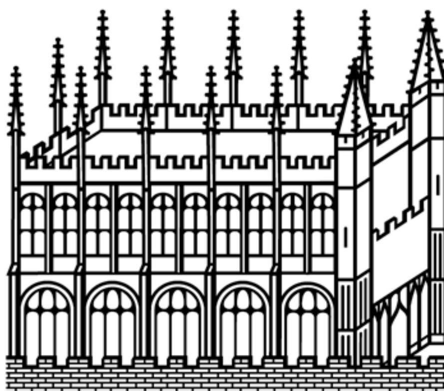

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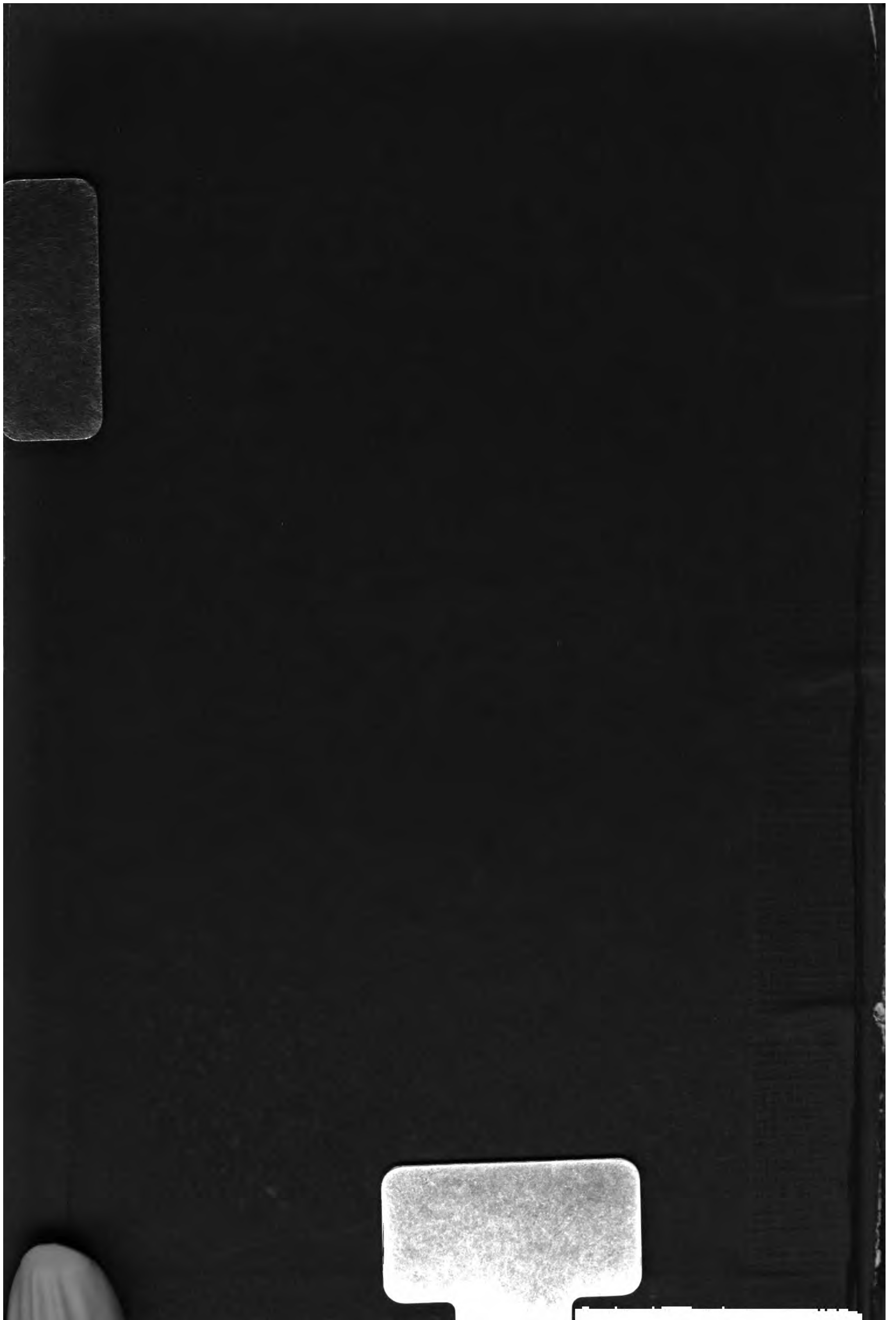
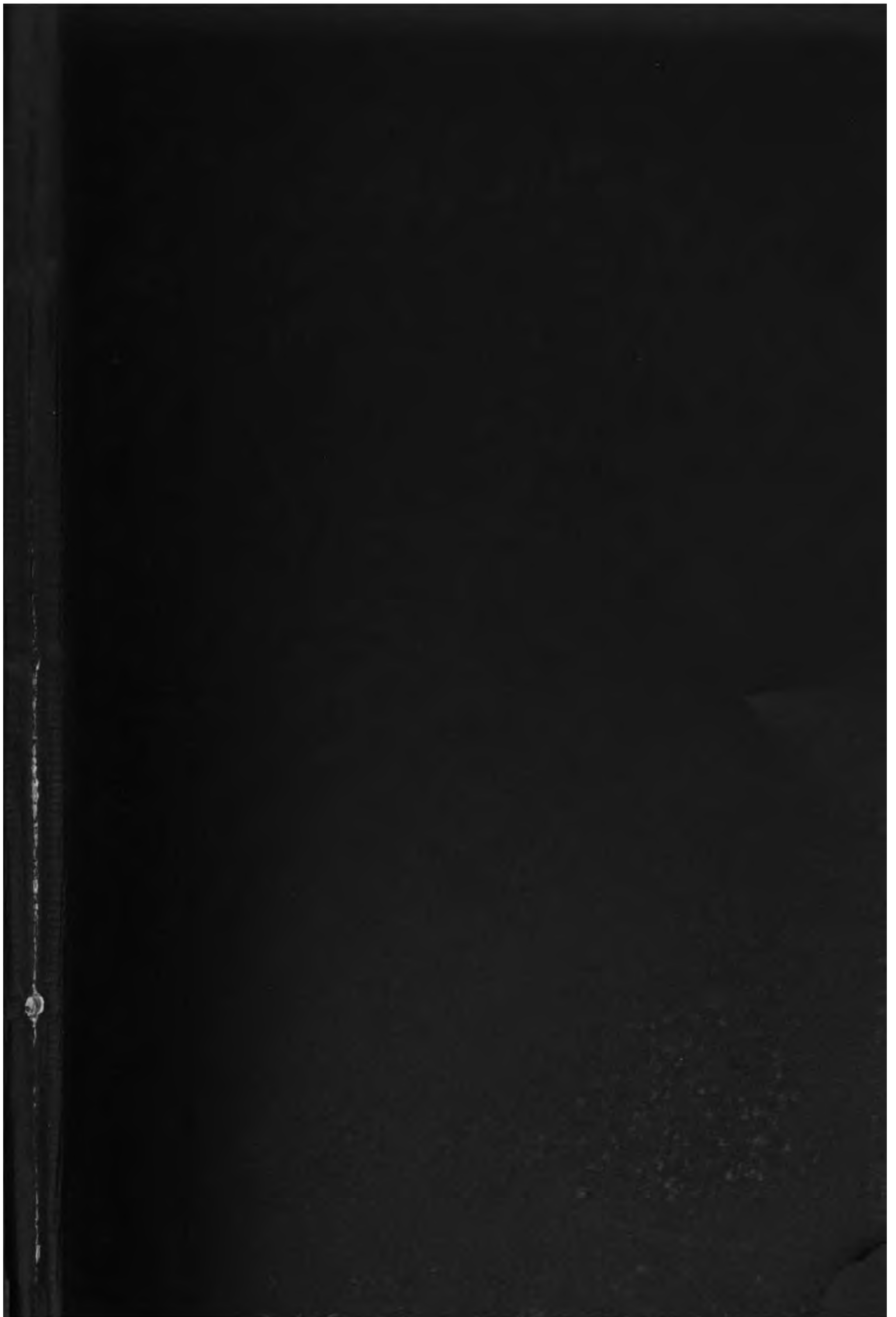
PEASANT PROPERTIES

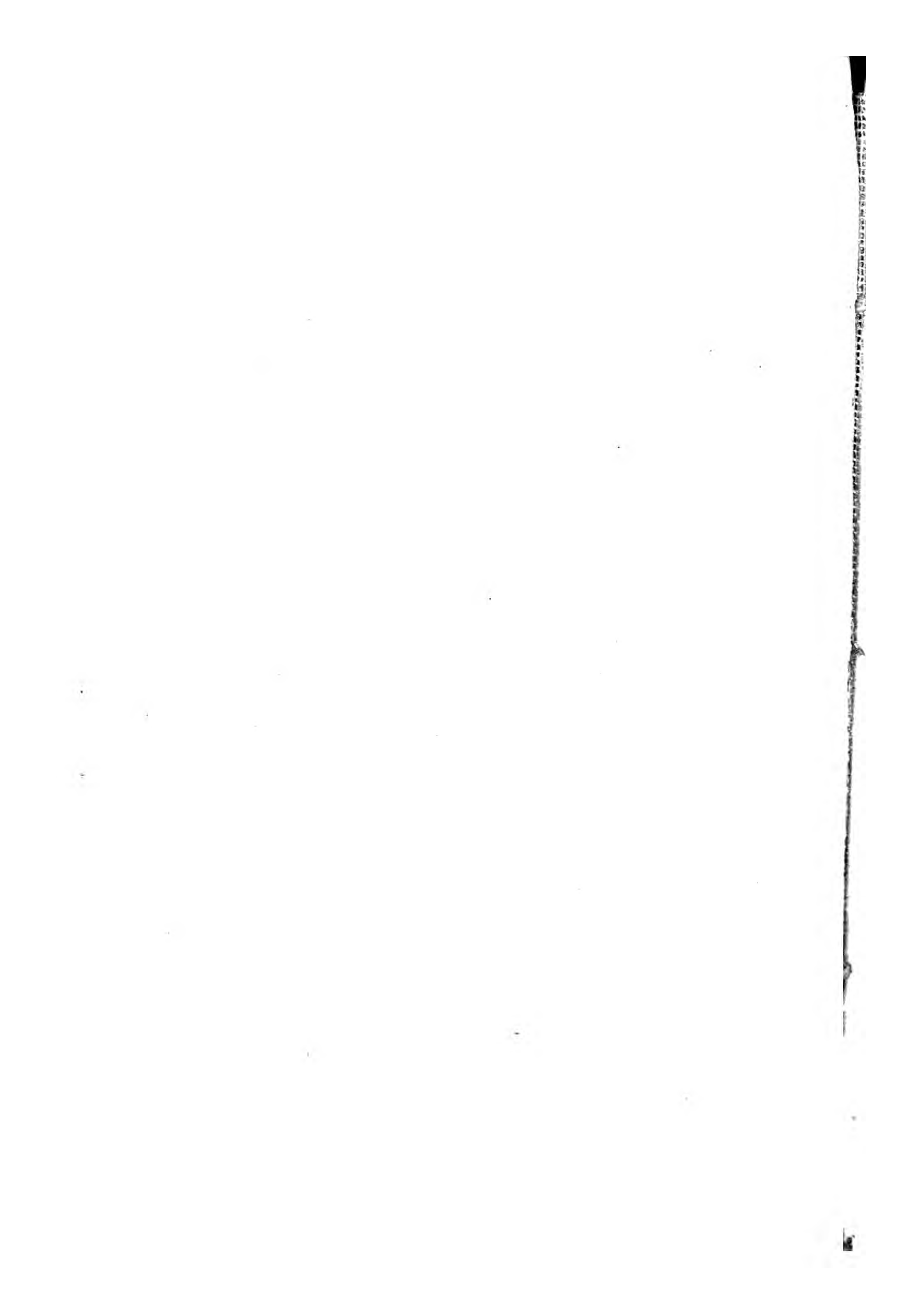
AND OTHER

SELECTED ESSAYS

LADY VERNEY







SELECTED ESSAYS

VOL. I.

LONDON : PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

PEASANT PROPERTIES

AND OTHER SELECTED ESSAYS

BY

LADY VERNEY

IN TWO VOLUMES——VOL. I.

LONDON
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1885

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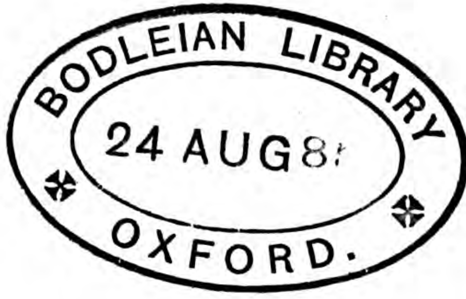
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PREFACE.

THESE ESSAYS are collected from the *Contemporary Review* and *Fraser's Magazine*, where they first appeared, with the exception of 'Ancient British Saints,' which is new—one of five papers upon Legends and ancient habits of thought.

The first five essays are mainly concerned with peasant properties in Germany, France, and Switzerland, and the subject is now engaging so much attention that it may interest some persons to look at sketches of the small owners and their abodes drawn 'from nature.'

CLAYDON HOUSE:
June 2, 1885.

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JOTTINGS IN GERMANY DURING AN AUTUMN RAMBLE.

THE dreary days of the protracted session came to an end at last, and we left England on a cloudless hot day, while the corn was being joyfully gathered in on all sides. The harvest was hardly more advanced in the north of France and Belgium, though the climate was so much better, as the peaches and grapes sold at all the little stations bore witness.

The waste of land in the innumerable hedges and ditches which divide the tiny properties in Picardy was very striking. In Belgium the fences had vanished, but the waste of labour was as great: three or four little ploughs, with two horses each, working at three or four little strips, the whole not so big as a small English field which would have been ploughed in a day with one pair—each proprietor here doing his own work with no help from or co-operation with his neighbour; the little corn-ricks looking as if out of a child's farmyard, and often so weak-kneed that they had to be supported by props.

The scattered villages lie very far apart, and Belgian villages are peculiarly wretched-looking,—the dwellings one-storied and miserable, the isolated cottages few,—often mere mud-hovels; vegetables running close to the very door, with no path up to it, and not a single flower; the bare-legged, bare-headed women evidently too ground down by hard work in the fields, and anxiety for the bare life, to care for even a strip of garden. If flowers were to be seen, they were at a drinking-house or at the railway stations.

The distances for the owners to go to their bits of land are very great. There are few cross-roads, so they must tramp along the grassy muddy paths between the fields to reach their work—no trees were to be seen but the occasional rows of hideous black poplars, with branches trimmed up for fuel and to prevent their overshadowing the soil. There was not room for a real tree anywhere in the economy of that world.

In Belgium the number of small *parcelles* is increasing. According to official statistics in 1846 there were 5,500,000, and 758,000 proprietors. Thirty years after, in 1876, the *parcelles* had increased by about a million, and there were 1,131,000 proprietors. It appears as if the *petite* culture only answered with market gardens near the great towns, which give advantages of good markets and plenty of manure in all countries alike. Here, however, the towns are many and close together.

The bits of land were generally the size of a large allotment, about an acre or so (one man will own several of these), and the effect on the naked country is as of a patchwork quilt thrown over it; a small brown patch for the ploughed land, a light green for the mown grass, a dark green for the uncut clover, a yellow one for the corn, and then *da capo*, over and over again. There seemed a ull level of poverty everywhere; there was not a house as big as an ordinary English farmhouse to be seen, particularly from Brussels to Verviers; everything skimped, cramped, uniform in ugliness and squalid wretchedness.

We drank tea in the inner court of the hotel at Brussels, *al fresco*, with an old French priest, who had come in to see the Belgian Exhibition and was very discontented with affairs at home. 'Gambetta, c'est un farceur, un buveur d'estaminets il y a dix ans; allez, c'est une fameuse dégringolade pour la France d'être gouvernée par un homme comme ça.' A more important witness declared he was biding his time for a war of revenge, when he would rise as

the saviour of France and the restorer of the provinces wrung from her in '70—' and war even now is popular in France.'

The bad coal burnt on all the engines made the journey most unpleasant in the heat: and we came into Cologne almost black. Even the Cathedral felt hot. Its spires, the highest in the world, as the Emperor declared proudly in his speech at the opening, were still veiled by the great scaffolding, which is a miracle of construction, but will soon now be removed. That majestic building, begun with the idea of glorifying and pleasing God by the gift of all that is best in the powers of man, an offering to Heaven, is now completed with little reference to God at all, but as a patriotic tribute to the unification of Germany, and to the honour of the German race, the work of men of all creeds, by a national instead of a religious enthusiasm. A strange crook in the lot of the great 'Dom'—the design of the old builders at length carried out after 600 years, but with a complete change in the central thought! And, final irony of fate, the Roman Catholic Cathedral opened by a Protestant Emperor, with its Archbishop in exile and under a ban, and a ceremony comprising as little as possible of the Roman Catholic element! The great crane on the mighty unfinished tower is gone, and the devil, it is to be hoped, is worsted, who, as it is well known, objected to its removal, and sent a storm to prevent it. The plans for the building had been most meanly filched from him by the architect, all except a part of the middle, to which the devil held tight. He vowed, in consequence, only too successfully until now, that the church should never be finished.

The lingering light was just touching the highest part of the high windows as we entered the transept, all below lying in deep shadow, which masked the rather bare walls of the lofty nave, enormously high in proportion as it soars into the air. It is finished according to the old drawings found after having been lost for a hundred or so of years,

but the new part has an oddly cut-and-dried look compared to the old work, which seems to have grown, and the statues on the retreating arches of the portals are strangely bad and vulgar—'journey work,' done evidently by the yard.

The next morning was Sunday, and the enormous space was filled by the rather unlovely Rhineland race. Common-looking, good, quiet folk apparently, but 'ordinary all,' was the ceaseless comment as the ceaseless stream flowed on—the women ugly, ill-dressed, in colours hopelessly wrong, and an utter want of charm. A Frenchwoman with no more beauty would yet have made herself pleasant to look at; an Italian crowd would have been dirtier but more picturesque. The men were in curious preponderance at the service. A crowd stood round an altar in the transept, and the responses to the priest were in such harsh gutturals that we thought some heavy metal was being dragged on the pavement, till we walked among them and heard our neighbours' voices come grating out of their mouths. No one had a book, but all joined, evidently knowing the service by heart.

A woman with a basketful of candles came up to me with an insinuating smile. My neighbour bought one and proceeded to set it on a spike, in company with two or three dozen more, which were burning to the honour of a small statuette of the Virgin, in a crown and very fine brocade gown, over a crinoline. She was evidently much in fashion, for a whole gallery of *ex votos* hung over her. Presently, a poor old woman in black, with a heavy basket on her arm, sat down by me, and with a rapt look leant back, closed her eyes, and began telling her beads, while a look of peace stole over the worn face. It was pleasant, also, to see how at home everybody seemed to feel, passing from altar to altar as they pleased, as if the place belonged to them, instead of to the sexton and the beadle, as in cathedrals at home. The great organ sounded like the

articulate voice of the enormous building, and the single voices of the choir in the distance like the pleadings of earth with Heaven, plaintive, weak, uncertain, full of sorrows and perplexities. And then came the answer of the Church back again, full, rich, powerful, unhesitating, infallible (if only you accept it !). The extremely vicarious nature of the worship struck one, however, the more from the immense distances at which it took place. A tinkling bell rang, out of sight and a quarter of a mile away, telling us that the Host was being raised, and immediately every body went on their knees, at whatever point of their devotions they were. You had only to follow your leader and do as you were bid, and you were washed 'clean and done for' by the priest, in the lump, as it were—instead of the strictly individual relation of the soul to its Creator of real Protestant worship. Then the priest put the remains of our Lord into a box on the altar, the little choir boys swung their incense pots, and our adorations were over.

The new painted glass, with a few exceptions, is abominable. One window in magenta and green looked like a faithful rendering of the last new carpet from Shoolbred's, or whoever the German equivalent of that worthy may be. Then came a glare of yellow and red, like a transparency in oiled paper, with bright light blue at the top. Every variety but the variety of good was there, and of that harmony found in the old glass of even poor village churches. The attempt at making a picture interferes with the true effect, which in painted glass should be mainly of pure colour—a glory which is, perhaps, more sensuous than that of form, but with as supreme a pleasure of its own, as may be felt in the rose windows of St. Maclou and the Cathedral at Rouen. It is like melody, perhaps, as compared to harmony in the sister art.

'Offerings for the Holy Father, Leo XIII.,' were received at the door. Living on the alms of the whole world ;

an idea beautiful or not as your fancy takes it—hardly appealing to our English sympathies.

The Rhine steamers are a favourite resort for bridal excursions, and we had two pairs on board. One ugly fat girl was marching up and down the deck in a thick cloth jacket, in spite of the heat, with white mittens on the hands sentimentally clasped on her bridegroom's arm, and a proud look of serene consciousness of being the admired of all beholders, which was inexpressibly silly and droll: another sat with her arm round the neck of hers, or resting on his knee,—simple, tactless, tasteless worthy folk.

The reign of ugliness in modern architecture is as bad here as in England—it is wonderful how every old building, both in town and village, is picturesque, rich in ornament and design, and every new one mean and scamped in eaves and mouldings. As we passed up the river the black-and-white half-timbered cottages, the woodwork in patterns, were all good; the towers of the churches, with their pierced stone parapets, round-headed windows, or pointed pinnacles—the pitch of the high roofs, the proportions of everything, were right, while the new *pensions*, &c., were as hideous as if from the hands of a London builder. The originality of each little district, too, was interesting; while the new work was everywhere all alike. The isolation of old days may account for each community having a pattern of its own, but not for the amount of imagination which they showed then in building and have lost now.

In the same way almost every bit of costume has died out. The embroidered cloths and velvet bodices, the beautiful stuffs which lasted for generations, are supplanted by dismal lilac cottons; the silver and gold ornaments, which descended from mother to daughter, are all swept into the gulf of commonplace which has inundated the world.

The effect of the vine terraces which seam the sides of the hills, climbing up slopes so steep that apparently the soil can hardly cling there, is always interesting; the tiny

strips are supported by walls carefully built up, the earth often carried up in basketfuls. Here, too, the great distances that the owners must walk to reach each little property are very striking, and as there are no roads (the ground is too valuable) each must pass along scores o his neighbours' patches. The temptation is too great for human nature when the grapes are ripening, and a close time takes place when no man is allowed to enter his own ground (which would hardly be liked by an English labourer). The owners live very hardly, eat black rye bread and no meat, and, when there is a bad crop, borrow from the money-lenders,—there is hardly a man who is out of debt, we heard again and again,—and just before the 1st of November there is a rush to sell potatoes, or anything else they possess, to pay off the interest, which is extremely high. In a very good year some few of them free themselves, but as in the equal division of property here one brother almost always takes the land, he mortgages it to pay off the portions of his brothers and sisters, and is hampered generally all his life. 'The girls are proud, and will not go out to service; they prefer the liberty of working in the fields.'

The soil from which the best *crus* of wine are made is very limited, and a few feet, or even inches, divides a vineyard whose produce is known and valued highly all over the world, from what will only make *vin ordinaire*. But Nature's chemistry is too subtle to be analysed, and the difference cannot be detected in the earth. The limit where the vines can be profitably grown is, also, we heard, now reached, and hardly any new ground is added; any freshly-attempted position is found to be too exposed, or too sunless, or too bare of earth to succeed.

The plain country lying between Mainz and the Black Forest is exceedingly rich—fruit trees, with crops of Indian corn, roots, clover, growing under them, abound; but the last winter had been 'dreadful,' and a good half of the

apple, pear, and plum trees were dead. What do the people do in such a case? we asked. 'Oh, borrow on the mortgage of their land: it is a kind of security *qui est très goûté* by the money-lenders,' said our friend significantly. 'There is not a peasant hereabouts out of debt,' said another. 'They pay enormously, sometimes as much as five per cent. interest per month,' said a third.

The hard work of the women is excessive: mowing (we saw three women mowing in one field), spreading dung with wretched wooden forks, digging potatoes, driving carts, one at least we saw ploughing, carrying burdens, dragging loads, bare-foot, bare-headed but for a handkerchief, dirty, weary, haggard, old before their time. The distance between the villages was sometimes nine or ten miles, so that they must walk five miles out and five back to the plots in the middle, as there were no cottages between.

We stopped at Offenburg, a quiet little town at the beginning of the Black Forest district, with great green pots lining the streets, full of flowering oleanders and large plants of the shy blooming pomegranate, covered with scarlet blossoms, looking as if made of sealing-wax. It was the eve of the Grand Duke of Baden's birthday. He and his Duchess are very much beloved, and at night everybody was out in their best clothes, under the trees, in the little 'Place,' listening to a band, and looking at six or eight Chinese lanterns and three or four Roman candles, with squibs and crackers, which figured as fireworks. Everybody was delighted and in high good-humour. We sat on two chairs given by a friendly shopwoman and talked to our neighbours, and were treated with much honour by the cheerful little crowd. A statue to Sir Francis Drake, as the 'inventor of potatoes,' with a stone wreath of that poetic vegetable round the plinth at his feet, stood in the midst of the fun, and was much in keeping with our homely festivities. 'So sorry you will not stay for the dancing to-morrow,' said our friends as we parted. So were we.

The railroad mounts by a very steep incline up the narrow valley which leads to Triberg. A rapid stream runs at the bottom, with little fields and bits of pasture here and there, and enormous spruce firs feathering up the precipitous sides. The Bauer houses are very large, built of wood of the richest brown, with great projecting balconies, generally three, one above the other, hung with drying clothes, and an enormous overhanging roof partly shingled, partly thatched, and bright with green moss, which stretches on one side to the ground. Under this are sheltered all the owner's goods, his cows and horses, his pigs, oxen, and goats, and, above all, his manure heaps, most valuable and loved of all his wealth, and which scent the whole house unbearably to strangers. His little crop of corn lies in the great loft at the top of the house, with a small quantity of flax, his wood, and all his treasures, including the ladder, which is slung aloft, all ready to his hand in the long months of winter, when the snow lasts sometimes five months. He is often a well-to-do man, owning two or three hundred acres of land, but he lives as hardly as the poorest peasant, dresses and eats as badly, and his wife and children do all the work, with the exception of a *knecht* (who is often a woman!). He has money, but he does not spend it; his education is small, and his life one of intense labour and sordid saving. These farms are not divided at the death of the father, but pass, according to the custom of different districts, to the eldest *or* the youngest. When it is the first, the mother will call him, only half in jest, *Mein Prinz*, the eldest son in a noble family is a 'prince' in the great 'majorats.'

We looked down from the railroad carriage into the heart of the most picturesque little town (Hornberg) that we thought we had ever seen, huddled into the narrowest of gorges, with brown and timbered houses facing every way on both sides the stream, and crowned by a castle.

The hotel at Triberg is set on high, close to pine woods, the great trunks of the firs springing out of beds of lovely

moss, near a fine waterfall which comes plunging down out of the heart of the forest just above the town. At night it was lighted up with red and blue fires in honour of the birthday, and it was strange to see how little it took to turn the glorious Nature into a very bad work of art. It looked like a vile bit of scene-painting in a low theatre. I was thankful when the glare subsided and a starlight night took gentle possession once more of the beautiful valley.

There had been a Bauer marriage at a farm on the mountain side, but we were too late for it,—the bride, in a high pointed black cap and streamers, presiding over a series of feasts which lasted three days. At night the sky was lighted by the lurid glow of a fire, ten miles off, at another farm, where a poor idiot was suffocated and three cows burnt. We thus touched on the two great events of Bauer life. The beautiful thatched and shingled roofs are very apt to catch fire, and no new ones are suffered to be built, which is dismal for the picturesque.

The little town is tenanted by watchmakers and carvers in wood, and seems prosperous; the people own their own houses, and are not dependent on their land, but on their handiwork for existence.

We drove back next day along the lovely valley close to the stream in search of Hornberg. The women were at work, even harder if possible than in the plain below, making the second-crop hay, picking up the grass in their arms on the steep slopes and scattering it to dry without even a fork, dragging it along the road in small hand-carts, sawing wood, &c., &c.

The number of deformed, lame, hump-backed people is very great. An English doctor told us he had never seen so many rickety, ill-kept, and wretched-looking children as in Germany. How can it be otherwise? The mothers are in the fields, and cannot be looking after their babies, and mending and making at home, where surely there is always

enough to do for one pair of hands. As we drove along, the cripples sat by the roadside tending cows and goats, which must never be allowed to go alone, lest they should stray beyond their owner's narrow frontiers. Carts, with small wheels very far apart, most rudely put together, passed us driven by women.

Hornberg proved a base imposition; the houses, once large and handsome, were now occupied by small proprietors, who could not keep them up—close, unwholesome, tumble-down, and melancholy, they crowded round a stream, stinking in spite of its rapid current, with the perpendicular hills too close behind them, and the castle now turned into a brewery. A monument to the only man in the district who was killed in the Franco-German war was the chief illustration of the place, We were puzzled by rows of what looked like round cakes drying in the sun. They were made of sawdust from the tanners' yards, which burns slowly, and so is used in the stoves. With such great abundance of wood it showed both the poverty and the amount of cold to invent such fuel.

As we passed over the plain high up on the top of the mountain next day, whole families, even to the smallest children, were out on the wet, undrained meadows gathering in the hay. In summer they often start thus at three in the morning, with only a little bad coffee and bread, sending back a little girl for a second supply in the day, and work till night on this unsubstantial diet. A good deal of brandy, however, is drunk on these occasions. These upper regions look like a great sponge, and their waters feed the two great rivers of Europe, the Danube and the Rhine, one flowing east to the Black Sea, the other west to the German Ocean, from this not very lofty watershed.

Constanz is a quaint old place, standing close to the boundaries of six countries which meet on the lake. The Inseln hotel was once a monastery, with a garden reaching down to the water, and many guests were sitting under the

trees. The dining room is the old chapel with a double row of columns, sadly disfigured by paper and hangings, however, and we slept in a corridor where once had been the monks' cells. At night the hall filled with a great meeting of Roman Catholic deputies from all parts of Germany, Belgium, even Holland. H—— went down amongst them; he was civilly asked if he were Catholic, but when he acknowledged that he was not one of the faithful, he was still given a place of honour near the president where he could hear. The principal topic, after exhortations to unity and much mutual praise, consisted in rejoicing over the relaxation of the Falk Laws and hopes that Bismarck would do more in the same direction. I looked on through an opening high up in the eastern wall, through which probably the sick monks assisted at the service.

The town is a well-to-do place, full of memories of past greatness and past struggles. You may stand on the stone which marks the place where John Huss was burnt, and look out of the windows of the hall where sat the great Council which decided between the rival claims of three Popes; but the fires are dead which burnt so fiercely within its walls, and the worthy gentlemen in frock-coats collected in the Inseln hotel serve to show more clearly how far we have drifted. There is a curious old MS. in the library where the events of the fifteenth century are depicted in long processions, and the men-at-arms, the priests and cardinals, the women, the cooks, the prince, the bishops, and the Kaiser all appear 'in their habits as they lived.' There is nothing in the long series which has remained the same. The knights in armour, the prince bishops, the ladies in tall pointed head-gear, even the Holy Roman Empire itself, are all gone; only the little crescents of bread which one of the bakers is holding out remain the same; the *Hörnchen* have held their own amidst all the change.

We drove among the vines to a lovely little wooded island in the lake, approached by a long wooden bridge, where

the Grand Duke and Duchess of Baden have made a true home, beautiful within and without, out of a great *schloss* which belonged to an order of knighthood now extinct. It is built round three sides of a square, with long corridors full of beautiful inlaid and carved *armoires*, old armour, curious pictures, china, tapestry, and flowers; the rooms opening out towards the lake. From our apartment of three rooms the grand panorama of the Alps stretched out beyond the lake, with a foreground of terraces, flowers, vases, vines, and shrubs—it was wonderfully lovely. 'I knew that Sir H—— cared very much for the mountains, so I put you here.' A very pleasant dinner, and much talk both political and about the many institutions of Baden for all sorts of necessities, schools, hospitals, asylums for the blind, deaf and dumb, all admirably organised, and a 'Frauen-Verein,' extending over the whole duchy, a union of the women of all classes for the benefit of all, and to prevent the same work being done, as often in England, by three or four sets of workers.

From the windows of the dining-room the wooded promontories of the lake are seen far below, backed by a splendid view of the Alps, the long procession of peak beyond peak, when the shy mountains allow themselves to be seen, reaching from the Tyrolese ranges in the east to the Jungfrau in the south-west.

The young Princess Victoria, the only daughter of the house, took us out on the lake in a little boat, where I could make a sketch of the steep, wooded, rocky island rising from the bright green-blue water; with the background of mountains exquisite in colour—all so peaceful.

She took me into her charming boudoir, where she was taking off the chilled varnish for her father from an old picture, and trying her hand at modelling in clay. Here were a number of photographs of her uncle, the Crown Prince, in whom she evidently delighted. 'He is so good to me, he is such a fine fellow.'

The next day, rowing again on the brilliant lake, the whole panorama of white snowy points against the pearly sky shone out, perfectly distinct, yet with a distinctness quite untranslatable by paints and paper made by hands, in its ethereal hues and subtle gradations of colour, and one felt deeply how utterly powerless art is before certain aspects of Nature. A boat lay in front, with men drawing up their great nets, having toiled all night and taken nothing of the splendid lake trout—the whole as it were hung between transparent sea and sky. As we looked across in the radiant still evening at a great blind asylum in an old palace on the eastern shore, the gracious mistress told how all the isolated efforts after good were gathered together and assisted to work for common objects, and to play into each other's hands. It must be a great help in the organisation of wise charity, and the utilisation in a general plan of the desultory attempts of obscure workers. The number of institutions for education, religious and moral training, and for the wise assistance of every species of distress established by the present sovereigns of the well-governed little realm, is very remarkable.

The old Emperor and Empress had just been staying there, and one day, when they were walking by the lake, the young princess and her cousins dressed themselves in peasant costume, and came rowing up to the shore. They were warned off by the Grand Duke as seriously as he could. 'Oh, but we must see our Kaiser,' cried the princess. When her grandmother recognised the voice and found her out the old Emperor was much amused. A pleasant little home picture; and the young girl went and put on her peasant's dress to show us—she and it were very pretty to look at. We were told next of the reverse of the picture, the two attempts at Berlin on the Emperor's life. He was driving in an open carriage with his daughter by his side, there was a stoppage, and a man with a wild look leant over her and fired two shots *à bout portant* at the old man. He was as calm as possible, she was very much moved, and they

drove home immediately, where the perfect storm of congratulations was trying in their warmth. Three weeks after he was shot at again. The Grand Duchess received a telegram to summon her, and found her father with head, arms, and legs swathed in bandages; he could not move and scarcely eat. 'How fortunate that you were not with me!' were his first words, thinking of her, not of himself. He was sitting in a perfect garden of blue cornflowers, his particular flower, which were sent in thousands of bouquets by the whole country.

The next day we were steaming down the lake to Lindau in a storm of wind and rain, blotting out every vestige of the mountains with the capriciousness of the hill weather. It was bright again, however, for our journey onwards, the little railway to avoid tunnels twisting and turning curiously, and showing the hillside views to perfection. Mouse-coloured cows, musical with bells, were followed everywhere by women and girls with red handkerchiefs on their heads, and whips in their hands to keep them in the narrow paths of virtue—and very narrow these were when the subdivision was great. We saw four ploughs, with two horses each, on four adjacent strips about twenty feet across; the shares were wooden, with a narrow sheath of iron, an inch or two wide, to give them an edge. When we reached the summit level, a lovely little lake filled up the valley, with long tranquil reflections of the flat red roofs, laden with stones, of a village, crowned by a brown-red bulbous-headed church tower on a long stalk, and precipitous rocks crowding in upon it. In front the hay was thrown over upright stakes about six feet high with three cross-bars at right angles, planted in rows, so that the fields seemed studded with gigantic spindles. Here it was left till dry enough to stack. The upland meadows were lilac with autumnal crocuses, showing how wet they lay, and any large scheme of drainage was evidently impossible for want of co-operation among the small owners. The grass of Parnassus grew

like daisies on the rough places by the rail when we reached the forest ground above. This belongs to the State or to large proprietors; no peasant ever possesses any woodland, as he cannot wait to realize, and must have returns year by year—indeed, month by month—in order to live. In some places the narrow strips of grass, about three feet wide, dividing the small properties, were so many and near together that they amounted to a good-sized field in a few miles.

The station at Munich was bright with the electric light, 'tramways' (*sic*, in English) were in the streets, and all the newest improvements. The new buildings are very ugly, however, and with a set determination about them to be æsthetic and didactic, which is a little aggravating and pedantic. The *Alte Pinacothek*, nevertheless, is a charming collection, if with no picture of world-wide importance, unless it be an Albert Dürer of the 'Four Temperaments,' a favourite classification of the middle ages—the Melancholic, the Phlegmatic, the Sanguine, and the Bilious, represented in this case by four apostles—noble figures, though St. Paul in front is grasping his sword as if he meant to use it on us in earnest. Albert Dürer himself considered this picture as his 'Testament als Künstler, als Mensch, als Patriot und Evangelischer.'

The portraits, to me, are always among the most telling results of art; the men and women, so long dead, living to all time. Rubens' wives are there in every variety of fine clothing, which yet somehow do not swamp the faces, a Frank Hals, many Vandykes, particularly an Antwerp burgomaster and his wife, &c., which are magnificent.

Rubens is here even more lavish of flesh and blood than usual in the 'Last Judgment,' where a little soul, at least, one would think, is required; but there are some studies of his for this picture in a room behind, which are glorious in their sway and rush of souls—the lines which the downward sweeps of the damned take, who are here in great majority, are perfectly wonderful in grace and beauty; the blessed do

not seem to have been so much to his taste, and are far inferior. Two of the finest Peruginos out of Italy are here. One of them represents a visit paid by the Virgin to St. Bernard. It is not a vision—she is walking in on her feet, with attendant ladies, and his face, as he looks up and receives his charming visitor with a tender joy, is very touching. Near it hung a Holy Family by Raphael, an indifferent one it is true, and copies of the pictures in the 'Tribune' and the Louvre. It was impossible not to feel how entirely the form of the faces, the expression, the whole manner of feeling and thought had been borrowed by the greater pupil from his master. He has made such admirable use of his inherited wealth that he has justified his use of it; but, in spite of the warning in the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' I felt inclined to 'praise Pietro Perugino' with all my might, as the originator of the Madonna type. Only, to value Raphael aright, his frescoes, not his easel pictures alone, must be always considered.

The old German masters in the smaller rooms are extremely fine, though many of their names are hardly known in England—'The Master of the L—— Passion,' Van der Weyden, Master Wilhelm, &c. The faces are somewhat flatly painted, without much shadow, but the extraordinary amount and variety of expression, the working out of detail, whether of feature or dress, with loving feeling and care, every stroke telling, the colours as brilliant as the day they were laid on many of them four hundred years ago, are all most remarkable. In the 'Marriage of the Virgin' the faces of the bystanders show every possible shade of doubt and curiosity, reverence and belief: you feel as if assisting at an act which really happened to real people, not before a set of academical models, bones and flesh in a sort of 'general way,' with clothes on. After this we went to the other building to look at the modern pictures. It is a melancholy sight, admirable rooms full of enormous works by the best men of the Munich school. Good colour was not to be

expected, perhaps, but there was hope that drawing, thought, and feeling might serve in its absence. The effect is one of absolute despair as to the chances of modern art—is this all that the encouragement of a whole kingdom for two generations can do? the best of schools, of lectures, of lessons on anatomy, and colour can bring forth? The enormous canvases, the acres of paint, are without a spark of genius. It seems to have been supposed that the big is equivalent with the great, and 'The Deluge,' some fifty feet wide and forty feet high, greets one at the entrance. The fear of being drowned is not a lofty sentiment, and when repeated in seventy or eighty figures of entirely uninteresting people it is monotonously unpleasant; there is no perspective, and the men at the top of the hill, forty feet above the spectators, are as big as those in front. There is more pathos in the small dark six inches of the Marc Antonio etching of the same subject than in the whole sprawling field. Next comes the 'Destruction of Jerusalem,' by Kaulbach, which is quite as large. Above in the sky is a great rush of angels flying about without any earthly or heavenly motive visible; the earth below is not a place at all, odds and ends of temples and courts and houses lie about 'all nohow.' They could only be seen from a standpoint in the air, but buildings are material things, and must have *some* foundation, *some* local basis. A man is killing himself in front like a bad actor, and heaps of people are lying about dying 'permiscuous,' not from the swords of the Roman soldiers, for they have not yet taken the town, and certainly not from hunger, for the lumps of arms and legs are much too fat and comfortable. It is a farrago of absurdities. Then comes an Ascension. How any man should dare to try and re-say on such subjects what has been said again and again by the great masters in their greatest works, without having a single new idea of any kind to add to the stock, is almost impossible to conceive.

There are many portraits, gigantic in size, wooden,

affected, heavy dismal dolls 'striking an attitude,' in elaborate gowns and coats. That the immediate neighbourhood of the wonders of the old masters should have had so little influence is astonishing. The landscapes are raw, hard, and conventional, with the same curious absence of reality and truth, done apparently after a recipe, like an apothecary's mixture, a brown tree on one side and blue lake below like a teaboard, with no relation whatever to the rendering of natural effects before the eyes of the painter. Wandering from room to room dismally after something to admire, the only things in the least interesting were some small portraits of old German streets and buildings, which were given with a great detail of honest care—the colour quietly good, like that of a Dutch picture. When they touch plain brick and mortar, with no temptation to angels and poetry, and saints, or lakes, or mountains, the painters seem to recover some of the patient reference to what *is*, which all painting must submit to render, to make the imaginative part of any value.

Meantime H—— had gone to Ammergau, to see the last representation but one of the Passion-play which will take place for ten years. Who can say what will then be the state of Europe? The last performance was interrupted by the Franco-German war. He found from fifty to sixty carriages and peasant carts streaming along the road from the Murnau station, all full. It is a purely pastoral district with little corn, but hayfields running in and out of the forest on the sides of the valley, which seems to be closed by the great Zugspitze, 10,000 feet high, at the end. The village is built utterly regardless of any sort of order; the houses run up and down, to and fro and across, with only cart-ways in any direction—unmade tracks here and there among the cottages. The place was full of strangers standing about looking at the arrivals. Nearly 7,000 people slept that night in the dwellings intended for 1,300,—half at least on straw,—but happily it was a dry night with a bright

moon. The village was *endimanché* to receive its guests, the older men with silver buttons as large as crown-pieces on their redingotes and waistcoats, high boots, and pointed felt hats with a feather and flower in them. One beautiful girl wore a flat black hat, a dark green gown over a red and black striped petticoat, red stockings, a green velvet bodice and silver ornaments: strong, well made, modest, she was a pretty sight. But even here costume is dying out.

H—— found his way to a timbered house with overhanging roof, the cottage of Joseph Maier, the performer of the Christus. He is a wood-carver, as was his predecessor in the part, and the crucifixes which he produces have, perhaps, assisted his conception of the character. He said the fatigue of the last scene was extremely trying. He is a remarkable-looking man even in his peasant's dress, and was much occupied with preparing for the next day's representation.[1] He is sometimes so plagued by visits from admirers that his wife said she had to lock him up in the kitchen to defend him. H—— then climbed up a rough boggy dirty hill, where the peasants were kneeling and praying round a great marble Crucifixion, given by the King of Bavaria. The village is full of shrines at every turn —the Virgin and many saints, and in one place Christ and the Père Eternel, sat side by side, only to be distinguished by the globe in the Father's hands.

The play, as is well known, is a survival of the mysteries and miracle-plays which were performed all over Europe in the Middle Ages, and which came to an end when a greater feeling of refinement in the world took offence at the buffooneries and indecencies with which they were defaced. Even now, a Passion-play is enacted at Easter in the streets of Seville by the same actors who play at the theatre, wherein, to relieve the too great solemnity of the drama, an

[1] The accounts of the Ammergau receipts have just been published, by which it appears that Maier's share was 50*l.* for thirty-nine representations —small enough.

intrigue between Pontius Pilate and Mary Magdalene is introduced, and Judas is made to pinch the little children, to pull their hair, and play tricks to make the people laugh. At Ammergau, in the old days, the devils appeared to carry off the traitor, dancing round him and tearing him in pieces, when a quantity of sausages tumbled out, to the great delight of the audience.

The play has been saved at Ammergau from the general fate by the accident partly that its performance was restricted to every ten years, in pursuance of a vow made after a terrible sickness in 1590—which has removed the familiarity which has bred contempt in other places—but chiefly by the efforts during thirty-five years of the 'Geistlicher Rath,' now an old man of eighty-two. He has pruned and added, and taken great pains in instructing the actors. The 'tableaux vivants' of types, principally from the Old Testament, are sometimes far-fetched, but beautiful in their picturesque arrangement, in which he has been assisted by artist friends from Munich. The chorus and the musical recitations and hymns are also his additions. One of the scenes of the gathering of the manna in the Desert, with a number of children in front, who keep marvellously still, was extremely pretty.

The actors are selected by a committee of village householders, at a solemn meeting in church which takes place on the last week of the year before the play. The principal parts are easily settled, as there are few equal to them; but there are hundreds of minor characters, and everybody wishes to act, so that the selection is a troublesome affair. The fiat of the little parliament is, however, never resisted. The women and children are accustomed to take part in the ceremonies of the Church, and the chief actors are trained. But with all explanations the vivid presentation of such scenes by poor Tyrolese peasants, who for ten years have gained their living by wood-carving, and will do so again for the next decade, is most remarkable. The

reverence, the delicacy of treatment, make it truly the religious exercise which it is evident that they consider it. None but those of good character are allowed to join, and the effect on the morals of the village is excellent. Joseph Maier is an admirable personification of dignified calmness and unmoved suffering; tall and perfectly proportioned, his long hair (which was saved by special orders from the King when he served as a soldier in the Franco-German war) hanging down on his shoulders. Every movement as he walked was perfectly graceful, and there was a holy dignity about his whole bearing which was intensely touching, especially in the parting with his mother, when Mary's agonised entreaties to him not to encounter the risk of going up to Jerusalem, and his declaration that he must do the work for which he came into the world, drew tears from many eyes. The acting of Judas was excellent, especially so when in his despair he flung down the money at the feet of Caiaphas—it would have been thought fine on any stage. The scene, too, with Mary Magdalene after the Resurrection was beautiful; but it would artistically have been better to end with the climax of the Crucifixion, though the moral teaching was supposed to require the latter scenes. About half the audience were peasants, sitting on the unsheltered benches; the rest comprised strangers from all countries and of all ranks; the Queen of Wurtemberg, the Grand Duchess of Baden, a Grand Duke of Russia, were present on that day.

Many of very opposite shades of faith were there, who had come doubtful of the advisability of the representation, yet who all agreed after seeing it that it was a great help in realising the life of the Saviour as a whole, and in putting reality into the Bible narrations of scenes from which the meaning has sometimes been almost trodden out by continual repetition.

The Crucifixion is a most difficult ordeal to go through. Maier is supported by nails between the fingers—there is a

slight shelf on which the feet rest, and the *tricot* round his body is fixed to the cross, but nothing of this is visible. He remains uplifted for at least twenty minutes, during the scenes with his mother, St. John, the Thieves, and the soldiers.

The taking down from the Cross is copied exactly from Rubens' great picture at Antwerp, but the cloth fell aside a little, and H—— saw the feet of the dead man moving to help him down the ladder, which was a pity, as otherwise the illusion was perfect. The play was too long—it lasted three and a-half hours in the morning and four in the afternoon—but no one seemed weary; the peasants are not so *blasés* as civilized folk, and it is an encouragement to patience to know that they must wait ten years for their next entertainment. The silence and reverent rapt attention of the enormous crowd (4,000 persons were present) was very remarkable—with closed eyes it seemed as if there were no one within 200 yards. Had it rained the case might have been different. We heard of fights with umbrellas having occurred among those who sat in front unsheltered. In the old unsophisticated days it is recorded too that Pontius Pilate and the Virgin Mary sometimes appeared on the scene holding umbrellas over their heads!

The railroad from Munich to Salzburg fringes the beautiful lake country, and the mist which veiled the mountains was falling as snow on their summits. We passed along a flat region, much of it bog, where the fuel was being stacked (it is used even on the railway engines); clover, blackened by the rain, hung on the little posts which are here six feet high; the undrained meadows were soaked in wet; where the women, ground down with hard work, were doing more than the men, barefoot, or with heavy wooden shoes and no stockings. The 'happy peasant' of the Vaudeville and the new order of political economists we pursue in vain; we certainly have not found him yet. The nearest approach to him that we hear of is among the Tyrolese of the South Bavarian hills, where the population is very sparse and

there are many large properties and much wild land belonging to the King. Here the 'happy hunting grounds' may still be found; the peasant is an 'inveterate poacher, and out a great part of his time after game, four-footed and winged, very *lustig*, and very fond of music and dancing.' But this is hardly the ideal which is expected to regenerate Ireland, or England either.

Splendid rose-coloured clouds spread over the whole western half of the sky as we came nearer to the solemn range which stood out, purple and black, against the sky behind Salzburg. The city is set upon the edge of the flat plain out of which rise the great mountains, sheer, with no intermediate hills, in a most striking manner. The look-out, indeed, east and west, is called the most beautiful inland view in Europe, the distant snowy peaks of great height towards Gastein and the Tyrol, towering over the nearer ranges, and seen from every eminence, however small. For four days the cloud veil fell over the mountains and absolutely nothing was to be seen, but on the fifth the sun came out, and we drove up to the very holy Madonna at Maria Plain, who performs miracles by the dozen on the believing. Strings of men and women pilgrims were going up the flights of steps to the top of the hill and kneeling at the shrines and chapels on the way to an extremely tawdry church, dressed out with blue and gold. The black silk handkerchief tied tightly, with long ends, at the back of the head, and the white sleeves, are all that remain of costume, but two queer little babies in blue and white, with green wreaths on their flaxen plaits, 'vouées à la Vierge,' toddled on as part of the stream. The glorious view of mountains spread out before us as we rose, beginning with the magnificent Untersberg, in the caverns beneath which sit the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa and his knights, who are to return some day to earth—the time is not quite specified. He is waited upon by the dwarfs, the little *Bergmenschen*, (gnomes), as one of our informants told us; 'but it isn't

true,' he said so earnestly, that it proved there was a large substratum of belief under his words.

There is a still more celebrated and potent Madonna about fifty miles off, where, at a convent and church high above the Danube, a hundred thousand pilgrims still attend every year upon her pleasure.

The next day was fine, and H—— spent it in going up the valley to visit the salt mines at Hallein and Berchtesgaden. The 'Salzkammergut' is the private property of the Emperor, and the monopoly must bring in a large revenue. The deposit of salt is known to be 1,500 feet thick, and may be much deeper where it is still unworked. The entrance at Hallein is high up in the mountain, and the descent is by a series of wooden slides, one after the other, some at an angle of fifty-seven degrees, through the mine down to an opening at the bottom. The sightseers, male and female, clad in thick canvas jackets and trousers, sit astride, each on a flap of leather, with a lamp in one hand and grasping a rope in the other, in a string behind the guide, who regulates the speed, with his hand protected by an enormous glove, grasping the stationary rope by his side. If he were to lose his hold his whole cargo would be precipitated to the bottom with a tremendous smash. Twenty-seven large and small lakes are in the heart of the mine, some of which are lit by lamps for the pleasure of the visitors as they are ferried across them; but there is no sparkling white salt, all is dirty and dull.

The great fortress of the Archbishop (who was Primus in Germany) rises 600 feet or more above the subject city, and can only be approached by flights of steps and steep inclines. I went up in a sedan chair, but H—— walked gallantly the whole way. Up, up, higher still and higher, with bastions, rock-hewn ditches, portcullis, and outlying towers, where it is impossible to make out what is rock and what building, what natural and what artificial, the priest's stronghold mounts into the sky. Nothing on wheels can

get up, only sledges drawn by oxen, so that the supply of the regiments who are quartered there must be difficult indeed. Troops of men in uniform, off duty, were running down, all very young, and many Tyrolese Jägers, with their green feathers, looking active, well-built, but very small men. My bearers climbed like cats, even up the staircase of the tower which ended the ascent. Here was a view quite unsurpassed of the lines of mountains towering up into the sky on one side, and the city, with its many churches, and the river winding through the plain to join the Danube far away in the distance, on the other. It was a beautiful evening, and the valleys were distinctly seen up into the heart of the land. Above even this we climbed, up two winding stairs, where, high in the air, Archbishop Leon had made himself a perch, in 1499. It was not like the dwelling of a human being, but of a savage bird of prey, some 'geier,' or eagle, ready to swoop down on the passengers to and fro, while far beneath lie horrible dungeons and torture chambers, where the rack is still shown to those who love such sights, and *oubliettes* where prisoners were thrown down to die. We passed a 'prison of little ease,' where the poor wretch confined in it could neither stand, sit, nor lie at length, a more dreadful punishment than even the rack—and many were the 'heretics' who had suffered in the fortress, under Leon and his successors. Up in this eyrie was the Archbishop's bedroom and a dining-room with a great porcelain stove, each tile with a story or coat of arms, the whole set on eight pottery lions (the only attempt at warming in that coldest of perches), and finally a hall of audience with twisted porphyry columns, the doors with great hinges picked out in vermilion and gold, very barbaric and fine. The walls and ceilings are lined with elaborate woodwork ornamented with very peculiar gilt studs, which shone out like stars, the whole wonderfully, strangely striking, while the windows looked three ways, embracing all the glorious views we had seen from

the tower. It was the most remarkable dwelling-place we had ever entered. And then we returned through great vaulted chambers, below the priestly suite, in which the young soldiers were swarming, back to the lower world where the darkness had now settled down; the lamps were lit and the Angelus was pealing from the many churches, one with a most melodious carillon, very sweet in the evening air, which rang at six A.M., at noon, and at twilight.

Here, after the Schleswig-Holstein war, 500 Danish prisoners were lodged in the fortress, and the Protestant pastor of Salzburg offered to give them a Sunday service, to which the commandant assented gladly. The Protestants, however, were just building a church, and meantime were making use of the old Rathhaus, the floor of which was declared by the authorities to be too ricketty to stand such an additional weight of worshippers. The commandant (Count Taaffe, now Prime Minister) was appealed to again, who immediately offered them the Archbishop's council chamber up in the skies, to the great delight of the pastor and his flock. Accordingly, every Sunday the whole body collected there, each bringing his stool, or chair, or bit of wood, as there was nothing to sit on. He found that most of the prisoners had their hymn-books in their knapsacks, and that they all knew Luther's 'Ein' feste Burg,' the great Protestant anthem.

There was, however, no instrument to lead them, and again he turned to the kind commandant, who directly granted them the regimental band of forty men. It was very hot weather and the windows were all open, and Sunday after Sunday, out of the Archbishop's sanctum, rang out old Luther's great pæan, thundered by forty instruments and nearly 600 voices, to the great scandal of the Catholic city, with all its churches and churchgoers, below. 'And I hope the ghosts of the Protestants who were murdered in the dungeons underneath heard it and were satisfied!' ended our friend grimly.

I asked our driver, as we waited in the dusk for the pastor, about the Kaiser beneath the Untersberg. 'Yes,' he said, 'he was there, and the little hillmen waited on him.' 'How big are they?' I inquired. He measured with his hand about two feet. 'But I have never seen them myself. There are plenty of *Märchen* about them, however.' 'Has anybody seen them?' 'Yes, the Jägers sometimes; and they are heard in the Dom Kirche once a year, on Midsummer Eve, for then they come and sing.' 'Oh, then, they are good and not evil, if they come to church?' 'Oh, good; they are not evil at all; they do nothing but good to people,' he said, with a look over his shoulder lest the *kleine Leute*, the dwarfs, should do him an evil turn. 'They sing, and dance, and have good wine, "und essen sehr wohl!"' he went on; and then came an account of their clothes, of *verschiedene* colours, which was beyond my German to follow. 'But the Kaiser is dead,' he said with a sceptical laugh, intended to impress me with his advanced state of mind. I inquired about a queer feather in his hat. It came from under the wing of the geier, the mountain vulture shot near the Königsee, and the brown bit was the beard of the *Gemschs* (chamois), which gave a good deal of local colour to the hat over the man's gaunt handsome face: he came from the mountains himself.

The wages of a labourer, H—— heard, near Berchtesgaden, were about 3*s*. 6*d*. a week, with food, and a garment of some kind was added in the year. A servant girl got 6*l*. a year, which was high in proportion. No one in the mountain region eats meat—not even the rich Bauers with twenty or thirty cows—except at Easter and Christmas.

We went into several of the smaller proprietors' houses not far from the town. One was a picturesque timbered cottage with a wooden balcony, in an orchard; no fence to the road, no path—you just crossed the mud as you could. It was a beautiful day, after a week of fine weather, but every approach was soaked. One-half of the rooms was

let; but the wife of the owner, barefoot, barelegged, with a single ragged petticoat, dirty and unkempt, took us into her narrow tiny kitchen, with scarcely anything but a great stove in it and a deaf old mother, no furniture, and everything as filthy as she was herself, Within was a sort of light pantry, without a single shelf; four little pans of milk stood on the floor among the potatoes, and some sweet chestnuts. Then, with some pride, she opened a door in the heart of the house, where lay a small cow on wet straw on one side, and a pig and two goats on the other; beyond was an opening to a little croft of about an acre, which belonged to them, with a little bit (*Bischen*), she said, about half as large farther off. A great manure mud-puddle blocked the stable opening without a door. We are intimately acquainted with the cottage life of three English counties, and more generally with those of many more, and never saw a place or a woman in the most pauperised district, and in the worst hovel (run up on the waste by a small shopkeeper in order to let!), which looked in more squalid poverty, or in such rags and discomfort, as did this owner of a house, a cow, two goats, a pig, and at least an acre-and-a-half of land.

We then tried a more imposing-looking home, much larger, and smartened up with green jalousies. Here, too, half the house was let. The kitchen was so small that the women could hardly turn in it, the 'parlour' was no bigger, and a bed on one side and a chest of drawers on the other, with a great crucifix, filled up the space. The owner took us through the kitchen door into the cowhouse adjoining, where lay six cows. A little hayloft opened into it and a place for the ox, which was out cultivating part of his eight acres of land. He sent his milk into the town. There was a sort of rack close to the cows, where the *Knecht* slept: when 'he' is a girl, both here and in north Germany, she still sleeps thus in the manger of the wretched stables, open to the smells, the draughts, the mud, and the public.

Then we went to a still larger owner, who gloried in eleven cows; here, besides the kitchen, there was a large low sitting-room with nothing but a bench all round; but the master was away and we could not ascertain the acreage. The women were digging potatoes, dragging hay, spreading manure, &c., as everywhere, and in the inclement weather of the mountains their task is even harder than in the plains.

The line to Linz, although the mountains are gradually dying down, is very lovely. The first view of the Danube at Linz is extremely fine—the rapid flow and glorious rush of such a volume of water thus far from the sea. The day was so cold and grey, however, that we gave up the steamer, which takes ten hours in following the river windings to Vienna, and came humbly on by the railway, which passes through great sweeps of flat alluvial soil, cut up into very small portions. The ploughing season had just begun, the crops having been gathered in, and we counted once nineteen ploughs, with two horses or bullocks each, all at work in the space of a moderate English farm, on which eight or ten horses might be employed. Here were thirty-six draw cattle and horses, nineteen men (they guide the horses with their voices, and do not have a boy in front), and a great number of women and children, doing the work of eight at most; the waste of labour was tremendous. A little farther on twenty-two were in sight on a rather larger space,—then came a rough bit of a hill, which hid our view of more than one or two 'equipages,' then ten more together on one side and nine on the other, then ten again. The next week we returned and found places where the ploughing had been finished in this piecemeal way, with the furrows running at right angles every thirty yards or so; while scattered here and there lay a few bits, looking like pocket-handkerchiefs in size, where the proprietors had not been able as yet to do their work. It must have been almost more trouble in these cases to turn the horses or oxen in so small

a space than it would have been to plough this additional scrap. But every man did his own bit at his own time; the idea of common work was out of the case. 'Particularismus' could, indeed, no farther go.

Near by, a majestic Benedictine monastery, on a rock overhanging the Danube, with sixty windows in a row, including the library, surmounted by the great dome and two towers of the church, certainly represented the sentiment of common action in the other extreme, both for good and evil.

It was quite dark when we entered Vienna, and the feeling of being driven through the unknown atmosphere of a great city for the first time is always very interesting. What will the morrow show?

To those who knew Vienna twenty-five years ago, the change is wonderful. The old picturesque city, its narrow streets grouped round St. Stephen's, still remains at the core untouched, but great (so called) 'rings' of boulevards and squares, two museums, several churches, the University, the Rathhaus, and two Houses of Parliament, have now risen on the site of the old fortification and glacis. The land has proved so extremely valuable, that it is said the Government have hitherto been able to construct all their own buildings, without cost to the city, out of the money received from the sale of land for houses and shops.

The Belvedere, built by Maria Theresa, has suites of splendid rooms, very uncomfortable, almost impossible to inhabit, looking down on the towers and spires of the stately city. The pictures will not long be seen in that very seigneurial home; they are to be moved to one of the museums, and will greatly gain, for the light is so bad in their present abode that many of them are almost invisible. The cleaning has been grievous; there is hardly a picture that has not been flayed alive. One of the great Titians had been set on an easel in the window to be copied, and the Virgin's face, grand in outline and colour, was literally

bared to the first tints, almost the canvas. The damage is irreparable, and many of them show signs of retouching, which is an even worse injury.

The destruction which has been thus wrought on masterpieces which can never be reproduced by copy, print, or photograph, made me think sadly of Napoleon's contemptuous words. Denon one day used the phrase 'immortal works,' in talking of Raphael. 'How much longer do you believe his pictures will last?' said the Emperor. 'They have lived now three hundred years, and I hope for at least three hundred more,' was the answer. 'Belle immortalité!' exclaimed Napoleon, shrugging his Corsican shoulders. It is, alas! quite true that, at the present rate of devastation, many pictures will have before long to be taken on trust by our descendants. It will be like reading Shakspeare or Dante in a translation, guessing at beauties of expression, believing humbly in traditions of splendours, of which only a pale reflection is left. I am glad we have lived early enough in the history of art to see these glorious works for ourselves.

The pearl of the whole collection is the Santa Justina, by Moretto of Brescia, a lovely full-length of the saint, in very gorgeous Venetian brocade, looking tenderly at a knight kneeling beside her. It is strange that his name has not been made out, for the dress is very marked in its fashion, and therefore in its date. Six very fine pictures, by Velasquez, of Philip IV. and his children, have the curious property, so striking in those of the National Gallery, that what close at hand seem to be mere splotches of paint, grow in living power and distinctness as you go farther and farther away from them.

There is a curious rise and fall in the estimate made of particular masters, when so large a number of their works pass before one's eyes as in the combined art treasures of Munich and the two Viennese collections. Vandyke rises immensely in the scale. There are portraits of his in the

Belvedere, and still more in the Lichtenstein, with a power and vigour of expression and colour, far superior to the courtly graces to which we are accustomed, and worthy of Rembrandt or Titian. The Wallenstein, and a certain Maria Louisa von Tassis, are quite magnificent: indeed, the last is called the finest female portrait of the seventeenth century. Rubens, on the contrary, stands still. The facility with which he flings on canvas his masses of beautifully-painted bodies, with nothing inside their ornamental exteriors, grows tiresome when they cover whole rooms in each of the palaces. The pretty picture of his two boys with the bird is here. Titian cannot be judged rightly away from the great Venetian pictures any more than Raphael away from Rome, but the Viennese specimens are extremely fine, and there are two undoubted Giorgiones in the Belvedere (rare as the master's works are), with faces that look through and through one. The collection of the Flemish painters is as fine as even those in their own lands.

It is distressing, however, to feel how much all pictures lose by being hung close together in a gallery. Each of them was painted for some particular altar and chapel, to be seen with its own associations by its kneeling worshippers, and in a particular light. When there are a dozen Madonnas, three or four St. Sebastians or St. Catherines, almost touching each other, you cannot but compare their differences critically, instead of reverently admiring. Then the portraits dug out of private houses all over Europe, stuck side by side, often with their histories and even their names forgotten—seven men with hands on their swords, nine ladies with feather fans—is an ordeal which they were not intended to undergo, and to which it is most unjust to subject them. Yet, with even these disadvantages, it is wonderful how seldom the Rembrandts, or even the Vandykes, repeat themselves.

There is a very fine collection of etchings, woodcuts, drawings, and prints of the old masters to be seen in a

narrow gallery at the Albertina, where one may turn them over at leisure. Looking through a great folio of Albert Dürer's is like making an intimate acquaintance with a whole new society, such is their vivid force of reality. The holy scenes are very small; but each actor is a living individual being, not a man in the abstract; and, as there is a good deal of human nature in the world, the Jews and Romans of our Saviour's days were probably exceedingly like ourselves in their passions and expressions, instead of wearing the conventionally generalised, vacant faces of our modern religious pictures. There is a Pilate, a comfortable, rather fat man, with an expression of perlexity and confusion—not indifference, but *bore*—at having to decide on the fate of the Christ before him, which it is a perfect marvel to have compressed into the half-inch of paper which contains his face. Albert Dürer must have known him. A splendid portrait of Erasmus is extremely like Dean Stanley.

We drove to the Prater that afternoon, which is a strangely over-praised place. It is a dead flat, much overgrown with shabby trees. The 'sausage' alley for the people was amusing, with wooden houses for beer and coffee, and a quantity of shows, such as flourish at fairs, —dancing dogs, monkeys, monstrosities of all kinds, one a horrid picture of tortures, impaling and such like, ten feet high. (Query, were they, too, being performed within the booth?) The world had not yet returned to Vienna, and there was no 'ring,' though plenty of private carriages, the servants with the hideous oilskin round their hats which disfigures Austrian equipages. When is the occasion grand enough for the hats to emerge, one cannot help wondering.

The Danube hardly skirts the Prater, and is so far from the city that it is difficult to follow Sobieski's dashing relief of the town in the face of great odds, crossing the river lower down, with much difficulty, opposite the Turkish camp,

while the Grand Vizier had thrown a bridge of boats across the stream nearer to Vienna. The town could not have held out five days longer, and the governor in his last extremity used to look out from the spire of the Cathedral, whence at last he saw the dust of the army of his deliverers advancing from afar. Now the watchers for fire sit in his place, which is shown to climbers aloft, and telegraph the different directions in which engines are to drive in the streets below.

The pierced stone of the spire is almost like lace-work, and a little too suggestive of iron. On a smaller scale it might even seem weak, but nothing can spoil such a giant in size. It comes near to Cologne in height. The church, with its great dark pillars rising into apparently illimitable space, with statues in shrines hanging almost in the air, the heavy low arches, from which the spire springs, have a most grand and mysterious effect. The stonework is extremely dark, and restorers are at work skinning it in a way which goes to one's heart. The exquisite carving of the pulpit (1512), with a circle of heads of the Fathers of the Church, has been chipped and rubbed to a nice clean surface, and what has been lost may be seen by comparing them with the one still left untouched of the sculptor Pilgram, who looks out ruefully from a stone window under them, at his defaced handiwork. We longed to throw down the men whose grinding and scraping resounded spitefully from their high scaffolds through those wonderful aisles.

A little bit of bathos was disturbing. There were long spittoons before each of the carved seats! and at the altar, before which we sat, three women were kneeling devoutly to the 'Heilige Josef,' who was entreated to 'pray for us.'

The original design included a second spire, which would hardly have been an improvement; the doubling of the point, which should aspire alone, always seems to weaken the effect. The architect, however, who had raised the church with the assistance, as usual, of the devil, had a misunderstanding with his master after the first spire was

completed, and cast himself, or was thrown down from the scaffolding by the indignant Satan, for a breach of the promised conditions, and killed on the spot—after which the work was naturally stopped. This was one of the few cases where the devil obtained the soul for which he bargains and is defrauded of in so many like instances. The belief that knowledge and skill of all kinds come from the bad and not the good spirit, which was the origin of the early legends of Faust—the idea that goodness and ignorance are concomitants—seems to have beset the Middle Ages to such a degree that no great work, not even a church, could apparently be carried out without the assistance of the Father of Evil, who figures in all early building legends.

The signs of the shops in the picturesque narrow streets are queer. 'At the Eye of God,' for an inn, sounded strange. 'Mozart' looked uneasy over his 'Modewaren,' while 'Maria Hülfe' and 'Jenny Lind' presided over furniture and shoes. The polyglot of languages over some of the doors included sometimes six,—Hungarian, Russian, Bohemian among them; and we saw a Hebrew superscription alongside one in French.

The chief necessaries of life at Vienna, if one may judge by the number of shops for their supply, consist in gloves made to the hand, stays, the *friseur* and the dentist—they far outnumbered the rest. Of booksellers there were hardly any, and these eked out a livelihood by selling prints, photographs and maps, to disguise their unpopular wares.

The Emperor was shooting chamois in Styria, and the Viennese world had not returned from the country; but we had three very agreeable dinners with the English, Dutch, and German ambassadors. Prince R—— talked much of art; he worked at etching himself. 'Very interesting; but a gambling sort of interest—it is so impossible to predict how one's work will turn out.' He belonged to a once reigning family, of which there were 300 before Napoleon suppressed the chief part and 'mediatized' the rest. We inquired

about the peasants. The Bauers, he said, except round Vienna, were very badly off. The Princess, a Saxe-Weimar, gave an interesting account of the peasants at her husband's home, near Frankfort; the people were very poor, and lived very hardly; they found that the children were much neglected up to six years old, when they went to the Government Schools. She was very young, and had no experience; but with the help of the Pfarrer's daughter they set up three infant and girls' schools. The Dissenters were very primitive and strict, and inquired whether the Princess was a pious woman, to whom they could trust their children, before they would send them. One morning she heard a knocking at the glass door of her boudoir, opened it, and found three little girls. 'What do you want?' 'We want you to teach us to knit!' 'They looked on you as the mother of the community,' said I. 'A very young one,' answered she, laughing. She was a bad knitter, but she took her *femme de chambre*, who was a good one, and there were soon eighty girls collected. Prince R—— was sent to Constantinople soon after, when the Government took up the infant schools. The Prince had been cultivating local action—very wisely, it seemed, in the country districts, and the village church was thus rebuilt: there appeared to be nothing like the English parish, vestry and county boards.

Society is on what, to dwellers in London or Paris, sounds an impossible footing. The sixteen quarterings are as necessary as ever to be admitted at Court, and exclusion from it does not mean, as here, the loss of a few balls and concerts, but that the doors of the upper class are completely closed to the intruder from below. And more, if a girl born of the 'cream of the cream' marries one of the lower noblesse, much more a young officer or rising lawyer of the upper middle class, she is cut off irrevocably from all her friends. Even if her husband becomes a Field Marshal or a Prime Minister,[1] and is received by reason of

[1] When Baron Heimerlé was Prime Minister, his wife went to one of the

his office, his wife is not restored to the privileges she was born to: the separation is absolute. So that, under such a régime, Disraeli's wife would never have been admitted into society at all, while her husband was ruling the British Empire.

At the evening parties the girls and young men are put together, the young married people are in another room and the elders by themselves, which must be extremely dull.

The charmed circle is so small that it is like a great family party; everybody is on intimate terms with everybody else; a number of small jokes which no outsider can understand, *petits noms*, the sort of *caquetage* and rather dull freemasonry which goes on in a large cousinhood at home, are generally the staple of the conversation.

The 'Eastern question' does not grow any clearer by coming nearer in distance to the troubled waters. The extreme jealousy felt by all the other nationalities of the Sclavs complicates every attempt at its solution. The heritage of Prince Metternich's scheme for the government of Austria—'Divide et impera'—is still bearing its bitter fruits. Hungarians, Germans, Bohemians, and Sclavs hate each other as cordially as in the old days, when we remember quiet Austrian white-coated soldiers in the Lombardo-Veneto stigmatized as 'Croati,' and suspected of running their bayonets into babies, and a regiment of Italians quartered at Prague, to keep Bohemia in order, utterly unable to communicate with any one, detested and detesting, and spoken of as spies and assassins. Until a greater fusion takes place, Austria cannot be as strong as her position would entitle her to be.

The Sclavs are said to be, as a race, so behindhand in civilization that they cannot govern themselves as yet, and

Court balls. The Emperor, seeing a new and pretty face, asked who she was, and answered himself, 'Oh, I suppose she is one of the dames d'honneur of Princess So-and-so,' who was there on a visit. He did not know his own Prime Minister's wife.

certainly not other people, as they have an utter want of power of tolerating any form of thought in religion or politics but their own; but, on the other hand, it would be very unwise for Austria to add fresh provinces to her Empire till there is a greater amalgamation of her old ones. The Bosnian insurrection was said to be mainly agrarian; the Christian peasants desired to take the land from the Mahometan landowners, and, as the Austrian Government cannot permit this to be done, there is much discontent in her new acquisitions. Mr. Gladstone's unfortunate speech about Austria has done much harm, and rankles in the national memory. On the strength of it, he is supposed to wish for war, and to favour Russia, and his explanation was chuckled over in a way little pleasing to English ears. The extreme importance of a strict alliance between Austria and Germany, backed by England, even without any formal treaty, was insisted on as the greatest possible guarantee to the peace of Europe—against Russia on one side and France on the other.

H—— ended our Vienna stay by a visit to the hospital of 2,000 beds, one of the largest in the world. The nurses did not bear a good character, and great efforts are being made for their improvement. H—— saw one curious treatment for burns and skin diseases, patients who had been kept in warm water during months; one peasant for a year and a half. He seemed quite comfortable.

The State Lotteries were spoken of as a fertile source of misery to the peasants, who are much smitten with this dismal species of gambling.

We inquired narrowly into the condition of the small proprietors again on our road home, and came to the conclusion that the day labourer and his family in England are better fed, better clothed, better housed, that the man has more time to himself, and the whole household is more civilized than these little owners of the soil. Compared to the men 'north of Trent,' the comparison is enormously to

the advantage of England, but we would take even our southern counties and still contend that the scale is higher on this side the Channel. Existence is only possible, on such mere scraps of land as we saw in Belgium and Germany, by the protracted and incessant labour of the whole family without intermission. The man occasionally has a surcease by hiring out his labour; but the home life of the women and children is one of slavery and squalid misery, such as is not known with us. They submit also to a scale of diet unwholesomely low, and which I am thankful to say our people would refuse to endure.

'Ah! on ne sait pas ce que c'est que de travailler à la campagne en Angleterre,' said the proprietor of such a little plot upon seeing English labourers at work.

But it is said the possession of land has an ennobling effect. Is it so? Is it a high ideal to be the owner of what entails a degrading drudgery on the wife, old at forty from overwork, and the bad health, from neglect, of many of the children? an ownership dependent on the good pleasure of the money-lender, who may foreclose when a more than usually bad season prevents the payment of the always high interest?

As one of our German authorities informed us, how can the peasant proprietor be out of debt? The expenses of cultivation are as great as—or greater—in a bad year than they are in a good one, on a small farm as in a large one; but in a bad season, when the corn, the fruit, or the vines fail, the small man has nothing to fall back upon for his daily bread; the large one has some resources husbanded. The English labourer, paying a fixed yearly rent for the allotments which are now to be found all over England, *not able to mortgage*, with a weekly wage, the two, and, in some counties, four, 'harvests,' as they are locally called, the 'extras' which are so valuable, the help from the farmer of his team to fetch coal, &c., the clothing, shoe, and fuel

clubs, is better off materially and morally than such merely nominal owners. His children go out into trades, into service, to the railroads, and form the backbone of the town populations, leaving only enough at home to till the ground.

In Germany, the discontent among the peasants is often great, and emigration takes place to a very great extent, and seems to be increasing. There is an inquiry going on at this time as to their condition. In Prussia 82 per cent. are exempt from direct taxation by reason of poverty, 7,000,000 heads of families earning less than 25*l* in the year—9*s*. 7*d*. per week. Few, indeed, who have studied the condition of the small proprietors on the land, and not in books, but will feel that the introduction of such a system would be a fall, not a rise, for the labourer in England.[1] There is much to be done to ameliorate his position, but it will hardly lie in this direction, here, where the value of land to buy is still high and that of its hire is diminishing. In all other occupations, moreover, the small man is going to the wall: the hand-loom weaver at Coventry and Spitalfields cannot hold his own, the stocking-machines of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire have all been driven out by the large manufactories, the small kingdoms in Germany and Italy have followed the fate of the Heptarchy. It will be exceedingly paradoxical if in agriculture alone it should be found that the peasant proprietor, with his wretched instruments, his want of manure, his unskilled labour, can do better for the land than men of capital and intelligence with the command of machinery. 'The average yield of wheat in France is rather less than half the amount in England,' says Mr. Caird. As to the

[1] The only point of superiority we could find was in the facility of obtaining milk which a system of stall-fed cattle gives to a cottager. The keep of a cow can thus be obtained from mere odds and ends of land. This might well be carried out in England, where difficulty of getting milk will increase as the large farmers send their milk to London and the great towns more and more. Cow clubs might, perhaps, accomplish this reform the most readily.

good effect which the possession of land can give, this is better obtained by the allotments or small pasture farms (arable cannot be made to pay) nearer to the labourer's cottage than the holdings abroad—which are sometimes miles away from the Bauer's dwelling—yet not so large as to induce him to depend upon its produce for his living, as do the wretched families of whom we saw so many.

And so ended our outward journey. The Austrian railways are exceedingly inconvenient; the Viennese travel very little, and the fast trains run either at night or at an unearthly hour in the morning. There is but one from Vienna to Trieste, although it is the only port of any size for the whole of Austria and Hungary. Yet, when the directors were asked to put on a second train, they replied that, as there was only one first-class passenger and a half a day, this was impossible!

The Viennese weather is detestable, alternating between great heat with much dust, and bitter biting winds and snow from the Eastern plains—and we left Vienna in a thick fog, which lasted until we had quitted the Danube. Anxious as we were to return home, there is always a certain sadness in having reached the limits of anything. 'The end' is always a somewhat solemn word even of 'An Autumn Ramble!'

AUTUMN JOTTINGS IN FRANCE.

PEASANT PROPRIETORS.

PARIS looked grey and dull this year in the last days of August and the first week of September. Indeed, we have seen an amount of bad weather there at different times, wet, cold, windy, snowy, such as would have ruined the reputation of any English town. But it is always useful as well as agreeable to praise oneself, and Paris has done this to such good effect, that the world at large believes that her climate is as pleasant as some other of her characteristics.

The town looks less picturesque at every fresh visit, for the piercing of new streets increases yearly, and they are all built in the true boulevard style, with high *mansarde* roofs and gables in them, all of the same height and pattern, the long lines of windows and mouldings running straight from end to end, without a break, with monotonous regularity, evidently constructed by the acre. Old Paris was a triumph of individualism even five-and-twenty years ago; every house had been built at some time by somebody according to his own taste and fancy—to live in, not to sell. It had an idiosyncrasy of its own, resulting from the individual thought and requirements of the owner, differing in each. A few old streets remain of the old picturesque fashion, and we passed through one or two on our road to the Lyons Station. Here is a house, two stories high, red brick, with a great deal of colour in the lower half, grey stone ornaments over each window, and an arched

doorway with some rich old ironwork in it. Alongside stands a lofty neighbour of five storeys, with balconies at the top, full of trailing nasturtiums and scarlet geraniums, a bower of green wreaths showing against a dark brown roof, and *pignons sur la rue* with round-headed windows set in blunt triangular gables. Next comes some good plaster work in panels between the pilasters of the architraves, while opposite rises the pediment of the old Hôtel de Sully, with boldly carved entablatures and emblazonments in stone, the great *porte-cochère* opening into an inner court, where, on the flights of steps and balustrades and 'rustic' masonry, stand pots of large oleanders and pomegranates. Every house has its own physiognomy instead of being turned out by the gross; but, then, there is the consolation (or the reverse) that each street can now be swept by cannon in case of a great row or a revolution, and that a gun planted at the Hôtel de Ville can command the whole line of the Rue de Rivoli down to the Place de la Concorde!

Two hundred miles of dead flat (with the exception of the pretty hills round Fontainebleau) carried us through the centre of France from Paris to Dijon, that 'ugly picture in a beautiful frame,' which must always be traversed, in whatever direction the country is crossed.

We passed much undrained ground, with bulrushes and coarse grass, ragwort and weeds of all sorts, tracts of frowsy land, low lying and marshy, or high lying and bare, evidently not worth cultivation by the small proprietors when it lay far away from their dwellings. The melancholy-looking villages stand a good way apart on both sides the line, quite unaffected by the railroad; their one-storied houses, with deep brown, almost black, tiled roofs, looked like barns, with hardly any chimneys, dilapidated, wretched, with no new constructions of any kind to be seen, except at the railway stations. There are no 'bettermost' houses among them, but all of one low-level character, with a miserable little church in the midst, generally hardly

bigger or better than the buildings round it. Not an atom of ornament or even a gable was to be seen, and the houses grow, as it were, out of the bare ground, without a scrap of flower-garden or so much as a path up to the doors. There were hardly any by-roads, only the one *chaussée*, so that everybody must cross everybody else's land to cultivate their own plots. In the excessive subdivision these plots lie very separate, and one owner will often possess ten or twelve pieces of half or even a quarter of an acre, each of which has to be ploughed and harrowed, planted and manured separately. The enormous amount of labour expended and the small return of grain are very striking—less than half the crops of wheat which are gathered in England is harvested as before said. And this though the climate is so much better than our own, as might be seen by the maize and the vines, while the average of the soil is certainly as good. The women were carrying great weights, working bare-headed in the fields, washing bare-legged in the streams, driving the rude ploughs, &c., which always shows a low ebb of civilization. No agricultural machines were to be seen the whole way, except one for making hay, not far from Dijon; indeed, such small owners cannot afford to get them.

The supply of firewood was very scanty, and came from afar—faggots and trunks of trees, of which the largest measured about eight or ten inches in diameter. Here, too, the peasants cannot afford to keep forest land, which entails long waiting for the profit of the produce, and the woods belong to the few large proprietors at great distances apart. Indeed, these are few and far between, for after passing Fontainebleau we only saw two *châteaux* from the railway. They both stood high, with some terraces and ornamental trees about them and their *dépendances*. Else the excessive monotony of the open flat country, unbroken by a single division or hedge, and without a tree, except the rows of miserable polled black poplars, was extremely depressing.

When once we came upon a group of three large horse-chestnuts and elms—the first and last we saw in 150 miles—their beautiful rich round outlines were a joy to the eye, wearied with the sight of green brooms in long lines. Thousands of French peasants can never have seen a real tree in their whole lives.

The look of the houses, with the *persiennes* of the one best room always closed, is very dismal, and the holes left for scaffold-poles in the walls when building, not filled up, gives them an unfinished gaunt appearance. Altogether the country looked grave, grey, dull, decaying, and the population is everywhere stationary in the rural districts—in some places diminishing. A dreary life 'Jacques Bonhomme' seems to lead in central France. I asked about the dancing in one place. 'Oh! on a aboli tout ça!' was the answer; there is a ball sometimes at Christmas in the towns, but none of the old dancing on Sundays, only hard work. Yet, I remember, as a child, hearing a peasant ditty—

C'est demain, dimanche, que les filles dansent:
Les garçons vont les prier, 'Mademoiselle, voulez-vous danser
Une contredanse, le pied sur la planche?
En avant, chassez croisez, un tour de main et balancez—'

which showed a different state of things.

We have not seen a gate for nearly 300 miles, and although hedges in the north of France and walls in the south are left to mark out the divisions (often into the smallest of fields), great gaps are left to pass from one to the other, so that the cows require a guardian to keep them to their duties. A cow, indeed, is a fine lady, who never goes out without her man or maid, by whom she is taken for a browsing of a couple of hours or so in the morning and afternoon, and no one seems to mind any beasts but his own. A flock of sheep, with a shepherd and two wolf-like dogs watching them, was a new sight. The last time we had noticed any number together was near Amiens.

The scene changed when we came near Dijon. 'France'

is a big word, and to talk as if any generalization held good from the Manche to the Mediterranean is, of course, even more absurd than to speak of Kent and Caithness as alike, because they are both British.

Vineyards cover the rounded hills of the Côte d'Or, the red and black loam of which produces the valuable Burgundy wines. The crop, however, is a very expensive and 'chancey' one. Ten or twelve per cent. we were told is made in a good year, but in a bad one hardly anything, while occasionally it is a positive loss; then the small owner must borrow or beg. The best growths are in the hands of large proprietors, chiefly wine-merchants, but there is a great deal of common Burgundy grown on little patches of ten to twenty *journaux*.[1] The bad years of late have been many and trying, the phylloxera has invaded the country, although it is not so bad here as in some parts; two and a half per cent. was all that could be counted upon, taking everything into consideration. The men who work for hire are paid generally in kind; if in money, about four francs a day in the vineyards at this season.

Dijon, the capital of the old civilization of the south-east of France, is full of old memories and old monuments of 'les Princes des bons vins,' as her sovereigns were called; but everything was defaced at the Great Revolution, and grievously mutilated. The Chartreuse has been levelled to the ground, where were the magnificent monuments of the Dukes of Burgundy, altar tombs on which lie grand colossal figures of Philippe le Hardi, 1404, and his son, Jean sans Peur, with his wife, Margaret of Bavaria, 1419, which are called 'the finest specimen of mediæval art north of the Alps.' They lie with their hands raised to heaven, 'in their habits as they lived,' and coloured like life. The heads are very fine, individual, and full of character; they were only saved by being pulled to pieces and buried. They have now been put together again and placed in the Museum, and the tearing

[1] A *journal* is three-quarters of an acre.

them out of the associations for which they were designed, the breaking-up of the setting of which they were the centre, has so spoilt the poetry and sentiment of the tombs, that they have nearly lost their savour, and sunk to the level of the 'curios' which surround them—'dried head of a cannibal from the Feejee Islands,' 'fetish of an African king,' &c.; and when we came to the 'cast of the skull' of the fierce old Jean himself, taken out of his grave, the force of disenchantment could no farther go.

The ancient Palais de Justice has nearly been improved away. The rage for destruction in France has been greater than in any other country: to wipe out the past, to begin again from the very bottom of the edifice, seems to be the chief object of the national existence. The old dynasties, the old institutions, the buildings, are levelled or improved out of all knowledge; the very names of the streets in Paris must be changed in each fresh revolution, to satisfy the instinct for getting rid of all that differs from the colour of the prevailing opinion of the moment. There is no reason why in a dozen more years a succeeding wave will not have washed away all the handiworks of the present generation of busy workers, like the sand forts and gardens of children on the sea-shore, or rather there is every reason to expect it. Each, however, is equally fierce in its conviction that it has hold of the whole truth and nothing but the truth, and that all who differ are either scoundrels or fools, probably both at once. The lilies of France can be traced on the scutcheons, under the red cap of 'Liberté, égalité et fraternité' of 1793—the Bees of Napoleon again over the signs of the Republic—more lilies, Louis Philippe's cocks, more 'fraternités,' more Bees, more republics, red and other, carved or painted over doors of national monuments, at the corners of squares, in frescoed ceilings. Everywhere may be traced crumbled idols, dead enthusiasms, extinct beliefs, emblems of rallying cries that rally no longer. 'Tout passe, tout casse, tout lasse,' is a truly French saying.

When a tree or a constitution has roots in the soil and gradually grows and develops, the changes may be great, but there will be a certain harmony in its whole character, it is possible to calculate the course it will take; but if it is cut down and another planted every twenty years or so, who can say what the next tree of liberty may turn out to be? The waste of energy is enormous in this perpetual reconstruction. History has no lessons for a people which has thus deliberately broken with its past, whose sole idea of improvement is to make *terre rase* and build from the foundation. 'Aucun de nous connaît son père; nous sortons tous de dessous le pavé,' said Cousin one evening at Madame Mohl's, in despair at the want of continuity in French politics, ideals, and institutions.

The elections were just over, and the papers full of skits upon them. A conversation between an elector and his representative began with—

'Are you going to diminish the taxes? They are heavier now than they were under the Empire.'

'No, but we hope to *supprimer le Sénat.*'

'Why, what harm have they done, poor souls?'

'Oh, they would not have the *scrutin de liste* as we bade them.'

'But why mayn't they have their opinion as well as the Deputies?'

'Oh, because we are right and they are wrong.'

'But what we want to know is, will you diminish the taxes?'

'No, but we hope to *supprimer le Président*' . . . . and so on.

There was great discontent at the war in Tunis and the manner in which it was being conducted; all the mistakes committed in '70 were being repeated, as to the bad commissariat, the sanitary arrangements, or rather the want of them, the enormous cost and the little results obtained; a credit of five millions had been taken, and treble the amount

spent already, with nothing to show for it. 'The war has broken up this Ministry,' said a shrewd Frenchman: 'and, if it goes on as it has begun, it may do more. The Mexican war was the beginning of the end for the Emperor, and this may be so for this form of the Republic.' 'They dare not send Chanzy, our best soldier, to Tunis, they are so afraid of his return as a triumphant general and military dictator.' 'But it has been very useful to them to get rid of a great many inconvenient persons,' laughed another, 'and they have broken up the regiments and despatched awkward customers with great effect out of the way of mischief at home.'

The tremendous peculation, the want of preparation for action, only discovered when *munitions de guerre* and soldiers were called for in earnest, were all quite as bad as under the Empire. And there was a very unpleasant connection between the financial enterprises, the railroad to Enfida, &c., &c. which had been encouraged by Government, and the sending out of troops to enforce their claims.

When Gambetta is once Minister, he will soon fall in reputation; no man can ever long survive that ordeal in France. The Republic devours her children fast; the people demand impossible success, and when a man has failed and fallen from office, it is not, as in England, to win again in more favourable circumstances, but he is swept off the stage like so much rubbish, 'and falls, like Lucifer, never to rise again.' How many Ministries have there been since 1870? There have been ten different French Ambassadors in London during that time.

We found many American travellers in the hotels. Vulgarity is very amusing when it is French or German, it is part of the day's experience; but when it speaks English one feels a sort of unpleasant responsibility for it. Blood is thicker than water, and the vulgarity of one's own family, even far-away members of it, is certainly depressing. One is not proud of 'calling cousins' with the usual travelling specimens of the United States. We came in from

looking at the fine old church of St. Bénigne in the twilight, when an exceedingly well-dressed lady followed us from the same place. 'What did you see?' said her friends. 'There were no shops, and I felt so lonesome that I came back,' she said, with a twang, enough to electrify one. Her neighbour replied by a long dissertation on the relative advantages of gathers and flounces, and it seemed strange to have taken the pains to come 4,000 miles to discuss problems, important no doubt, but which might quite as well have been followed up at home. In the *livres des voyageurs* were 'observations' for the enlightenment of mankind, such as 'Mr. and Mrs. —— from Massachusetts. Pears here very good, the best we have had since reaching Europe;' which combined the advantage of a hit at the poor Old World and a trumpet blast in honour of the New, even if it were only in the matter of pears. Why do such people take the trouble to come? They must be rich, or they could not afford the expense. In the old society such an amount of wealth implied a certain amount of culture, and to travel so far a certain sprinkling of knowledge and interest in Art; but these have neither, and it was evidently very dull work to them [1] and to many others we met. Indeed, the head of this very party, an old man, after his womankind left him and he was free to behave as he liked, nearly put out his jaw with his fearful yawns, accompanied by an inarticulate howl of ennui, louder and more hideous than I ever heard.

We went to look at the old inn of La Cloche, under whose narrow archway H—— once safely steered the diligence more than fifty years ago. The postilion had fallen off his horse, dead drunk, several miles from the town; H—— jumped into the jack boots which were, as

[1] In the novels of Mr. James, no harsh judge of his countrywomen, several of his heroines go through all the galleries and palaces in Europe, and return home having seen nothing and without troubling themselves to be ashamed of the fact.

usual, strapped to the stirrup leathers, and succeeded in bringing the five horses into the courtyard of the hotel without damage to his very unwieldy equipage (though the glory ought no doubt to be shared by the horses).

The vineyards do not extend far beyond Dijon. The grape cultivation is everywhere extremely local, and ends suddenly where the limestone hills and sunny aspect come to an end. In spite of the associations connected with the word, it is a frightful crop; the dwarf plants, pruned to an unsightly stock and trained to short stakes which bristle over the hills, can never be otherwise than ugly, while the subdivisions are even greater than with other kinds of produce, and give an uncomfortable jerky look. Then the long flat plain began again for another fifty or sixty miles, when at last a more southern look came over the land which could hardly be put into words; the roofs became warmer in tint and flatter in pitch, there were walnut groves in the fields, a general new atmosphere of beauty, as the rising hills in the horizon grew nearer every step, and there seemed a feeling of mountains in the air. 'Mais les blés ont très mal réussi, nous avons été grillés pendant deux mois, et à présent nous sommes noyés; il y a beaucoup de misère,' we heard. 'It is only because the French have such small families, and the population is absolutely stationary, that the peasant proprietors can live,' said a very intelligent Swiss who knew the country round Lyons well. At Ambérieu the railway enters a narrow valley with lofty walls of rock closing in, with 'Tors' like those at Matlock, a rapid stream at the bottom and picturesque villages hanging over it with projecting wooden balconies. Vineyards were creeping up the stony slopes. The vines will grow where nothing else can cling; pinned to the rock with scarcely any soil, they seem to bask in the sun's rays scorching through them till the grapes are baked into ripeness, where other things would be shrivelled by the heat. 'They will flourish where even weeds die,' is a sort

of proverb, and the hard gravel where some of the best Médoc *crus* are produced is notorious.

Then vegetation died away, and the grey steep cliffs were as naked as their rugged Scotch and Welsh compeers. As night came on we could see the warm light dying away on the upper summits of the crags above, the valley of the Jura grew wilder and wilder, and the moon began to shine on a misty world. Then came a flood of moonlight on the little lake of Bourget among its narrowing mountains, and we reached Aix-les-Bains.

We had pouring rain for nearly a week. The town is huddled up on a precipitous slope round the hot sulphur waters which are its *raison d'être*. The small close streets climb the steep hill, with tall houses shutting out light and air. There is rarely any wind, and always an abundance of smells. But some of the prettiest scenery in Europe is to be found within a walk. The vines were no longer pruned close and mangled, but trailing from tree to tree, their lovely festoons hung now with purple grapes, above plots of bright green large-leaved maize, loads of which were dragged about by picturesque mouse-coloured oxen, while this poetic foreground was backed by steep mountain sides—the Dent du Chat, 5,000 feet high, just opposite—and the beautiful little lake below.

Still the rain poured on, the town was full to the rooftrees, and the only rooms we could get were in what was called a *châlet*, in the garden of one of the great hotels. Night and day the rain pattered round us, on mimosas, bignonias, oleanders, althæas of many colours, and all sorts of lovely plants, without stirring a leaf; it was like living in a steaming greenhouse. Each day, after having been parboiled at the baths, we crept up through the dripping trees to the various *tables d'hôte* under umbrellas, and came back under the same. And on these rainy evenings the 150 guests of our hotel, who would otherwise have gone to the concerts and *cercles*, crowded solemnly (as

far as consisted with the law that two bodies cannot occupy the same space) into a couple of small *salons*. Some sat on the ground, some balanced themselves on the edge of the furniture, while the men stood smoking in the passages and halls; the infinite boredom of the whole was indescribable. The only amusement was to watch the specimens of real watering-place growth, women who devised a fresh toilette each day, picking the astonishing flowers out of one astonishing hat and sticking them into another, varying the decorations with superhuman ingenuity. One day, however, there came some real bouquets, eclipsed and dulled by their magenta rivals. 'I really would not wear natural flowers, they look so dowdy!' said my companion, in irreverent laughter at effects planned with such pains and success. The occupants of the hats flirted and gambolled (and gambled also); they laughed, they ogled, they talked, in perfect harmony with their attire, and were quite worth seeing as curious natural phenomena.[1]

We changed our quarters five times in vain attempts to better ourselves in a sanitary point of view, and could now graduate in a profound knowledge of smells. There is the open-air, honest farmyard smell; the stable smell, more suspicious and closed up; the faint and sickly smell, suggestive of low fever; the insidious underhand smell, which only comes out when windows and doors are closed against rain or cold; the boisterous, tyrannical smell, which keeps no terms, and is always present and asserting itself; the gas smell; the burnt-fat smell, where the ghosts of five daily *tables d'hôte* rise in evidence against the eaters; and there is, finally, the combined result of all these together, n which Aix may be said to revel.

[1] One of the bye-laws of the Casino gives a pleasant little peep into French family life. It is so much the fashion for daughters-in-law to accompany their sick mothers-in-law, that a special privilege is allotted to them. They (as well as the daughters) are allowed, in reward of their virtue, to go to all balls and concerts at half-price! I was fortunate enough to be in the fashion.

The arrangements for the baths are very good, where *douches*, from the hot river which wells out of the earth, and cold ones, alternately, are fired at the unhappy patient, and the shampooing and rubbing and steaming are carried on by *baigneuses* in exceedingly scanty clothing, by reason of the excessive heat. One could not help remembering Lady M. Wortley Montagu's evidence in the Turkish baths, borne out by all the dwellers among African and Indian unclothed races, that, when the whole body is seen, the enormous preponderating interest of the face diminishes, The general effect of good proportion in the whole form counterbalances the want of beauty in the head, which becomes merely an item of many parts, and this, even when fair, does not compensate for an ill-constructed body accompanying it. My two *baigneuses*, stalwart, strong 'daughters of the plough,' easy in their violent action, had limbs which were well worth drawing,—one oldish woman with grandchildren, one young with babies. They are up and hard at work by three in the morning during the season, when they begin with the hospital patients, and go on until twelve, and again in the afternoon for two hours, always wet from head to foot, and in incessant motion; but they do not suffer, and are only sorry when the dead times comes round. 'I am never ill but in winter, when there is nothing doing!' said one of them, laughing; but, then, they are well paid and have plenty to eat.

In general, the sickly worn look of the women, and even of the men in the fields, was very striking; they are underfed and overworked, said our doctor friend, They are frugal almost to a fault, eat little but rye bread, which often brings on illnesses peculiar to itself,—'des étourdissements, des fièvres,' when touched by ergot. They do not drink their own wine, and only the buttermilk from their own cows. He said that the *morcellement* of land is so great, and the mortgages on it so heavy, that the peasants cannot live on the produce of the plots; in a bad year they

are reduced to starvation, there is much begging and a good deal of private charity. 'My mother generally has to keep alive four or five families in the winter, and often asks me for a sack of corn.' 'They lead hard lives in the villages,' said everyone.

The weakly look of the children is sad to see; the doctor said the mothers were forced to go out to work and could not take proper care of them; and that all sorts of want of health proceeded from the want of care; the number of accidents, burns, &c., was dismal.

The weather cleared, and we took one beautiful drive after another; one day we went over a hog's-back, with the vines trailing from tree to tree (generally the supports were of live maples), no fences anywhere, up a steep ascent with views of the valley below, and great walnut groves among the houses on the hill. On the summit level, where the ground plunged suddenly down to the lake on the other side, and was clothed with very fine old chestnuts, stood a farmhouse, a solid stone building, rather large, a little distance from the road. We turned up the muddy path to it, past a stable which formed the first half, where an old woman, filthy, ragged, and bare-legged, was washing amongst the dirt heaps. We picked our way through puddles of manure to an open door where the mistress was churning. She was very gracious in reply to all our questions. The room was large and very high, quite up into the rafters of the roof; the floor was of earth, like the ground outside, without any attempt at levelling it; washing was quite out of the question, and even to sweep it was almost impossible, as there was a step down into the house. The beds were in a sort of inner recess, hardly to be called a room; a few large broken chests, a wretched table, and some broken-down chairs, comprised the whole of the furniture, while chickens were running in and out chirping. The woman, barefoot, in a dirty torn cotton petticoat and jacket, a tousled head of hair that was

evidently never touched by comb or brush, had five children as squalid as herself and a sixth just arriving. It was a scene of misery and discomfort, such as one never could find in England except in absolute destitution. Yet she and her husband hired the large vineyard in front of the house, a field for hay, another for maize, &c., ten *journaux* (about eight acres) from the *grosse maîtresse* who lived next door, in a house as wretched as their own. She was out that afternoon, so we could not see her. They had three cows and two oxen 'to work the ground.' The rent consisted in half the produce; and she thought this the best plan for them in such chancey years as these last had been. The ground was very good; they had tried luck elsewhere, and had just returned to their old home. Did they drink the milk? 'Oh, no, except the children sometimes,' she said, as if it were a crime; she made butter and sent it to Aix, three miles off. They drank a little buttermilk. 'Oh, no, we never eat meat, certainly not!' Or wine? 'No, they sold it. The children ate the grapes sometimes, but they were not yet ripe.' The old woman was her mother, who had come up to help her to wash. 'They were hard times,' she said; and sickly, worn, haggard, ugly, and unkempt as she was, with her house as wretched as herself, she would have been supposed to be in the lowest dregs of poverty in England.

We drove on through the chestnut trees to where the valley opened at the head of the lake. The view was exquisite; a great mass of lilac mountains with jagged edges and points rose against the sky, marked out by delicate shadows and pale golden lights, a pass on one side leading to the Grande Chartreuse, and an opening on the other to Chambéry, over which the snow tops of the Alpes Maritimes could just be seen, beyond the usual foreground of vines and maize. The reflections of the mountains in the lake were almost too perfect for art (it looked like an imitation of the original turned upside down), as we passed close to its

shore along what had once been the railway. An improved line was made by the French after the annexation, and was presented as a *bonne bouche* to Aix to reconcile their subjects to the new yoke. Pools with white water-lilies lay on one side, and ragged children, after wading up to their middles to gather them, were running after us to offer them for a *sou*.

The extreme variety of the scenery was striking. We drove north another day, by a glorious bit of country; where the highway of the olden time wound up and down through little villages surrounded by vineyards—with tall walnuts overshadowing, and branching old chestnuts standing in the fields: the patches of haricots, maize, hemp, of bright green grass to be cut for the stall-fed cows, were in little plots, like allotments in size, and some mulberries, but the disease in the silkworm has ruined the 'industry' of silk. The great bunches of purple grapes, the figs, the standard peach-trees (which, by-the-bye, are very ragged ugly bushes), altogether made a most idyllic picture, and nothing could be more exquisite than the background on both sides, with vineyards terraced wherever there was holding room, and peeps at the little still lake, with a lilac haze over it, and the grim points of the various Dents over all. So much for the outward, not so for the human part; the smells, as we drove between the picturesque houses, with their overhanging roofs and balconies and outward stairs, the stone archways into filthy courts, were almost overpowering; the children, barefoot, pale and sickly, were wallowing in the dirt; the women, stunted and ugly, were dragging little carts, cutting grass, labouring in the fields. Some were stripping the leaves from ash boughs for the cattle to eat; one, with a great load of grass on her head, was toiling up a steep path, her husband following after, carrying nothing; they had been cutting weeds in an ill-kept vineyard, and he had loaded this his beast of burden with the results, which would be used to feed the cows. A little further on, the perpendicular cliffs, dipping

into the lake, seemed to bar all further progress. The deep green water, in which the reflections of the upper world were shining and which were almost more beautiful than the originals, here, however, drew back a little, and we crept round the headland, on which grew great bunches of *Rhus Cotinus*, which I had never before seen wild. We reached a village beyond, where the wine was said to be the best in the country, and the fruit the finest; the peaches and figs, indeed, furnish Aix, where they will hardly ripen; while all was divided into small plots. Here, evidently, we had reached Arcadia – the fruitful soil, the delicious climate, the good market for the produce close at hand, the excessive beauty, peace, and apparent plenty, and peasant proprietorship in perfection. We walked about while the horse was baiting, the stone houses of the little hamlet were set at every imaginable angle, creeping up the steep side of the mountain from the lake; picturesque was no adequate word for the large grey buildings with their many outward stairs, the trailing vines covered with grapes hanging over their doors, the great eaves, and the bright lights and flickering shadows cast by the broad leaves of the tall walnuts, while a pair of mouse-coloured oxen were dragging the broad green maize leaves from a plot above. The inhabitants were generally in the fields; but at last we found some open doors. The first house we entered was turned away from the sun and the view into the narrowest of lanes, opposite a barn; the room would have been quite dark, for the tiny window was so blocked and dirty that it gave no light, but that two sticks were flaming in the large open fireplace; the uneven mud floor was the same as we saw everywhere, a broken press, some dirty sacks, two chairs, nothing else was in the place. The owner was a widow with two grandsons, she had a cow and a heifer on the mountain, a piece of vineyard and of maize, and a bit of land, 'où il y a un peu de tout,' hemp, beans, hay for forage, &c. Hideous, dirtier even than her floor, with the

usual blue cotton torn jacket and petticoat and bare feet and legs, she was a most repulsive-looking creature, and begged for a *sou*.

We wanted to see a winepress, and were directed to the next house, where steep stone steps led up to three living rooms, all upstairs above the stable and outhouse. The 'house-place' looked like the extremely untidy loft of an ill-kept barn, with bits of rotten wood, odds and ends of rope, and heaps of straw lying about. A few maize cobs hung round the great open fire-place, with no signs of fire in it past or present. Another room within was as utterly unlike an inhabited dwelling—a confusion of dirt and disorder, with a few common tools for tillage lying about, and some great round flat rye-loaves, black, sour, sodden, about two feet in diameter, resting against the wall among the dirty rubbish. The barefoot mistress baked every fortnight, and put a little wheat into the loaf, 'pas beaucoup. She offered us some of a basket of beautiful figs which she had just picked to send in to Aix. The rooms were nearly dark, but she opened the door into an inner bedroom, with a window to the lake, where the glorious nature shone in like an extraordinary surprise on the squalor. Chickens just hatched ran in between the beds, a sort of cage hung from the ceiling, where she put the cheeses, 'else the rats would eat them all.' The clothes of the family, man, woman, and children, were all hanging on a rope; there was no kind of cupboard, press, or drawers in the house. She took us to see her winepress in a dark, dirty hole below, with a great cask, where the grapes were trodden by men's feet before being put under the screw of the machine, which was of the rudest and most wasteful kind; it was very unpleasant to think of drinking the results of such a filthy process; The mistress was still young, but withered and haggard with overwork, low-spirited, sad, and hopeless. She complained that the great heat of August had dried up their grain. 'Ah, c'est un vilain pays ici, laid—

tout montagne.' 'We think it all very beautiful,' said I. 'Ah, pour vous,' she sighed. All their wine and butter and fruit was sold to get enough bread to live on. They grew 'un peu de tout,' as indeed everybody did in those parts. Everything was done at home. She dressed the hemp and spun it, after which it was sent to the village *tisserand* to be woven into coarse cloth; there is no division of labour known here, all is done at home.

Their two cows spent the summer on the mountains, on the communal ground, and it took a hour for her eldest daughter to go up and milk them; she made butter but once a week.

Her youngest child, a pretty little bright-eyed thing of eight, barefooted like her mother, came in from the nuns' school, where the girls are taught gratis. The boys pay eight francs a year, and a 'lay' school was being established. I was afraid we might have asked too many questions, for at first she was not communicative, but we parted great friends, and she said that she wished her child were a little older, when she would have asked me to take her as a servant, 'Remercie la dame, Marie; fais la révérence,' and the little one bowed her head and opened her great soft eyes. 'Elle n'a pas fait sa première communion,' and if she dies now (there was no appearance of any danger) 'they would not bury her in the little chapel up there,' said the mother dreamily; 'petite comme elle est, she must be carried out there to the next village,' which seemed to pain her. The priest only came to the chapel occasionally, and they walked over to the next church every Sunday. The possession of a *pressoir* implies a certain amount of dignity and profit; the neighbours who have not got one send in their grapes to be trodden, and in payment leave behind the mass of hard squeezed skins and stalks, called *marc*, from which, after it is steeped in boiling water, an *eau-de-vie* is distilled.

Another day we went up a mountain lane, which zig-

zagged high up among the rocks, and was broken with torrents across it which had carried away the road; there were absolutely no trees that did not bear fruit, except on the steep slopes where the scrub grew short and scanty, being well kept down by cutting for firewood, which costs a good deal even for the scanty cooking. We looked into a cottage where two men, each with his jacket hanging over one shoulder, and a glass of thin red wine at a round table before the great wide empty chimney, were sitting like a Dutch picture. A woman stood by them making a white curd cheese, several of which were hanging out of a window in an osier cage. They gave some of the whey to their one cow, 'to help her to do the field work;' there are more cows than oxen used for draught in the country. We asked about the size of the properties. 'There are some very large about here,' said one of the men, 'as much as 150 or 200 journaux, from that down to two.' The hiring price of land was from 45 to 50 francs a journal for the best, the proprietor sharing equally with the hirer the produce of the vines which grew between the plots *en treille.* For a vineyard the owner finds manure and props, the tenant the labour which is required for vines almost all the year. 'It is a beautiful country.' 'Vous trouvez ?' said they, with a shrug; 'it would be much better if we had land behind us, instead of being shut in with that wall of rock.' Mountains were unfruitful, barren, and evidently unpleasant accidents of Nature.

The amount of work done by the women is enormous, without which it would be utterly impossible to cultivate these small scattered plots, as the owners cannot pay for labour. Here was an old woman, dirty and worn, working with a great hoe, her gold cross hanging from a gilt heart, dangling above the dirt, as she bent her stiff old body over the work; another was guiding the plough, which two oxen were dragging, and which only scratched the earth; another was harrowing with the little three-cornered harrow used

here, a baby laid by her on a heap of sticks in the open field. Some were breaking the hard lumps of soil with a sort of hook. In a ploughed field, far from any cottage or village, was a mother sitting in the middle of her work, suckling her baby, with three small children hanging round her; the fatigue and anxiety to a woman of dragging such tiny feet to such a distance, where they had to be kept the whole day, perhaps only a woman can rightly understand. At Chambéry we met four men riding in a bullock car, their three women walking by the side. Even on Sunday, poor souls, they work on after Mass, with an attempt at better clothes it is true; but they are too down-trodden to have courage enough or time enough to attend to their looks or the looks of their houses. Indeed, the use of beauty is certainly altogether ignored in French country life here. A woman is treated as a beast of burden, and the general civilization suffers.

In the villages on the hills the houses were stuck at every imaginable angle, and if the problem had been set, how to waste the most room and give the least accommodation, it was solved at Mouxy. If there were three houses together, instead of opening on the road, they stood one behind the other, or back to back, anyhow, down the steep muddy declivity, with no sort of path, though they had only to fetch stone from across the way to make one. The ground between was cut up with the passing of the oxen, with rubbish heaps, while pellmell, fronts and backs, the dwelling-house stood in one place, the winepress in another, the cowhouse in a third. All but a very few lived in their own houses, which were extremely old. Nothing like a new one was anywhere to be seen, and all were on the same level of filthy discomfort. We went into one after another and found scarcely the smallest difference between them, the wretched little rooms always opening into each other, so that it was impossible to reach the innermost without passing through all; back doors are nearly unknown; clay

floors, no furniture, no presses for clothes, the children sitting on the ground for lack even of stools. We did not see a single book or newspaper, or ornament of any kind, in the thirty-five or forty houses we visited. The struggle for life is so severe, the wolf of starvation is so close to the door, that the effort to get bread enough to eat seems to exhaust their energies. They simply preserve life at the expense of all that makes life worth having.

We took pains to go into what looked like the good as well as the bad houses. I generally begged to see the winepress, saying that, 'as we had no vines in England, it was very interesting to us.' A *pressoir* is a sign of wealth; the request was, therefore, a compliment, and they were almost always pleased to be asked—while the lofty compassion excited by hearing of so dismal a land was also pleasing to express. 'What! no vines? No figs? Drink beer? How sad! Beer is but poor stuff,' said the proud possessor of a plot of mountain vineyard, where he made half a cask of thin sour vinegar. Once I was moved to say that we kept our cows for milking, and used our horses for draught. 'Well,' he said, 'the cows give less milk certainly, but they *must* work here, because we can't generally afford oxen, and, as for machines, what use would there be for them on our little plots?'

One exceptionally beautiful dwelling lay high up on the mountain, with a grand view to the south towards Chambéry, and to the north towards the end of the lake. It stood in a natural park, with great chestnuts and walnuts growing out of the green sward on a steep declivity plunging down the hill, and a vineyard behind. There were no fences, and all the ground round might have belonged to it. The house was a large stone one, with very picturesque balconies and overhanging eaves; the mistress was washing her gown at a trough (on Sunday), and the master, with four little boys, was sharpening a scythe. We were taken inside, where the rooms were as dark and filthy and comfortless as always.

We heard afterwards that the father was dying in an inner room, and we were coming away when the man said, 'Si vous trouvez ça si beau, will you buy it?' We asked if he were really serious in wanting to sell. 'Yes; very truly I am. And the ground lies all together! all in one piece!' and he reiterated this surprising fact again and again; part of it was his mother's—the properties had married. 'How much land is there?' I inquired. 'That you would see when it was measured for buying,' he replied, sententiously. We heard from the wife afterwards it was about eighteen acres. 'Oh, is England too far off for you to come here? is it such a long way?'

When H—— arrived, I took him to see my proposed estate; the vineyard occupied nine acres, and the wife declared that they made twelve barrels of wine last year, and sometimes as many as twenty-two, but I doubt this was a fiction of the seller to a hoped-for purchaser. If it had been possible to live on milk and grapes, walnuts and chestnuts, it would have been very tempting; the walls were so solid that it might have been made into a comfortable home, the floors were boarded; it was by far the best of all the homesteads we saw; but though the owners had cows and oxen, pigs and winepress, they were just as squalid as their neighbours, and cared little for their place. Indeed, it was remarkable how the richer houses were not a whit more comfortable or civilized than the poorer ones. The ideal had sunk to the level of the most miserable everywhere.

In a flour-mill on rather a large scale, where we went the next day to look at a press which made colza oil for lamps and walnut oil for salad, the old miller, who looked like a day labourer, took us into his house. In England he would have had a smart parlour, with prints on the wall and books on the table—an attempt, at least, at art and literature. Here the one room was so small that it was hardly possible to sit down; a flour-bin on one side, the staircase on the other, and the cooking-stove set in the large unused chimney-

corner on the third, and everything dirty and bare. These stoves are now taking the place of the great wood fires, and are very convenient. A flat iron box, four inches deep, is set on four legs, with three or four round openings in the top—a handful of fuel is put inside, and as soon as it is alight the pots are set in the holes to simmer, while an iron tube carries off the very small amount of smoke. His two daughters were making some soup—haricots, leeks, sometimes a little maize or potatoes, no milk, a bit of butter, seldom any meat, they said—this was the usual *potage* of the district, and indeed generally in France.

The miller employed no workmen; they did all in the family, and 'had a good piece of land of their own.' In England the sons would have resisted being made into day labourers, and would have gone off into other trades; but here the only object seems to be to avoid hiring, and to keep the piece of ground together. The idea of 'bettering' themselves, of rising in the world—which is the great object of the Anglo-Saxon race for themselves, or at least for their children—is entirely absent here. There is no ambition but that of putting money by in the funds, or hiding it in an old stocking, after the barest necessaries of life have been provided; and no capital is invested in cultivating the land. We found another 'rich' mountain home on the other side of the valley. We had followed an old man, who was carrying on his head a heavy load of green maize for his cows, to a large farmstead, up among the big walnuts, which he owned, and where he lived quite alone, in the usual filth and destitution; but he had a tall clock, which he showed us with pride. It did not go, but it was a wonder of luxury worthy of admiration; we saw no other, indeed, in the district. 'Now, let me show you *la maison la plus élégante du voisinage*,' said he. 'Jacques is a great proprietor; he has 40,000 francs in land only—about twenty *journaux* (18 acres), and they are worth 2,000 francs each about here, and he has four oxen and two cows!' Neither

the great man nor his wife was at home, but our friend went up the outside stair and pushed open the door. There was a kitchen and sitting-room, both large, the last absolutely bare, except for three chairs and a wretched table. The three bedrooms could only be reached through the other rooms, and were certainly not bare, for all the wardrobes of all the family—men, women, and children—clean and unclean, linen and woollen, were all hanging on long ropes. There was not a single press in the house; some oats were lying on one of the floors, and some gourds under the beds. Long plaited hanks of hemp hung on the walls. Except that there was more space in which to be dirty and uncomfortable, there was no difference between the most 'elegant' house in the neighbourhood and the rest.

A little further on, a man and his wife were digging very small and bad potatoes in a field; he had a bit of vineyard 'up there,' he said, 'in all about three acres; many had only two, or even less,' equal to a good English allotment; 'and there are more who have the little than the large ones, *allez!*' 'But a family cannot live on that?' 'Oh, no, they go out for hire, down into Aix in the season. It is a hard life!' 'And what do they do in the winter?' '*They suffer*,' said he, emphatically. 'C'est un pays de dur travail, allez! Dans la plaine on va droit devant soi; mais ici!' Again, the rocks were only impediments and mistakes. There is little work for hire to be had in the country, because each man works his own little plot.

At the table d'hôte I sat by an intelligent middle-class Frenchman who knew the country well. He gave very much such an account of their agricultural difficulties as we should do in England. The wheat, cheese, and pork are undersold by American produce; the 'déplacements d'industrie et de commerce,' occasioned by arrivals from the New World, unhinge everything. I told how we had heard from a German grand seigneur that his fine Saxony wools were ruined by the produce of Australian sheep, which was not nearly so good,

but was preferred by the manufacturers of cheap wares, and of the distress thus caused in Germany. My neighbour said that the dislocation of trade was, he believed, universal; probably as population increased in America, and the cost of production with it, an equilibrium would be found, but there will be much distress in Europe first. There are other very serious dangers in France. The phylloxera is very bad and widespread, and no cure has yet been found against this almost miscroscopic insect, except to plant the American vine, whose bark is tougher and cannot be gnawn away; but two or three years must go by before the plants will bear, and how can the small cultivator wait so long? Then, the silk industry has quite died out with the disease in the worms, and Lyons is using Chinese and Japanese silk as cheaper. Also, in the south, whole districts had depended on the cultivation of the garance, used among other things as a dye for the red trousers of the French soldier. Now gas-tar dyes had taken its place, and the farmers who grew madder were ruined. France is so large, and her productions so various, that no one hears much, *à l'étranger*, of all this, but the distress was very real. The education given in the schools was very bad: reading and writing alone is not education, and the books the people read (when they read at all, which is not the case with the peasants) are bad, and the papers worse; the *feuilletons* of the cheap press are simply disgraceful. We heard this from many others, and the names of the books we saw at the station bore it out:—'Fils adultérin,' 'Gasconnades de l'Amour,' 'Séduction,' 'Les Lovelaces,' 'Le Bâtard,' 'La haute Canaille,' 'Amours fragiles,' 'Les Maris de Madame,' 'Le Mari à deux Femmes,' 'Mémoires d'un Baiser,' 'L'Assommoir,' 'Le Mariage du Suicide,' are not likely to be improving reading for any one. And the list was nearly the same a. the Amiens bookstall in the north as it had been at Aix in the far south. Advertisements of 'La Chute d'un Prêtre,' *roman feuilleton*, covered the walls of Paris.

In the curious old Town Hall there is a very good collection of remains of the prehistoric lake villages, built on piles in the Lac de Bourget; and dredged up when the water is low. The food, the weapons, the ornaments of the ancient race, and their manner of life, can be to a great extent traced out. Different kinds of grain, very small and poor, wild fruits, crabs and plums; the bones of wolves, hares, dogs, wild boars, stags, and even of small horses; stone whorls used for spinning, like those so abundantly found by Schliemann at Troy (?); flint weapons and stone celts with their wooden handles, bracelets and necklaces of beads and stones once strung on a thread, long pins with ornamental heads, from the hair of some half-naked lake belle, and much like the filagree halos worn by Italian peasants, have been discovered. Even bits of coarsely woven linen and of grass matting, somewhat like the African, have been preserved in the useful mud. Most of the things seem to have dropped tranquilly to the bottom of the lake, but occasionally there must have been a catastrophe, and the little city of refuge was perhaps taken—at all events, it was burnt, for all the objects found are charred, and even the piles on which the wigwams were built—which were probably round, like the Malay huts—show signs of fire.

I asked Sir O. Cavanagh, who had been Governor of the Straits Settlements at Singapore, about the Malay villages, which are built in the same way far out into the water, for safety from enemies. He said that as these are on creeks of the sea, where the tide rises ten or twelve feet, they are even more difficult to construct than on the peaceful French or Swiss lakes. The floors are of split bamboo, with interstices about an inch wide, so that the inmates can sweep out all dirt into the water without trouble. And if this were the case with the prehistoric lake men, as is probable, it would account for the great number of (to them) valuable articles which had been lost, and are found so opportunely

by us as to enable us to reconstruct once more that far-off old barbaric life. In fear of wild beasts, in fear of 'enemies,' in fear of starvation, it must have been a somewhat dismal existence.

We drove round the head of the lake near the place where one of the villages once stood. The road run through a marsh which, after the rain, was almost like the lake itself. A fisherman stood up to his knees in the water, the hot sun shining on his head, and a man with a gun was plunging heavily through the mud. The reeds were mown for litter, for which they said it is better than hay. On the drier parts the cows were standing for their afternoon outing, with their feet in the water, eating rather dolefully, while their barefoot child-keepers sat on the edge of the road and squalled for *sous*, holding up bunches of ragwort as an excuse.

Bourget itself, the smallest and most remote of towns, possessed a fine old Benedictine monastery, and there is a beautiful carved procession, of the thirteenth century, round the apse of the old church. The relief is exceedingly high, the heads quite detached from the back; our Saviour on an ass followed by the Apostles. Each face and attitude was a study of character, so individual, so living—speaking, moving, almost thinking; but no one cared for it, and a great piece has been wantonly cut away, 'to make room,' it was said, but for what nobody could tell.

In the inner court of the monastery we found an arcade of the fourteenth century, with a still older one below, both extremely quaint and pretty, but defaced and torn down at the Revolution. The place had been bought by an old man, who took us into a nest he had fitted up for himself in the old prior's rooms, where he showed us with pride the *boiseries*, done by a local carpenter, of inlaid walnut, cherry, and ash; it was the only bit of new work we saw anywhere. The views out of the windows, looking to the Alps across a little garden full of fig-trees covered

with fruit, were lovely. Below was a great refectory with an open fireplace, twenty-seven feet wide, crowned with a scutcheon, the simple stone mouldings so fine that they were a pleasure to trace: then to a tithe building where the dues, all paid in kind, were stored by the monks—into a sort of opera-box, high up in the church, where the prior 'assisted' at the service without troubling himself to go there, the steep twisted stone staircases round a pillar were so dangerous that the monks can never have contemplated growing old. At the other end, the proprietor has fitted up a lodging for visitors out of the cells, seven *pièces* looking on a terrace into the street, where the mountains peered down above the houses with their overhanging eaves, from which hung osier baskets full of cheese and strings of yellow Indian corn cobs. All the women and children in the place seemed to be sitting in the dirty road, two old hags were busy turning spinning-wheels with one hand, holding a long distaff in the other; an old man was making a net. The outside staircases, the wooden balconies—all was most picturesque, but so utterly squalid and full of smells that one wondered what the 'visitors' could be like who went to stay in the place.

As we returned by the beautiful shores of the lake, the extraordinary precision with which the mountains towards Chambéry, on one side, and the steep promontories and precipices receding towards the open water, on the other, were mirrored, had a purity and delicate clear transparency that was quite impossible to paint, the lake in some places of an emerald green.

It is difficult to make out what is the feeling towards the religious orders at this time in France. The measures for closing their schools have been merely nominal; they have all been reopened under other lay names, and are in all other points the same as before. The great Protestant *pasteur* of Paris, M. Bercier, has expressed a general feeling, in saying, 'Let us establish better schools; but it is tyranny

not to allow those who desire it to have and to use the denominational schools already existing.'

The influence of the Church has apparently diminished a good deal. At Amiens we were looking at a statue of Peter the Hermit, the pedestal of which was covered with brickbats and broken bottles, evidently flung at it in scorn, and the name erased. We asked an *ouvrier* who it was. He was a stranger and did not know, but believed it was the builder of the church. 'It is a monk at all events,' I said. 'Then he ought to be pulled down and broken up,' answered he, with a scowl, clenching his fist. At Aix a workman was complaining of the sums paid to the Church: '*Cinquante-deux millions sur le budget,* and we don't want the priests.' 'The *curés* are very ill-paid and very good and useful men,' I answered. 'What!' he cried, 'do you think it right for a woman to go to confession to a man and tell him all her husband says and does? It is abominable! The priest ferrets out all the gossip in the village and puts his nose into all our affairs, but the husbands won't allow their wives now to confess, except *quelques vieilles dévotes,* and the fathers won't even let their daughters go, after they have once made their *première communion.* For three francs, we can get a *billet* pretending to show we have been there without ever going near the altar—what do you think of that? I don't want the *curé,* or his teaching or his preaching.' It was sad to see the true substance and the false form so inextricably mixed up in the people's minds. Religion is dying away, because, as my informant said, 'on veut nous faire croire un tas de bêtises qui sont incroyables, et nous n'en voulons pas, je vous le dis tout court!' We heard that confession was nearly extinct in the north of France also.

The *curé* is extremely ill-paid, only 900 francs by the State, besides his fees, which are not high; he is hardly ever a gentleman or man of education; he generally rises from the poorest families, and only associates with the

gentlefolks professionally; thus a link between the upper and the lower classes is wanting in France, such as is found in the English clergyman. There has been, except in particular instances, a great gulf fixed between the seigneurs and the peasants.[1] Eugénie de Guérin mentions that one day she asked an old woman to fetch soup from the *château;* she did not come, and when questioned, she replied that her grandchild had said, 'N'y va pas, grand'-mère, on t'y mangera.' Happily for both, there are no such grim traditions of hostility in England between the manor-house and the cottage.

A French lady from the North of France told us of the strange jealousy of the peasants of any one higher or better off than themselves. There is little such feeling in English country life, and the 'big house' and park are often regarded as the museum, entertainment ground, and convalescent home of the neighbourhood, as indeed they ought to be. I told how at a christening feast this summer at C——, nearly a thousand village folk had tea on the lawn, with football, dancing, and games of all sorts, going wherever they pleased, in and out of the hothouses, remaining until ten at night for fireworks and illuminations; yet on the next day it was found that not a border had been trampled or a flower plucked. The self-restraint and good feeling evinced by such care of what was trusted to them was felt to be very gracious, and most honourable to their 'civilisation.' She replied, that a similar *fête* had been given on the occasion of a marriage at a *château* near her, where the gardens had been opened, but everything had been 'pillé, ravagé, et saccagé: c'était comme si l'ennemi avait passé par la campagne.'

[1] In the *Récit d'une Sœur*, as a proof of her extraordinary sanctity, the angelic Alexandrine is described as visiting the sick, and teaching the children of the poor near her father-in-law's home, in the way that is done by wives and daughters of the clergyman and the squire in almost every village in England, as a matter of course, without any notice whatever being taken of it.

We went over to Chambéry to see some grand views up the valley; the town was more interesting to me as the place where the charming 'Voyage autour de ma Chambre' was written by Xavier de Maistre, then a young lieutenant in Napoleon's army, who was put under arrest for some trifling regimental infraction, and utilised his enforced leisure by writing that witty, wise, and tender little book.

Strange stories of the old nobles turn up. We saw near Chambéry the towers of a castle in the valleys leading towards the Alps, where, at the end of the sixteenth century, the seigneur of Montmayeur had a lawsuit with his neighbour of Asprémont, and the President of the Court gave him hopes of success (judges were apt to give opinions off the bench in those days); but when the trial took place an important *pièce* was wanting, and Montmayeur was cast. A little time after he gave a great feast (probably prepared for his expected triumph) to the President and all the neighbouring great folk. When all were assembled, suddenly the host requested the judge's presence in an inner chamber. It was hung with black, and an executioner stood in the middle, with his axe, at a block. The President was seized and his head cut off then and there. A few hours after, Montmayeur dashed into the room where the other judges belonging to the court which had offended him were sitting, threw the President's head, in a bag, upon the table, called out, 'Voilà la pièce qui vous manque!' and, in the confusion, escaped scotfree on a horse which was waiting for him below.

Such ungovernable ruffians would go far to discredit their order, even in those rough days, and the extravagance and license of later years did not redeem their character. There has been little of what we call real country life among the French upper classes. They have generally retired there chiefly to recoup themselves for life at Paris, and it has been considered as an exile, not a home.

The political talk we heard was that, in spite of his

apparent popularity, Gambetta has been going down ever since his more than royal progress after the elections. The belief in personal government is so inveterate in France that they must always incarnate a chief to credit with good and evil fortune; none of the Ministers have been sufficiently considerable for this, and the President, Grévy, is *absolument nul*, therefore the issues of the Tunis war will fall on Gambetta alone. Since the failure of the *scrutin de liste*, he has shown that he can no longer 'wield at will the fierce democracy' of Paris. Said our Parisian friend, 'No one knows what will come of the new Ministry; the excessive change, the uncertainty, is trying and dangerous for us in trade, and in all ways; there is no stability in anything, and no one can foresee how matters will stand next year. Your institutions are better in England, *perhaps*?' Then, with some satisfaction, he went on, 'But you have plenty of troubles there, too, with your great industrial populations and your Ireland! You are not on roses either!'

Next we heard that Gambetta will give anything which he believes to be asked for by the people, and that Louis Blanc is quite right in declaring that France is playing Bismarck's game, by thus risking the friendship of England and Italy, and alarming Spain for such an object as Tunis.

At last our bathing purgatory came to an end, and we gladly moved on to Annecy, an old-world town, with a great castle on a rock in the very midst of the town, and curious arcades in the streets, on the borders of a lovely little lake, prettier even than that of Bourget. Here St. François de Sales, its bishop, lived and worked—one of the most 'pious' and attaching of saintly men. The traces of him, however, are few; his house and the church where he was buried were destroyed in the Revolution, and his body is now set up in a glass case over the high altar, in an ugly, tawdry new church; it seemed strange that he did not rise from the dead to prevent an exhibition so contrary to his gentle

modest nature. Then we ferreted out a little old convent where he used to visit his friend and coadjutor, the Baronne de Chantal. The tiny chapel and a vine *pergola* date from their time, 1610, and its leaves are plucked by pious pilgrims in remembrance of both. To her many of the beautiful 'Lettres Spirituelles' are addressed, which contain some of the most practically devout Christian maxims of any age. It is dismal to hear, however, that he afterwards joined in the religious persecution of the Protestants. But, after all, a good logical Catholic must be a persecutor – it is his duty to torment unbelievers well in this world, however unwillingly; it would be a cruel kindness to spare a little pain here, according to his creed of salvation, if by any means he may save their souls in eternity.

We steamed round the lake, touching at all the little villages, with a constant coming and going of market folks. An old priest on board was very willing to talk. 'The subdivision of land is excessive, and the poverty very great.' 'How do they live in winter?' '*C'est le secret du bon Dieu, madame.* There is much private charity and some allowance from old foundations belonging to the town.' A young priest did not approve of his elder being so friendly with heretics, and came constantly to persuade him to change his seat, which he objected was too 'hot' or 'too windy;' but in vain, the old man would not leave us.

The head of the lake, where the great mountains overlapped, with deep blue chasms on their sides, and shaggy pine-woods, and long slopes clothed with brown and golden velvet fern, and brushwood in front, was very fine. The next day we drove over a Col into the beautiful valleys leading to the Arve and Chamounix. The extreme fertility of the alluvial soil at the bottom produces a rich vegetation, contrasted with the rugged mountain summits, that is most striking. The road runs through one long orchard on both sides—with great walnuts, as large as forest trees; pear-trees, of the height of elms, and weighed down by showers of

fruit; apple-trees, so laden with red apples that they looked as if they came out of a fairy tale; little *châlets* perched high up on the hillsides in the midst of patches of cultivation all most picturesque. But the population was as poor and as dirty as in the districts we had left.

The new road made by the French at enormous expense, leading only to Chamounix, was another bribe to the inhabitants; and, certainly, when one sees the extent of fair country which France gave to herself in reward for her Italian exertions, it is hardly to be wondered at that Italy refuses to be very grateful. 'Was she not amply paid?'

The valley narrowed, the mountains grew steeper, as we started in the early morning after a poisonous night of smells at Sallanches. 'There is Mont Blanc,' cried H—— ; 'Yes, I see some confused marks,' said I. 'Oh, not there! look higher,' answered he. 'Yes, I see a faint outline.' 'Higher! higher still! much higher,' cried he; and there, far up in the heavens, unbelievably high, above the broad band of cloud, were the great white points and aiguilles shining in the sun, and the interpretation of the whole of the faint, confused, cloudy indications below breaks upon one. It was so like life.

However often one may have seen it, the sight is always like a new revelation; the excessive purity and brilliancy of the slopes of dazzling snow, with the delicate inflections of their shadows against the pale blue sky; so lonely, so still, so sharp, yet so tender, softened by the wonderful amount of atmosphere between our lower standpoint and their glorious height; so distinct and decided, yet so unreal, like the glimpse into another world high up in the heavens. Like all the greatest effects in nature and art it is perfectly incommunicable by words, or colours, or photographs, and is fresh in its novelty of beauty every time it is seen. This day, through the deep dark gorge, with mighty silver firs clinging to the almost perpendicular rocks; the Arve dashing unseen, but not unheard, below, and the lofty cloudland,

with the sun on it above, the effect was *saisissant*, and H——, who knows the Andes well, acknowledged that even they could hardly have looked finer. 'Only an inch or two higher up on the canvas'—a mere question of degree.

That curious settlement of inns and *pensions*, Chamounix, was just about to be forsaken for the winter. Our hotel, a very large and good one, would have the key turned in the door, and no more care taken of it than could be given by a woman going in once a week to open windows. 'There are no thieves here, for where could they carry the plunder?' The medley population was mostly going away. The nationality of trades is a curious one; the English will be found everywhere, as engineers and grooms, the French as cooks and milliners, the Italians as confectioners and workers in plaster, and the German is 'easily prince' of waiters. Indeed, to see him carrying seven plates of fish on one hand and arm, and keeping the other free for their distribution, is a splendid instance of the 'prehensile powers' of the human animal! He is an original. I had 'assisted' at H——'s departure for the Glacier des Bossons, and returned to the empty table for luncheon, when the waiter, who brought some salad, evidently considered it his duty to devote himself to my instruction and entertainment. He leant his arm on the chimney-piece, and began: 'I am going away in a week—this place is finished, and I think of visiting the chief cities of Europe. *J'ai vingt-six ans, et c'est le moment de se perfectionner.* Do not you think so, madame? I thought of going first to London, but they say the fogs are bad there, and the climate detestable; therefore, I think I shall go to Paris.' 'There is much to be said against the climate there, too,' observed I, solemnly. 'So I have heard, and also that the Germans are not so well regarded as they ought to be. I shan't stay there long, I dare say! Then I shall go to Berlin and Vienna and then——' But here cruel fate interfered; there was a cry from the 'office' for mustard, or napkins,

or some mean thing, and the Alnaschar visions of glory died away.

We climbed up the hill to look after *châlets*, and found an intelligent man who had been a soldier. He had been taken prisoner in 1870, and kept for ten months in Silesia. 'We were very badly fed; *on ne nourrit pas les cochons si mal ici.*' It was the old story, how '*nous étions trahis.* General—— had a franc a head from the Prussians for our division of 25,000 men; that was why we were beaten.' His father had left him half the house and a little bit of land, his sister and mother lived in the other half, and wanted him to buy their share, but he would not. 'A bit of land is good; but one must have a bit of money with it,' he said emphatically. The money spent by visitors helped in summer, and much butter, &c., was sold to them, but there was great poverty and suffering in the outlying villages. He had two cows, in a dirty stable almost opening into his dirty room. One he was going to kill, and had bought a sheep also to kill. 'Nous mangeons beaucoup de viande à Chamounix,' he said, with pride. I was properly impressed; but afterwards found that they salted down the meat when snow covered the pastures, and ate it during seven or eight months, when it became as hard and tasteless as a board. It was the same custom that prevailed among our forefathers in England, even in the greatest households, before the 'invention' of roots and vegetables, when skin diseases were frightfully prevalent, owing to the absence of fresh meat and green food. It was a little instance of the manner in which one should make sure that words bear the same meaning for speaker and hearer. He took for granted that meat meant salt meat, and if we had not found out the habit of the country elsewhere we should have been all astray. There was a grand view from the *châlet* across the valley to the great congealed torrents, like water frozen in the rush, of the glaciers of the Bossons and Taconnay, descending from Mont Blanc, while round the house lay

great rocks, covered with green and black or orange stains of lichen, which had perhaps taken one thousand years, more or less, to grow. A curious link in the upward chain of life, not inanimate as the stone they clung to, and the difference between it and the growth of a millionth part of an inch in a score of years, though scarcely perceptible, yet so infinite.

Then H—— went into a little smithy to see the bells for the mountain cows forged. The tall, strong young blacksmith told him with great pride that his handiwork was heard in all the district from Martigny to Sallanches; there were no bells there which were not made by him. Here they are flattened, with mouths contracted instead of wide, but the sound is deep and sonorous, and heard from afar. The chief cow, who 'bears the (best) bell' and goes first, is proud of her honours, and will not endure to be degraded from her post; in such a case she has been known even to die.

The *rentrée des vaches* was at hand. No beasts are left out for the winter, they would starve in the snow and cold; but on the morning we came away the small herdsman, sounding a great horn, was still passing up the little street collecting the goats from each house, and taking them up to the mountain pastures, and would go on till the 'Saint Denis.'

The hotel was full of Americans; we sat by two quick-witted, sharp men, who were swallowing their mountains, lakes, and passes hurriedly, as a duty. The clouds hitherto had prevented their seeing anything; but public opinion required that they should have gone to the different places, in name at least, before sailing for home. 'Mount Blank,' as they called him, was luckily visible, and they inquired after 'the glazier' as if they wanted to get their windows mended. The women seem to go about in flocks and herds, sometimes six and seven together, with many *enfants terribles*. At one long table d'hôte dinner with 150 people, we sat opposite a pretty little U.S. girl, about six years old,

who ate straight through the eight courses, beginning with the hot soup and ending with the cold ice, cheese, and fruit. She added pickles when she could get them, and poured a flood of sauce over her plate, often taking two slices when others took one, and a double help of cream, her mother sitting placidly by and never interfering. I watched her with a sort of fascinated wonder, expecting a catastrophe of some kind, but the interests of truth compel me to state that she was still alive when we left the hotel, although we left her eating. At the same place three little U.S. boys came up suddenly to H—— after dinner and asked him how old he was; and I sat by another boy, about fourteen, at the next town, who cross-examined me for three successive dinners without intermission. 'Where did we come from?' 'Where were we going to?' 'How long should we stay?' 'Where did we live in England?' 'Had we been here before?' At last he asked three questions in one, and I burst out laughing. He had not the slightest notion why, but thought he had said something very clever; he smiled in a pleased and superior manner, and went on with his catechism. The young of no other species are so unpleasant; but as there are a great number of agreeable and excellent Americans in the world, they must somehow shed this their first exceedingly obnoxious husk.

We drove rapidly down, following the Arve to the French frontier, and here saw another agricultural machine on the Swiss side, only the second since leaving England. That machines, which are the very life of agriculture in America and with us, are also occasionally to be found in France, there is no doubt, but they must indeed be few, when during three weeks of very careful investigation and inquiry, after having seen the corn reaped in the north, the hay cut and carrying everywhere, and ploughing going on along the whole line of our journey, we had thus only once come across a single one. Indeed, those who have marked the

size of the peasant plots must see how utterly impossible any help from machines would be. The difficulty attending the turning of even a common plough within their minute limits is so great, and so much damage is necessarily done to *le voisin*, that we were told it was only because *le voisin* does as much harm in return, that questions of compensation do not become serious. A steam plough would be like a bull in a china closet.

The vintage was just beginning, but the old festive arrangements have in general died out, and the gathering is neither curious nor picturesque at present. The joint authorities of a district fix a common day to avoid the picking and stealing which, in the extraordinary mixture of tiny plots, might otherwise take place ; and, however over-ripe the fruit may be, no man dares pick a grape (except to eat) until that morning under a penalty. Then all the vines are stripped together, though loiterers, of course, may take their own time. That such a system is needful hardly speaks well for the inter-household morality, and an English labourer would resent such interference with his free will in harvest time. But here no one complains.

It is a mistake to suppose that in the excessive subdivision of the soil in France and Belgium each owner cultivates his own little bit. A great deal of land is let by one to another. A farm of fifty acres in Belgium, mentioned by Mr. Jenkins,[1] was hired from nineteen different proprietors, and in smaller instances three and four landlords are not uncommon. These small owners are by necessity very stringent in their demands for rent ; they cannot afford to wait for their money, and the rents which we heard of were very high. If the Irish ideal could by any possibility be carried out, and the whole of Ireland cut into small morsels for separate owners, so that rent was abolished, it would be found to revive again on the succeeding day. The experi-

[1] On the Duke of Richmond's Agricultural Commission.

ence of France and Belgium showing that the cottar landlords often find it better worth their while to let, and that they exact their rents with a severity unknown to large proprietors, as is the case at present with the small owners of houses and corners of land in England, where it is well known that the worst cottages and highest rented belong to little absentee owners, or have been run up on the waste.

It is so difficult to obtain accurate particulars concerning peasant properties, as the owners are naturally very reticent, that I give the details of one with which we happen to have become well acquainted, although it is over the French border. It is a peculiarly favourable instance, as the family to whom it belongs are exceptionally respectable, intelligent, and thrifty, come of French Protestants who took refuge in Switzerland in one of the great persecutions about 200 years ago,—while the habit of seeking service abroad and of emigrating, ingrained among the Swiss, forms a great contrast to the way in which each member of a French family sticks to the land, and greatly eases the working of the system.

Yet this is the result.

The property consists of about six and a-quarter acres, and this is divided into sixteen little morsels, no two of which touch at any one point. It is not, in any way, at all peculiar in this respect. The father inherited from his father half a house, but about thirty-five years ago he quarrelled with the brother who held the other half (a result which often happens), and sold his share to him, going to live in a hired house, where he died, leaving a widow and eight children grown up. It is clear that, if the land had been divided, each would have had his three-quarters of an acre, and there would have been an end of the estate; but here the Swiss custom came in aid. One brother went with Lesseps to the Suez Canal, where he died. Another became a soldier, and died also. A third settled in the

Argentine Republic, where he was killed in an attack by the Indians. One sister married at home and died, leaving three little boys unprovided for. Three other sisters took service in England, and one brother devoted himself to the care of the little *bien*, which was heavily mortgaged, and of his mother, who had a *droit de jouissance* in the inheritance for her lifetime. In 1854 he borrowed money to buy a dilapidated house, which had been sold because the owner could not pay the interest of a mortgage upon it. Here he lived with his mother and the three nephews (whom they took in for a time), declaring that he should never marry, for 'the property could not afford it.' The mother is dead, the brother-father of the family died a year or two back, in great part of hard work, and a sister who had returned from England to keep his house has married at fifty, and now lives at the place with her husband. The other sisters have a right to return and a common share in the property, which cannot be sold because the death of the brother in Egypt was not certified officially. They have never taken the little interest which was due to them, but left it at first for the benefit of their mother, and afterwards to keep up the 'estate.' They have therefore hitherto benefited by it in no way, except in the very ideal satisfaction of having a property belonging to the family. The interest on the two mortgages, which are at 5 per cent., amount to 175 and 28 francs a year, *i.e.* 8*l.*, and the value sunk in the rest of the property, taken at 4½ per cent., amounts to 12*l.* more, in fact 20*l.* in all, which would be considered a high rent in England for six acres of land, only half an acre of it vineyard, and a house.

In what respect are they better off than they would have been by hiring land in England? As an Irish tenant, who was lately asked to buy his holding, replied, 'Sure, and shouldn't I have to pay the poor rate and the taxes? How'll that better me?' These people have, of course, to

bear all the burdens on the land, and having, for instance, lately dug a well, the rating value of their house has been increased by 600 francs in consequence. They are not even more secure, for if they do not pay the interest on the mortgages, the house would be sold over their heads, as was the case with their predecessors in it. The amount of sacrifices made by the family, the time, thrift, labour, and thought expended in buying and keeping together these little scraps of land, would in England have enabled them to do well in trade, and to advance in the world; each might have married, and had a home of his or her own, and, among such extremely intelligent and respectable people, probably some one of them, instead of continuing on the same level as two hundred years ago, might have been helping to govern his country, as Mr. Mundella and other architects of their own fortunes have done here. The fixed idea of keeping and increasing the peasant property has dwarfed their ideal and narrowed the field of their energies, and prevented, instead of helping, their thriving in the world.

We found everywhere that the waste of time, labour, and money in tilling these small morsels was excessive, when each has to be cultivated, manured, weeded, and ploughed separately. It will be asked why the plots are not consolidated by exchanges. In the first place, the fluctuating ownership brought about by the *partage forcé* is so great that it seems often considered hardly worth while to knit up to-day the Penelope's web which may be scattered again to-morrow. And next, that the quarrels and ill-blood engendered by the extraordinary mixing up of the plots often renders any amicable arrangement impossible—*e.g.* one of the sixteen morsels just mentioned is a scrap of ground in the middle of an orchard, inherited from some old ancestress. It is what would be called a 'Quillet' in Wales, where there is something of the same custom. It is only a few yards square, and is of the smallest value to

the possessors. The owner of the orchard is very anxious to get it, as the necessary passing to and fro greatly damages his property. He offers land close to the house of the Quillet possessors, but they say their land is better than the price proposed; he will not give more. It has become a point of honour on both sides not to yield; the quarrel has been going on for years, and will probably not be settled while either party is alive.

'L'échange des parcelles s'accomplit rarement,' writes Le Play. He remarks that the dislike to accommodate *le voisin*, and the hope to make a little money out of him, almost always prevent any hope of accommodation in such matters. He goes on to say that in the minute patches, isolated and scattered, to which the *partage forcé* reduces peasant properties, the proper employment of water for irrigation, any works for drainage, all improvements in the cultivation of cereals, green crops, or the breeds of cattle, become impossible. In some places the width of the plot is from four to five furrows, the length being about fifty metres, so as just to allow the plough to be used.

We crossed the French frontier into Switzerland in a black *bise*. It is now perilously near the town of Geneva on both sides; indeed the little canton is pinched in as between the heads of a pair of pincers, and whensoever it shall suit France to 'go to war for an idea,' or that 'the interests of civilization' shall require her to take her neighbour's goods, as she has done in the case of Savoy and Tunis, there seems to be little chance of its safety; while Europe is very apt to condone the high-handed acts of the strong, as she has done in the case of Prussia and Schleswig-Holstein, though she falls heavily on weaker offenders.

The old Puritan town has nearly doubled in extent during the last fifty years, and a great rich 'quarter' of houses has grown up beyond the bridge across the 'arrowy Rhone,'—but her real importance can hardly be said to

have risen since the days when she was the home of a knot of scientific and literary men, many of them exiles, like Sismondi and Rossi, of European reputation, and she was called (although, it is true, in derision of her pretensions) the 'cinquième partie du monde.'

The new monument to the Duke of Brunswick was opposite our windows. Exceedingly ugly, heavy, almost vulgar, it is an interesting lesson in the history of art. It has a puzzling echo in it of something beautiful, like the unpleasant likeness of a vulgar man to a beautiful mother, and at last it dawned on us that it is a copy of the tomb of Can Grande della Scala at Verona, with all the proportions altered and all the details 'improved,' as we were told by the *custode* with pride on the next day. The slender pinnacles of the original were intended for a group of tombs in the midst of a narrow Italian piazza; they have been pulled out in every direction as if they had been made of indiarubber, and set upon a platform in a garden. The gambling nineteenth-century Duke rests (or is supposed to do so) in a mediæval sarcophagus in the centre, while his ancestors, many of them in frock coats and trousers, or 'shorts,' stand round in the mediæval niches, in place of the mail-clad 'warrior saints' of the Scaliger's tomb. That we cannot originate in art is evident, but here is seen how great is the difficulty of even copying intelligently. The whole is a most useful warning as to the value of proportion, in giving its nameless charm to a building, and a lesson on the very bald truism that the external form of a tomb should have some (at least slight) reference to the person in whose honour it is erected. But whether this humble, if useful, result is likely to be satisfactory to the worthy Genevese who have put it up (with the Duke's money it is true) may be doubtful. At all events, the juxtaposition is so exceedingly droll, that it almost comes under the definition of humour, if, as was once said, its office is to find the likeness of incongruous ideas.

Another curious fact is that there is no statue of Calvin in the town. That the graceless, wretched Duke of Brunswick should be commemorated in the once stern old religious city, while her most famous citizen (if not the most agreeable) is left out, speaks strangely for her present rulers. 'Thrift, thrift, Horatio!' Calvin left no money to the town to build a monument to himself.

Commerce was said to be flourishing, and the watch trade is holding its own against the Americans, who use pinchbeck instead of gold in unseen places, and scamp the work. 'Very smart, but not very honest; and such conduct does not answer in the long run,' said the chief of the watch-making works, proudly. The coarser parts of the watches are very generally made at Le Locle and Chaudefonds in Neufchâtel, and the Jura, but the finer work is done chiefly in Geneva, and a great deal of it by women. The daughters of respectable tradesmen have very often an *établi*—*i.e.* a working bench with wheels and staples, set up in the ordinary house room, where they make the hinges, the hands of the watches, enamel, paint, and engrave the backs and faces, and mark the hour figures. They often earn their own livelihood, and are not dependent on their parents, instead of leading the useless, aimless lives of so many tradesmen's daughters in England, striving after gentility by practising bad music, ugly drawing, and useless woolwork. The polishing of the watch cases is done at the great shops, in a separate room by women, where the work is handed to them through a wicket. It is dirty work; the water in which their clothes and their hands are washed is all passed through a sieve, for the amount of gold dust found in the sediment is of very appreciable value.

The division of property in the canton is exceedingly great, but the Swiss emigrate to so large an extent, and are besides so industrial and commercial a people, that, unlike French peasants, they do not call on the land exclusively to support them. One kind of manufacture, how-

ever, which has lately sprung up is a little too akin to fraud: wine is made from imported raisins; 90 per cent. of water, 5 or 6 of alcohol, and tannin from the dried grape make a mixture which is underselling the natural wine, and is besides very unwholesome.

The entire exclusion of the educated and capable men of the old aristocratic class from all share in the government of the canton makes their position a very trying one; the democratic majority is absolute, so that no man of the opposite party is allowed to hold office of any kind, and the influence of the few who enter the Grand Conseil is so small, that there was at one time talk of their resigning, from their utter inability to influence or carry any measures which they think right.

The *bise* was sharp on the lake, and the weather grey, but it lightened as we drove up to G——, an interesting old castle, standing high up among the vineyards in the Pays de Vaud; the towers are full of bullet marks, for they had stood more than one siege against the people of Berne, during the struggles between the cantons, and the final conquest of the country. Republics have been as much addicted to wars of aggrandisement as their neighbours in the days of old. The walls are fifteen feet thick, and the interior was so dark that windows had to be broken through by the present owners to make it habitable. A Rothschild had offered 30,000 francs for some of the old carved furniture, one cabinet with heads of Mary Queen of Scots, her husband Francis II., the Constable de Montmorenci, &c. The family is an extremely ancient one, and the pedigree was headed (more modestly than in the Welsh descents from Noah and Adam) by Melchior, one of the Wise Men of the East, 'les trois Rois,' and his picture—a black Moor in a turban—hung in the gallery, an authentic relic of A.D. One!

The wooded slopes of the Jura rose close behind the house, and had once belonged to the family, but the forest

had been 'annexed' by the Commune, during the Revolution, and the trees cut down; only brushwood remains, but wolves are still heard of higher up the mountains. The family had taken much pains to improve the vineyards by planting a species of vine which should ripen early, a great desideratum in that rather high land; but they could only pick their own grapes, before the rest of the slow-going district was ready, by paying a fine, a sort of premium upon non-improvement.

We steamed up the lake in a bright sun and a bitter wind, with the long line of what are now French mountains fringing the southern side, and Mont Blanc to be seen, if the clouds are propitious; but his neighbourhood is feared rather than loved, as from him are supposed to come the dreaded frosts and hail in spring, which have spoiled the vineyards during many years. 'How can you admire *ces beautés de la Nature* when they do us all this harm?' said a little owner. Suddenly, we came under the shelter of the mountains above Clarens and Montreux, and entered into summer again, with a most southern vegetation. Here the vineyards are the most valuable in the district; 20,000 francs a hectare, *i.e.* 160*l.* an acre, is often paid. An old man in a wretched cottage, smoky and dilapidated, perched on a sort of rocky horn on the steep mountain side under Glyon, with a splendid outlook, paid 12*l.* a year for house, a garden, and two small plots.

The whole eastern shore of the lake is bordered by a continued line of boarding-houses, villas, hotels, and little shops, and a strange confusion of tongues and types, collected from all parts of the world in one common search after health, is to be found walking, driving, dining at the *tables d'hôte*—Russians, Poles, Spanish, French and English, Greek, German, American, curiously mixed together.

Nothing can be more lovely than the end of this lake, and what would be called in music the 'contrary motion' of the lines which formed the picture. The opposing steep

mountain slopes, craggy and bare, of the French and Swiss sides of the valleys drawn in lovely shades of lilac, a perpendicular rock in front with a group of poplars, and the tall, dark tower of Villeneuve guarding the passage into the town, contrasted with the perfectly horizontal lines, not only of the lake, but of the alluvial ground of the pass to the Valais and Martigny, the snowy peaks of the Pic du Midi in the distance, made an almost perfect composition; a long line of cows was coming home from the mountain pastures, with a pretty *sonnerie* from their enormous bells. I was trying to draw, and as we had just passed the English cemetery, with its sad record of young occupants of many nationalities, I said to our driver, 'How many deaths there are here!' 'On meurt partout, madame,' replied he, sententiously, anxious for the honour of his country. 'Yes, but these seem sent here to die.' 'Ah! moi, je ne voudrais pas tâcher de tromper la mort comme ça. Doctors are the same everywhere; quand ils ne veulent pas qu'un malade leur meure sur les mains ils l'envoient promener pour s'en défaire!'

Peasant properties in Switzerland require more time or opportunity to examine than we could give at that moment; in the Pays de Vaud, however, the warmer climate which enables the grape to ripen, makes it possible for a larger number of persons to live on the produce of the land than in the neighbouring cantons. The change on crossing the dividing line of hills into Fribourg and the country round Berne is exceedingly striking. It has the grey cold look of a northern land compared to the sunny exposures of the hills striped with vineyards round Lausanne and Vevey. Berne itself has a large, and not very thriving, population, crowded into the picturesque streets on the steep banks of the river. There are no manufactures carried on in the town, and the drain into it from the country of the small cultivators, who cannot live on their plots, and come in to try and better themselves, but find no work, is so large as to cause some difficulty.

At a pretty little campagne, with a splendid view of the Bernese Alps from the garden, where we went to tea, a lady told us that the begging began as early as seven in the morning, with demands for breakfast, for bread, for *une aumône*, or for clothes; the bell was going all the forenoon. It is a severe tax on the charitable, and on the town charities. There was some excellent painted glass dating from 1490 in the house, but shut up in a box as too aristocratic, and some good pictures. The old government of Berne may have been unwise in some things, but art flourished under it; the present régime is only active in destroying. A beautiful old ceiling in the council hall has just been pulled down 'in order to heighten it,' and one of the grand old towers was demolished near the station 'because it took up too much room.'

We journeyed on to Baden-Baden to visit a very kind friend. The fine old Schloss is built on the heights crowned with pines, and looks down on the gay little town nestling in its narrow valley. We drove up the many zigzags of road over a drawbridge and into a courtyard, round which it is built, and were taken into a little suite of rooms with deep recessed windows broken through the old walls fifteen feet thick, very cheerful and homelike, and with a beautiful look-out. The three-cornered terraces below cut out of the live rock sheer down are very striking, the top of the church spire at the foot just reaching to the balustrade of the lowest terrace.

We were asked to come and dine to meet the three generations, for the Emperor and Empress were staying at Baden. H—— went, but I was too unwell to join.

The brilliant autumn tints of the trees, American maples, azaleas and red cherries, contrasted with the dark firs higher up the hills, made the little valley very lovely; but so late in the season it was growing damp.

We heard much of the marriage of the young Princess Victoria, whom we had known at Marnau, and the Crown

Prince of Sweden, in which the country had taken a warm interest. While in her new home she was welcomed with much affection as a descendant (through her grandmother) of the old line of the Vasas. The marriage had been one entirely of affection, indeed a Capulet and Montagu reconciliation of families, for the Crown Prince was of course a Bernadotte. It promised every happiness, but Sweden is a long way off from Baden.

We heard much again of the organisation of the charitable institutions so admirably carried out, several of which H—— visited.

It was sad to see the injuries which two severe winters had inflicted on the lines of pear, apple, and plum trees which border the little fields in Baden-Baden. Thousands of them had been destroyed, and as the peasant proprietors greatly depend upon their produce, they had had of late a hard struggle to live. The debts and mortgages are extremely heavy on the small plots in these parts. In the neighbourhood of Heidelberg 5 per cent. was often paid for three months, to enable the owners to tide over the time till the potatoes were ready or the grapes ripe. 'There is not a peasant about here out of debt,' said one authority. It was always the same story.

We re-entered what had been France at Strasburg; there is much stir of business about the place, and a prosperous look, although the streets were full of German soldiers. It was after all essentially a German town, in its modes of life as well as its language, and retained its characteristics even under the long French occupation. 'Sale comme un Français' was one of the proverbs which survived among the people, and they were proud of being German; now their patriotism of course takes the reverse line. The country people in Alsace have been dealt with very gently by their new masters, but the higher class have been forced either to give up their old nationality or to migrate, in a way which seems unnecessarily harsh, and

has created a very bitter feeling amongst them against the conqueror.

The Cathedral looked empty and cold. Except on Sunday, and with a crowd of worshippers, the long bare nave of many a Catholic church is even more unfurnished than some of our English cathedrals, cut short, as some people think objectionably, by the organ and the choir seats, but at all events occupied.

The line of railroad to Metz runs for some distance through the pretty valleys of the Vosges, with much wild land on both sides, and through one of the two most important forests of France, which supply the country with timber and firewood; the villages are very scattered, and there is little cultivation to be seen.

During a long dark journey in company with several German officers, they gave a very interesting account of the *Etappen* system to H——, and of the perfection of their military training. 'The captain of a company is responsible for everything connected with it; he is their musketry instructor, on him devolves all care for their intellectual training, that their accoutrements, arms, and clothes are properly made, and of course for their drill. He does all which the major, adjutant, and sergeant-major do in our service, and a great deal more.' The effect is admirable; 'it establishes a bond between the officer commanding a company and his men which is too often wanting with us, and renders the whole a perfectly homogeneous body of men, able to rely on each other, and having entire confidence in their officers—a most powerful weapon of defence.' The staff consists entirely of highly educated officers, who have shown ability for its duties; and are selected entirely by merit.

Metz is a considerable town, with narrow streets and high houses, among which are many old *hôtels, entre cour et jardin*, inhabited before the war by old French families, who have now all migrated. A French country town is

always a very dead-alive place, unless where some special manufacture is carried on. But, although it may hardly have been more lively of old, yet the constant feeling of being under the iron heel of the conqueror must now be extremely trying. It has become a garrison pure and simple; troops of soldiers in full uniform, with their arms by their sides, were passing in every street, soldiers were drilling on the esplanade, exercising on the ground just outside the town, practising at targets, fifty or more of which at different ranges stand against the hill. The triple girdle of earthworks and ditches makes it one of the most impregnable of fortresses, and the utmost military precautions are always enforced. No one is allowed to see the fortifications on the hills, except with an order from the Minister of War at Berlin.

M. Mohl once told us that he had heard from Count Moltke how many years before as a young man he had gone to Metz in order to make plans and sketches of the forts for practice. The General Commandant was warned what he was doing, and answered, 'La ssez-le faire; je le connais, c'est seulement le petit Moltke.' When the siege took place in 1870 these very plans were used, and were found to be correct in every point, except that the range of heavy ordnance had increased in the proportion of two to five or six miles during the interval, which had to be allowed for. The low hills round the town are now all covered by forts, one of which in the direction of Gravelotte dominates not only the city, but the country on every side, and is garrisoned by several thousand men. This position the French, strangely enough, had omitted to fortify. The town is entirely commanded from it, and could not now hold out a day. Looking from hence over the wide bare country H—— was shown a valley to the west, where a large body of the enemy could have been concealed; the hill above had accordingly been scarped, and the low ground filled up, which renders that windy fortress now secure on the only side where it

could have been attacked. The Germans do not do their work by halves.

H—— then drove with his military companion over the battle-fields; the country is covered with crosses and little monuments of dead soldiers, who were buried where they fell. The amount of fighting to the west and south was tremendous; every inch had been contested, and the value of hedges, banks, and ditches to the fields was evidently most important for the defence. The Germans acknowledged that their difficulties were greatly increased whereever these existed. They passed through Gravelotte, a wretched village, where the great battle took place in '70. Here H—— saw the quarries in which the French had invented a victory to comfort themselves for the dismal realities of defeat. Sixty thousand Prussians, a whole *corps d'armée*, they declared, had been decoyed into the quarries, where they were massacred by the French troops firing in on them, and the peasants throwing down stones! There had not been even a pebble of truth at the centre of the great lie, but the scene had been painted for a broadside in red, blue, and yellow, and gave so much satisfaction that General Cox saw a copy of it still stuck up at Amiens when the German troops marched through the town eight months after, on their way to the siege of Paris.

General W—— declared that he did not believe in Bazaine's treachery; it was certainly not true that he had been bought by Germany, or that he was acting in the Prussian interest. He probably believed it to be best for the Emperor Napoleon that a great army should be preserved intact, to act later in favour of the dynasty, little dreaming of such a possibility as the capitulation of Sedan. At one moment, no doubt, the fortunes of the war lay in his hands; he had 120,000 men in Metz, and might have left half to guard the town, while with 60,000 more he could have taken the Germans in flank as they were marching on Sedan, the consequences of which might have been most

serious to them. H—— drove down a wide *chaussée*, with a space of a couple of hundred yards on each side cleared of wood, along which Bazaine might have marched with no sort of danger, until he came up with the enemy. That the French on the whole fought well, but that the manner in which they were commanded could only be called dismal, was the general German verdict. A young aide-de-camp whose family we know had ridden out with another *Uhlan* to reconnoitre not far from Metz in the direction of the French army. Suddenly he came upon an empty camp, out of which the troops had evidently only just marched. He returned in haste with his news to Count Moltke. The old General would not at first believe the account. It was quite impossible, he said, that any commander could make such a gross blunder as was this move under the circumstances. When at last he had satisfied himself that the report was correct, 'Then we have them,' he said quietly, and a crushing defeat ensued.

We walked through the narrow streets of the town, which were almost empty. A block between two women pushing hand-barrows and an artillery tumbril, or army provision cart, was pretty nearly all the motion to be seen. There was some beautiful modern carving in the windows of a shop into which we went; the owner told us that the *bonnes familles* were all gone, and the Germans were birds of passage who bought nothing, while the country houses outside the town were all shut up or sold. 'Peasant proprietors' and shopkeepers do not buy works of art, and he would be starved but that in the Luxembourg there were still some rich people, and he had a trade *avec l'étranger*.

In another shop the master told us that he had considered the question of going away, but the people who had migrated were not *bien reçus* at all in the rest of France. Nobody wanted them! and this would not suit him. How could he get up a new trade in a new place? It was hard

enough in the old one. So he had made up his mind to stop where he was.

Barbarous old customs linger in such out-of-the-way towns. A military surgeon had died that morning of heart complaint, and it was necessary for the poor wife to 'sit up' in state to receive all the friends and acquaintances who chose to come and see the body; the number was in proportion to the popularity of the dead man, and a crowd was therefore honourable. In this instance the house was overflowing, and our friends told us that the family looked quite stupefied with the crush and buzz in the midst of their grief.

A great *fonction* was about to take place for the opening of a Protestant Church with a spire and bells, neither of which had ever been allowed by the priests in France to a 'Temple,' and they were therefore a matter of much pride. The building had been long in hand, for the Prussian Minister grudged the funds necessary to finish it. At last the Emperor was appealed to, and, said the legend, 'he replied, "Ich will es," and so it was done directly;' the idea of paternal government certainly in perfection!

The peasant proprietors of the district, we were told by the Germans, are extremely poor. French Lorraine indeed, within five miles, is one of the districts where land is extremely subdivided, and has gone down in value 40 per cent. according to the report of the 'Société des Agriculteurs de France,' lately published. In the rest of the corn-growing districts of France it has sunk from 20 to 33 per cent. during the last few years.

General W—— had been extremely struck during the war by the conduct of the lower-class Frenchwomen. They were quite as patriotic as their husbands, and much more capable and intelligent. The sense and dignity of their conduct in the many difficult questions that naturally arose between the Germans and the conquered people was very remarkable. 'The grey mare' is very decidedly 'the better horse' in north-eastern France.

There is a change for the better in the French railroad arrangements; travellers are no longer boxed up in the wretched pens where they used to be suffocated; but still the doors are only open at a certain moment, and an *ordonnance* was posted up at all the stations, saying that 'vu les grands dangers' that are run by getting in and out of carriages, now that travellers are allowed to go on the platforms, they are ordered to take 'les plus grandes précautions' not to be killed! the sort of admonition that would be addressed to an English boy of ten years old travelling for the first time by rail. There is a curious union in France of the utmost license in some matters, an intolerance of any government that does not suit their humour at the moment, combined with a patient submission to its paternal interference in matters with which we think that it has nothing whatever to do.

The railway passes through low pleasant hills, with many vineyards bristling over them, crosses the Moselle, and up an extremely pretty valley, with wild picturesque forest land on both sides. This is the second of the *deux nobles futaies*, which supply the chief part of the timber of France, and are still possessed by great proprietors. M. Le Play, in his 'Réforme Sociale,' shows how it is only by their means, or by the State, that forests can be preserved at all. The time that is required to grow large trees, *la révolution de la forêt*, as it is called, is beyond the life of a single man, it is calculated at 120 years both in Germany and France.[1] A proprietor who has an interest in future generations, and can afford to wait, is content with the smaller revenue to be obtained from forests treated in the systematic manner necessary, each portion being set aside to be cut in its turn as it becomes ready for the axe. Peasant proprietors, of

[1] The custom of forest culture is rather different in England. Here such large trees as have reached their full growth are cut with the underwood every fifteen or twenty years, and the rest suffered to grow till they also are fit for timber. The ground is cleared in Germany.

course, strip the land and attempt to cultivate it, even when only fit for trees; they cannot live except by produce which brings in a yearly income. What Le Play calls a *famille instable*, who, although rich, treat the question only commercially, will buy and cut down a whole forest, by which a large immediate profit is realised; but the hillsides on which the trees here grow, produce when cleared only a very poor pasturage, at a very low rent, often 2½ francs per hectare, in the place of nearly 20, which is calculated for the receipts on wood, after all expenses are paid. 'While the destruction of the mountain forests is a *vrai désastre* for the nation; the loss of the supply of timber, the deterioration of the climate, which alternates between too great dryness and devastating torrents after heavy rains, the stripping of soil which leaves only bare rocks and dry ravines in the place of sheltered meadows with streams and fountains, has done incalculable harm to society, both in France and Italy.'

The question of the supply of timber for the future is all over the world becoming very serious; the sources are gradually exhausted, while scarcely anything is done to repair the waste, except by England and in parts of Germany. In India, the small cultivators cut down the trees wherever they can, and of course never plant; and the destruction of the forests has greatly injured the rainfall, dew moisture, and supply of wood in the country, while the peasants are burning the manure of their cattle for lack of better fuel, instead of putting it on the land. Government has now been obliged to interfere both for the protection of the forests which remain and to plant fresh trees. In America, along the whole line where cultivation encroaches on the backwoods, the trees are recklessly destroyed, even burnt down, accidentally or purposely, and no steps are taken to ensure future supplies of timber in place of that which is so rapidly disappearing. What is sent to Europe comes every year from a greater distance inland.

It has lately been proposed to utilise the enormous tracts of waste mountain and bog in Ireland, which will not pay for ordinary cultivation, by planting it. It seems to be forgotten that this is a most expensive work; about 8*l.* per acre is a low estimate for the first process, while no profit can be obtained for fifteen or twenty years. Peasant proprietors cannot and will not plant; it cannot be expected of them; it can be done only by men with money, who are interested personally through their heirs in the future produce of the country.

The line presently passed into the ugly Champagne country, with a large district of marshy copse intermixed with wet pasture land, and here and there an occasional herd of cattle, made up, we were told, of cows belonging to separate owners. The soil is exceedingly poor and the population very scanty, the villages lay far apart, and little pieces of corn and vegetable gardens in their immediate vicinity were the only cultivation to be seen. Much of the undrained country—half scrubby wood, half covered with wretched grass—belonged to the communes, who cut every year, and cannot afford the time necessary to let large trees grow.

At last low chalk hills began to appear on each side the valley, scored and seamed with lines of vineyard, where the champagne which supplies the universe at large is produced. How little that is called by that magical name however really comes from its legitimate home may be guessed, when we were told that the finest 'river wines'[1] only occupy an extent of six leagues, and the 'mountain wines' not very much more than double. When we were at Marienbad a few years since, we were shown the place where the sour wine of the country was, with great mystery, doctored

[1] The 'Veuve Cliquot,' the largest proprietor here, has built a great château near the railway. Her heiress-daughter married the Duc de Mortemart, a case of what the impertinent old French nobles called 'mettre du fumier sur ses terres!'

with the effervescing water of the 'Bad,' and dubbed Champagne, to the great advantage of the mixers; and there appears to be every variety of manufacture going on, both in France and out of it, of a product whose name brings in so large a harvest to the fabricators of the compound.

Paris was beginning to fill again, and the people were full of anxiety as to the change of Ministry. The unpopularity of Gambetta beneath his apparent success was growing; *il baisse.* He is often ill received at meetings, and the denunciations of Mlle. Louise Michel, the returned Communist who decrees that his crimes require that he be guillotined! show that he is losing ground with the ultra-Reds, while he is not gaining with the party of order. The moment of a man's triumph in France is the first step, indeed, in his downward progress. There are no buffers for the Chief of the State (which Gambetta is virtually) as in a constitutional sovereignty. Grévy desires to have him at the head of the Ministry, believing that 'it will use him up,' and that there will then be an end of his influence in France. Barthélemy St.-Hilaire has refused to serve with him—a singular change from the opinion he held in 1879, when he admired and trusted him with all his heart, and looked forward to his command of the State as a boon to the country. There is an extraordinary dearth of great men at present in France, or even of men of second-rate ability. Gambetta stands alone for the moment, and no one disputes his supremacy. It is not his own greatness, however, but the smallness of the rest, that gives him his present position; and he bears no rival, but surrounds himself with mere clerks.[1]

[1] It was not expected when we were in Paris that the fall of Gambetta would be so sudden, or that it would be 'unwept, unhonoured, and unsung,' as it has proved, but we heard enough to show that his 'imperious, absolute, personal policy' was not likely to last long. The *Scrutin de Liste* would have added the last screw to the tyranny he would have exercised over

Barthélemy St.-Hilaire has been a strange ruler of the Foreign Office, and it is an irony of fate that the attack on Tunis should have been made under his sway. A truly disinterested and high-minded man, and one of the first of French literary men, but who had never had the smallest experience of government work, or possessed any of the faculties necessary for ruling his kind, he was put at the head of one of the most difficult departments at the most difficult moment, and it is not wonderful if he failed.

That the French, whose ideal of a ruler would seem to be a brilliant and successful general, should so often have set literary men at the head of their affairs is strange —Guizot, Thiers, Lamartine, St.-Hilaire. The result has not been successful. Of all human beings a literary man would seem to be the least likely to possess the practical faculties required for government. The power of weighing motives and actions in the calmness of the closet—judging after the event, with the past for his material and the future chiefly considered as an audience, would seem to be the farthest removed from the statesman's quality of foreseeing at a glance the complicated consequences of immediate present action, which cannot, perhaps, be delayed for a moment, and of choosing the steps and instruments to carry out a thought, which is often like an intuition, of what is best and possible at each stage.

The poor 'Tartuffe de Tunis,' as St.-Hilaire was unjustly called when the lying concerning the Kroumirs, the equivocations about annexation and the treatment of the Bey had ceased to be popular, so that a scapegoat was wanted, has probably gone back with joy to the modest little lodging of his past literary days, in which we had long found him, thankful to have given up the great gilded

France. He could have then influenced every election from his bureau in Paris, and the particular opinion of each district, which we think so important, would have been stifled under the weight of the central orders for the men on the lists of the Government candidates.

salons of the Hôtel des Affaires Etrangères, one of the most magnificent palaces in Paris, which seemed somewhat incongruous and oppressive to his simple tastes and habits.

The arrangements of all kinds for the Tunis campaign appear to have been abominable; the peculation and the inefficiency were as bad as before the defeats of '70, particularly in everything connected with the sick, and with sanitary requisites, which were simply non-existent.

Our Orleanist friends complained bitterly that the party of order would not bestir themselves at the time of the elections, which had been lost in the department where lies their country home, and in the Paris *arrondissement* where they live, by 150 and 148 votes respectively, when both might have been easily won. But the opposition in France—*les honnêtes gens*, as they call themselves—sit still and complain, and wait for another revolution, instead of attempting the gradual changes brought about in England, when each party in turn knows that it will have its innings, under criticism, but mitigated by this knowledge, and by expectation of the responsibilities of coming office.

Lanfrey, 'un républicain très convaincu,' finds great fault with the democracy of the time of Louis Philippe 'en arborant le drapeau républicain,' which closed the door on gradual reforms. 'Elle rendit impossible l'avènement pacifique, régulier, périodique, de chaque parti au gouvernement du pays, qui fait la force et la grandeur de l'Angleterre.'

The petty bribery with petty places, the dependence on Government, the intimidation by the heads of departments, go on exactly as under the Empire. Votes are lost because the post of *garde champêtre*, or *adjoint* to the *maire*, was to be given away, and a brother or a son, or even *le cousin*, wanted it. Political arguments availed nothing against such a plea. Influence is as unscrupulously used now as under the tyranny of the Emperor, which used to be complained of so bitterly.

'Influence,' however, in France, both public and private, is depended upon for all purposes, to an extent which seems extraordinary to us. If a place in the Institute is vacant, the amount of solicitation required, the social engines which are set in motion to obtain it, are unwearied. The way in which a first success for a play or opera is secured by the efforts of private friends and paid *claqueurs* was not pleasant to hear of. The tribunals are by no means exempt. A friend of our own had a trial concerning some property going on in the Limousin, and undertook a long journey, and remained several days in the little town where it was going on 'in order to see the judge, and expose her views to him.' 'But surely he will not see you?' said we, imbued with our English notions of the inflexibility of justice. 'Not see me, my dear!' she answered, angrily. 'Why, he would be very much shocked if I did not appear, and would think it a great neglect of courtesy on my part. *C'est l'usage!*'

Everyone agreed that 'Society,' in the old sense of the word, was nearly dying out. There were plenty of balls and entertainments, but there is hardly a *salon* left. Nothing like those of the Duchesse de Broglie and Mme. de St.-Aulaire, or of Mme. Récamier and Mme. Mohl, where the political and social notabilities of the time, the literary men, artists, philanthropists, fair women and clever men of all degrees and kinds, were gathered together—Guizot and Thiers, Chateaubriand, De Tocqueville, Villemain, Lamartine, Cuvier, Cousin, Ampère, Soult, &c. Now those who desire to meet the political men must go to Government houses not much affected by 'Society,' while the literary men and artists are to be found chiefly in *salons tant soit peu Bohêmiens.*

As long as there were hopes that the Elysée would work in favour of Henri V., the Faubourg St.-Germain went to the Maréchale Macmahon's receptions; but when that bubble burst, through the obstinate folly of the Comte de Chambord, the party gave up attending them. Any change

seems possible in France;[1] the success or not of any party is a mere touch and go; and we heard that matters had gone so far among the Legitimists for the return of Henri V., with the connivance, at least, of the Maréchal, that the carriages had all been prepared for his public entry into Paris; and if he had not insisted on keeping his white flag, and had shown the most ordinary common sense, there was no doubt that he might have been placed on the throne. For how many days he would have sat there is another question.

There is no doubt, too, that Thiers, for some time after the fall of Louis Napoléon, considered that a monarchy was the best chance of a stable government for France. He called Gambetta *ce fou furieux*, and spoke seriously of the return of the Orleans family as what he desired; but his head was turned by his own position as a virtual sovereign. 'Ce petit saute-ruisseau!' as he was called derisively, when first he came to Paris from Marseilles, as a newspaper hack, soon dropped the idea; for though so good and clever a family is hardly to be met with in or out of France, they have 'no initiative,' and France requires more dash, and does not care for such quiet respectable folk. Moreover, they have put themselves into a cleft stick by the acceptance of the *fusion*, and the religious question is against them. France now insists on education being free from the priests. The Comte de Paris and his brother are sincere Catholics, and it is feared that they might try to restore the supremacy of the Church, to which France will not submit.

Religion is just now used as a stalking-horse by all sides; but there is good work going on quietly in many places—not in the direction of conversion to Protestantism, of which there is very little chance—but in greater thoughtful-

[1] 'Les choses les plus absurdes sont toujours celles ici qui ont le plus de chance de se réaliser; il y a sur le pavé de Paris 50,000 bêtes brutes, menées par quelques douzaines de fous,' says Lanfrey in 1869. 'Le manifeste du Sieur Gambetta m'a semblé une production extrêmement bouffonne,' he goes on, irreverently to 'ce tribun,' as he calls him.

ness on religious matters, as opposed to unbelief on one side and clericalism on the other.

At Paris, however, 'it must not be ignored that irreligion makes increasing progress among the people.' M. d'Haussonville's striking words must be given in French: 'Peu à peu la religion catholique a perdu l'influence qu'elle exerçait sur la masse, et . . . . le peuple parisien a passé vis-à-vis d'elle de l'attachement à l'indifférence, et de l'indifférence à l'hostilité déclarée dont nous sommes aujourd'hui témoins.' He goes on to say, that what remains is a vague belief in 'la religion du progrès,' a confused hope in a general improvement of mankind, physical and mental, a sort of mystic idea of a millennium in fact, such as existed in the early centuries. And their orators talk of Evolution and Revolution, meaning thereby either a slow progress, or the employment of violent means to bring about this dim future.

An excellent man, who had long been working at Lyons, told us that the ignorance of the workmen there was incredible. They had been left by the priests untaught on the most ordinary religious questions, and by the State, as to all secular knowledge. He talked to them at night in as amusing a manner as possible, or he would get no listeners, as nobody would ever go to a 'serious' discourse.

The suppression of the schools under the religious orders has been a mere farce; they have everywhere been re-opened under lay names, and everything goes on in them as before, whether for good or evil. The Government schools teach no religion; indeed, they are not merely negative, but teach irreligion, as was told us by impartial Protestant witnesses; and the new Minister of Public Worship openly announces that he believes in nothing, and that 'his mission is one of antagonism' to the Church which he is called upon to govern. Intolerance is almost as great among the unbelievers in France as it ever was under orthodox governments. 'When we had liberty under Louis Philippe,' said

M——, 'we could do many things; now we have a republic, it is true, but no liberty.'

The instability of everything social and political—'le provisoire perpétuel' it has been called—is a terror to quiet folk. 'So you have another change of Ministry,' said H—— to the owner of a shop in the Palais Royal. 'Yes,' he answered, ruefully, '*personne ne sait où nous allons*, one up, the other down; none can say what will become of us next.' It reminded one of De Tocqueville's melancholy letters to De Beaumont concerning 'les institutions constitutionnelles:' 'le pays les verra-t-il durer, elles ou tout autres? C'est du sable, et il ne faut pas demander s'il restera fixe, mais quels vents le remueront.'

A discussion was going on in the French papers as to the great increase of suicides in the last fifty years. 'While the population is stationary, if not diminishing in France, the proportion has risen from one in 9,833 in 1827, to one in 5,161 in 1879.' 'It is the uncertainty of the political future, the sudden gains and losses of industrial life, and the alternations of poverty and wealth, brought on by revolutions, wars, and sieges, which are answerable for this increase.' As with French newspapers in general, the question was regarded only as concerned their own country, and their statistics were not compared with those of other nations. A list, however, lately published in England, shows the average of suicides in all the great towns of Europe during the last few years. London, where it is the popular opinion that the fogs make us cut our throats, drown and hang ourselves to a fearful extent, stands far the best; the proportion, indeed, is extraordinarily below the rest—85 per million; Paris, 200; Berlin, 289; Vienna, 285; and Leipsic the bookselling, higher than all. (Why is the publishing of books so productive of mischief?)

That the situation of the artisan in Paris is most unsatisfactory at present is evident from the numerous papers on the subject given of late in the 'Revue des Deux-Mondes.'

The misery and overcrowding and drunkenness of the workmen, the wretched *cafés* or rather *cabarets-concerts*, where every species of abomination is sung and listened to with 'des trépignements' of applause, the general state of 'les mœurs' described in the articles upon 'La misère à Paris,' by M. O. d'Haussonville, are dismal. With regard to drink he gives an account of a curious book written by an *ancien ouvrier* on 'les mœurs des travailleurs Parisiens,' particularly those of the railroads, to which class the author himself belonged. He divides them into two categories—the workmen and the *Sublimes*. The first work more than they drink—these he puts at 40 per cent. The second drink oftener than they work—these are 60 per cent. But as there are only about 10 per cent. of the first class who are really quite sober, *la clientèle du cabaret* must be taken at 90 per cent.

M. O. d'Haussonville describes the *cabinet meublé*, where a man, his wife, and two or three children live in ten or twelve cubic feet of air, often underground, and with only a borrowed light through the door—the *chambrée*, a filthy lodging, where fifteen or twenty beds are crowded without the commonest sanitary precautions. Those, technically called *les misérables*, have generally only one shirt, and in order not to wear it out, they sleep summer and winter *complètement nus*.

The Parisian philanthropists speak of London, indeed, as far ahead of them in decency and in sanitary respects. It is supposed that the want of freeholds, of power over the land, is the great cause of the bad accommodation for the poor in London. But it is clear that the subdivision of property, the *partage forcé*, the interference with *liberté testamentaire* (which Le Play and many French economists consider most prejudicial to the welfare of France) is no cure for a state of things still worse among the French working class. It is evidently a far deeper question than can be reached by any mere legal arrangements, and re-

quires a moral solution to raise the standard of civilisation, to create the demand for better quarters among the people and enforce the supply of them.

The effect of the *partage forcé*, says Le Play, is bad all round; it prevents the improvement of the land, as the large proprietor is afraid to spend on what may be sold at his death; 'il détruit les petits domaines agglomérés à familles fécondes, il les remplace par domaines morcelés, où la fécondité conduit fatalement au paupérisme, et où le bien-être des individus se fonde sur la stérilité du mariage et sur l'égoïsme.' He declares that 'the disorganisation in France of manufacturing industry is owing, in great part, to the breaking up of establishments by our laws of succession—a father cannot leave his mill to a son capable of continuing his work. France has not taken the place in commerce to which her geographical position entitles her because our law of division entirely prevents the foundation of those powerful houses of commerce which are one of the essential elements of the prosperity of a nation.' 'Une réunion de 130 notables, appartenant à toutes les branches du haut commerce et des manufactures de Paris, a réclamé la liberté testamentaire' in a petition presented to the Senate in 1866. But this is too great a subject to enter upon at the end of a paper.

We walked up the arcades of the Rue de Rivoli to look for a wedding present. The enormous number of shops for the sale of *brimborions*, absurdities of all kinds, bad photographs and toys, utterly useless, and not even pretty, is more remarkable than ever. Are they put together for foreigners, or to satisfy the native burdensome tax exacted for New Year and fête-day gifts? Money is more absolutely wasted in buying them than if it were buried; for to be broken and thrown away would be the best destination of most of the *objets* that fill the long rows of shop windows in that quarter.

The hotel was very full, and we were put in what had

been a private house opening out of it, which gave a curious little glimpse into popular taste. A pretty little well furnished *salon*, with a dark ante-chamber, opened into two bedrooms, or rather closets. They were as utterly bare as could possibly be, containing only a bed, a chair, a chest of drawers at which to dress, and a tiny washing-stand; but on the chimney-piece was a large mirror, a clock, and a pair of great vases with artificial flowers: true, the clock did not go, and the vases were broken and hideous, but the *superflu* was evidently more important than the *nécessaire*, and at least we had the whole 'décoration complète.' A prosaic Englishman would have preferred a bigger basin and jug, even at the expense of the soundless clock and the frightful flowers, but evidently the normal Frenchman did not consider the matter in the same light. Unlike the thrifty country workman, his Parisian fellow will save in his meat and clothing, to keep a few *sous* at least for the theatres and the *guinguettes*. After all, there is perhaps something to be said for his choice, if only the quality were better. 'Man does not live by bread alone,' in many senses; and we are beginning to find out that the dismal lives spent in the hideous streets of our great northern hives require some interest, if not excitement, to carry them through the hard work of existence, and that we must take heed that it be of a good kind. It is told how, during the siege of Sebastopol, Lord Raglan, from the kindest of motives, sent the bandsmen of the regiments to serve their turn in the trenches, saying that it was not right to spend men's strength in music when the soldiers were dying of overwork. 'It was the last straw that broke us down,' said a poor private afterwards. 'When we didn't hear the music any more, it seemed as if all things were gone to the bad and it was all over with us;' while the French rather increased than diminished their bands, which went playing up and down before their regiments with even redoubled vigour. It certainly showed a deeper knowledge

of human nature to find out that the arms of the cornet players might be doing better service to their country than even by handling spades in the trenches.

My neighbour at the *table d'hôte* told me that she had just been to 'the Louvre, and it was so hot.' 'Yes, it is odd they do not ventilate the Long Gallery better.' 'Oh, I didn't mean the Gallery!' she replied with some scorn; 'I meant the Magasin du Louvre! We saw the pictures ages ago, when we were here before! Are there any new ones to go for?' 'Not that I know of; but then I am satisfied with the old ones,' I answered, humbly. Then, to show that *she* at least was up to the newest novelties, however behindhand I might be, she went on—'Have you seen "Rorke's Drift," painted by a Frenchman? There *is* a fine picture! Why don't the Governments buy *that?* It's first-rate! Only Lieutenant So-and-so always wears a bit of his pocket-handkerchief hanging out of his breast pocket, and that's left out, else it's *quite* perfect!' Shade of Titian!

We went to look at the despised Musée, although there was no new 'assortment' of Raphaels. It is difficult to realise one's own recollections, and to believe in the Vandalism which even up to 1848 hid all the treasures of this magnificent collection every year under a rude scaffolding on which were hung the modern pictures of the 'Salon.' It was not only that the old masters were invisible for months together, but their safety was seriously endangered, the dust was abominable, and a splinter from an awkward carpenter might have flown through the face of the Gioconda, or irretrievably ruined the Virgin of the Giardino, or the Francia portrait.

M—— and I wandered afterwards through the labyrinths of lower galleries to reach the shrine where the Venus de Milo holds her state. It is hard to put into words the quality that makes the finest Greek sculpture so utterly unlike any other 'stone-cutting' done by human hands.

It may perhaps be said to be the absolute mastery of technical skill over the material, and the living reality with which the ideal of the goddess within the marble is bodied forth. She is hacked about and armless; she has been broken across, and the half of one foot is gone; but the divinity is in her so absolutely that one scarcely desires her presentment to be more perfect. How could she tell us what she has to say more plainly than she does at present? In general the process of hewing out the thought of the artist has been so hard and uncertain that the spectator is occupied by the conquered difficulty. Here the goddess apparently stepped out of the marble, requiring no mortal hands to fashion her; and we no more inquire how or of what she was made, than if she herself had floated on a cloud into the Palace of Art.

Then, what is omitted is as telling as what is finished. When seen closely the hair is merely blocked out, but at a little distance it is clear that a stroke more of the chisel would have marred the broad effect. It is relatively right, which is the last perfection of art; the true science of proportion in selecting that which is to be made interesting is as necessary as in the correct size of the limbs and head. The profile too reveals quite a different side of her character, more sensitive, with more thought and more feeling. And this piece of perfection was found in the shrine of a village church, as one must call it, on a tiny rocky islet set in the stormy Ægean Sea, where scarcely any spectators could ever come near it. What a wealth of artistic power there must have been in Greece thus to sow her masterpieces, as does nature, on some barren rock!

She has undergone strange vicissitudes after her misfortunes at home and her perilous journey to France. During the siege of Paris she was taken down for safety against cannon-shot, and buried in the cellars, when the statue came in two, and had to be joined together afresh.

Then we walked through the endless lower galleries, full

of interest and with many 'statues of merit,' but none worthy to stand near the throne of the goddess; nothing that even approaches to the pediment of the Parthenon in the British Museum—the noble simplicity and dignity, the easy grace and glorious strength combined, of Greek art of the Age of Pericles. It is not only the mighty grasp of genius which has thus imprisoned for ever in stone the vision of an inspired artist, but the presence of individual life is there—not a symbol, or a generalisation, or a type, however ideal. There is no realism, but strong personality here; it is no abstract goddess, she is the Venus de Milo, she has a character of her own, quite different to that of any other Venus; whereas, 'most goddesses have no character at all,' to parody Pope, but are merely an assemblage of what Gibson, or Canova, or even greater men, consider the most beautiful features and forms they can put together, with nothing inside. Some statues of Michelangelo, the San Georgio of Donatello, and one or two of John of Bologna, with, curiously enough, a few of the alto-relievos of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries which we have been seeing of late in France, possess the charm. It is found even in the little procession in the old Bourget church; the heads are too big, the hands are not faultless, but these men and women live and think, while the statues in a modern exhibition at Paris or in London are almost always without this touch of what alone is valuable in art.

The spectators of all classes were few, but as many as would be seen in the British Museum. Sculpture is not a popular art. On Sunday, however, it is said that the numbers looking at the pictures are sometimes large. 'Le peuple de Paris n'est pas né musicien: en revanche, il a un goût prononcé pour la peinture,' and on the free days the modern exhibition in the Champs Elysées is crowded. There was, however, no love of art of any kind to be seen in the cottages we visited, not so much as the rudest print affixed to the walls of any one of them.

It is strange that while in England the question of peasant properties is coming to the front as the solution of agricultural difficulties, in France it is declared that 'of all the changes in our financial habits the greatest, and certainly the most unexpected, is, if not perhaps the indifference, yet the cooling of the public passion for the ownership of land. The desire of it has hitherto brought about most of our social crises, but the excessive division which is the inevitable result of our laws of succession is no longer pursued with the same fury.' Again, it is said that 'the succession duties paid to the State by the constant changes of property have become so high as almost to absorb the total value of individual property by the community.' The consequence of the fear of this, and that other investments for money are gradually becoming popular with the peasants, has not only made land much less valuable than it was, but has encouraged the rush upon great cities. 'In other countries the surplus labourer emigrates; in France, he flies, not to towns in general, but to Paris, Lyons, &c. The rush into Paris, especially, which is supposed to be the Eldorado of high wages and constant pleasure, is the source of great misery. He often finds no work there, and sinks to the lowest level of distress.'

'The disease in the vines, the mulberry, and the olive, and the impossibility of finding a fruitful appropriation for the devastated fields, has brought down rents, and forced proprietors to cultivate at a loss the land which has been abandoned.' 'In the centre and south of France,' says another authority, 'la petite culture est impraticable,' at the present time.

The state of the peasants in the different departments of course varies greatly. In Touraine a number of large estates still remain, and many of the old families reside in the châteaux for a great part of the year. There is, therefore, work for pay to be obtained, which is not possible where each plot is cultivated solely by its own family, and no

labourer is ever hired. The vine cultivation is successful, and here the report of the condition of the people was more favourable.

The importance of a *dot* or, better still, a piece of land if possible for a wife, to take the place of what is given up or mortgaged when the head of a family dies, is so great that mercenary marriages are now almost universal among the peasants. 'De mon vieux temps on demandait si une jeune fille était jolie, si elle avait un joli caractère [disposition]. A présent elle peut être bossue, louche, méchante, vilaine. All that is asked is, What has she got?' said an old man of the ancient type near Tours.

> Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher!
> The nice yellow guineas for me,

as in the refrain of the song by Burns.

In the provinces of the North-west, Normandy, &c., the small owners appear to be the best off, where they have the command of the London market and send over eggs and fowls, butter, meat, &c. The climate there is favourable for the rearing of cattle and pigs and the ripening of fruit and early vegetables, and the value of land continues high.

In the Department of the Hautes Alpes we heard of a Protestant village where the subdivision had been so great, and the cutting of the forests by the peasants so injurious, that the snows had come down on the place, and the soil had been carried away. The poverty of the people had increased in consequence to a degree amounting almost to starvation, and their English friends have subscribed with the Protestant Committee of Lyons to send the greater part of the inhabitants to form a little colony near Oran in Algiers.

In the neighbourhood of Vichy a friend of our own intended to take a walking tour, but he found that at the village inns the only food to be had was a *potage* made of cabbage, of a few slices of bread, an onion or two, and a piece

of lard. The cauldron was filled up with water three, and sometimes four, times[1] in the day, without anything else being added. This was the habitual food of the peasants, and there was nothing else but black bread to be had. He was a man of very simple habits, but he was obliged to give up his little travel.

Any one who has watched the peasant women undergoing the most severe labour in all weathers and in all states of health, ploughing, harrowing, breaking up clods with heavy hoes, lifting great weights of hay and corn up on the carts at harvest time, carrying manure on their backs, or toiling up steep hills (as we saw them constantly at Aix), with great weights of green maize, wheat, or grass on their heads from plots a mile or so from their homes, for the daily food of the stall-fed cattle, will not wonder that the infant mortality under a year old among French peasants is estimated by Jules Simon at 50 per cent. in consequence of the want of necessary care by the mothers. A friend of ours, a French doctor, was extremely struck by the superior appearance and manner of the women whom he saw in our English cottages, their clean, tidy looks and, what he called, their refined ways, as compared to those of his own country-women, and the general comfort under their home-keeping life of the extremely ordinary houses which he entered.

Our journey was nearly ended. Passing from Paris to Boulogne, the great melancholy marshes which lie for forty or fifty miles on each side of the railroad, where the rivers, the Somme and the Oise, have been allowed to wander at their 'own' by no means 'sweet will,' and little can be grown but reeds and willows, the small owners have evidently been utterly unable to carry out any general system of drainage, which indeed could only be undertaken on this

[1] Mr. Hamerton, in *Round my House*, confirms what is here said concerning the food and clothing, the ignorance of all kinds, and the niggard thrift of the French peasants, who will hardly allow themselves proper food, even where it can be easily afforded.

scale by the common action of large proprietors, who have intelligence, money, and, above all, patience enough to wait for the results of the great expenditure it would entail—as was done in the fen reclamations, the Bedford levels, &c., or by Government, which can hardly be expected to spend the large sums required on what is private property. The harvest in these parts had been poor, and four bad years had put the peasants in low spirits and great straits.

La petite culture is scarcely to be found all along the road, except in the immediate vicinity of the poor, one-storied houses in the ill-built villages, and in the market gardens round the towns—i.e. the limit where the boundary is reached, at which manure can be carried with little expense either in hods or wheelbarrows. It is often forgotten that in fields distant from the cottages the cost to those who have no horse and cart, and must hire to convey the manure and bring back the produce, besides paying for the ploughing of the land, eats up any possible profit. In England, allotments, even at the distance of half a mile from a village, are but little unpopular. In one such case a field containing them has earned the expressive name of 'Wearisome.'

The sterile sandy hills in the Département du Pas de Calais lie uncultivated, and could apparently only be utilised by large flocks of sheep, such as are seen on the other side the Channel; but this would require a capital which the small owners cannot command. Probably the reason of the extremely bad quality of the mutton (and there is none good to be found in France) is the stall-feeding by twos and threes of the sheep, which are gregarious animals, to be kept in perfect health only by a life of constant motion in the fresh air.

In the comparison between peasant proprietors and the English labourers among whom we have lived all our lives, the superior comfort of these last is very striking—the higher scale of food, clothing, amusement and knowledge;

above all, the chances for their children of rising in the world, which a fairly good labourer, in constant work, with a good cottage, and allotment and a solvent benefit club, can command; and there are hundreds and hundreds of thousands of such men amongst us.

The French or German peasant, with his miserable, dirty, comfortless home, his wretched little plot of ground, above which he never lifts his thoughts, his wife ground down and prematurely aged by hard work in the fields, with sickly half-fed children, eating bad black bread, drinking buttermilk and sour wine, and with not enough of any of these—above all, without even the wish, much less the hope, of bettering his condition—is in every respect in an inferior position.

Take even the matter of amusements, where we are supposed to be deficient: there is hardly a village in England where the squire and parson, the farmers, artisans, and labourers (that useful admixture of classes) do not get up a cricket club, with play on Saturday afternoons. Everywhere there are school feasts, matches, little concerts, lectures, and penny readings. There are no athletic sports whatever in France, and the only 'diversion' that we saw was a procession or two, headed by a priest and his acolytes, followed by girls and children, who were watched by the men of the place with a scowl and a scornful jeer; even these are becoming rare. There is no one in the dead level of the common French village life who can afford the time or the money to originate anything among his fellows, either of instruction or recreation. The ignorance and superstition are startling, not only as to book matters, but concerning health and cookery, as much as of geography and politics. It is quite a mistake to suppose that good cooking is found, except among the *bourgeois* class and in towns, as Mr. Hamerton bears witness, while we are speaking, of purely rural life.

When the extraordinary advantages of climate and soil in

the south of France are considered, that trellises of vines can be grown every thirty yards or so apart, with crops of maize, roots, and haricots between, that grass can be cut three and four times in the year, that fruit of all kinds ripens season after season, and has a good sale, and the enormous saving of fuel where a fire during the chief part of the year is only lighted for an hour or two to serve for the tiny cooking, it is only marvellous that the owners are not more prosperous with all their hard work and thrift. It would seem as if the only explanation was that, *adscripti glebæ*, their land system induces them to try and get a subsistence out of small patches which are utterly incapable of affording it. 'No one can expect to live on a holding of five acres,' as Mr. Sub-Commissioner Kane remarked lately in Ireland.

The French holdings are, on an average, little more, and the cultivation of them is so bad that, as Mr. Caird tells us, production is nearly as two to one in favour of the English system; while it takes eight peasant farmers and their families to work the same extent of land in France as is done here by a farmer and five or six labourers.[1] M. de Lavergne, a most impartial witness, and the greatest French writer on agricultural affairs, moreover declares these last to be far better off than the French small proprietor. The advocates of the system have lately brought forward this large surplus of producers as one of its advantages. There is nothing new under the sun, and it is curious to hear once again the arguments used by the labourers who destroyed machines at the time of the Swing riots in 1830. 'It's wicked,' said the rioters. 'Here's a wheat field would employ twenty men for a fortnight to cut and carry, and these rascally machines will finish it off in four days with seven! Let's burn 'em all!'

[1] To increase production without increasing the number of hands employed, and so add to the general comfort, is the ultimate object of economical science, the solution of the greatest social difficulties.—*De Lavergne.*

The state of the French peasant is going down, that of the English labourer is in the ascendant; his wages have risen and are rising; the use of the dreaded machines is giving him the pay due to the skilled workman; and while it cost him five days' work to pay for a bushel of wheat in 1770, he can earn it now in less than half the time. He indeed benefits more than anyone by all the agricultural improvements introduced, while in France intense conservatism and ignorance combined prevent any such novelties; so that, when the 'fields of wheat in California of 3,000 acres' are considered, with every advantage of machinery, it is no wonder that their agriculturists are in fear for the future.

As to holding up the system as a panacea for the evils of the poor of England, still less of Ireland, this is often done by those who have had little experience of the land or the people. It requires, even for the bare existence of the owners, in the first place, the small families of the French race, and next an amount of thrift which no English, much less Irish,[1] labourer is capable of, the grudging of every morsel of food which is put into their own and their children's mouths, saving on every article of clothing (rather rags) which they are forced to use, the spending of every hour, even of Sunday, in hard work, the giving up everything which makes life valuable for an object which, regarded only as such, is valueless. To esteem a bit of land as a means of comfortable livelihood is intelligible, but to treat its possession as an end, a sort of Moloch to which the well-being of the whole family is to be sacrificed, is an ideal which, even if it were possible in England, can hardly be esteemed desirable. The small amount of land here compared to the population will always make it a luxury which a poor man cannot afford. And it will answer his purpose better therefore to hire, and employ his

[1] ''Tis the finest divarsion that's under the sun
To sit by the fire till the praties is done,'
will hardly make a peasant property answer.

capital in working the land, than to sink his money in buying it. 'His capital will go six times further in hiring land than in buying it, because he has the advantage of working with the landowner's capital, which he has at the low rate of 3 per cent., while the proportion of comparatively unproductive fixed capital in buildings is much larger on small farms than large,' Mr. Caird declares.

With regard to the moral effects of the system, of which we hear so much, let anyone take the trouble of reading the powerfully realistic picture of 'Les Paysans,'[1] and see what Balzac, with no theories to carry out or political conclusions to serve, considers as its result—the sordid aims, the mean ways of attaining them, the dismal level of poverty and ignorance which is brought about by it, and then inquire carefully before helping to put pressure on Government to interfere artificially in trying to produce a state of society such as is there depicted.

[1] The book was given us by a Frenchman, well acquainted with, and able to judge of, country life, who told us that it was the truest account possible of the state of the peasantry in the parts of France that he knew.

PEASANT PROPERTIES IN AUVERGNE.

JOTTINGS IN AUVERGNE.

We have had another opportunity of studying peasant properties in France for a month in a fresh district. Royat is a watering-place which has lately sprung into favour; indeed it has hardly yet attained its majority. Five-and-twenty years ago a *curé* remarked that in winter the snow always melted at a particular spot; a hole was dug, and the hot water bubbled up from the old volcanic communications in the heart of the earth, which once raised the line of sugar-loaf hills, the now extinct craters of the Puy-de-Dôme and its neighbours, and poured forth the streams of lava which still can be distinctly traced along their sides. The waters were known to the Romans, who, with the wonderful instinct which detected everything of value or interest in a new province, had made their stone 'piscines,' and used the spring for their warm baths, traces of which were disinterred when the 'source' was rediscovered.

We crossed France by the Lyons railroad, passing forests of shabby stunted wood in very sterile soil, tracts of sandy or chalky land, with withered crops of potatoes, stunted maize, corn just reaped, and often barren hills and commons of which hardly any use was made, where in England hundreds of sheep would have found a living. Here, three or four together, with a boy to look after them, or (in two cases only) twenty or thirty, with a wretched *bergère*, were all that we saw.

That the climate allowed peaches to ripen on standards was evident near the towns, but the peasant cultivators were too down-trodden to grow even an apple-tree. At last we reached the plains of the Limagne, and matters improved. We passed through Clermont—a dark dirty town, crowned with its beautiful cathedral built of black lava, set high on a little hill, and the great landmark far and near. Royat is only a mile away—a mere settlement of hotels, which are perched on the side of a narrow gorge, with the hot water bubbling up at the foot. Each house seems intent on climbing as it were on the shoulders of the one below, and for each a perch is cut in the solid mountain side higher than the last. 'Cet emplacement pour maison à vendre' was inscribed on a wall of rock seventy or eighty feet high, with a morsel of vineyard at the top, the whole of which would have to be removed bodily before any dwelling could be built there.

We fortunately found a resting-place on the hog's back above the steaming close garden of the *établissement*, with a grand view of the cathedral, in its subject plain, but sadly masked by the lodging-houses growing up in every direction. The whole place exists only as an attendant on the bathers and spa-drinkers—an assemblage of hotels, flies, booths, sedan-chair porters, fruit and flower women, donkeys; all collected for a season which lasts only about three months, after which everything is closed, and subsides into solitude, silence, and snow, described by the few residents as *comme la mort*. A band played in the garden to encourage us in our duty; and on Sundays a very mingled company came up from Clermont to listen. Squat, ugly, comfortable-looking *bourgeoises*, dressed in hideous garments —'high fashion,' in large *bergère* hats, with a whole *panache* of feathers, or seven or eight red roses as big as saucers, and a simpering, conquering look under them inexpressibly comical: 'Look at me, and learn; *I* am the pink of the fashion.' The gowns were of great-patterned tartans in

red, yellow, and blue squares. French taste in dress is confined absolutely to Paris.

The tops of the houses belonging to the hotel below made a terrace for our apartments above, looking over the little gorge to the mountain beyond, seamed and scored with vineyards up to the bare rock; the common *salon* opened on this, but as the Frenchwomen would not allow a chink to be opened on the closest day, and, if the English surreptitiously let in a little air, rushed up and closed the window violently in their very faces, the room was hardly habitable.

We drove up the side of the volcano of Gravenoire, with peeps of the Puy-de-Dôme, the great pride of the district; it is almost conical, one side quite inaccessible, and at the top are the remains of a temple of Mercury, with great flights of steps ascending at right angles,—a most striking place of worship of the 'herald god new lighted on this heaven-kissing hill,' as his votaries must have felt when they ascended the mountain. It has only lately been discovered, and a number of curious little images and tiles and pottery have been dug up in the excavations which are still being carried on.

We turned down a twisting sandy lane among the vineyards in search of villages. Here and there was a tiny wood of old chestnuts, and rows of great walnuts in full bearing; scraps of ground with hay or corn, minute beyond conception, lay in the midst of the vines; the *morcellement* was greater than even at Aix-les-Bains. A bit fifty yards by thirty looked quite large. If I asked the value of the land they laughed at the notion of a *hectare* (2½ acres); they bought it, they said, by the *toise*, six feet square—or a hundred *toises*, a *quartonay;* a little bit here, a little bit there, very often at an hour's distance from each other, as they could get hold of it. 'Oh, no, not lying together; nobody had land lying together!' I spoke to a bettermost sort of a man who supplied the hotels with wine. He had

ten acres, quite an estate—400 *ares*—but all scattered up and down, just like the rest. A large piece together did not exist. I asked why they did not buy up or exchange so as to have their property under their hands. It was quite impossible; there is the greatest jealousy of each other, no one can bear his neighbour to be better off than himself. I heard of running up the price at an auction from sheer spite to twenty francs the *toise*. The fortunate buyer paid 20*l*. for his scrap, for which he might get in a good year a tolerable percentage; in the last six years he would have received next to nothing. Last year the hail destroyed every grape on it—vine culture is the most gambling of crops. Our boy driver took our crazy carriage up and down the twisting tracks among the vineyards, which thrive in this black volcanic sand. The grapes were in very bad condition; the wet and the sunless summer had brought on the oïdium, and it was melancholy to see the bunches dropping away black and mouldy, or with little berries not larger than peas. A month of fine weather was required to ripen what was left, which, poor people! this autumn never gave them. We found one old woman cutting wretched stuff for her cow on a scrap of green among the vines; a young one was gathering weeds by the road-side, thorns, thistles, &c., for hers. The milch cows do all the cart work, dragging manure, &c.; they lead a hard life, like the women, everywhere. An old woman was reaping, a young man acting chambermaid at ——. 'The men do the light work themselves and leave the heavy to their wives,' said J.

At last we reached the village of Beauséjour, built in such a hole on the hill-side that, until we were close upon it, there was not so much as the top of the church tower to be seen. An impossibly barbarous place, the houses dropped about as animals or children might have done, built of black dismal stone, in the narrowest of alleys, twisting to and fro and without the smallest plan, no

place where two carts could pass. We had to make the circuit of the whole village, as it was impossible to turn anywhere, even before the church, climbing up the steepest of pitches as a wind-up. Heaps of manure lay in the streets; dark, dirty, miserable cowsheds with muddy yards alternating with houses. A pleasant-looking woman, who had been for twenty years chambermaid at one of the hotels, showed us her house, part of one which had once been good in the old days before subdivision; she was preparing hemp which the *tisserand* would weave into a coarse cloth. She said that the snow lay thick on the ground from November till March, and they did not leave their houses much then. They never bought fuel, they burnt the vine-shoots, and picked up any bits they could find. 'But you must suffer from cold?' 'Oh, no, because we go into the stables with the cows,' she said with great gusto. '*Il y a là une si douce chaleur*, it is so pleasant that one can't help nodding with sleep; the roof is boarded, and there is a little window, and when one comes out into the open air there is such a steam and it is like an oven,' she ended with pride and enthusiasm.

Then she talked of her two children: 'Mais les enfants d'aujourd'hui, ça ne veut pas obéir, ça veut faire à son soûl comme ils veulent; ils n'ont pas de foi non plus, pas comme de nos jours;' the golden age lies always behind the old.

In another house there was no window whatever,—only two panes, which did not open, over the doorway,—and no light or air unless the door was ajar. No shelf, press, or cupboard was to be seen, and on the floor lay onions, dirty clothes, bread, sticks, and the indescribable remnants of never-stirred rubbish. One could not say the floor was 'dirty as the ground,' because out-of-doors the pure rain fell and cleared away the filth, whereas within no water was ever used by human hands, or indeed could be, unless the whole house had been turned out-of-doors. 'Where do you sleep?' said I. 'Oh, up there.' There was no

stair or opening of any kind. 'But how do you get to it?' 'By the street.' She led the way up a steep path to the road above, by which we reached the room above, with a door to the street. True, they must pass to bed through the cold and wet, but then they spared themselves the expense of a stair. The pleasures of spending her evening with her cow were insisted upon by this mistress also.

Another day we drove along the side of the hill on the great highway leading to the Mont Dore and the interior of Auvergne. The soil seemed so fertile that everything grew there together. Pear and apple trees, heavy with red and yellow fruit, as in a child's picture-book—great chestnuts; while literally under the trees grew patches of corn and potatoes; the vines here, however, were not good. 'Combien vos pêches?' shouted our driver to a man who was gathering them in his orchard. '4*d*. for 25,' replied he. 'Mais c'est affreux ce que vous demandez!' was the answer as we drove on. Above our heads rose the lower slopes of the mountain thus richly clothed, and between the trees on the other side were beautiful views of the valley. It was an idyllic country, but the inhabitants were of the most dirty prose, without an exception as far as we saw. At the *table d'hôte* dinner the antagonism between North and South France came out strongly. 'They are like two nations, and do not seem to love each other much,' said I. 'No, indeed,' was the answer; 'one may say indeed that there are four nations in France; and the eastern provinces towards Germany, and Brittany in the west, have as little sympathy with each other as those in the north and south.'

I looked through the French newspapers every day; they were singularly jejune. There was very little about the war in Egypt, but much about the theatres and the last horrid (Fenayrou) murder, which was being dramatised 'as,' said the learned critic, 'was done by Shakespeare in his *puissante ébauche*, "A Yorkshire Tragedy!" and again

in "Arden of Feversham," also by him, *singulièrement puissante'* ! ! !

The next day we drove to Beaumont, another little village-town in the midst of the vineyards. The houses were higher and of more pretension than the last, but the pavement was of large loose stones, with a gutter in the middle of the street, and we were nearly jolted out of the carriage. The women sat gossiping and knitting in the roadway; there was no furniture in the dismal dark houses, which did not seem to be intended to live in, but merely for sleeping and eating. We everywhere asked the number of children, the last census of France showing that the population is nearly stationary, and that it is diminishing in thirty-four rural departments:[1] that an average of three children to a family was the smallest that could keep up even the present numbers, and that even this is not now attained. Two children were more common than three—very often there was one. 'Je n'en ai pas, à quoi bon avoir des enfants? Il faut vivre,' was one cynical answer. One old woman had three sons and only four grandchildren. In one house only in all the country we found seven, and the woman said there was no such family in the place, that everybody wondered at her. The Doctor told us that even four were very uncommon.

We turned into the curious old twelfth-century church, with small round-headed windows, thick walls, round pillars with carved capitals, about the choir. Two old bodies were praying; one of whom whispered to me to go and look at 'Notre Dame, with the dead Seigneur on her knees.' 'Ça fait pleurer, ça fait pitié à voir.' It was a rather ugly modern plaster group over a tawdry altar.

[1] 'Il y a moins de naissances en France que dans les autres pays de l'Europe.' The calculation is made from the beginning of the century when the diminution of the proportion of births to deaths began. Some statisticians consider that the 'phénomène tient à la loi du partage forcé.' *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, June 1882.

The women were standing round the fountain, and we had some chat about the badness of the grapes—everybody liked a 'crack.' 'Au revoir, madame!' they cried as we drove off. We stopped to talk to a man who was dressing the vines, in the sweat of his brow indeed; he looked ill and was out of spirits. 'It was sad to see the way in which the crop was falling off, for there had been good promise. He should get little.' 'How do those live who have only land?' 'Badly; for his part he was a *distillateur* from the *marc* (the remains left when the grapes have been trampled and squeezed), so he had a weekly wage. If the phylloxera came they would all be ruined, and forced to *expatrier* themselves,' which he seemed to consider the greatest possible misfortune for his children—very unlike an English or even Swiss father. The horror of the phylloxera is like that of the plague, in Germany as much as in France. One lady told me that she had sent peaches from near Paris, wrapt in vine leaves, to her daughter-in-law at Frankfort. The young lady was summoned to the police-office, made to swear in writing that she was ignorant of the crime which had been committed, after which peaches, vine-leaves, and basket were solemnly burnt before her eyes. 'Elle manqua de pleurer!'

We drove to Montferrand, once a fortified place, to see the fifteenth-century town-houses of the nobles, who then lived in the now demolished châteaux, and where Charles IX. had a small palace. Beautiful spiral stone staircases in corner towers, as at Blois, either with pillars or ascending windows, with wonderfully delicate mouldings, led to arched open corridors, with elaborate groinings and keystones, communicating with the *piano nobile*. They were as solid and perfect as when built three hundred years and more ago, and looked fit to last for centuries more. Here and there were fine old high reliefs—Adam and Eve, and a serpent with a woman's head, carved in the black lava, which cuts as true as a cameo. The art was perfect. In these houses

the *cultivateurs* of the neighbourhood were squatting—it could not be called living, with scarcely any furniture but heaps of dirt, partitions cutting up the beautiful courts and rooms in which they huddled, blocking the windows, bringing everywhere squalor and nastiness, living like animals. It was a strange sight. The world has gained a good many things in three hundred years—liberty, and knowledge, and interests and thoughts of all kinds to live for; but in what were the begging crew that hung round us the better for what it had won? The old French nobles were a quick-witted, artistic, intelligent race, who misused their gifts it is true, and threw away their opportunities, but for whom there were great openings, great possibilities of virtues—witness such men as the Chevalier Bayard, Fénelon, &c.—whereas these their actual successors, squalid, ignorant, narrow-minded and dirty, seem to have no object but to put by many sous; who imperil the future of France by a diminishing population, in order to carry out their ideal of having only children enough to enable them all to be kept at home, so as to succeed to the wretched little property, where they continue as squalid, as ignorant, as narrow and unintelligent as their parents. There could hardly be a more dismal sight. I sat drawing the wonderfully perfect art, surrounded by a herd of little girls, comfortably dressed, each shouting that *she* had seen the carriage first, and had exclusive right to a penny for showing us the way up the alley. The begging was disgraceful. They belonged to a nun's school, and I bade them tell their mistress how shocked the strangers were. They nearly devoured J—— when she brought out the coveted sous. We appealed to three old women sitting in their caps in the street as usual, though it rained, but I could get little help from them; a distribution of sous would evidently not have been unpleasant in their own cases. One of them took me into her house, belonging also to 'the *vieux temps*, when the place was full of nobles.' There was hardly a table or press; all was dirty as usual, and empty

but for a great cask. The old husband came in from his vineyard. He said he could not work in the rain. He counted on thirty to fifty *pots-de-vin*, containing two bottles each, for a *quartonay* (which is not much above the twentieth part of an acre). We heard afterwards that 184 gallons per acre is the average production of France. One old woman had two children, another three, the next only one, but there were four grandchildren. The old man said his two sons were married, 'et nous leur avons donné à chacun du pain et du vin'—i.e. a bit of corn ground and of vineyard each, but the old people had great difficulty in living on the diminished remainder in such a year. It seemed strange that they should despoil themselves for the sake of strong young men.

The house belonging to Charles IX. proved to be very handsome, with the same spiral stair carvings, and coats of arms over an archway in the street. As we passed out, a sweet gentle old woman came up. '*Ah, vous admirez ma maison!* Yes, it is mine, but I have given it to my son.' As she spoke, a cross disagreeable young woman looked out of the portal and called to her in a loud rude voice to come in. 'What was she doing out there, keeping them waiting in that way?' The old lady looked frightened, broke up her talk with us directly, and hurried in. It was evidently a King Lear story. J—— told me of such another. Her aunt and uncle possessed a farm; the son, a weak young man, married the servant—*bonne travailleuse,* but with a temper. She took possession of the situation, and the poor old mistress was entirely thrown aside, and not allowed to take so much as an apple without leave of her daughter-in-law. In another case the widow had the *jouissance* of the whole house; her three sons married and brought in their wives; the sisters-in-law quarrelled, one pair went away, the house was divided between the other two, and the mother was thrust into a room with a smoky chimney, so that she had to keep the door open all the winter, to preserve her eyesight,

and this though the whole place was legally hers. The living of several families in one house is practised everywhere, but does not seem to succeed in any country.

I sat by a clever, sharp, cynical old lady, a widow with property near Bordeaux, who talked of the ravages of the phylloxera which is ruining the Medoc. I questioned her as to the excessive *morcellement*. Michelet declares that the peasants throw obstacles in the way of anyone who attempts to unite the small morsels of land. She gave the same evidence, and added that the jealousy amongst them of anyone rising above the others was excessive. She talked of old French memoirs of Francis I.'s time and later. 'There are queer stories in them.' I said that it was at least a comfort that the world had made progress since then. '*Vous trouvez, madame?* and in what respect, *s'il vous plaît?*' answered she in her most sarcastic tones. 'We are more civilised in the sense of being less cruel; *mais quant aux mœurs*, there is not a pin to choose between that time and this. I was *à même* to know a good deal about the Emperor's Court, and I can tell you nothing could be worse, a curiosity of evil.' 'But the respectable people at Paris are many.' 'You had better not look too close; and *you* are just as bad.' 'No,' I declared; 'there is a fast fashionable set whose misdeeds are all known, but the mass of the upper class in England are respectable to the core.' 'Ah! but then you marry to please yourselves, and a man knows the girl with whom he is to live. How can you expect people to be faithful to each other who have often never met till all is settled, and who know that a marriage is a pure matter of business between the parents?' She felt the point with even curious strength. The peasant marriages are as mercenary, or more so, depending on the amount of land which each can bring to the bargain.

Next day we drove to a hamlet high up near the Puy-de-Dôme, taking the Doctor's little boy with us to show us some *intérieurs*. The view up the zigzags of the mountain

road, with the immense plain stretching far to the north, speckled with villages, and spurs of promontories running out into it, formed a very striking sight—there were no trees but fruit trees below; but quite on the rocky summit grew some small firs.

We went into the house of a *nourrice*, where the baker from Clermont sent his children. 'What could his wife do? she could not attend to her business and keep her baby!' To have a little maid as in England was quite out of the case. We entered a large stable, with a central stone pillar and vaulted roof, which the owners had built themselves; on one side were three cows, on the other two wooden beds in one frame against the wall, with a couple of cradles and a cot; the sheets tolerably clean; the floor without an attempt at a pavement of any kind; filthy to a degree not describable, with the cows' litter, the chicken's dirt. A quantity of old bits of wood, broken boxes lay in the corner, with the chest for corn, while the clothes hung on ropes in the midst of the disorder; there was no press, no cupboard or shelf to be seen—and but one little window near the beds. Presently there was a wailing sound in the darkness, and the nurse took up a child and dandled it kindly; it looked sickly and small and cross; then out of another scrambled a fine strapping boy of two years old. 'I took him from the first day he was born and brought him up from Clermont.' The whole was so strange, and the Rembrandt effect so striking, that I sat on a three-legged stool just inside of the door to draw it. The chickens came under my petticoats, scratching in the manure; a pig grunted outside just behind me; the fleas jumped cheerfully (and agreeably to themselves I have no doubt) on my hand in the open. The instincts of civilisation were too strong, and I came to an end, dead beat. The woman had the usual three children of her own, and three sheep were taking an afternoon walk with her boy. They all slept summer and winter in the dark and horrible discomfort from choice; she had a

room upstairs which they let, and a small kitchen with a fireplace, but only for cooking. They possessed cows, pigs, sheep, poultry, besides receiving pay for the room and the children; but they preferred to live thus like brute beasts in order to save fuel. No book or paper was to be seen, indeed there was no light whereby they could have been read. Anything more ugly socially I never saw. We went into several other houses, the cow arrangements of which were just the same; in one, however, the woman said they only slept in the stable in winter. She also had nurse children. Another had just lost a baby which fell into boiling water while she was away at work; it had lived twenty-four hours in agony, 'quite skinned.' No doctor is ever sent for or thought of, said Dr. P., except for fractures; the people die or get well, as happens, without help of any kind. They never wash, except hands and face at the fountain, from January 1 to December 31, and such a thing as a basin or jug was never anywhere to be seen. That respectable tradesmen should choose to have their children brought up in the intolerable barbarism of such a life, for any consideration whatever, was almost incredible.

My French neighbours at the *table d'hôte* showed no surprise at what I told of the cottages. 'How is it then with you?' I said to a lady from Brittany. 'Hommes, femmes, et bêtes, tout ça vit pêle-mêle,' said she. 'How is it in Touraine?' I asked another lady. 'Oh, no, they do not live in the cowsheds,' said she, 'only in the stables, and there is generally a little off-place where they sleep.' There seemed little difference in this respect in the different parts of France. The most well-doing country life was said to be in Normandy, where the subdivision was not great and many tenant farms remained. There homesteads with 'trente bêtes à cornes' exist, and enough land still lies together to allow it to be properly cultivated.

A high level railway of thirty miles, with a viaduct across the Royat valley, and steep curves above our heads,

had last year been opened to the baths of Mont Dore and the hill districts beyond; 'chemin de fer de l'état.' There had been two bad falls of earth to begin with; 'they acknowledged three men were killed and thirteen wounded, so you may judge how many more there must have been, for Government never tells.' This year the delays were incessant. 'We can drive to the Mont Dore in four hours, and the rail takes three hours and three-quarters, and twenty minutes of carriage after that,' chuckled the driver. Wiser men than these declared that a State railway meant bad construction, bad service, and complete disregard of the convenience of travellers. The advantages of a State proprietorship of English lines was certainly not borne out by what we heard of its conduct in France.

The French companies do not err by over-consideration for the wants of passengers. On the great artery from Paris to Lyons and the South there were only two early and two late trains; the *rapide* at midday ceased on September 15, because the *étrangers* were gone, and it would probably not be filled by natives. No second-class passenger was allowed in first-class trains, and it was said that unless the French lines reformed their ways, there was great danger of the Germans, in connection with the St. Gothard Tunnel, carrying off a great part of the traffic to Italy and the East.

We crept up the long zigzag road behind the Puy-de-Dôme leading to Fontana, crossing the little mountain line twice. 'Ah!' said our driver, 'how it has terrified the old women! One of them from a mountain village ran home half dead with fright, saying she had seen a line of black cars drawn by nothing, and it must have been the Devil in person driving, for she saw him vomiting fire and smoke in front.'

Not far off we came upon a solitary little chapel. '*Il paraît que cette Vierge a beaucoup de vertus, elle est très puissante—on vient de tous côtés* to entreat her.' There

was another in the Clermont Cathedral, evidently considered as a separate person, hung round with all sorts of offerings, 'very powerful.' A black edition occupied another chapel. This variety is generally very old and particularly efficacious, being, it is believed, a survival of the idols formed of meteoric stones, probably like the image of Diana of the Ephesians 'that fell down from Jupiter.'

The Devil and the Virgin are the great objects of fear and adoration among the peasants; the remainder of the hierarchy of Heaven is comparatively unimportant. But, if help is not to be had from one potentate, even a Saint does not disdain to take it from the other, as may be seen in the story of St. Kado. He had entreated 'Madame la Vierge' to obtain a bridge for him over a certain ill-conditioned river. 'La ménagère du Paradis,' however, replied that such things did not concern women, 'et qu'il fallait en parler à la Trinité.' The rest of the story must be given in French, for the pronouns are untranslatable. 'La Trinité, qui avait toute sorte de considération pour St. Kado, répondit qu'elle ne pouvait pas lui accorder sa demande, parce que les saints de la Bretagne la ruinaient en miracles, et que les anges, qu'elle aurait pu y employer, étaient occupés ailleurs.' St. Kado, thus rejected, turned to the Devil, 'who has always been considered an excellent mason,' and 'asked for his plans and conditions.' Satan drew an admirable bridge on red paper. And then comes the ordinary story of the compact, by which he was to have the first soul that passed the bridge, and how he was cheated by a black cat driven over by the Saint. And one cannot help taking the Devil's side, who has honestly completed his bargain, and is defrauded rather indecently by the wiles of the holy man.

We came on a queer proof of the Virgin's power at Beauséjour. A large stone outdoor stair led to an upper chamber, but the top stone had fallen, and there was no communication above. 'What has happened?' said I to

the blear-eyed mistress, who sold wine and very unsavoury-looking *comestibles.* 'Oh,' answered she, 'at the *fête patronale* of Notre Dame six weeks back, we had a ball up here' (the ball must have been 'limited,' for the room could hardly have been fourteen feet square), 'and they were quarrelling, seven or eight of them, out on the balcony, when it all came down together. Mathieu had his leg broken, and Georgette's arm, and the rest were shaken, but nobody was killed, *par la grâce de Notre Dame, parce que c'était sa fête.*' It was certainly very kind of her, for these votaries squabbling in her honour were hardly creditable disciples.

We went to another *fête patronale* a few days after, expecting to see some church processions and dancing of national *bourrées*, at a small town a few miles off. We crawled along the vineyard lanes, with lovely rose-coloured mountain pinks fringing the rocky banks, to Beaumont, which looked rather dirtier and drearier than before, the women sitting in the streets at one end of the village, the men at the other. The road leading from a place of fifteen hundred inhabitants to one of three thousand was like the bed of a torrent, with great stones as big as one's head and the soil washed away between. It behoved the communes to mend the by-roads, but it was evident that nothing had ever been done by any commune anywhere since the towns existed, though the stones literally encumbered the ways. As we jolted slowly along, with a number of folk strolling to the fête, men and women generally separate, I saw a blouse who was shouting the 'Marseillaise' very discordantly as he walked. 'What is the matter with him?' said I to the driver. 'Qu'est-ce qu'il a, ce monsieur?' replied he. 'Il est soûl.' 'Is there much drinking?' 'Well, the *cabarets* are full enough on Sunday.' The statistics of drinking are not very satisfactory, but it is difficult to get drunk on this thin red wine. 'It is *les richards* only who drink brandy.' Presently we reached Aubières, where in a long *place*, houses

on one side, trees on the other, stood a line of booths and merry-go-rounds, fortune-telling going on in one, a wild beast or two and acrobats in the others; bobbing for apples, a greased pole further on—the whole like a very shabby ugly fair in England. The people were marching up and down staring at each other, doing nothing, seeing nothing, quiet, dull, and contented. Presently a sort of club feast procession, with an ugly flag, 'Les enfants d'Aubières' on it, marched through with music. That was all the amusement we saw. On balconies and outside stairs the *bourgeoisie* of the town sat in state, looking on, dressed in pale blue and lilac silk, with much white lace, and droll travesties of Paris fashions. It was a lugubrious sight, and this was the one festival of the year. Over a very ugly-looking *cabaret* was a placard announcing a ball for the evening, else there was no sign of dancing—no costumes but the white caps, with a broad riband, and blouses of shining plum-coloured calico, with large felt hats. Anything more vulgar, duller, emptier I never saw. The 'intelligent man' of whom one is ever in search here turned up; he said that half the vine crop was lost already by the disease. The poorer people had some of them two or three *ares* each, the fortieth part of an acre, and worked at day-work, earning forty sous a day; there would be great distress among these. His little boy did not like his father's delay in talking to me. He was crying violently, because they had put cognac in his coffee *pour jouer*, and grew very cross. When his father stopped, and he could not get on, he flew into a passion, and took up a stone to throw at his father, who only laughed. The spoiling of children in France is great.

The extraordinary disregard for the value of time in the peasant economy is most remarkable. Thirty or forty women from the villages east of Clermont and Royat, and still more from the mountain hamlets, went in to the town every morning during summer. First, the detachments with milk; then groups, each with a basket on her head,

carrying eggs, peaches, butter, pears, a cauliflower or so, and some haricots, whatever, in short, was in season; many of them walking six or seven miles. They are so suspicious of each other that no one can trust her neighbour to do her work, and the little 'higgler,' so useful in our English country life, buying up the produce, and taking it into the town, saving the utterly unnecessary labour, waste of shoe leather and time of the individual seller, and leaving the house-mother to look after her children and her household, is impossible here for want of confidence.

The waste of time for the men, who spend half the day in going up and down, working at ten or twelve scraps of land, many of them an hour's walk apart (as we are constantly told) is incredible. A vineyard requires constant care, and the fifteen or sixteen processes, detailed to us by an old vine-dresser, are long in carrying out; it cannot be left without incessant attention from February to October, during which a bad week may ruin all. Every day we met processions of basket carts, so small as to be quite a curiosity; sometimes fifteen or sixteen were following each other, drawn by milch cows, who often go twenty miles in the day, their milk being diminished accordingly, sometimes to about seven or eight pints a day. They were carrying wood or potatoes or hay down to sell, and bringing back manure. Oxen walk slowly enough, but a cow's pace is hardly moving at all, and to see the thin beasts crawling slowly up the steep hills, each with a man attending, was strange indeed. One good-sized waggon with three horses would often have carried the whole lot at once in less than a quarter of the time; but here each man prefers to wear out his own strength and that of his cows at his own pleasure; co-operation seemed quite impossible.

Again—the corn was put up temporarily in little round cocks of about fifty sheaves from the time it is reaped until October. 'Why is it not housed or stacked?' said I. 'There was not enough on any one little field to make into

a stack, and as for the barns there is no room in them; the cows must eat up the hay, and we must wait for the second crop, *le regain*.' A few days after this it rained heavily; the cocks were completely wetted through, and the men were occupied in pulling them to pieces, and drying the sheaves (which must have shed much of their grain in the process), and putting them up again, not for the last time before their final housing in October. But they did as their fathers had done, and probably will to the end of the chapter, wasting their hard-earned produce.

In a corn patch was an old woman reaping alone; the field was small, but the labourer looked dismally out of proportion to the work, and bad weather was in the sky. In a little barn we found three men with flails beating out the (handful of) corn in measured time. Further on, we came on a hodman without a hod, carefully building up ten or twelve bricks which he hoisted on his shoulder with a jerk and carried slowly up the ladder to the top of the wall. These relics of a time of leisure strike English eyes as very curious.

The enormous price given for the land is almost incredible. The banker spoke of a thousand francs for an *are*, the fortieth part of an acre, for good vineyard ground, and eight francs or ten was the common price which we heard of on every turn for the *toise*, two yards square. As there have been now five or six indifferent grape years in succession, the peasants cannot get one per cent. for their money; no wonder the number of peasant owners of vineyards is diminishing, as the census showed. The expenses of the transfer of land are ruinous to small proprietors. M. Dufaure has vainly tried to get these altered, but the Republican Chamber has more interesting questions on hand. 'In a sale of real property under a thousand francs half the value is absorbed; under five hundred the confiscation is complete.'[1]

[1] *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, Aug. 1882.

Royat was beginning to grow chill; the wave of cold which crossed Mid-Europe in September, covering the passes of the Alps with snow, drowning the Tyrol and North Italy, had also caught Auvergne. The Puy-de-Dôme was quite white, winter had begun on the mountains of the Mont Dore, and our last drives were gloomy. Whenever we left the high road we sank into a quagmire, and the lanes between the substantial stone buildings of the hamlet of Fontana were everywhere one sheet of filth, mud, and manure. We tried to get to a house with a peculiarly abominable mode of bedding—one tier over the other, like berths in a cabin, affixed to the wall with wooden doors. You scrambled up on a great *coffre*, and so climbed to number one, but it required a sailor's agility to reach the next. '*Figurez-vous* having to examine a patient thus perched!' said the Doctor. The great wooden cradle is hoisted up at night on the *coffre*, and the mother lies in bed with a string, rocking it. It had begun to rain, and the narrow road to the house was a torrent of mud and water.

We turned on to another house, or rather stable, on the lowest side of a sort of yard, which swam in dirt. Bits of rock cropped up in every direction; they had literally only to break them up to pave it. It is always supposed that ownership gives a reason for and a pride in carrying out any little improvements and beautifications of a dwelling, but if the level of civilisation of a place does not demand these little amenities they are not made. This year H—— pulled down an old cottage and built a new one in its stead, and a number of half bricks and bits of stone belonging to the old walls lay about. The tenants of two cottages behind, who were only monthly ones at 1*s*. a week, with leave paved their back doors with these odds and ends. Their front doors were paved already, but the new cottage had a paved back door, and they would not be behind the new standard of comfort.

'Will you allow us to enter, madame? It is new to us to see inhabited stables,' said I to the mistress. She took it as a compliment to their superior advantages, and received us courteously. The ground inside was like that without, only a little less wet; the arrangements were the same as at the last hamlet, and it was curious to find so very original a type reproduced exactly: the same stone pillar in the centre, supporting the wide vaulted roof; the two beds, heels to heads, in one frame as before, only here were seven cows ranged against the wall. There was only a glazed hole by way of a window, that did not open, and light and air came in by the distant door. The heat even on this chill day was great, but a poor old woman in one of the beds, very ill, was shivering all over, and complaining of the cold; she wore only a knitted shift, and her clothes were heaped over her; it was very pathetic to see her helpless look amidst the dark filth, the bed shut in on three sides, which never could be shaken up or cleaned from biting beasts, without a fireplace, and in the cheerless, airless confusion. 'She is my mother; it all belongs to her —*mais enfin c'est à nous*. Would you like to look in here?' went on the woman, doing the honours and opening a door into perfect darkness. As I followed her ruefully, urged on by the interests of science, five or six large geese rushed out past her legs and nearly overset me. Here there was not the smallest opening of any kind, but she undid the upper half of the door, and I saw there a horse, a sick calf, and the place for the fowls—here were two more beds, 'for the men,' i.e. her husband and a farm boy. The smell and dirt were so intolerable that I hardly dared step into the place. Everywhere was the bare earth, or rather mud. This was by far the largest and richest homestead that we saw, and, perhaps because there was more of it, it looked more wretchedly dirty than the rest. Nowhere else did we see seven cows, or a horse or a servant. 'And you sleep here summer and winter?' said I. '*Bien sûr*, it is so

warm and nice.' Two little girls came rushing in, her only children. The old woman called out to know whether we would have some milk (to buy)? 'It belongs to her,' said the daughter. The dreadful discomfort was not the effect of poverty; and it was the deliberate choice of wretched squalor, the utter want of any feeling for decency or comfort, or any object in life but to save fuel, that made the place so painful. The Archangel Gabriel himself could not have cleaned the stables without a miracle. As none of them are paved, water could only have made the earth dirtier, and as for sweeping, the masses of beams of wood, sticks, old boxes, &c., mixed with manure, which filled up the corners where the dirt and creeping things accumulated in peace, rendered this everywhere out of possibility.

The food everywhere is the universal soup of onions, cabbage, lard, or 'un plat de légumes au lard, avec une petite friandise telle qu'une salade,' or black radishes sliced, as described by Edmond About, in his 'Honnête homme.'

The roads were so bad that we never got beyond the circle within which the peasants sent produce into the towns, but the Doctor told us that the poverty and barbarism in the higher mountain villages were excessive. Wherever the peasants depend upon the land alone, the poverty and low standard of living were at the lowest, we heard, in all parts of France. Wherever there was some *industrie* going on, by which they could gain wages, the standard of civilisation rose, the ignorance was less, and the wants of the population greater.

We drove on through a beautiful wild gorge with many sugar-loaf hills rising in every direction—the Puy-de-Pariou, the Puy-de-Dôme—to another hamlet of these strange dwelling-places, for I was anxious to see a great number of houses and be sure that such a state of things was not exceptional. We ploughed on through sloughs of mud, and stopped before a row of stable-houses. They were inferior to the last, with no central pillar, although the roof was vaulted to keep in

the heat; 'it was better in winter, and safer from fire—' built by their fathers. Here the beds were close to the door, instead of at the farther end—less privacy (!), but more air—two on each side, always joined together, and of the same pattern, with a paved narrow passage lying between them just broad enough for the cows to pass in to their beds within, with no partitions to keep them off the sleepers. 'Surely it is hot here in summer?' 'Oh, no; except, perhaps, in August, and then we open the upper half of the door. We like it. We have a kitchen next door, and one upstairs, only it is let; but when the soup is cooked, we bring it in here to eat, on that *coffre*, because it is so comfortable!' There were four nurse-children from Clermont, brought up in this filth and barbarism, and one grandchild of her own: 'her father died four months and her mother three weeks ago—she counts now as a child of my own,' said the mistress. She had three children, and only four grandchildren; her cows gave about six litres each; they worked hard in the carts all day, *bien sûr*. Often for two months the snow is so deep that in the mountain hamlets they do not leave their houses at all. They bake *des tourtes* of rye bread to last a month; it does not dry up, like wheaten bread, but it does become mouldy. A pig is killed sometimes, and they go on every day upon him till they have finished him. They have cheese, the cabbages and carrots are stored, but the ground is so hard that they can scarcely dig them out of the heaps in winter.

The tops of the hills are often bare, but sometimes clothed with scrubby wood; 'they generally belong to the Communes, who allow rights of pasturage, or sell the wood.' 'In some cases the Communes divide the lands among themselves.' 'Which do you think best?' 'Oh, to divide.' 'But then you lose the wood.' 'Ah, but it is so good to have one's own bit, however small!' Here spoke the true spirit of peasant proprietorship. The forests had been almost all destroyed, when Government some twenty-five years ago

insisted on their being replanted. 'The Communes were furious, but when they found how good it was to have the wood, they were pacified,' said the driver. 'Louis Napoleon did many evil things, but he was quite right about the forests; it was his hobby.' 'Yes,' he said, 'we are not so well off under the Republic as *sous nos vieux rois.*' He did not say 'Emperor,' however. '*Le commerce ne va pas—rien ne marche. Les richards ne veulent pas risquer leur argent*—when it is so uncertain what will come next—*et c'est très mauvais pour les pauvres.*' This was the general cry. Every bad season and difficulty in France is always laid to the door of the Government of the day, whatever this may happen to be; but there was certainly no tenderness for the Republic among the peasants whom we saw. *Rentes* have gone down now for two years, always of course a great source of unpopularity. If there is a change, however, of which the air was full of rumour, the new *régime* will be as unpopular as the present in a few years. '*La monarchie, l'aristocratie, la république,* are each good to make a great State; but our Government is none of the three, *c'est simplement du chaos,*' said another authority.

On a close day, when we longed for the fresh air of the mountain, we drove up the interminable hills towards the Puy-de-Dôme; the distances were all veiled, but the great mass of red houses of Clermont, crowned by the high black lava cathedral, with its pierced windows and stern towers, is very striking wherever it is seen. Many of the villages might have been considered as isolated by bad roads; but the worst we saw lay barely three miles from the town, and not four hundred yards from the magnificent chaussée running through Auvergne. A walnut avenue led to a side valley, where stood a congeries of the dirtiest, darkest, most miserable of human habitations; space seemed as valuable as in the City of London; the ways between the houses were impassably narrow—dunghills at every turn, steep ascents and purposeless descents, houses dropped anyhow—a strange

place. We went up some steps, where sat two women, in a couple of rooms, not bad in size, but in the same state of indescribable filth. The houses were very old, and had apparently never been cleaned or even swept since they were built. Whitewash seems never to have been heard of; a bed lay on the floor, round which the chickens were disporting themselves; the cow was underneath in the stable. 'And do you often sit with her?' '*Bien sûr*, it is very comfortable, and saves fuel; there are often eight or ten of us.' 'Do the men come?' 'Oh, no; they have been working in the fields, in the *intempéries* of the weather, and they all go to bed.' 'But you have worked too.' 'We sit there *filant, tricotant*, till eleven or twelve o'clock at night, *et raccommodant des chemises*.' '*Et faisant la causette?*' I put in. She laughed. 'But it is rather hard, if you have been in the fields all day, to watch half the night.' She only laughed again.

I said we kept our cows for milking. 'But how do you manage for carts?' 'We have horses.' 'Ah, we can't afford horses. *Je suppose qu'en Angleterre vous êtes si riches que vous n'avez que des châteaux*.' 'No,' said J——; 'there are plenty of cottages, but they keep them cleaner.' 'How can we keep our houses clean? We go to market carrying the milk and the eggs and the fruit every day. We are out in the fields; we can't do everything.' Poor souls! no wonder.

Accordingly they are stunted, ugly, often with *goîtres* brought on by drinking snow-water; the pretty children gradually develop into old women, who are sometimes hardly human-looking in their repulsiveness. In one village an old blear-eyed mad woman was shuffling in great sabots, screeching as she went past us—no one taking any notice. The peasant women are greatly oppressed in France, yet still the marketing gives them a certain power, which is shown in all classes alike. In one sense a Frenchwoman holds her own among rich and poor. There is a legend of the widowed Châtelaine of the fine old feudal castle of Tournouel

which we saw in the distance, perched like a vulture's nest on a spur of the mountain running into the plain, who held her fierce men-at-arms in stern order, and when she sent them out on a marauding expedition mounted to her donjon-tower and sat there, *à califourchon*, on the battlements, drinking *eau-de-vie* and watching their work from afar. Rights in feudal times of *péage*, *pontage*, &c., had been granted by the king to the nobles on condition that they kept the roads, fords, &c., in order. Instead of which they neglected the ways, but came down for the dues on the merchants going from town to town, or the pilgrims to some cathedral shrine, and, when the spoil proved insufficient, carried off prisoners who were kept at ransom in the dungeons. The vassals in the village below Tournouel took refuge in war-time with their flocks and herds in the great castle yard, and in return cultivated the lands of the seigneurs, but the oppression was often great. There were no nobles in France who won rights for the people as well as for themselves in a Magna Charta, no large-acred squires, like Eliot and Hampden, who were the head and heart of resistance to the encroachments of the Sovereign, as in the Parliaments of Charles I., who fought not for their own privileges, but for the liberties of the nation; and the pleasant friendly feeling which grew up in England between the great house and cottage is simply non-existent in France.

The working of the Catholic hierarchy in the country districts seemed most unsatisfactory. We saw no parsonage or decent house in the villages, where the curé could reside as a centre of civilisation, a help material and spiritual as in England. The fall of the independent Gallican Church has been a great misfortune to France. When Napoleon I. 're-established religion' after the Revolution, his idea evidently was to form the whole system of clerical government on the pattern of an army, and all dependent on himself. The curés were to be in the complete power of the bishop, the bishop of the archbishop, the archbishop

of the pope, and the pope on the will of himself, the emperor, says an excellent authority. With the exception of the last link, all continues the same at present. 'I consider my priests to be like a regiment,' said the Bishop of Rouen; 'I say to one, "Go here," and he goes; I dismiss another as I think necessary.' The class of priests accordingly has gone down in position and in character alike—independent men in mind or estate will not submit to such despotism, and, in the country at least, the curés are chiefly recruited from the peasant class.

Our last drive was to the village of washerwomen, three miles from Clermont. The road lay up the usual steep hill-side, with its rich vegetation—chestnuts and walnuts in full bearing above, corn and vineyards below. The village was in a hole, as usual, down one steep path and up another, when we came suddenly on a hundred women in an irregular bit of ground—it could not be called a *place*—with narrow alleys where no cart could pass leading out of it at every imaginable angle. An immense crucifix, backed by the mountain beyond, the remains of a mediæval fortress and tower, overlooked a moving mass of women washing in the stream which comes from under the lava torrent issuing out of the Puy-de-Pariou. The water flowed from two little arches under a house, and divided into two streams, with a narrow promontory between them, meeting again at the road. Four rows of women lined the shores, the middle rows back to back, each kneeling in a three-sided box, open behind, with a black stone in the water before her, on which she beat the linen with a wooden paddle. I never saw anything more curiously barbarous; the waste of power of the women, who could only work by throwing themselves forward on their knees, and stooping into the water, a position which no back could preserve for more than a few minutes at a time; the treatment of the poor linen, which never was touched by hot water, but had its dirt beat out of it by main force; the state of the water,

which, although clear when it left the source, reached the lower washerwomen soapy and black with dirt, and to a degree which would not be pleasant to think of for the owners of clothes far down the file of performers.

I sat drawing on the road below, to the great delight of the company. 'Elle fait tous nos portraits!' 'Not all,' said I; 'why, there must be fifty of you.' 'Plus de cent,' cried the general voice. 'What time do you begin?' and the chorus replied together, 'Six o'clock, and we work till dark, and sometimes by torchlight.' 'What, in winter?' 'Winter and summer; this water never freezes.' They wore very clean white caps, a handkerchief, generally yellow, crossed over their skirts, and a cotton gown—nothing picturesque in detail, but a wonderfully queer and quaint scene altogether. They must be constantly wet, raising great masses of wrung-out linen on their backs and round their necks to carry away, after which they begin upon a fresh pile, which lay tied up, generally in striped blue bales, behind each woman in the rear of the settlement. *Les bonnes familles* at Clermont and elsewhere only wash twice a year; it is a proof of gentility, and that you have a great supply of linen. 'Oh, no, we never use hot water, or wash in the house.'

'*En voilà* a centre of gossip for the whole neighbourhood,' said M—— afterwards. 'Figurez-vous une jeune fille qui se marie! quels cancans! comme elle est mise en pièces par cent voix à la fois!'

The rain falls on the sandy volcanic soil, and sinks in; there are curiously few streams to be seen, but the water flows under the tongues of lava which run from all the old craters, works itself a channel outwards, and comes out where the lava ends.

We never saw the smallest flower near or in any house of all the many we visited; not so much as the wallflower and nasturtiums, which abound even in ragged hovels in England; not a white jessamine or china rose against the

wall. Flowers are considered as things to sell, like onions, and in the nursery gardens near Royat and Clermont, where the roses are hawked in bunches about the streets, a few are grown between the haricots and the carrots. What beautiful things the climate would afford I saw one day, in a cascade of the orange trumpet flowers of the Bignonia, long wreaths of which were trailing over a stone *portail* of what had probably been an old villa.

Not a book or a paper was ever to be found; not a print or picture against any wall, in the houses where walls existed—in the stables there were of course only rough partitions; not a bit of china, not an ornament, not a piece of good furniture or a clock, such as is the pride of an English cottage, was to be seen. It was impossible to conceive life so absolutely bare of interest, or amusement, or comfort, or refinement of any kind.

In England thrift appears to be a great virtue; one to be inculcated on every occasion upon our people. Here one hates the very mention of it. It is an end: they do not work to live, they live for the sake of working to lay by; they grudge every penny they spend, even for the most important necessaries.[1] There is never a respite when they have amassed enough: among the town people of Aubières, said M——, with ten thousand francs laid by, the women go every day to Clermont with their baskets on their heads to gain a few sous (and to gossip). The sordid, unclean, hideous existence which is the result of all this saving and self-denial, the repulsive absence of any ideal but that of 'de cacher de petits sous dans de grands bas,' as an object for life, is incredible if it is not seen and studied. There is so great a jealousy of any man rising above the rest that the equality in the villages is nearly absolute, and the level of taste and civilisation sinks to the capacity of the lowest; any advance on this is regarded as

[1] 'La France est le pays de l'épargne, on s'y prive pour amasser. Faute d'avoir le superflu, nous lésinons sur le nécessaire.'

pride and absurdity. There was absolutely no house in any of the villages where the chief farmers, the lawyer, and the doctor show a higher standard of refinement, information, and comfort as at home; all was squalor and ignorance alike—even the priest was a peasant like the rest.

And this is the state of society which, with great expense, trouble, and care, we are about to try and introduce for the regeneration of Ireland—without even her possession cf any of the conditions which enable the French peasant to get on at all,—*i.e.* his extraordinary powers of thrift, his own unwearied industry and that which he compels from his wife and children, and finally the climate, enabling an amount and a variety of produce to be raised, utterly impossible in our northern districts.

If 'truth, goodness, and beauty' be the objects of life worth living for, to be sought after, however imperfectly, by all classes, each after their lights and opportunities, if 'the cares of livelihood must not absorb the mind, taming all impulse, clogging all flights, depressing the spirit with a base anxiety, smothering social intercourse, destroying men's interest in each other, and making friendship impossible,'[1] then indeed there can be no arrangements of living, no ideal of society more utterly mistaken than that of the peasant proprietors as we have now watched them closely in the south and middle of France—with no higher object than the old stocking or the buying of some infinitesimal corner of land, with no care for politics, for art, for education, or anything outside their own narrow range of vision, and with no hope of improvement for the race in the future, as their children will perpetuate apparently in *sæcula sæculorum* the life in which they now spend their dismal existence.

[1] Seeley.

PEASANT PROPRIETORS IN BRITTANY.

THE evidence of a foreigner is often considered to be prejudiced; I therefore add an account of Brittany from the 'Revue des Deux-Mondes,' for November 1884, which enters into very great detail concerning the different districts. It describes the cottages with roofs reaching to the ground, the interior black with the smoke of heather and dried rushes (their only fuel); the owner and his family half naked, sleeping in a box, without sheets, on a chaff mattress, with a cow, a pig, or a donkey at the other end of the hovel, as not uncommon. *La petite propriété* has increased enormously in the last forty years. The excessive *morcellement* prevents the possibility of dairy produce in many parts, but allows of market gardening. The climate near the shore is wonderfully mild, and since the opening of railroads early vegetables are grown there, which are sent to Paris. Gigantic fig-trees, vines, pomegranates, myrtles, and camellias grow out of doors. The seaweed on the coast, used as manure, makes the market gardens very fertile, and half a million francs' worth of strawberries is grown about Brest, but this does not seem to increase the comfort of the peasants. In the interior there are thousands of wild acres, whole tracts of rushes and broom, with an occasional wretched cottage in the midst of the desert.

The value of the land has increased, of course, since the opening of communications, but prices vary extremely, and in some parts are extremely low. The small amount of produce is complained of; 'autant vaut la terre que

l'homme'; if the land were better cultivated and the peasants higher in scale, they would get more. The large farms are generally better cultivated in Lannion, and let at 100 to 130 francs the hectare (two and a half acres), which falls to sixty or eighty francs in the interior.

The state of the country, socially, seems to be of the lowest. Food for a working man is calculated at 8*l.* a year, for a woman at 6*l.* A *soupe*, of course without meat, with or without lard, water-gruel with black bread ill-baked, butter and potatoes (the lard generally in very small quantities), is the food for employer and employed alike. This diet produces *une mollesse et une lenteur* very bad for work. The women are particularly worn and weakened by it. *Les abus alcooliques*, to which a too great number of the peasants yield, seem to be the reaction from a state of semi-starvation. The evil has grown worse of late in the lower stratum of the working class, unhappily the most numerous. Alcohol has taken the place of wine and cider, and drunkenness among women goes on increasing. Their excuse of bad food does not hold good for the women of Normandy, who are addicted to the same vice. The drinking at fairs, at sales of land, and at feasts and 'Pardons,'[1] is excessive for both sexes, especially on Sunday. The ceremonies of the Church, however, are dying out, and in most parts fairs and sales only remain to bring people together.

Nothing improves more slowly than the dwellings—it is the last use to which the savings of the peasant are applied. The houses are generally exceedingly damp, and the inhabitants have to choose between being frozen or smoked, and the *cohabitation du cochon* is general, though sometimes he is separated from the family by a thin partition. The beds are arranged one over the other, like the berths of a ship—

[1] A 'Pardon' is a church gathering where indulgences are obtained, and in the days when the beautiful local costumes still existed was a most picturesque sight.

le système Breton—dirty, the feathers ill-cured and full of smells. *L'ascension pénible et ridicule du docteur* to a patient above may be imagined. The want of windows and doors is general everywhere, and these wretched hovels are rented at 1*l*., 2*l*., and even 4*l*. a year—letting, of course, is not confined to large owners. Wages vary in the different communes; about fifteenpence a day for men without food, tenpence with; tenpence or sevenpence for women, 'and we have met with cases of fivepence for women with food, and eightpence without.' In the Côtes du Nord, even the men have only from fivepence to sixpence a day during the winter—'*c'est misérable!*' It is only in harvest-time, and in the more prosperous districts, that the labourer in Brittany obtains two francs a day; two and a half is very exceptional. The work is so bad that this cheap rate costs as much as better pay for more efficient labour, but the employers are too poor to give more.

In the great majority of middle-sized and small farms, the wife is humble and submissive—*façonnée au joug de l'homme*. She is like a servant without wages; she waits on the men at table and eats their leavings—*un ridicule très marqué* attaches to an indulgent husband in popular estimation. Unfortunately, the habit of parents to strip themselves of their property during their lifetimes for their children only tends to make *des ingrats*.

Education is at the lowest. In the Morbihan sixty out of a hundred cannot read; in the Île et Vilaine in the census of 1872 the population was 589,532; those who could read were only 355,400, and the instruction of 234,132 of these was very bad. Strange superstitions linger in the province. In the arrondissement of the great stone circles, the Maenhirs and Dolmens, hairy dwarfs are seen at night executing strange dances and playing tricks upon passers-by. A prosaic Englishman might be apt to connect these with the *abus alcooliques* so often mentioned in the article.

In St. Brieux the cultivation is all by hand with spades,

hoes, and rakes. The small proprietors have sometimes a donkey-cart, or one or two cows, generally very poor and thin. The number of small properties is given in the case of each arrondissement, but the terms 'large' and 'small' require explanation. In some places a property of from fifty up to (rarely) a hundred acres counts as large; the small ones begin at a *parcelle*, and rise to twenty-five acres. The country looks like a chessboard. In Quimper four-fifths of the properties are under twenty-five acres. A pitiless succession of bad years has lowered the value of land and also of rents everywhere, often as much as by a fourth or a fifth. Near Nantes, for the last ten years or so, the little proprietors seem more disposed to sell than to buy.

A great division of property on the coast is caused by the passion of the sailors for a *lopin de terre* on which they can build a house. These scraps are sold, however, as quickly as they are bought; the owners soon grow weary of the land, are off to the cod fisheries in Newfoundland or elsewhere, and are forced to sell. The 'greater' fisheries and the merchant marine are both going down, however.

But the principal cause of this crumbling away of property and the artificial augmentation of its value, out of all proportion to the agricultural return, is its equal division among the heirs at a death, which to a great extent is made in kind, and also that properties are bought up on speculation and sold at auction in small pieces, often at an immense increase in price.

The state of the peasants is said to have improved, but we should consider it extremely low.

In the arrondissement of Vitré is the Château des Rochers, which belonged to Madame de Sévigné, and the state of things seems to remain much the same as in her day. The estate then was valued at 120,000 livres, and the rents at 6,000 livres a year; the value of the livre in 1660–70 was probably about four times the present livre or franc. Life, however, was much cheaper than at present, and the nobles

used to pass the winter in the country in order to save for the expenses of Paris. It is a pity that the present value of the land is not given, so as to show the exact measure of the increase.

Some of the fierce old savage spirit still lingers in the songs of the country. In one survival from a more barbarous age, the peasant, seeing his enemies and their tents burning in the fire he has lighted, cries, 'We shall have a fine harvest; there is nothing like *des os broyés pour faire pousser le blé!*'

Mendicity is the bane of the province. It is a tradition and a career perpetuated from father to son—*on est né mendiant en Bretagne.* Alms are distributed on certain days at the farms; the amount of charity given is immense, but the consequence is that pauperism and drunkenness are the true enemies to contend with. Public relief appears to be very imperfect. Hospitals and asylums, doctors and druggists, are alike wanting in the country and in the smaller towns. In the islands of Brittany at the extremity of Finisterre, Batz, Hoëdec, &c., the customs are peculiar; the men go out fishing, and have little authority on shore; the wives possess the land, manage the property, cultivate it, and see after the children. The agriculture is extremely poor, indeed miserable; there are scarcely any cows or sheep, and corn and potatoes are grown almost exclusively. The unit is a *sillon*; the properties are divided into these furrows, about three feet wide and forty metres long, the value of which is about ten francs. The *morcellement* is so great that 135 acres in cultivation in one island are divided into 3,765 *parcelles.* The large properties consist of twelve or thirteen sillons, but some are cut up into half-sillons, and in one case this half is worked and harvested alternately by three owners. These *propriétaires minuscules* sometimes possess families who divide the profits amongst themselves. Subdivision could hardly be carried further.

'LITTLE TAKES' IN ENGLAND *versus* PEASANT PROPERTIES IN FRANCE AND GERMANY.

'AGRICULTURE is in a suffering state in every part of Europe' is the beginning of an article in the 'Revue des Deux-Mondes,' of October 1874. Our extreme insularity makes us almost always ignore this condition of things, and speak as if our woes in the matter were peculiar to ourselves, while the remedies often proposed entirely omit the experience of other countries, which shows that they have not only been tried and found wanting in France, Germany, and Belgium, but that there is 'a strong reaction against, for instance, the *morcellement* of property' entailed by the present *partage forcé*; that the peasants themselves are beginning to seek for other means of existence than that of land, which has gone down in value in many parts of France, sometimes 40 per cent., from the want of demand. In Germany, where the complaints are greatest, inquiries have been instituted by three different Governments, of which that of the Grand Duchy of Baden appears to be the most searching and complete. The chief cause of the distress is declared to be the competition of the New World; the remedies proposed are, of course, very different, but the current of opinion is strongly against the action of the present laws of succession.

The paper goes on to say that when a piece of land passes to the principal heir—in some cases the eldest, in some the youngest of the family—he is, of course, obliged to go deeply in debt in order to pay off his co-heirs. From this he

cannot free himself; he only vegetates, and the next generation must sell. If the land is divided in kind, the condition of each piece is even worse; the second or third generation falls into poverty and dependence; and the *système des deux enfants* is coming more and more into practice to prevent a ruinous partition. A very mild remedy is proposed—to let the principal heir buy off the younger children with only a small sum; otherwise the debts become crushing, and sales, which mean division, must ensue. 'To such an extent is this the case, that the land of a proprietor of, say, twenty-five acres is often divided into forty or fifty *parcelles*, dispersed over the territory of a commune. He employs half-an-hour or more to go from one to the other, and not only loses much time, but he cannot cultivate these tiny morsels as he ought, when the land is mixed up with that of his neighbours. If the *parcelles* could be united, by means of exchanges, the value of the land would be increased by twenty to thirty per cent.,' but this in France is impossible. M. Le Play describes the jealousy of the peasants to be such that 'l'échange des parcelles s'accomplit rarement;' the dislike to accommodate *le voisin*, the attempt to get a little more money out of him, prevents all accommodation between owners; while the proper use of water for irrigation, of works for drainage, improvements in the cultivation of cereals, &c., are all impossible in such isolated patches.

In Germany exchanges are favoured by legislation, and take place rather more frequently.

'The heaviest charges on the small properties,' continues the report, 'are the family settlements; these constitute seventy-three per cent. New constructions only count for five per cent.

'Many circumstances just now are against agriculture; the rise in wages in Germany is so great that it forms a serious difficulty to the farmers. In one sense, of course, it is a matter for congratulation, but unfortunately, if the labourer requires more, he does not work the harder,

and in some places it is difficult to get work done. In the neighbourhood of the Rhine, where a road was to be made, it was necessary to send for Italians, the labourers declaring that if they only complained enough they would be fed, and therefore it was unnecessary to work.'

In former times the peasants bought nothing; they were fed and clothed by the direct produce of their fields; even the cattle were got by exchange. Now they buy at least coffee, sugar, and a certain amount of clothes. Bad seasons have diminished the quantity of corn grown by the larger farms, and this is not compensated by any increase of price; 'but American competition, which has caused such discouragement in Europe, is, we believe, purely temporary.'

Bismarck, in a speech last autumn, remarked that when he went to Varzin (the estate which was presented to him by the country), he found about a dozen peasant proprietors; they were now reduced to half; 'the others have been obliged to sell to me to avoid burdens which they cannot bear.' He goes on to say that protection was the true remedy for this!! 'Let the corn duties be raised!' We shall hardly adopt this method of making peasant proprietors succeed.

In England the interest of money spent in buying land is so low—two and a half or three per cent. only when the buildings and repairs necessary are included—that a poor man cannot afford it; it is a luxury. Sir James Caird says that 'the farmer has, in fact, the use of his landlord's capital at very low interest, while employing his own in a more remunerative way.' Two typical instances may be mentioned. A 'very striving man,' who grew strawberries about fifteen miles from London, hired the ground from a neighbouring landlord. 'Why don't you buy land for yourself?' he was asked. 'I can't afford it. I want my capital to cultivate my fruit, whereby it brings in much more interest for my money than the rent costs me. I can't sink my money in the land.' Secondly, a little owner of 200 acres, who was out-at-elbows in every way, sold his

property to a neighbour who had made a fortune in the north. He now farms what was once his own with the money he received, and is most prosperous.

Indeed, it would appear that in future small farms on grass-land are what are most likely to succeed. Corn cannot be made to pay, as it is ruinous to hire horses and labour. The farm should not be too large to be cultivated by the owner and his family, and he should have some other occupation to help him out.

In the questions of the comparative comfort and well-being of those who own and those who hire small parcels of land, peasant proprietors and tiny farmers, it is only by an accumulation of evidence concerning petty details in a great number of instances, in a great variety of circumstances, that there is any chance of reaching the facts. Generalisations, such as are uttered in speeches and books by men who have hardly been within a cottage door in their lives, do not help. 'The English peasant is the worst off of any agricultural class,' says one; against which may be set M. de Lavergne's dictum, that he is 'better off in food, clothing, &c., than the little owners of France and Belgium;' or the equally sweeping assertions of Englishmen, that 'the French peasant proprietors are a thriving, contented set,' while the French political economists are declaring that the difficulty of getting a living is so great among them in most parts of France, that land has gone down in value enormously, forty per cent. in some parts, because the mortgages with which each little plot is burdened eat up the value to such a degree that, if it were not for the honour of the possession, it would be as profitable to be without it.

The difficulty of getting at the truth, relatively as well as positively, is extremely great in all countries. What is called comfort abroad would be considered misery in England. The standard of living is much higher, as are the wages, with us. Moreover, no man likes to give the secret

details of his private money affairs to a mere stranger in any rank of life, and unless the inquirer is extremely cautious, insinuating, and indefatigable, he may make up his mind that not only has he not obtained the whole truth, but that the facts he has succeeded in extracting are often in themselves misleading. As, for instance, a man in the South of England declares, honestly, that his wages are twelve or fourteen shillings a week, but he does not mention that there are each year what are locally called in the county, 'the four harvests'—*i.e.* 'the rining,' stripping off the oak bark for tanning (when thirty shillings a week may be earned), the usual hay and corn harvests, and, fourthly, the collecting of acorns and beechmast for the pigs in autumn, when even children can earn two shillings and sixpence or three shillings a week, in the few hours after school.

When the results of such 'winnings' are added up, the ordinary week's wage will be seen to form only a part of the year's earnings; to such a point that a man with a nominal twelve shillings a week declined to take sixteen if he was to be cut off from these extras; 'it was not worth his while.' In some counties the hops, in others the cider orchards, or the gathering of seaweed, afford the same kind of advantage. In the counties north of Trent the wages now for agricultural labourers are about seventeen or eighteen shillings and above.

'An ounce of practice is worth a pound of theory,' and I venture to put down here the experience of dwellers on the soil, to the manner born, who can supplement by their own knowledge the direct information derived from that shy, wary, by no means unintelligent man, the English labourer, who is shrewd enough to bamboozle many a clever literary man, inquiring without having the necessary side lights to enable him to test the accuracy of the answers which he receives.

To begin with a southern county, where 'little takes,'

as the small farms are called, are not at all uncommon (the very fact, indeed, of their having a recognised name shows that they have a standing). 'They should not be so large,' says an excellent local authority, 'as to induce the family to try and depend on their produce. The man must go out to day labour, or have some small trade as the backbone of the support of his family. He and they may then cultivate perhaps ten acres of poor land, or seven or eight of richer soil, to profit, if his landlord will provide and repair the little buildings required. These, however, are much more expensive to build and keep up for a number of small farms than for one large one, and the rent must be higher in consequence to pay for them,' which seems to be forgotten by the designers of paper agricultural improvements. But, if the saving labourer is satisfied with a smaller plot, an allotment of, say, half or three-quarters of an acre (and almost everyone on the estate in question has one) only an outhouse and pig-sty would be required at the cottage.

Here are the particulars of a little 'take' of the most primitive order as a specimen. It consists of about four and a half acres lying on a steep, wild, sandy hill-side, covered with fir-trees, hollies, and heather, the copse running above and around it, a stream flowing at the foot of the orchard, where the land is better. The old people who hold it, as their fathers did before them, are both above seventy, and a grandson and granddaughter supplement the failing strength of the ancients.

The thick walls of the house are of mud, which has an evil name, but, as the dwellers in it know, are warm in winter and cool in summer, and the same good word may be said for the deep thatch of the roof. An old yew, trimmed and carved into a porch, shelters the door, and a row of single tulips, with some orange 'bloody warriors' (wallflowers), red peonies, and 'love in idles,' as the old woman called her pansies, fronts the bee-hives—for they sell honey—and leads up to the house. 'But where is the

passion-flower, Ursely [Ursula], that was so beautiful last autumn?' 'He overblowed hisself, I take it, and died last turn; but I've set a slip, and he'll be fine still to-year.'

A large old fireplace occupies the whole of one side of the room, with a deep oven in one corner, which was just disgorging its great brown loaves and a pie of inviting colour as we came in. The floor is half clay, half brick, and the chickens walk in and out at their ease, and, in spite of their mistress's conscientious efforts, could not be made to understand that 'manners' required them to withdraw. The bedroom was on the ground floor, but on that sandy, gravelly soil it was perfectly dry, roomy, clean, and not uncomfortable; some old black oak chests and drawers stood about, and a dresser with bits of blue china. The official description is 'A small garden, good orchard, about an acre of useful grass-land, the remainder rough, poor ground. They have two cows, a breeding sow, poultry, bees, a pony. Very respectable and comfortably off; deal in butter, eggs, fruit, and chickens; carry their produce, which they take in their cart to market at a little town near, and buy from other cottages. Rent 8*l.* a year; the landlord pays the tithe.' The old gnarled apple-trees and the tall 'merries' (the French *merise*), the small black cherry of the county, were covered with bloom as we waded among the thick grass where a 'cauf' was tethered. 'I were just a thinken, squire, as I'd ax ye whether the big tree yonder mid not come down,' said the old man, looking up from 'fettling the pig,' with a hearty welcome, but not unmindful of the main chance. The poor squire made a wry face—it was the finest oak in the hanging wood above the hill, but he compounded for a couple of 'ashen' trees lower down the 'archat,' and we came away through the bare field where the pony picked up a scanty living, helping himself with a fringe of golden broom, and bracken, and foxgloves among the hollies, and snatching at the tall May in full flower hanging over the gate.

No. 2 lies about half a mile off, up the wood track through the copse, and on the road, a bettermost sort of cottage, with house-place and back kitchen, and good bedrooms upstairs, a good orchard and garden, a carpenter's yard and workshops, with some great rhododendron bushes and Portugal laurels mixed up with the planks and wood-yards—about an acre and a half. The tenant, a carpenter and wheelwright, gets plenty of work even in this lonely spot, but it is not two miles from a small town. 'A very respectable man, but badly off, because he has striven to undertake contract work for which he had not experience enow. His carpenter's bench and tools had been sold up, but the landlord has bought them in, and charges a few shillings yearly for their use; has only a pig and poultry, and rather neglects his land. Rent 10*l*. 10*s*. a year.' Five children, flowers all over the house and in front, a charming little home.

No. 3. Another quarter of a mile away in the green lane lies another very comfortable cottage. Two rooms and back kitchen below, three good bedrooms above, a large orchard, grass-land, vegetable garden, three acres, little barn, cow-shed, pony-stall, pig-sty, wood hovel. One cow, pony, and pigs; man and wife very industrious, the land kept in good condition; he attends the local markets as a pig-dealer, has a fair connection, and makes a good living. Rent 12*l*. a year. Tithe paid by landlord. A garden round the house, with great red and lilac rhododendrons, laburnums, and flowers; they have brought up seven children very respectably, who are in good places, excepting the two youngest, who are at school.

A mile or so farther, on the same estate, there is a little hamlet of seven or eight cottages, each with a small 'take' of from five to fifteen acres.

The owners go out to work, and earn their living partly by buying underwood and making what are called match-faggots (neat little bundles of kindling wood), a manufacture

which is chiefly carried on under an open shed by the women and boys. There is a large sale for these in the neighbouring town, and they send in butter, eggs, poultry, and vegetables, which are collected by little 'higglers.' These small tenants have stood the bad times better than the bigger ones. They have indeed scarcely felt them at all, as their produce has been selling well, and most of the farm work is done by the tenant, his wife, and children, so that they have not felt the rise in the price of labour. They have always been ready with their rents, there has been no abatement asked, and there are plenty of applicants for the holdings, while the large tenants have had a reduction of from ten to fifteen per cent. Small corn farms, however, would not pay; the labour would be much higher than on the large farms, where horses are kept and machinery can be used. The rents, however, require to be quite thirty per cent. higher than in the large farms, to allow for the interest on outlay for buildings and repairs, always done by the landlord.[1] Kentish cob-nuts have been planted, intermixed with standard fruit trees and gooseberries, and by gathering them young they avoid being troubled with birds. A jam factory has been started on a small scale at R——, where jams and jellies are made by steam, and where some tons of apple jelly were manufactured last year.

In the north, upon an estate belonging to the same landlord, there are twenty-five small holdings under twenty acres, besides numerous allotments.

No. 1 has sixteen acres or more, nearly all grass, keeps three cows and a heifer, and one horse, has ample outbuildings (stone), and manages his land very well; fills up

[1] 'In comparing the condition of farmers and ownerships, a colony of small proprietors may be mentioned, where a small estate was cut up into lots of about twenty or thirty acres near R——. The properties are almost all mortgaged, and the interest of the money represents a fair rent. The dwelling-houses are badly built, comfortless-looking places, and the sheds for cattle, &c., are of the most wretched description.'

his time with market gardening. He lives near a colliery. Rent 33*l.*

'No. 2 lives in a good house in the small village, and has more outbuildings than are required for six and a half acres; he keeps four cows and one or two calves, is a woodman, and works away three-quarters of his time in the woods. He manages his land well. All grass.'

No. 3 is an old tailor, has three and a half acres, keeps a cow and a donkey, manages his land well, has outbuildings for more cattle.

'These small holdings are the best managed and the most productive of any part of the estate; the tenants are all working men who are away from the land nearly all their time, the wife and family look after the cattle; but to succeed the land must be grass. To grow corn, there must be land enough to employ two or more horses; it does not answer to hire them. The small farmers have stood the bad times mostly the best and have paid their rents. The difficulty in dividing large farms is the great outlay in erecting houses and outbuildings, and in repairs. On this estate there is a separate charge for them of 5*l.* or 7*l.* a year in addition to the land.'

An account has just been published of Lord Tollemache's efforts in this direction. His estates in Cheshire are about 26,000 acres. He has forty farms of between fifteen and forty acres, and 270 cottages with three acres each of pasture land. The cottages are generally near the farms where the labourers work, which saves them the wearisome journey to and fro (but has the disadvantage of entailing much additional walking for the children to the school, and the wife to the shop and church). One acre is set apart for haymaking, a quarter acre for potatoes, cabbages, turnips, and grain, the rest in pasture. The occupants all have cows and sell butter, which is collected by the small dealers. To provide against the loss of a milker a cow club has been established.

Cheese is made on the estate. The rents are from 10*l.* to 11*l.* Chester is within an easy distance, and Liverpool not beyond range, so that the produce can be disposed of easily, which is a *sine quâ non* for the little patches. Corn growing does not answer except on so small a space that spade cultivation is possible.

The German and French authorities agree with the English that wheat can only be grown with advantage upon large farms also. 'It would be quite unendurable for Europe to be entirely dependent for the staff of life upon the harvests of the New World, which may fail, and an adequate proportion should always be grown at home. Large farms are therefore necessary to produce the food of the nation,' says the German report.

There is room for every kind and of every size in the economy of this country, both of farms and ownerships. Sir James Caird declares that the number of small properties is still very large in England; 390,000 out of 550,000 are of fifty acres and under, and every effort for simplifying and reducing the cost of the transfer of land should be made; which, it must be remembered, will benefit sellers and buyers alike.[1]

It is curious that in America the size of the new corn areas is enormous; we are told of 'fields of wheat of 3,000 acres;' there seems to be a tendency there to consolidate rather than to divide.

That the evils of great subdivision of property consequent upon the 'partage forcé,' the compulsory cutting up at a death, are great, can hardly be doubted in the face of the Government reports, inquiries, and statistics, published in Germany and France. That the interference by law of the power of willing, and the continued changes in ownership incidental to the subdivision of an estate, are no remedies for the evils complained of in England, either in town

[1] The system of the registration of titles is said to be particularly good in Switzerland, simple, efficient and cheap.

or country, is shown by the fact that in Paris, where the ownerships are so small, the rents are higher and the lodgings for the poor more overcrowded and wretched than in London, which is appealed to by French philanthropists (see M. d'Haussonville's 'Misère à Paris') as better in sanitary respects, in decency and other respects.

Those who have examined French peasant homes attentively will not think their condition an advance in civilisation over our English cottages. 'Little takes' are not a heroic remedy for the many agricultural evils which beset our country, in common with the rest of Europe, but they have been so successful that it is to be hoped they may be more generally tried, where it is practicable, and thus afford more openings for the saving, industrious labourer to rise in the world.

It is curious that one of the demands for change—that of fixity of tenure—is the one point upon which the subdivision of property particularly fails in the large sense, as may be seen in the experience of both France and Germany. The little farms and cottages are far more often 'fixed.' A cottager at C—— asked his landlord last month not to move him, even into a better house: 'Me and my family have been here for a hundred and twenty years.' The little farm first described has a pedigree of above ninety years.[1]

[1] *Contemporary*, May 1885.

PARIS DURING THE EXHIBITION.[1]

For the first time since the disasters of 1870-71, the great 'Exposition' has enabled Paris to resume her position as the pet pleasure-place of Europe, the bright, gay capital, centre of interest of all kinds, in art and literature, politics and amusement, sunshine and noise.

The gloomy prophecies of Buonapartists, Legitimists, and Orleanists, and of many who belonged to none of these parties, had pronounced that under a Republic (and one, too, which had arisen from the ashes of the Commune) no foreign country would venture to risk its treasures, its pictures and carved work, its china, its jewellery and manufactured goods, its machines and inventions, to the chances of what might happen. Whereas it appears that the collection is one of the most brilliant that has been seen in Europe, while the numbers which attend its 'world's fair' seem likely to outrival those of any such previous gatherings.

The pride and self-glorification of the country have been great, yet it would seem as if France herself had been the last to believe in her own success, or had, at all events, determined to risk as little as possible to win it; for on April 31 the French departments were, with few exceptions, an absolute blank,—the manufacturers, the shopkeepers had scarcely attempted to begin preparing their shows of goods, while, though the building itself was roofed in, it was full of packing-cases, dust, paper, and cord—even the

[1] *Contemporary Review*, 1878.

flooring was unlaid, and the passages impassable from stacks of goods.

The central alley, where were the lines of representative buildings, was like a muddy stream, three or four inches deep. A pretty English girl was standing helplessly on the brink, when one of the employés came to her rescue. 'Tenez, mademoiselle, ii faut vous porter!' and before she could speak he had gallantly taken her up in his arms and landed her safely on the other side.

Outside, the approaches were in a state of utter chaos; long lines of carts were bringing gravel over the seas of mud to what were to become roads,—flowers in full bloom were being transplanted to form what were to be gardens,—trees were dragged up to make bosquets of shade round the growing pavilions which would be cafés and restaurants. If it had not been for England, her colonies and dependencies, for China, Japan, and a gleaning from other countries, May 1 would have shown an exceedingly ugly tale of empty benches and divisions. And for this forwardness the Prince of Wales was greatly responsible; he worked hard and successfully; and a Prince's presence has not yet lost its prestige in the world, and certainly not in republics on either side the Atlantic. The one in France was exceedingly grateful to him, and showed its pleasure in very pleasant forms; his *bonhomie* and his good-will to the country, irrespective of its government (with the choice of which he wisely considered that he had nothing whatever to do), were extremely popular. The compliments paid him were generally somewhat double-barrelled, and wound up with a little (permissible) tribute to their own charms, virtues, and delights, which indeed the Prince was doing his best to honour. There was no doubt of the truth of Punch's cartoon,—the flutter of gratified vanity of the France in *sabots* and a high cap, at the attentions which 'Altesse' was paying her, a feeling which among some stern republicans made one smile. But the people had taken the show under

their own protection, and regarded it as a national success and a national triumph. There were more flags and *lampions* in Belleville and the sister suburbs than in the more aristocratic quarters,—where on the great night the lighting up was almost confined to the streets where foreigners most do congregate, and where their hotels, shops, and haunts are mostly to be found, and to the boulevards, quays and public buildings, where it was done by the Government. The *citoyens*—an ill-omened word—had been invited by placards to illuminate, and the middle and upper part of them had very decidedly refused to take any such trouble.

The ceremony of the opening was neither well managed nor impressive in any way.[1] Perhaps a central figure is required for any successful 'function,' and the Marshal, since his defeat in the autumn, has sunk into a position of entire insignificance ; he is not noticed as he passes in the streets ; neither in public nor in private is his personality now of the smallest importance. Now a work of art requires a culmination of interest round a person—a summit, an apex to the pyramid, a point to the story or the drama ; and this was wanting in the show. Besides which, the Republic has had no practice in organising great *fêtes*, probably no gift in that way, and the whole affair was ill-managed to the last degree. As the Marshal and his attendant princes and ambassadors tramped through the mud and rain, the effect was almost pitiful. Nobody had any place assigned to him, the spectators were allowed to go where they pleased, the Presidents of the two Chambers were left to wait in a private room in order to join the *cortège*, and were entirely forgotten. In the midst of the confusion they

[1] The *parti clérical* is very decidedly unpopular at the present moment, and it was perhaps on this account that no sort of religious ceremony, no prayer, or even any religious allusion, was allowed upon the opening of the Exhibition. 'It was left to foreigners, *malheureusement* Protestants, to supply this want, by opening the Salle Evangélique for the carrying out of religious services connected with the Exposition,' said one of the papers. The 'salle' was opened by Lord Shaftesbury, and is a great success.

were suddenly remembered, dragged out of their seclusion, exceedingly out of humour, and stuck somehow into the procession. 'You cannot think how much I am enjoying myself!' said one of the performers, draggled and wet, ruefully to a happier friend in the crowd, who was able to dispose of his own movements. When the honourable guests, princes, ex-queens, and kings, Marshal and company, were to take their departure, they were so hustled and pressed upon that they could hardly reach their carriages.

The weather was abominable; violent storms of rain blew in the faces of the actors and spectators alike, and made the ground under their feet like a quagmire. 'Décidément le bon Dieu n'aime pas la république!' said the crowd, quite good-humouredly, as they huddled like sheep with their faces against the outer walls of the annexes, and their umbrellas behind them, like a bas-relief on the Trajan column, where the soldiers shelter beneath their shields under the wall of a besieged town.

But towards evening the weather cleared, and the people took possession of the situation; they made their own *fête* of their own presence in the streets, and marched about delighted to feel that Paris was once more herself again. There were no illuminations for them to look at, as we understand them, no stars, devices, or designs; and the extreme beauty of the long lines of light, as seen from the bridges and the quays, marking out the architecture of the great public buildings among the trees, and reflected in the water, was supremely indifferent to them; they never even turned their heads to look. What they were out for was to see each other, and to be seen, to be merry, to have 'a good time,' to feel that Paris was prosperous once more; they cared little for what reason or on what occasion.

And for four or five hours the crowds swept along the Rue de Rivoli in unbroken lines of living fun and noise—

carts, vans, broughams, *pataches*, omnibuses, waggons, *chars à banc*, vehicles without names, unearthed perhaps for that night only, open Victorias, with the quaintest inhabitants for 'carriage company.' There went two comfortable bodies, in white caps and dress to match, fat and jolly, with no gloves, lying back at their ease in state, good souls, evidently doing the thing grand for once in life. Then came an omnibus with a great society of laughing boys on the top, looking down in triumph from their vantage-ground upon the spectacle below. Next a great Norman plough-horse, slowly pulling along a covered country cart, filled with women in high caps, and a heap of babies. A few soldiers, but in their private capacity only. Six women, each with a baby, following each other across the streets in the midst of the carts and carriages, the babies carried aggressively to force the passage. A block along the whole line, for miles perhaps, but everyone in good humour, and finding no inconvenience whatever in waiting a bit, in such good company. Men carrying children astride on their shoulders, one small boy with a pair of bright blue kid shoes ending the little legs which made a necklace round his father's throat. A driver fast asleep on his box, and his carriage, full of living souls, going on just the same, in full trust in Providence. A cart with 'Beurre et Œufs' in large letters, advertising itself by the luxury of Chinese lanterns of different colours hanging round it. Shrill cat-calls and Polichinelle noises in all directions, a very mild amusement. Above all, babies asleep and awake in every direction and in every position and action (except crying). Everybody shouting, talking, laughing, everybody polite and well-behaved, nobody drunk, nobody out of sorts or impatient or pushing, perfect good behaviour, courtesy and consideration, a model crowd, if a little too noisy for the enjoyment of mere spectators. Presently, in the thick of the fun, came a procession of workmen, arm-in-arm, four abreast, singing the Marseillaise. 'Qu'un sang impur abreuve vos sillons!'

they shouted quite pleasantly, the awful words piercing the merriment like a sword. It made one shiver, like a frightful echo, *un cri sinistre*, of what those merry men perhaps had been doing seven years ago in this very May season. While above the laughing, singing crowd, beyond the grove of chestnuts in full flower and spring beauty of foliage, in the gardens before us, lay the long line of the burnt Tuileries, with its eyeless windows and blackened walls and torn-down roofs looming ominously. Seven years ago a furious mob of workmen were setting fire to their own public buildings, and Paris itself was in danger of being burnt.

Meantime on went the fun. The carts, big and little, with their coloured melon lanterns hung in front, or dragged by a mule with a Chinese lamp dangling before his nose,—and the babies, always babies, in endless succession. A long string of men and women were making their way, each holding on to the tail of the one in front, and headed by a boy with a lantern hanging to an umbrella; there was an occasional noise of a distant rocket from time to time,—though no fireworks were to be seen, but the noise was evidently agreeable to the company; a blue blouse and a smart lady *en cheveux* on his arm; and so on, and so on, in dizzying succession till twelve o'clock at night, when the whole array melted away, to the great comfort of the police no doubt, and of all quiet folk whatsoever. But though the signs of force were all concealed, there were 80,000 troops at the moment massed inside and just outside Paris; and many soldiers were dispersed among the crowd, we were told, with strict orders where they were to collect at the sound of the first trumpet call. The police are suspected of Buonapartism and are not trusted, but the defence of order in France is always considered to belong to the army; the civil element of repression has never been strong in Paris.

The flags continued hung up perennially in their places about the streets all during the Exhibition, which gave the

whole town a sort of gay festive look; the people were in high good humour, and the English in high favour. The French had been pleased by the good-will and readiness of the English nation to entrust their goods to the Republic, and delighted with the Prince for the interest he had taken and the trouble he had given to the good cause. Moreover all parties, Republican, Legitimist, and Orleanist, united in admiring the manner in which England had put herself forward to defend the public rights of Europe and the respect for treaties, past and present, said they. We never heard so many compliments (national) paid to us in our lives. England has been in the cold shade of favour for so long on the Continent that it was very pleasant to feel that she was credited with a disinterested resistance to overbearing despotism, even if the compliments were a little self-seeking, and that they felt we were fighting their battle, that we should pay the piper and they would profit by the sweat of our brows, if there was war. This point was almost the only one on which the different parties were agreed, and the three or four receptions where the Prince of Wales was present were the only places where politicians of different hues would consent to meet. The bitterness of political feeling is something beyond what an Englishman can conceive at the present day; he must go back eighty years, and remember the passions excited here from 1790 onwards for a generation—the terms in which Mackintosh was spoken of, the tone concerning the 'bloodthirsty Whigs,' the 'Atheists,' 'Jacobins,' 'king-killers,' used by the Tories, and the feeling of the Whigs in return.

Truth is difficult enough to get at in every place and time, but certainly nowhere does she inhabit so deep a well, or one so difficult to arrive at, as in Paris; where each clever, high-minded, distinguished man, fully *au courant* of affairs, contradicts point blank the last clever, high-minded, distinguished man, equally *au fait* of what is going on, whom we have come across. And this not only as to hopes and

retrospects, but as to facts and figures—the past, the present, and the future. The history of events gone by, the prophecies for those to come, are asserted and denied with equal positiveness. As foreigners, we have friends on all sides, of all colours; and as the old and new Republicans, the Conservatives, the Monarchists, and the Ministerialists succeeded each other in our little *salon*, the variety of the kaleidoscope of opinion could hardly be more striking.

All that can be done by strangers is 'to remain respectfully in doubt' (always a difficult accomplishment), to listen and to learn, and not even pretend to oneself to be able to judge, where the materials are so chaotic and so abundant in their variety.

Says one, 'The Marshal is the most honest of men,—*borné*, but only intent on doing his duty. He saved us from a revolution by yielding in November and remaining in office, and for this his good deed he is despised by his friends and hated by his enemies.'

'How can the Marshal be called commonly honest? He declared a particular policy to be dishonourable for himself and ruinous to the country, and then he remains in office in order to carry it out!' declares the next.

'The people are quiet enough now, occupied by the excitement and pleasure of the Exposition, and the money it brings into Paris; but as likely as not we shall have an outbreak as soon as it is over.'

'The future of France never was more secure and peaceful than at present. The people are satisfied. Grévy will succeed the Marshal for a period of seven years, after him will come Gambetta. It would not be wise to choose him until he is rather more *posé*; but see how he has gained in these last years;—and with his wonderful powers, his eloquence, and his high-minded single-heartedness, years are all that he wants to make an admirable President. Nothing but the Republic is now possible in France.'

'Tenez, mademoiselle, voulez-vous l'Empereur de l'année

prochaine?' said a photographer, holding out a picture of *le petit jeune homme* on horseback, surrounded by an *état-major*. 'He'll be sure to return before long.'

'The Orleans family are very clever, very *instruite*, very moral—the very best family in all France at the present moment, and the wives as good as their husbands; but the Royalists are ruined by their divisions, and at present are quite out of the running. Still, their time will come, when France feels the want of the protection of a legal government.'

'The present Chamber of Deputies is admirable, and composed of our very best men,' observes one friend.

'There are *deux cents des plus grands coquins que nous avons en France* among the five hundred and fifty members,' declares another.

'The Deputies are paid for the whole month, however short a portion of it they serve; so they arrange to sit three or four days at the end, say, of April, and three or four more at the beginning of May. They then get the salary for two months. The pay of full one-third of the Chamber is sequestrated by their creditors, and a man is often elected because his money will be convenient to those to whom he owes it. The other day a ruined *avocat*, a man who is continually drunk, was chosen, with no other qualification but to secure this money, and against a candidate excellent in all respects.'

'Every intelligent man in France now is a Republican.'

'I only know one honest and educated Republican at this moment, and he is a pure idealist; he sees everything *en beau*, and not in reality. There are two or three *soi-disant* in my own family,—*mais ce sont des gamins.*' And the speaker laughed dismally.

'But then, why have you a Republic if you have no Republicans?' said we.

'Why? Because of universal suffrage. *Gardez-vous du suffrage universel* where every *gueux* out of the gutter

has as much power as the greatest philosopher and statesman.'

'Thiers might have altered it, and was much inclined to do so in the terror felt after the fall of the Commune. "*Je ne vois que la monarchie constitutionnelle de possible* and the limitation of the suffrage," he once said, but he was dazzled by the prospect of being sovereign himself of France, and the opportunity was lost.'

One day, bewildered by such differing 'blasts of doctrine,' I went and sat in the garden of the Tuileries, just over the way. The tall horse-chestnuts were full of flower, but looked shabbier, I thought, than of old. Nearly two hundred had been cut down lately, said one of the gardeners, and new ones planted. Some had been destroyed in the time of the Commune, but most went from old age. Everything looked bright, and clean, and pretty, though there was no sun; the lilacs and fountains, vases, children, statues, and flowers. The orange-trees, enormous plants in tubs, some of them one hundred and fifty or two hundred years old, were being dragged out of their winter shelter in a clever machine drawn by two horses, which raises and lowers them into their places by a screw. They must have seen Louis XIV. in his prime, and the *ancien régime* in its glory of hoops and powder, red heels and *laquais*; they must have 'assisted' at the end of the Monarchy, the great Revolution, the Empire, the Restoration, the Orleans dynasty, the Revolution of '48, the fresh Republic, the second Empire, and now the whirligig of time has brought them into a Republic again; and still they blossom on, bearing fruit for all governments alike, 'which is sold to the *confiseurs* by the State and brings in a good deal of money,' said my informant.

I sat down by a good fat *bonne* with two children. 'They are not mine,' she said; 'I only take care of them, but I have two of my own. No, I was not here during the siege; my husband had just arrived here, and I was coming to join

him, but it was too late to get in. The bad food brought on an illness of which he died by the end of the year. There were stomachs that could bear that bread full of all sorts of *ordures*, but his could not, and he never was well after. I came in as soon as the gates were open, and we were here all through the Commune, at the corner of the Rue Rossini. It was a frightful time; there was a barricade close under our windows, and carriages a little way down to carry off the dead and wounded; the cannon balls fell all round us, a shell burst in a balcony just opposite; the pieces filled the room and broke all the mirrors, but no one was killed. A peloton of soldiers sat down in the street one day to eat their food, with their backs to our wall; another shell fell among them, four were killed on the spot and two wounded under our very eyes. *Je n'oublierai jamais ça !*'

'Did your children mind the bombardment much?' 'Mine were little ones, a boy of nine and a girl of six. *Mais tout ce qui est tapage enchante les enfants, et ils battaient des mains et riaient quand ils entendaient le canon.*' (Query, would English children have done so?)

'Did you see the column of the Place Vendôme when it fell?' '*Je crois bien*; we were close by; they worked at it ever such a time! gave themselves no end of trouble, mining one side and pulling at it with great cords. They had prepared a heap of sand and straw for it to fall on, else all the houses would have been shaken; and everybody had pasted strips of paper across their windows to save the glass, *en croix*. Such a pity to destroy the column! It didn't belong to them, it belonged to us all; and what harm did it do anybody?'

'And you saw the fire in the Tuileries?' 'Yes, indeed, it was terrible, and the Cour des Comptes.' 'What became of the beautiful things inside?' 'Ah, I don't know; *ces messieurs* who set fire to the place, *they* knew,—they carried off everything they could lay their hands on before it burnt.'

'Do the illuminations mean that the people like the

Republic?' 'No, I don't think so, only that everybody is so glad to get the Exposition; we were told that it never would come to pass, *et il y a grande allégresse* now that it is succeeding. *Ça fait aller le commerce*, and the people are very glad after their long anxiety.'

Then I asked whether the Republic would last, or whether the Empire or the Orleans would return. But she was evidently afraid of talking. '*Moi je ne comprends pas la politique*,' said she, curiously cautious, as under the strictest despotism; and I went on, and looked at the melancholy window of the Emperor's private cabinet, whence the Communists flung out all the letters from his bureau into the garden. They were picked up, and all the important ones published, among others some from the Queen of Holland (who was a cousin of Prince Napoleon's through his mother, a Princess of Wurtemberg). The letters contained observations against the union of Germany under Prussia, as absorbing the independent well-governed little Southern kingdoms, and brought much trouble on the Queen from ardent German patriots. It seemed a cruel piece of ungentlemanly spite to publish a woman's private letters thus obtained. They were, however, extremely interesting and well written; her prophecies as to the Emperor's fall were realised strangely soon, while the warnings she gave him were both wise and kindly intended.

H—— went to breakfast with the D'Haussonvilles, and heard much political talk, rather sad. The Comtesse is daughter of his old friend the Duchesse de Broglie and granddaughter of Madame de Staël. M. d'Haussonville called upon us next day, and most kindly brought his article in the 'Deux Mondes,' 'La vie de mon père.' His deafness has increased very much and makes communication difficult, but nothing could be more interesting than all that he told us, having been always in the centre of everything that was going on in Paris. *Pair de France* under Louis Philippe and associated with Guizot politically, while

all the literary world—De Tocqueville, Villemain, Cousin, &c.—of that brilliant period collected at his house. He tells a story in the Review showing the ups and downs of French life. When Neckar was appointed to the head of affairs the Comte d'Haussonville, his father, *Grand Louvetier* of France, went to call on the minister. On the steps he met the old Maréchal Duc de Broglie. 'You must introduce me,' said the Comte. 'But I know him no more than you do,' answered the Duc. 'Then we must introduce each other.' 'They little thought that the Duc's grandson would marry M. Neckar's granddaughter and his great-granddaughter would be my wife!'

We went to hear the most eloquent of the French Protestant *pasteurs*. A very striking sermon, beginning with an aphorism of Kant's that every truth must be true in every fresh application of it, or it is only a sophism. Monsieur Bercier, thinking the ordinary Calvinist services extremely cold, has introduced a kind of liturgy, with responses and music, much resembling our own Anglican service. The church, just outside the Arc de l'Etoile, a new one since the siege, was crammed to the very door. Every building thereabouts had been destroyed under the Commune, the trees cut down, everything ruined, said our driver, who evidently did not love it. 35,000 *becs de gaz* had been broken, he said, in Paris, and had to be made good, the bullets and the cannon balls spoilt *réverbères* as well as men's lives. 'As for the column of the Place Vendôme, that was spoilt by the treachery of the Prussians. 'But they had left Paris weeks before.' '*Tenez*,' said he mysteriously, 'it was found out that there were forty of them hidden in a café not far off, *qui conspiraient sourdement contre la colonne!* proof positive, that when it was down they paid for the bits by their weight in gold. *Allez*, it was quite well known that they did it!' And then we came jolting jollily down the hill of the Champs Elysées with some thousands, more or less, of our fellow-creatures.

A strange sort of feeling. Eight rows of carriages (eighty passed in sixty seconds, said Colonel ——, who counted them carefully), pell-mell, great and little, rich and poor, Baroness Rothschild's handsome horses and those which had not three legs to go on, splendid equipages and little carts, all on the Sunday afternoon. It was the first bright sunny Sunday of the year, and Longchamps had begun that day in 'the Bois.'

The Exhibition itself was very much like other Exhibitions, but without the grand *coup d'œil*, the lofty nave and transepts, which were so striking in the two in England; the succession of small low buildings, however, were very well lighted, and much better adapted to show the goods.[1] But nothing can be more fatiguing and tiresome to those who are neither exhibitors nor buyers than such an interminable series of small shops. Their close juxtaposition ruins the effect of the contents, and the rapid succession injures the memory of them, so that with the exception of the Prince of Wales's Indian presents, the Cashmere shawl work, and Japan ware, but little remains upon the average sightseer's mind. The Japanese had brought up living specimens in pots of the Lilliputian trees and flowers, peonies, &c., designed in their lacquer work, which were very pretty.

There were some curious national anomalies: the Italian 'exhibits' were chiefly of cannon and warlike material; the Germans sent nothing but pictures.

The English collection was exceedingly satisfactory as to our place in European art,—sober and rich in colour, the subjects good in taste and feeling, the pick of eight or ten years of the Royal Academy.

In the French *salles*, the numerous sensational pictures,

[1] A proposal to send over a number of English workmen to the Exhibition was carried out later. It was well that they should see how attempts to keep up the price of English goods, by striking for higher wages, are endangering our commerce, and how perilously close is the competition which lower wages and longer hours are enabling foreign manufacturers to run against us, beating us in many descriptions of goods.

horrible in subject and exceedingly crude in colour, ghastly designs horribly worked out, executions, murders, &c., in which Glaizé and Regnault are pre-eminent in realistic and repulsive terror, the number of women without their clothes, and the expressions of those even who had them on, however good the drawing, made the sight somewhat unpleasant. The violent contrasts between clothes and flesh seem entirely contrary to the best traditions of art—the soft draperies which harmonise instead of cutting against the flesh tints of Vandyke or Reynolds, neither of whom would have condoned the French effects. The little gems of colour by Meissonier are a great contrast to these ugly cres of canvas.

A picture of Milton dictating 'Paradise Lost' to his daughters, by a Hungarian, Munkacsy, in the Austrian Section, was one of the most interesting in the whole collection. The blind poet's figure is sternly beautiful and inspired, the colour grave without dulness, and the whole action living and not scenic.

Every hole and corner of the building was crammed to suffocation; a great number of country folk had come up for the show, and the stalls of moving toys especially were full of them. There were a good many priests—they are now so little seen in the streets of Paris that their presence is noticed.

Ex-kings and queens, though rather damaged ones, such as the four royalties of Spain, were going about tame, and on one of the days the poor Prince of Wales was being mobbed by his admirers as he tried to study the cutting of diamonds; the crowd looked like a black mass of bees in the swarming.

We drove to Versailles with an order for the Maréchale's box in the Chambers. A hideous straight road leads from the *barrière* where there had been a terrible smashing by the guns of both sides, along to the river, whence the burnt St. Cloud could be seen among the trees. Mont Valérien was

dominant over all, with its hill keeping guard. The whole *faubourg* has had to be rebuilt. Then on, jolted to death along old twisted lanes, badly paved with sharp stones, and through rather pleasant country, with many flowering gardens, irises in pots on the gateways and Judas trees as standards, to pretty Versailles. The Senate is held in the ancient Louis XIV. theatre of the palace, with memories of Montespan in the boxes, and Pompadour in the *coulisses*. That which was the *parterre* was now full of the bald-headed senators, with not a young man to be seen; there was a good deal of excitement and bell-ringing by the President. Ministers were proposing to undertake the charge of railways; and another day that the Tuileries should be rebuilt and made into a National gallery. And I thought I saw the shade of Louis XIV. shaking the powder out of his majestic peruke, with rage at the desecration of his palaces, and wonder at the change in the world since his day.

Then we went across the *grande cour d'honneur* of the Château to the Chamber of Deputies, which is a new building and not very interesting. There was a good deal of disorder. The Minister of Foreign Affairs having been asked to make public certain documents concerning the war in the East, had refused, 'as not advisable under present circumstances.' 'Just as it was under the Empire! What more insight have we gained into our own affairs for being under a Republic?' cried the Opposition.

The advisability of keeping the centenary of Voltaire and Rousseau was also discussed a day or two later, but the friends and enemies of both had so much to say for themselves, that the question of the good and ill that both have done to the world seemed little likely to be settled during this century.

It gave one a strange measure of the degree of insecurity felt in Paris, that it should still be necessary to exile her legislature so far away, to prevent its being overawed or overpowered by the populace. What an outcry there would

have been if it had been proposed in England to send our Houses of Parliament to Richmond or Hampton Court Palace for safety from any possible mob!

H—— used to attend the old Chambers during the outburst of Parliamentary talent and eloquence after 1830, when Guizot and Thiers were Ministers and Opposition leaders in turn, Berryer the Legitimist, Casimir Périer, De Tocqueville, Odilon Barrot, and, in the upper Chamber, Montalembert, the Duc de Broglie, most constitutional of men, Marshal Soult,—the names were as well known in England as our own Parliamentary leaders. Now hardly any of the speakers are of European reputation, with the exception of Waddington, with his square head, full of power, common sense, and honesty, looking like a middle-class Englishman; Gambetta, with the true *furia Francese*, a mixture of the *braillard d'estaminet* and the man of genius, who is evidently winning the day even with those who dislike his politics, as the probable man of the future. But he is encumbered by his followers, less wise than himself. 'Ah, vous êtes bien heureux de ne pas avoir une queue,' he is reported to have said. 'Alors pourquoi ne coupez-vous pas la vôtre?' 'Parce que je suis assis dessus!' They are going to revise the Constitution of 1875, 'the twelfth, *ni plus ni moins*, which France has tried since the first great change of 1789.'

There is an utter want of continuity in French politics and history; everything proceeds by leaps and cataclysms, there is no 'evolution.' If a 'Reform Bill' is to be carried and the number of electors in France to be increased, the whole house is thrown out at windows, a dynasty dismissed, and a Republic, with a poet as dictator, set up in its stead. If the poet, and his successor the soldier, are to be replaced by a Buonaparte, the streets are swept by cannon, and thousands sent to death, to prison, and Cayenne.

It is at least a good omen for the stability of the present state of things that in October last the Opposition carried the

day by legal Parliamentary means, and not by upsetting the whole machine once more.

But the past is ignored in France to a degree inconceivable elsewhere,—swallowed up in the ocean of the present, so that not even a waif or stray is left to show what had been the state of things which was engulfed. The last time we were in Paris the number of streets, of boulevards, of shops, cafés, barracks, palaces, roads, and *places* named after the Emperor and Empress were literally legion. Now not in the most obscure faubourg did we see even a trace of the name of either. There must have been tens of thousands of Louis Napoleon's busts in Paris alone, in plaster, and in marble; what has become of them? Have they been broken up, or are they hidden in cellars until the wheel shall bring up his successor? His rule was essentially an immoral one, and lowered the social and political feeling of France; but, materially, the enormous improvements he effected in Paris, the open, healthy streets he pierced through the worst parts of the town, the water supply, the lighting, the drainage, the hygiene, the beauty of all kinds, which he introduced in gardens and buildings, would have made such local memorials a tribute to his memory which was only just.

> The evil that men do lives after them,
> The good is oft interred with their bones,

is nowhere so true as in France; and there is something essentially mean in the millions who licked the ground before his feet, now wiping out so much as his name—as if this could alter the fact of his having reigned for nineteen years by the will of these very millions. After 1848 the signs of the Orleans rule were obliterated as quickly; the remembrance of the old Bourbons was as transitory in 1836; the Napoleon Bees were painted over the Fleurs de Lys, and the Fleurs de Lys over the Bees, with dismal impartiality. The half-effaced 'Liberté, Egalité, et Fraternité' over the gate of the Louvre—the word 'National' painted

over 'Impérial,' which again covers over the word 'Bourbon' underneath, so thinly that traces of the letters below can still be seen, makes one sad. The streets can hardly know their own names; some of them must have been altered a dozen times at least.

Everything smells of the provisional, of the absolute rule of the present, to be succeeded by some *régime* equally jealous of the past. 'Nought shall endure but only mutability!' To forget is surely as painful in nations as in individuals. Sorrows do not profit; experience does not teach, if they are like water spilt upon the ground. How can we advance unless by preserving the remembrance of what we have gone through, harvesting our griefs and our joys alike, to profit our after-time? The whole town after the siege and the Commune was riddled with bullet-holes, and the marks of cannon and shell; now all are plastered and painted over, so that nothing can be seen; but one knows that the wounds are there underneath. It is difficult not to feel that morally there has been something of the same process; and that to forget an evil is not to cure it, or to cause anything to be as if it had never existed.

The excessive desire to proclaim that all is prosperous, that the Republic is sure this time to endure, that *now* the change has been made for good and ever, to assert and reassert that all things are supremely right, and above all stable, brings with it the feeling, 'Methinks the lady doth protest too much.'

There is always the enormous cloud hanging over the peace of France under every *régime*, that when a time of bad harvests, depression of trade from whatever cause, and consequent low wages, create discontent among the masses, they always expect the Government, whatsoever may be the 'colour' of its politics, to remedy their woes.

There has been a good deal of distress this past winter among the workmen in Paris; the great *con*structions and *de*structions, undertaken under the Emperor, had brought

an enormous number of *ouvriers* to Paris, who have never left it, and for whom, under the new Government and with the poverty entailed by the war, no work could be found.[1]

'France with her stationary population is no less tried by low wages and the destitution of women; the female factory workers are far worse off than with us,' says Mr. Harrison, no prejudiced witness, certainly, in our favour. A woman-speaker at the Workmen's Congress at Lyons declares that 'while men work only ten hours, for a woman the time varies from twelve to fifteen.'

'The conditions of the labour of workmen are far more severe than in England, and the institutions for purposes of insurance, benefit clubs, co-operative works, &c., are only in their infancy. The divisions between class and class are far wider than in England.'

A private carriage in some of the back streets, we were told by the mistress of the one in which we were driving, is likely to be insulted and even stopped. A lady who should visit the poor in any but the quietest dress would risk being annoyed. In London it is rather taken as a compliment to the persons visited to go to them nicely clad.

At the Congress at Lyons, the general tendency of the speakers was to depreciate the value of trades unions and denounce strikes. 'La grève c'est l'augmentation de la misère de tous,' said a workman, who was much applauded. They have even gone farther in their political economy than our own men, and discovered that 'a rise of wages means a corresponding rise in prices,' and that in America, 'though the nominal salaries are from twelve to fifteen francs a day, the dearness of all articles of necessity is three or four times as great as in France, so as to restore the balance.'

[1] I discovered a peculiar calling one day when waiting at the *porte-cochère* of a friend. A *tondeur de chiens* passed by, with a peculiar cry and his *industrie* inscribed round his hat. The number of French poodles shaved in the back part of their bodies is so great as to support a barber attached to their own particular service!

The workmen are, indeed, much less communistic than they were a few years ago, and the spirit seems to have migrated into Germany and Russia.

In country places, the excessive division of property has alarmed even the people themselves, and the comparative inferiority of the crops upon these small holdings, compared with those on a larger scale in England, the better cultivation obtained here even with a worse climate, seems at length to have struck the more intelligent. '*Le morcellement*,' said one of the chief speakers at Lyons, 'is the ruin of the country.'

Passing from London to Dover, and from Calais to Paris, the contrast is very striking. On the English side the country looks *soigné, peigné*, like a garden, the fields clean, the farm buildings good, the cottages, the hedges and fences, the draining, in good order, the beauty of the trees great. On the French side, in departments where, we were told, the subdivision of the land is great, there are scarcely any cattle or sheep to be seen, little manure can be collected, the crops are thin, the fields badly cultivated, the trees small, there are few farm buildings. What, indeed, can the owner of three or four acres afford to build on his 'estate'? The cottages are of one story, poor, low, and tumble-down, although they are the property of those who dwell there, which, we are told in England, would be the cure of all evils. The plots are mortgaged up to their full value; the land, at the death of an owner, being generally kept by one member of the family, who must borrow to pay the portions of the rest, in the equal partition required by the law among children. Michelet, a friend of the *morcellement*, observes of the peasants that their land brings them in two per cent., while they pay eight per cent. for borrowed money. 'Property is divided in Grenoble to such an extent *que telle maison a dix propriétaires, chacun possédant et habitant une chambre*.'

The latest official return of cultivated land in France gives 5,550,000 distinct properties. Of these, 5,000,000 are under six acres. M. Dupin declares that England averages three times as much meat, milk, and cheese, for every individual of her population, as France. In the immediate neighbourhood of Paris and the great towns, where manure can be obtained, and the price of fruit and vegetables is high, the market-gardens are not at all better, hardly so good, as near London. Elsewhere it is only the extreme frugality of the French peasant which enables him to live at all, and this is a quality pertaining to his blood, not to his political condition, for it was as great under the *ancien régime* of land-holding.[1] The Lyons workmen go on to say that neither subdivision nor the possession of land by the State can be so good as personal property, which alone will enable the best to be got out of the land.

Another speaker, however, recommends 'a system of co-operation which shall cover all trades and occupations, and thus entirely get rid of wages, that source of all evil.' Co-operation in the form of industrial enterprises has been less successful with them than amongst our own men.

There is no lack of admirable institutions of all kinds in Paris for the help of the sick and the poor, but there seems to be far less of the spontaneous efforts of individual charity in France than in England. The 'regulation work,' as it may be called, excellent often as it is, of the religious orders, under the immediate command of the Church and the Government, seems to chill and discourage the private voluntary zeal, which with us accomplishes so much.

There is, too, a far wider division in Paris between the evil and the good, between 'the world' and the life devoted to God and fellow-men, than with us. Here, in London, men and women, living much in society, going to fine

[1] 'France is the country of savings; *on se prive pour amasser*, and, not having a *superflu*, we trench upon the necessary.'

parties, dressing in fine clothes, have continually some good work going on behind the scenes, of which they never speak —some workhouse or school, some hospital or evening class, often in a distant part of the town, to which they devote themselves zealously, without fuss or noise. At Paris you are either worldly (if not wicked) in gorgeous raiment, or virtuous and (separated to God) in black stuff and a poke bonnet or a white cap. The ordinary, moderate, good life seems to be far more difficult to lead in Paris than in England. It is the same with the literature of amusement; there is no middle term; the stories and plays are either such as can hardly be looked at by decent people ('Is it not possible to conceive a plot except as hanging on seduction or adultery?' asks the 'Revue des Deux-Mondes'), or 'goody' to a degree which makes them unreadable to persons with any sense of art.

There is more of 'spontaneity' among the Protestants, as is natural, and a great deal of useful and excellent work is going on among them, particularly in a whole group of institutions under the deaconesses—an infant school and an orphanage, a refuge for young girls and a penitentiary, a convalescent home lately added, all admirably managed. The faces of the girls in the refuge were as good and pleasant as those of others of their age, while on the other side of the wall (carefully parted off in another house) we saw from what they had been rescued—the painful tale of varieties of bad, bold, hypocritical, or sensual expressions, hardly one of them womanly. The face of the sister, who was with them night and day, was as that of an angel.

But Protestantism at present seems stationary in France. She has a grand past,—the Huguenots were the salt of her earth; the story of the Camisards in the Cevennes, thirty thousand of whom perished in battle or on the scaffold in two years, of the Pasteurs du Désert, of the women martyrs at Aigues-Mortes and elsewhere, are among some of the

most holy memories of their country. But they have little hold upon the present. They increase but slowly, infidelity spreads on all sides, the Roman Catholic Church is losing the masses of the workmen, but continues her sway over the respectable people, and is the fashion at the present day. While, as one of the best of the Protestants once said, 'Nous n'avons pas encore réussi à parler le langage qui est compris par la France.' Their form of faith has been perhaps too stern, too inward, for the 'sanguine Gaul.'

There must always be a certain loss in forming part of a sect, in not sharing the larger national life and interests which belong to the church of the majority—there is often a narrowness in the types of thought and feeling. On the other side, the earnestness and reality of their faith have stood the fire and are undoubted. No man or woman is a dissenter from careless indifference, or because it is 'the fashion.' They are 'holding fast' to some truth which they feel to be important, protesting against some error which they believe to be 'soul-destroying' and damnable. They care for the things of God. They may sometimes be a little too conscious of their purity of doctrine over that of their neighbours, of the superiority of their spiritual life over those who follow the broad roads, which to them seem leading to destruction, but they are the salt of the earth; from them spring apostles and martyrs. St. Paul was a dissenter; Luther, Huss, John Knox, Wesley were dissenters, the vehement men of battle for the truth; while the well-behaved philosophical natures, like Erasmus and Melanchthon, never move the world.

The French Protestants have passed through the ages of propagandism by fire and sword, and the time of civil persecution is at an end. Three members of their body are in the government, and they may collect in any numbers they please to pray and teach; but the fire of conversion has died also, and the future of France can hardly

be expected to belong to them, in spite of the good work they do for their country.

Three *œuvres* (the cant religious term) conducted in Paris by English Protestants, which we visited, are however curiously successful, considering that they are accomplished by foreigners with a very limited knowledge of the French tongue.

That by Miss Leigh is confined to the care of young English girls who are collected in Paris on so many pretences, to English orphans and persons in distress, and is excellent, while it is not thwarted by the want of words. But the other two are conducted purely among and for the benefit of the French themselves. An English Congregationalist, Mr. McAll, has opened twenty-two *salles* in different parts of Paris, in some one of which he addresses the people every day of the week as well as on Sunday, or gets his friends to do so. The addresses are sometimes given in English and translated, as was the case when Lord Shaftesbury spoke a few weeks back; sometimes they are spoken in French, by no means immaculate, by different Englishmen, but not a smile ever passes over the faces of the hundreds of workmen, women, soldiers, children present. They listen with the greatest intentness and respect, and, when the confused words must sometimes be almost unintelligible, take the will for the deed, believe that they are intended for good, and that the speaker has 'said what he ought.' It is an extremely remarkable sight when three or four hundred of the very roughest possible men and women in the Rue de Puebla and some of the worst quarters are thus collected, the men predominating, said H——. In one case a workman rose in the body of the hall and uttered an extempore prayer after the final *cantique*. The Prefect of Police, without whose leave no meetings can be held at all, sent word to Mr. McAll, that not only should he not be interfered with, but that the authorities thanked him for the good effect of the services on the people who attended them.

The other *œuvre* is on the hill of Belleville, the centre of all that is most turbulent and disorderly among the *ouvriers*, and was undertaken by a lady passing through Paris just after the Commune, who was so distressed by the vast amount of sins and sorrows she saw about her in an accidental visit, that she remained there, and has done so ever since, to try and help to the very utmost of her power. Miss de Broen (who is half English, half Dutch) has been joined by four or five other English and Scotch ladies; an iron house was erected by means of subscriptions from England; and therein are held a great sewing class or mothers' meeting, a large girls' school, meetings of workmen for religious and instructive purposes, a *pharmacie*, where advice and medicine are given gratis; and a small hospital is about to be added in an old house adjoining, which she has just obtained, but which as yet is only half paid for.

As we passed up the ranks of sewing women of all ages —girls—women with a baby in arms and another by their side (whose sewing could certainly not be very remunerative) —blear-eyed old hags, without teeth, without hair, their heads bound in dirty handkerchiefs—some seized hold of my companion's hand, and kissed it with a sort of passionate affection, occasionally, perhaps, not without a *soupçon* of the hope of the coffee which is sometimes given—others came up with long stories and requests. The affection Miss de Broen inspired was very touching, and, as we came away, one old body thrust a great bunch of pink peonies, another a nosegay of tiny roses de Meaux, into the hands of the different ladies, who rarely reach home without several of these little offerings. The pointed French way of putting a thought into apt words is even here to be found. A remarkably dirty, ragged man had attended the meetings, and had grown much tidier after a time. 'Yes,' said he one day, 'I found out *que j'étais sale, que ma chemise était sale, que mon corps était sale.*' 'But you are much cleaner now,' said his friend. 'Ah, I did not mean that; I mean

that moi, ici dedans, que j'étais sale, et qu'il me fallait *un laveur*, et *non une laveuse*.' The question of the Saviour *versus* the Virgin could hardly have been more tersely disposed of.

Miss de Broen's flock, however, are by no means lambs. I drove up with her from the Rue de Rivoli in an open cab. The driver appeared like any other of his kind in the civilised parts of Paris, but as we were mounting the steep hill of Belleville, my companion desired him to turn into the park of the Buttes Chaumont, and I asked incautiously (as we had often done of our driver before) whether there had been much fighting thereabouts. His face changed into that almost of a wild beast; 'his foot was on his native hill,' and the Communist came out. 'Fighting! I should think so! *Sacrés gredins de Versaillais*, this is what I got here!' and he pointed to his nose, struck and flattened; '*ces gueux d'aristos*, it was their doing! *Il n'y a que les républicains de bons;*' and then came a storm of unintelligible oaths and evil words, in a *patois* of which, happily for me, I could only understand a word here and there. We drove on into the beautiful park garden, made out of the quarries whence the stone of which Paris is built used to be dug. They had been long infested by a population of thieves and their families, and Louis Napoleon is said to have surrounded the place with soldiers, driven out the squatters, and made it into the present garden. The thieves, however, have not ceased to be, but have only taken up their quarters a little way off. The view was magnificent: the whole of Paris was spread out at our feet; the churches and public buildings, towers and domes, streets and gardens, with the river winding through the whole, and the glass roofs of the Exhibition and gilded vanes shining in the light. Our driver had now lapsed into a sort of droning guide-book, and was pointing out the different places we could see, the low hills of St. Cloud beyond the town, Mont Valérien on our right, the high ground of Père-la-Chaise on

left, with a great building underneath it, which turned to be the prison of La Roquette. 'Did the shells fall here?' said I, pointing to the trees and flowers. And again the man's face became like a tiger's; it was frightful to see him grind his teeth and shake his fist. This time his rage was against the priests: *they* had brought all this harm on the people—the rascals, the villains, the wretches, the pests of France! and so on. The outbreak was suggested partly, perhaps, by the sight of a woman carrying a long wax *cierge*, at whom he went on making ugly jokes.

I had intended to return in the same carriage to the Rue de Rivoli, and was rather frightened at the prospect of being alone with such a man. My friend quite sympathised, and, promising to get me a carriage in her own quarter, we rid ourselves of our unpleasant companion.

Along that very road up which we were passing, at the bottom of that hill, only seven years ago, in this very month of May, in the last agony of the Commune, when all hope of winning the day was over, and the spirit of bloodthirsty revenge had taken possession of the 'Fédéraux,' fifty-two of the hostages were dragged along to their death, with every aggravation of cruelty and insult. I did not read the account until afterwards, luckily for my peace of mind that evening.

The two chief hostages were the Archbishop of Paris and the President of the Cour de Cassation, Bonjean, a very distinguished and upright judge, who had returned to Paris from his country place in Normandy, where he was quite safe, saying, 'I thought that my post was where there was danger.' On March 21 he was sitting in his place on the bench when he was arrested soon after the beginning of the rule of the Commune and shut up in the prison of Mazas with the Archbishop, and a great number of men of all conditions, soldiers, gendarmes, gardes de Paris, &c., who had refused to serve the new masters. At the end of two months, the 'Committee of Public Safety' ordered the

Archbishop, 'Bonjean, sénateur,' the *curés*, 'et tous ceux qui peuvent avoir une importance quelconque,' to La Roquette, 'dépôt des condamnés.' They arrived at their prison at ten at night, much wearied by the passage of the prison vans over the unpaved streets and barricades, and having been cruelly insulted by the mob. They were placed for the night in wretched little cells, no food was given to them, and the next day, May 24th, were judged by a court-martial, presided over by a carpenter, not particularly sober, which was held in a hall full of barrels of wine, powder, and *pétrole*, passers-by, soldiers, wounded, and clamour of all kinds.

Six hostages were ordered to be shot, but besides the Archbishop and the president no names were given, and when the platoon of execution arrived the jailor refused to give up any unnamed prisoners. After some dispute the carpenter chose four more out of the list sent from Mazas, namely, Duguerry, the popular *curé* of the Madeleine, the Abbé Allard, belonging to the ambulances, who had assisted the wounded throughout the siege, and two more priests. 'On se moque des patriotes,' cried a man from headquarters, impatient at this tiresome formality. This was 'General' Mégy, commandant of the fort of Issy, *mécanicien*, who had escaped from the *bagne* at Toulon, where he had been condemned to fifteen years of the galleys for an assassination, and had now appointed himself to carry out the sentence of death. He had already done good service to the State, by setting fire, at the head of the *vengeurs*, to the Cour des Comptes, the Palace of the Legion of Honour, in the Rue de Lille and Rue du Bac, and the Savings Bank.

The six hostages were summoned from their miserable cells by a dreadful mob, shouting insults and curses, and the names were read out: 'Georges Darboy, se disant serviteur d'un nommé Dieu'; then four other priests, and lastly, Chief Justice Bonjean, the only layman. They were then led up

and down many stairs and passages and across many courts, till they reached an open space (still within the prison) where they were set against the outer wall and shot, no one but the victims and assassins being present. Two platoon discharges were heard, and then a few isolated shots. The Archbishop is believed to have died at once. The President was struck by nineteen balls without receiving a fatal wound, and was 'finished off' by a pistol applied to his left ear—a shot which Mégy afterwards in America prided himself upon having given. The bodies were stripped, and the few valuables found upon them, including the Archbishop's cross and buckles, were stolen.

'The Commune was now at its last gasp, and the spasms of its agony were terrible.' It had begun to suspect and destroy its own chiefs.

On that very May 25th, Delescluze, 'the veteran of democracy and the pontiff of revolution,' was accused of treachery and shot down in the Boulevard Voltaire, close to an enormous barricade, the real key of Belleville. He had just arranged and signed the orders for an offer to be made to Versailles, bargaining that the chiefs of the Commune were to be promised their lives and allowed to escape, or threatening that the nearly 1,500 hostages still remaining would be massacred on the spot. A mass of foul papers found in his pockets testified to his identity.

After his death, 'Colonel' Hippolyte Parent, 'dit Narcisse,' was appointed commander-in-chief. His history is as follows: He was an apprentice hatter, who was condemned in 1859 to three months of prison for *escroquerie*; in 1862 to a year more at Peronne for a similar crime; in 1863 to three years of prison for a forged signature; in 1868, at Lyons, to a year for *abus de confiance*; in 1870, also at Lyons, to six months more for some other crime. As in 1871 he was only thirty-two years of age, he could not be said to have wasted his time. On the evening before 'the Government' resolved on evacuating the Hôtel de

Ville, which had become dangerous, and had retired to the Mairie at Belleville, which was protected by the guns of the battery at Père-la-Chaise, he was chosen, with three others, to set fire to the 'Château Haussmann,' the 'Archives Municipales' opposite the 'Assistance Publique,' and other buildings near, at the head of two companies of the '*Vengeurs de Flourens*.'

The next morning, May 26th, fifty-two of the 1,490 hostages still in prison were brought out of La Roquette, and told that, as there was no bread left in the place, they were to be taken up to the Mairie at Belleville, to receive a ration, and be set at liberty. Amongst them were eleven priests, thirty-seven gendarmes, &c., and three 'civils.' During the early part of their march the crowds through which they passed were quiet and even compassionate, but when once they reached the Rue Puebla stones began to be thrown at them; all the riff-raff of all kinds which had taken refuge at Belleville and Ménilmontant threw themselves upon them; fifteen hundred or two thousand men out of the cabarets, women, deserters, *vengeurs*, soldiers from the Buttes Chaumont, made a triumphal procession round the prisoners, singing, shrieking, dancing; the women 'leur allongeaient des coups de poing,' and struck them in the face; mud and filth were thrown at their heads. 'Il faut les tuer ici—mort aux calotins!' was the cry. 'To the ramparts!' was the answer.

At length they reached an open space, with a garden behind it, where was a low wall, and the massacre began by a *cantinière*, dressed in red and armed, who had headed the *cortège* on horseback, striking a prisoner with her sabre. This was followed by shots from guns and revolvers on all sides; some soldiers sitting on a wall near were singing *à tue-tête* as they shot down into the mass below, while Hippolyte Parent stood on a little wooden balcony, smoking a cigar, and with his hands in his pockets, looking on all the time until the end had come.

Massacre was not enough, and a game was now invented: the victims were forced to jump over the low wall, and were shot, 'au vol, ça faisait rire.' A soldier threw up his kepi, turned round and cried, 'Vive l'Empereur!' One after another fell on the heap of dead and dying; eleven still remained, four of them priests. They were desired to jump, and refused, one of them saying, 'We are quite ready to die, but not *en faisant des gambades*.' A Federal came forward, seized them across the middle, and amidst the applause of the crowd flung them over—the last priest resisted, and in his fall dragged the soldier with him. The assassins were in too great a hurry to stop to pick out their companion, they fired upon the heaps and killed him also.

The butchery had now lasted an hour, but many of the wretched victims were not yet dead, and those below groaned miserably; even after a number of shots had been fired into the dreadful heap of suffering, still the moans continued. 'Allons, les braves, à la baïonnette!' cried a Federal, and the wounded were finished off at last in this way. One of the bodies was found afterwards to have received sixty-nine shots. After this there was a triumphant retreat to the cabarets: 'La terre est purgée,' they cried. The next morning the bodies were stripped, and the fifty-one hostages and one Federal were flung into a cesspool together.[1]

In the preceding month of November during the siege the programme of the 'Comité de ligue à outrance' had been given thus: 'Paris doit être brûle, ou appartenir aux prolétaires.' All chance of winning Paris was at an end, but the first part of the order could still be carried out. And on the '3 Prairial, an 79'—*i.e.* the 22nd May—the nomenclature of the old Republic had been resumed—the order was given thus:—

[1] The account was written down by an eye-witness, and is quoted 'textuellement,' in the account given by the *Revue des Deux-Mondes*. I have omitted some of the worst details.

'Le citoyen Millière, à la tête de 150 fuséens, incendiera les maisons suspectes et les monuments de la rive gauche. Le citoyen Vésinier est chargé spécialement des boulevards de la Madeleine à la Bastille,' and so on. 'Ces citoyens doivent s'entendre avec les chefs de barricades pour assurer l'exécution de ces ordres,' which were carried out on the 25th and 26th.

The factories of corn collected during the siege on the Quai Bourbon were soon in flames, a quantity of food which had been stored in an entrepôt for public carriages, at La Villette, was burnt, and 372 carriages went with it, 772 houses were blazing, 754 others set fire to, the Tuileries, the Palais Royal, the Cour des Comptes and its archives, the Gobelins, the Hôtel de Ville, the Préfecture de Police, three theatres, the Ministère des Finances, the Library of the Louvre, were burnt, and a number of other buildings too many to enumerate. Paris seemed to be given up to the flames, while the Germans who were encamped on the left bank looked on with amazement at the French cutting each other's throats and burning their own capital.

Then came the entry of the army from Versailles, the frightful retaliation, the revenge of the advancing troops. It was hardly to be wondered at if they were enraged; they had endured months of misery during the siege from the enemy, many had been brought up by long marches in winter from the interior of France, suffering cold, wet, and hunger, only to receive death and mutilation from the hands of their own countrymen. 'But if the revolt was odious, the repression was terrible; it was not justice which struck, it was rage.' The chiefs of the insurrection had made sure of their own escape, most of them had secured money and means of subsistence, and it was their wretched dupes who suffered in their stead. 'As the troops poured in we heard how the officers would call out, "Prenez-moi celui-là et fusillez-le;" "Encore ça, non pas celui-là, tel autre," at hazard, with no reason but the caprice of the

moment. Without trial, without shrift, without adieux, men, women, and even children, were seized and put to death without distinction or mercy.'

The women, it is true, had often been among the most fierce of the Communists; a *gamin de Paris* is sometimes an incarnate little demon. In the revolution of 1848, they were known to creep under the stomachs of the cavalry horses and shoot them with a pistol from below, when of course the death of the rider ensued. Yet to execute women and children when all was over, and their power of resistance was at an end, was terrible to witness and think of.

In one case we were told how a 'fournée' of men, women, and boys, were set against a wall to be shot; the soldiers were raising their guns, when a lad of perhaps fourteen or fifteen called out entreatingly to the officer, 'My mother will not know what is become of me; let me go into that porter's lodge for two minutes, and send her my watch. I give my *parole d'honneur* I will come back!' A mother's name is always a strong word to conjure with in France; the officer let him go, probably intending and expecting him to escape. At the end of the two minutes, however, the boy came running back, and set himself against the wall: 'A présent je suis prêt,' said he breathlessly. The officer gave him a kick,—probably pity at that moment might have been dangerous with his own men. 'Va-t'en,' said he, and the child scoured off as the bullets disposed of the rest of the prisoners.

In a street on the left bank near the river there had been much fighting, and several houses burnt. Towards evening a lady, a friend of our own, hearing there were some wounded in a courtyard near, went out with a doctor to try and give help. They found a 'Federal,' almost a lad, lying on the ground with a ball in his chest. 'Can I get over it?' he inquired. The doctor shook his head compassionately. 'Mieux moi qu'un autre,' said the boy

with a sigh; 'I have neither wife nor children,' and so died —unconscious hero in a bad cause.

The destruction of public buildings and monuments seems to have been carried out from several sides at once. A battery of seven guns on the height of Père-la-Chaise was directed principally on the Tuileries, the church of Saint Eustache, and the Orleans station. The Chef commandant l'Artillerie du X. wrote, 'Mon tir est dirigé de façon à faire le plus de dégât à l'interception des Boulevards Hôpital, Saint-Marcel et Arago.' 'Tirez principalement sur les églises,' wrote a member of the Committee of Public Safety in reply, 'except those of Belleville.' One could not help wondering where our Communist driver with the flattened nose and the hatred of priests had been distinguishing himself during those last days.

The men who had obtained the command had evidently a great objection, with excellent reason, to police reports, which seem to have included in their eyes records of all kinds. After the Préfecture with all its compromising papers was burnt, came the turn of the Cour des Comptes, and for hours during the conflagration the blackened pieces of paper fell like a dark snow upon the houses and gardens near, and were even carried by the wind into the country, forty miles away. Its blackened, roofless walls and empty eyes of windows still remain, close to the bridge which the jolly crowd of cabs and carriages and people cross to reach the Exposition, along one of the pretty shady roads close to the river. It was almost incredible to remember that such scenes were enacted there, only seven years ago.

No one liked to speak of the Commune; it was evidently felt to be a disgrace to the country to have allowed the scum of its population to obtain possession of the conduct of affairs in its principal city even for two months, and neither gentle nor simple cared voluntarily to mention the subject. But with the details of the horrors which were committed during its sway and the horrors which were committed

in repressing it, so fresh in remembrance, strangers may be forgiven if they cannot quite forget the past under the pleasant present, and if they do not feel the strong certainty of the procession of Presidents (like Banquo's vision of shadowy kings) which was paraded before our eyes by enthusiastic republicans. The only thing in France of which anyone can be certain is the *imprévu*; that which is most unlikely to happen is sure to be the one event probable. But the prophetic spirit must be confident, indeed, which can venture to foretell what that event will be, or who in future will govern the most charming, terrible, engaging, repulsive, brutal, heroic people which have ever existed on the face of the earth.

PICTURES IN HOLLAND, ON AND OFF CANVAS.[1]

There is a curious difference between the two parts of the 'Low Countries'—the 'nether lands' formed of the ooze and mud deposited by the three great rivers, the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Scheldt, before entering the North Sea, and defended by a fringe of sandbanks and 'dunes,' thrown up by the winds and the waves. Belgium is simply a flat, ugly, prosperous-looking, uninteresting country, not unlike the more commonplace parts of England; but the flatness of Holland has infinitely more character in it, so that after passing the wide and turbid Scheldt, with its forests of shipping, one feels as if in a new land. It is the difference between a merely plain person and an ugly face full of character.

We left Antwerp on a grey day, with occasional gleams of light, the spire of the cathedral seeming for a time to grow taller and taller, as the perspective of distance showed more clearly the true relation of its height to the churches and houses, the masts and chimneys, grouped round this central point—the delicate tracery of its lofty pinnacles, rising 400 feet above the little men who yet had ventured to build up that daring flight of masonry heavenward.

The dead flats, with trees and distant houses, and shifting islands of light on the bright green meadows, passed quickly by,—living illustrations of the Dutch pictures with which we all are familiar; the exquisite truth of which to

[1] *Contemporary Review*, 1877.

nature strikes one at every turn, the land part of the scene forming a mere line in the whole subject, the sky and clouds, as at sea, monopolising three-fourths of the composition, and requiring therefore infinitely more care and thought in their arrangement than is required with other landscapes.

Presently came a series of small pine woods, cut for fuel and the service of the rail before they could reach the age of any beauty; with wide tracts of sandy, heathery common, and sour boggy bits, where turf was being taken out, and waste corners where more scrubby trees were attempting to grow. Few cottages, no châteaux, hardly any inhabitants, were to be seen; it seemed as if we were reaching the end of civilisation. Then came the marshy flats, always at the mercy of a few inches rise in the tidal rivers, and the intricate series of islands, which alter as the muddy channels of the three great rivers divide and change, the rushing waters eating away the low-lying lands they have themselves formed, and carrying them bodily into the sea, against whose inroads the very existence of Holland is a continual struggle of life and death.

Here, in this apparently remote corner of the earth, as the stations succeeded each other at short intervals, name after name was shouted out, recalling some of the most stirring scenes that the world has ever known, and reminding one how in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries this was the place where many of the greatest deeds in European history were enacted, and the most important negotiations were conducted.

Here was the centre of the great struggle for freedom, both religious and political, won hardly for Europe at the cost of such horrible sufferings to the inhabitants of these industrious, well-doing cities,—ingrained traders if ever any existed,—who yet gave up the prosperity so dear to them for the sake of what to some seem only mere abstract questions;—where women and children helped in fighting the good fight, both actively and passively, not only enduring

to the end the dreadful privations of the sieges, and exhorting their mankind not to yield, but even themselves fighting on the ramparts. Here such heads of the people as William the Silent, Barneveldt, De Witt, Prince Maurice, and William III. revolved their great schemes of European policy, and moved the strings that moved the world.

After such a past, it seems strange how the current of political power has now, as it were, stranded Holland on her own mud-banks, and left her to her prosperous trade, the commercial activity which fills the ports of Rotterdam, Dort, and Amsterdam with shipping and goods, the interior development of her agriculture over miles of flat green pastures, rich and fertile, tenanted with herds of fat cattle, and the furnishing of butter and cheese, salt herrings and other fish, to the nations—a useful, but not quite so heroic a vocation as of old.

This is not the age of small States; war has been revolutionised to the exclusive profit of great populations and areas. The gigantic power of such armaments as Napoleon was the first to bring into fashion would now crush small centres of light such as the Greek and Italian Republics, and the seventeen United Provinces, before they would have time to collect men and money enough to resist. Whether this advance of brute force can be called civilisation may be a question. 'God' certainly seems now to be 'du côté des gros bataillons' in Napoleon's sense, but a better mode of adjusting our differences must surely some time be found than for one nation to hammer another into subjection at the greatest possible cost to itself of blood and treasure, as in the Franco-German war. The horror expressed at the Bulgarian atrocities (both real and feigned) shows an advance in public opinion. Every important place in the Low Countries suffered as great horrors again and again in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, while Europe looked calmly on. Let anyone read again the sieges of Antwerp, Haarlem, and Leyden, and say whether even the

fiendish cruelties exercised on the poor Bulgarian peasants were worse than the wholesale barbarities inflicted on the unoffending inhabitants of great civilised cities, and continued for years by Christian soldiers, led by 'officers and gentlemen,' representatives of the 'Most Catholic King,' and belonging to a State such as Spain then was, standing at the head of the European nations of the period. It proves at least that the ideal of what may be permitted, even in war, has greatly changed for the better.

It is sometimes said that individual influence is at an end in the world, that we now work only by committees, parliaments, associations, and unions—vestries, in short, big and little. In the days when Bismarck and Moltke are still alive, when Cavour for good, and 'Napoleon the Little' for evil, are scarcely cold in their graves, this can only be considered partially true. Yet standing among the trees of the 'Plein' (Place) at the Hague, and looking at the statue of 'The Taciturn' (as he is often written and spoken of 'for shortness' in a sort of affectionate familiarity) as he stands there bare-headed, in his long robe, trunk hose, and great ruff—sagacious, long-suffering, wary, *indomptable*, one cannot but feel that the whole of Holland might now slip into the sea with less effect upon the fate of Europe than had the death of that one great man under the hands of an obscure assassin. The whole country seems full of him—with his memory are connected all the most stirring incidents in that most stirring epoch of her history; he is the incarnation of the best spirit of Holland in her best days.

The period of development, the flowering times in art and literature of a nation, are even curiously incalculable. The most artificial unheroic age of Louis Quatorze brought out the full bloom of the talent of France. Here, amid war, misery, famine, bloodshed, and torture, grew up the great days of Holland, producing these unlikely results. Among these sleepy canals, brooded over by the heavy still damp of the

encroaching sea, the black stagnant waters, the raw greens of the grass and trees, arose the brilliant Dutch and Flemish art, one of the only two schools of colour that have ever existed in the world, as far as we know it, Greek pictures having utterly perished.

The gorgeous acres of canvas covered by Rubens, the magnificent Rembrandts, the little jewels of colour by Terburg, Wouvermans, Gerard Dow, Ostade, Mieris, and Both; the wondrous portraits where Van der Helst, Frank Hals, Mireveldt, and Vandyke represented their men and women, the landscapes at which Ruysdael and Hobbema, Cuyp, P. Potter, Berghem, laboured so industriously, though with such apparently unpicturesque surroundings as straight canals, stiff trees, and square fields, fill one with wonder at the quantity, as well as the quality, of their beautiful work. There is not a gallery in Europe, public or private, of any renown, which does not contain many specimens of each good Dutch master. England is peculiarly rich in such treasures, and here many of the best pictures of the school out of Holland are to be found. We may claim the merit, at least, of having discovered their value at a time when it was lowest among their own countrymen, and perfect gems of art were bought for mere trifles, which would now be recovered, if possible, at almost any price. The city of Antwerp has just given 4,000*l.* for a picture by Hobbema, not two feet square. Why has all this power passed away? why cannot the city cause a new picture to be painted equal to the old?

In literature they stood nearly as high. Erasmus was certainly the leading philosophical thinker of the Reformation. Grotius, who was termed the 'miracle of Holland,' the 'rising light of the world;' Descartes, though not born among them, yet certainly must be ranked among their great men; Spinoza, 'great among the greatest as a thinker,' the 'God-intoxicated man,' as he was called by the Catholic Novalis,—who was anathematised by orthodox

Jew and Christian alike, but whose reputation has survived the reprobation ; and Boerhaave, 'the physician of Europe,' were a few typical names among them ; while printing, whose delicate clearness and beauty has never been excelled, amounting indeed to an art, was carried on by the family of the Elzevirs, at Leyden and elsewhere. In etching, Rembrandt himself has no rival, in power and delicacy alike, and in the effects of colour produced, though in mere black and white, by the magic of his light and shade. The etchings, however, which bear his signature are of very various merit, and the backgrounds, foregrounds, and draperies are now believed to have been often worked in by his many pupils. Ferdinand Bol, himself an excellent painter, is also supposed to have filled in sketches made by Rembrandt himself. As far as mere mechanical power goes, Hollar's touch seems to be hardly inferior to that of the great master ; but the genius of invention behind it is lacking in his case, and the satins and furs, the ruffs and lace, so marvellously rendered, continue mere 'furniture,' without the wondrous application to life by which Rembrandt imparts to them such surpassing interest.

Presently we passed the low earthworks of Breda, which look so weak and insignificant that they would seem impossible to defend ; but their 'surrender' was deemed such an important triumph that it was immortalised by Velasquez, in the great picture of the Madrid Gallery, so bristling with uplifted lances, that it is technically called 'Las Lanzas.' To us a far more interesting incident is the surprise of the town in 1590, while in the possession of the Spaniards, by a devoted band of soldiers, headed by a captain of Prince Maurice's army. Seventy men hid themselves in the hold of a barge, under a load of turf, which was going into the town for the supply of the troops. The voyage was only of a few leagues, but the winter wind blew a gale down the river, bringing with it huge blocks of ice, and scooping the water out of the dangerous shallows, so that the vessel

could not get on. From Monday till Saturday these brave men lay packed like herrings in their little vessel, suffering from hunger, thirst, and deadly cold. Only once did they venture on shore to refresh themselves. At length, on Saturday evening, they reached Breda, the last sluice was passed, the last boom shut behind them.

An officer of the guard came on board, talked to the two boatmen, and lounged into the little cabin, where he was only separated by a sliding door from the men: a single cough or sneeze would have betrayed them, when every one of these obscure heroes would have been butchered immediately. As they went up the canal the boat struck on some hidden obstacle and sprung a leak; they were soon sitting up to their knees in water, while pumping hardly kept the barge afloat. A party of Italian soldiers came to their help, and dragged the vessel close up to the guard-house of the castle. The winter had been long and cold, and there was a great dearth of fuel. An eager crowd came on board, and began carrying off the cargo much faster than was safe for the hidden men. The hardships they had endured and the thorough wetting had set the whole party coughing and sneezing; in particular the lieutenant, Held, unable to control his cough, drew his dagger, and implored his neighbour to stab him to the heart, lest the noise should betray them. The skipper and his brother, however, went on working the pumps with as much clatter as possible, shouting directions to each other so as to cover the sounds within. At last, declaring that it was now dark, they with difficulty got rid of the customers. The servant of the captain of the guard lingered still, complaining of the turf, and saying his master would never be satisfied with it. 'Oh,' said the cool skipper, 'the best part of the cargo is underneath, kept expressly for the captain; he will be sure to get enough of it to-morrow.'

The governor, deceived by false rumours, had suddenly gone to Gertruydenberg, leaving his nephew in charge—a

raw, incompetent lad. Just before midnight the men stole out; one half marched to the arsenal, the other to the guard-house. The captain of the watch sprang out, and was struck dead at one blow, while the guard were shot through the doors and windows. The other band were equally successful: the young governor made a rally, but was driven back into a corner of the castle, while the rest of the garrison, belonging to Spinola's famous Sicilian legion, fled helter-skelter into the town, not even destroying the bridge behind them. A body of picked troops under Maurice himself soon arrived, the palisade was beaten down, and they entered by the same way as the fatal turf boat. Before sunrise the city and the fort had surrendered 'to the States-General and his Excellency.' The capture was not only important in itself, but was the beginning of a series of Dutch victories, the turn in the tide after the Spanish triumphs of previous years.

Next came Dort, with its bright little gardens, houses, churches, ships, canals, windmills, and river,—all seeming inextricably mixed,—and a memory of the Synod collected here to settle the Calvinistic, Lutheran, and Arminian disputes of Protestant countries, which was not very satisfactory in its results, as it settled nothing. The place was a favourite subject with Cuyp, and the numerous 'Views,' two of which were to be seen in the last Loan Collection, the 'Landing of Prince Maurice at Dort' in the Bridgewater Gallery, with Mr. Holford's 'View of Dort,' are at least a much more beautiful consequence due to the existence of the town.

There is a curious romance about this picture; it was very long and narrow, and was cut in two by an unscrupulous dealer, thus utterly ruining the composition and balance of colour, particularly in the sky. The two halves remained apart for years and were called 'Morning' and 'Evening,' in the strange ignorance of both buyers and sellers of what constituted early light. At length the true relation of the parts was discovered, they have been once

again married, and shine in the full glow of their warm beauty on Mr. Holford's walls: one can hardly help feeling that they rejoice in their re-union. The luminous effect of the evening light on sky and river, hot and still, with the town and its windmills in it, and the summer morning effect of the 'Landing,' are equally admirable. The atmospheric effects in Holland are certainly very peculiar. When the landscape is not blotted out by the mists, the fog, and the rain, its extreme flatness (as at sea) allows long perspectives of light to be seen under the clouds down to the very low level of the horizon. This often produces wonderful beauty of light and shade, when the sun is shining on any point in the great sweeps of country which are generally there in sight. The chances of variety are also much greater with such an immense arch of sky than when the lower circle is cut off all round by trees and undulations, more or less high, as is usually the case elsewhere. There is also a singular clearness in the air over great expanses of water or watery land, and of vivid colour, when the cloud-screens lift, which is infinitely attractive; while the reflected light from the plains of bright water gives a remarkable luminousness—which has certainly passed on to the canvas of the Dutch artists.

Further down the Maas comes Rotterdam, which is now the entrepôt for the trade between Java and Germany. It looks busy and full of life, with its forests of masts on the broad, muddy, rapid river, washing away a bit of land on one side, piling it up further down, on the ever-changing morasses formed where the Maas reaches the sea. Here first one sees that strange combination of dark red brick houses, trees, and canals, most picturesque, and strikingly unlike anything else in the world. Even Venice, to which it is so often compared, resembles it in the words of a description far more than in reality. The Dutch towns, with their deep sombre tones of colour, do not in the least remind one of their brilliant Italian cousin.

The Hague is certainly the pleasantest and most peaceful-looking capital existing—'umbrageous' is the only word expressive of it, such is the amount of trees in every direction. 'Trim retired leisure' is the general impression of the place, where women have time to squirt water at the fronts of their houses, and where the railway station is so clean that one might almost eat off the bricks. Still there is a busier and dirtier side to the town, connected with the trade to the sea. We looked down canal after canal, with long perspectives of bridges, men punting heavy barges with long poles thrust into the muddy black water or against the brick sides, leaning over so far that, at sharp turnings of the canals, it seemed as if they must overtopple themselves and fall. The boats were full of green cabbages and yellow carrots, baskets, mats hung up in rows, peat in neat little square cakes, the best from Guelderland. In many of them women and children were living in the small cabins, half under and half upon the deck, and were sitting about in picturesque heaps. Some of the canals are now filled up and turned into streets, but the waterways, with bright lights and chequered shadows from the avenues of trees thrown on the brick houses and the black-green water, are far more pleasant to look at. The stirring of the boats prevents the stagnant look which, in out-of-the-way, little-used corners, appears in a coating of green slime, and seems as if it ought to bring fever, but does not. Here is a very Dutch picture: two women harnessed to a boat by a long rope, pushing against the collar like beasts of burden; a bit of red colour on a wherry under the distant bridge; then a green hull and a mass of black barges, and the blue of the men's shirts, punting among the trees with their long poles, carrying the colour from a bright sky. Nature gets the blue required for her gamut often from above, and the reflections of the houses and trunks of trees in the water wherever it was still, doubled and inverted the lines with admirable effect.

There was a more open view out of our windows, where the canal (always a necessary foreground here) is backed by the park. The trees, particularly the oaks, grow very straight, showing that there is no stony, gravelly obstacle to their tap roots in the easy soil; peat (of an inferior quality) is reached wherever a foundation is dug or a garden cultivated, even in the best quarters of the town. Endless barrows, with all sorts of produce, are passing by—grapes; blue, green, and orange *faïence*; a red box with 'Koffee, Thee,' on it—the last as national a beverage here as in England; a boy in a blouse and *sabots*, with two great baskets slung to a yoke, and an enormous cauliflower in each; some women marketing, with queer skull caps of very thin beaten gold, hiding the hair completely, a costume from Zeeland; others with lace lappets, and small curly gold horns projecting four or five inches on the side of the head, heirlooms in a North Holland family, a white jacket, pink apron, and *sabots*, cold colouring; the peasants looking substantial in every sense; odd, old-fashioned country carts, with a curious horn jutting out in front; two wicked little boys, certainly not twelve years old, smoking; several more in wooden shoes and red stockings, flinging stones to bring down the horse-chestnuts, with an amount of diligence, patience, and skill, which would make them model boys if they do those lessons for which they will certainly be too late this morning as earnestly. No 'guardians of order' interfering; apparently order takes care of itself in this well-conducted population. The schools are said to be remarkably good and well attended; the religious education is kept separate from the secular, the hot Protestant and Catholic feuds making any other arrangement impossible, if the children are to be taught together; and there seems to be no difficulty there at least in carrying out the details.

We drove to the 'Maison du Bois,' where the Queen of Holland was living, through a thick grove of tall trees,

remnants of the ancient forest once girding the whole territory of the Netherlands; another portion of it is still to be found near Haarlem, which long enabled the savage inhabitants of the quicksands and thickets of Batavia to withstand even the Romans; while the tangled bushes into which the sand was blown on the shore of the North Sea are believed to be the origin of the dunes. The trees grow so close as to spoil each other sadly, but if once the sharp sea winds are admitted the destruction is great. Tall beech trunks, here and there, thrust their heads high into the air, pine and elm, hornbeams and horse-chestnuts, crossed and mingled their branches, with a great variety of foliage. In the midst of the wood we came upon a dark green clear pool, looking very weird and strange, and one sees where Ruysdael got the black greens, the sombre, sunless shadows, of his pictures. The deep seclusion of the place is very striking,[1] though within a mile or two of the town; the road wound and twisted through the thick forest, closing in on every side and over our heads, when, without any preparation, we came suddenly on the old red brick palace with a high 'perron' and steps in front, literally planted in the very heart of the mystery. Certainly this is the very place where the 'Belle au bois dormante' must have lived, and probably these are the princes her descendants; only the Queen, one of the cleverest women in Europe, does not look as if much of the sleep had come down upon her. The palace is full of Javanese and Japanese curiosities, and Mr. Motley's portrait figures there, hanging in a room full of the most precious of the monsters. He has certainly merited the rarest place in the kingdom, for his canonization of its heroes and his vivid pictures of the great struggles of its people.

We passed through a central hall, the cupola and walls of which are painted by scholars of Rubens in memory of

[1] There is a short prosaic way to the straight bare high road on the other side the palace, but this may be quite ignored.

the great deeds of some Prince of Orange, by order of his wife, who sits at the top and admires her own work in her husband's honour.

[The Queen received us very affectionately in a small cabinet with a balcony hung with wreaths of westeria, and looking out upon a poetic little garden full of late-flowering roses. It was her private boudoir opening from her own room. We sat down and talked of all things in heaven and earth. She was most agreeable, taking up and following out any suggestive remark.

She spoke and read French, German and English with equal ease, and kept up to the thoughts and interests of each country in politics, literature and religion in a very remarkable way. She talked of Bismarck and of Russian influence in Europe, discussed English statesmen, Lord Derby, Lord Salisbury, Gladstone—and was not at all pleased with his Bulgarian campaign, which was just going on. 'Turkey can do us no harm now. Your English politics are so insular, neither side tries to grasp the idea of the welfare of Europe.' She mentioned Charles Villiers; 'He has never had justice done to him in England, he has been before his day on so many great subjects—not only the corn laws.' Then we talked of books, French and English, Lecky, Motley, how little had been written of late in France, &c. She regretted the split between the philosophers and religious men, and hoped to live to see science illustrate religion as she believed that it ought and would do. She spoke of Jules Mohl, whom she had known from a child, as he was son of the prime minister of Würtemberg, of his wonderful ability, 'and he was such a true friend;' of the Dutch schools and of the teaching of Catholics and Protestants together. There was much less difficulty on religious questions in education than in England; it was not indifference, for the churches were much frequented. H—— said he had been *attaché* at Stuttgart about the time she was born. Her mother, who was known in England as the

Duchess of Oldenburg, at that time one of the most distinguished women in Europe, clever, handsome, but mixed up with political intrigue, died soon after, when great feeling was shown in Würtemberg. Something brought up the Queen's article in the 'Revue des Deux-Mondes,' which was very clever, and the French excellent. She laughed. 'Buloz treated me very ill about it; he put in the *nom-de-plume* by which I had signed it, but then on the cover he added "*par une Reine.*" Now, as there are no Queens who write, that I know of, except the Queen of England and me, and as it was not likely that she would undertake the Stuarts, it was giving me up.' I said something about the French in which the article was written. 'Ah! I had that seen to. I could not feel certain as a foreigner of not making solecisms. I wrote it all myself, but it was looked over for me.'

As we were going she said, 'You ought to see our Dutch modern art,' and she took us into a small *salon* where there were a number of very pretty little pictures. 'Mind you look at Motley's portrait as you go out,' she added. She asked us to dinner at six o'clock on the next day; it is the usual Dutch hour. Guests are expected to go away soon after dinner and to spend the evening elsewhere. We were shown through several drawing-rooms with beautiful specimens of all kinds of manufacture from Java. The Queen was a little late and came in apologising—the King's old uncle had been with her, to whom she was always kind. She was dressed in mixed white brocade and plain silk, then a new fashion, closed up to the throat, some diamond stars in her *crêpé* hair, and with her fine figure and intelligent face, still handsome, she looked exceedingly regal. She went in alone to dinner, and we followed after the usual fashion into a small comfortable dining-room; H—— sat by her, I was just opposite, and there was much pleasant easy talk. She spoke a good deal on politics with H——, but always bringing other people into the conversation, never

an *aparté*. She was 'up' even to the *causes célèbres* in England, and asked what I thought as to the guilt of Mrs. Bravo. I said I did not believe she had poisoned her husband. 'Ah, all the good wives think her innocent,' laughed she. We returned to the *salon* all together, where she talked of the schools and hospitals in Holland, the difficulty of doctors *versus* nurses, which existed there as everywhere; then of the draining of the Zuyder Zee, which would add a county as big as Surrey to the kingdom, and whether it would be best done by a company or by government. She was very gracious and kept us long after the regulation hour. Hers was a fine expression, as of a noble woman with great interests and earnest desires after right, but the trammels and hindrances of the position did not make one wish to be a queen.

She liked Paris, where H—— first met her, the stir of life in the political centre of Europe, the literary men and the interests of all kinds all moved her. One year her cousin, Prince Napoleon, lent her the Elysée; he was the son of her aunt, the Princess of Würtemberg, who had been compelled by Napoleon to marry his brother Jerome. She had a regard for Louis Napoleon and visited him at the Tuileries, where, however, she did not meet the society she liked best. Her advice to him seems to have been always good, but she had been much annoyed at the use made by the Liberals of her letter written to the Emperor just before Sedan, and picked up in the sack of the Tuileries.

She was fond of children, and invited them often to little garden parties at the Maison du Bois. On one of these occasions she was going about in a great garden-hat, when a small thing came up to her and said, 'Queen, Queen, why haven't you got on your crown to-day?' Queens always wear their crowns, as is well known, in fairy tales, and the seven little ogresses in 'Tom Thumb' even went to bed in theirs! Reality is sometimes so very disappointing.]—*Added in* 1885.

The gallery at the Hague is very small, but full of pictures of great interest: not by any means, however, those which are most talked about. The big Bull is a disappointment; we have been satiated with beast-painting, and the hairs of his head and the droppings from his nose, wonderful as they are, are too realistic and prosaic to excite any great warmth of enthusiasm. The sleepy sheep, too, are so poorly painted that they seem as if not by Paul Potter's own hand. Rosa Bonheur's 'Horse Fair' is a far higher kind of art.

Here there is a fine portrait of Prince Maurice, by Mireveldt, in armour, with a high narrow forehead and peaked beard. There is more even than his father's statesmanlike power in the face, but far less of the benignity. The features of the family of the Nassaus are well worth study. William the Silent and his three brothers had already laid down their lives for the sake of their country, and his son and nine more of the race were devoting their blood, their property, and every energy and talent they possessed to the service of the cause at the time this picture was painted. Few lands, indeed, owe more to one great family than Holland to the race of William.

The bevy of doctors surrounding a subject about to be dissected, foreshortened in a marvellous manner; it is a splendid effort of portrait-grouping, natural and life-like, and of light and shade, and is not so unpleasant as it sounds, but not a picture on which one can like to dwell. The portraits of Rubens' first and second wives are full of colour, life, and brilliant light; 'But I don't know which I should like least for my own wife of those two coquettish ladies,' said our companion. There is no good picture of William the Silent; probably he was far too busy with greater interests to remember to be painted; but though the omission seems to be in character with the man, it is not the less to be regretted. The statue on the Plein is not bad, but it is only a late production; by his side the little dog is immor-

talised which saved his life, when lying asleep in his tent, by barking so violently that it awakened the Prince, on one of the many occasions when his assassination was attempted by order of Philip II.

A 'Velvet' *Breughel* is here of 'Orpheus charming the Beasts,' in which Professor Owen detected a portrait of the long lost Dodo. It enabled him to give the external aspect of the bird whose skeleton he had so wonderfully reconstructed from an odd foot and part of the head, all that remained of a stuffed specimen, the last of its race, which had mouldered slowly away in the museum of the College of Surgeons.

Prince Maurice, who seems to have first conceived the idea of a Zoological garden, had collected at the Hague the strange birds and beasts brought home by the enterprising Dutch traders of that day, and employed Breughel to perpetuate the most curious of them in pictures, such as the exodus from Noah's ark, and Orpheus and the beasts. The minute finish for which he is famous enabled Professor Owen to discover, with a magnifying glass, even to the scales on the tips of the feathers garnishing the Dodo's head.

Breughel had evidently made a full-sized drawing from nature of the bird, which he had then diminished through a glass.

Two or three lovely little landscapes, full of air and sunshine and distance, with much sky, make one feel as if a hole in the wall were opened admitting the real view. One of these gives that mixture of ships and trees common in Holland, and another the distant sight of a town amidst formal trees and wide meadows, whose realisation we soon came upon in Leyden itself, near a small branch of the Rhine, where a great church rising among the trees and red houses has a sort of simulated look of the hull of a ship reversed, very characteristic of its position.

Leyden is now the quietest and most stagnant of learned universities, but with a story to it of the siege by the

Spaniards in 1573, than which nothing more moving has happened in the story of our race. The heroic manner in which the inhabitants held out long after all wholesome provisions had been consumed, how they ate horses and dogs, and cats and rats were luxuries; how they dug up the very weeds in the market place; and even when pestilence broke out from the privations endured by the inhabitants, and carried off thousands of them, still the remainder held out; is not this written in Mr. Motley's great chronicle of their race?

At length, as the last chance of relieving the city, William the Silent resolved upon opening the great dykes to the sea, and flooding the country so as to drown out the Spaniards and send food to the besieged. The damage to the fields, standing crops, and villages, in July, was enormous: it was a measure only to be taken as a last resort, but the danger was imminent, and if Leyden fell the rest of the country must follow. The Estates consented to the risk: 'Better a drowned land than a lost land,' cried the patriots, and a large capital was subscribed to carry out the work of destruction, as if it had been a commercial enterprise, while the ladies gave their plate and jewellery towards it. The besieged had written to the Prince that everything was gone but the maltcake, and that after four more days nothing but starvation would be left to them. William was lying at Rotterdam so ill with a violent fever, brought on by fatigue and anxiety, that his life was despaired of, but he caused letters to be sent off, which, without mentioning his illness, told that the dykes had already been pierced and that the water was beginning to rise. Great rejoicings took place within the wretched town, cannon were fired, and the Spaniards were surprised at the sounds of music; but Leyden was fifteen miles from the sea dyke, and the flotilla of 200 vessels, with guns and 2,500 veterans on board, was only able to get as far as a second dyke, still five miles from Leyden. Within this lay a chain of sixty-

two forts, occupying the land held by the Spaniards, who were four times the number of those coming to the rescue; a sanguinary and desperate action took place, but after breaking through these obstacles a third dyke still kept out the water. At length after a series of violent 'amphibious skirmishes' this defence was carried and the dyke broken down; but again they were doomed to disappointment; the wind was east, and the water spreading over so large a surface was reduced to a mere film of nine inches, too shallow for the ships—which required from eighteen to twenty—to sail over, and the fleet remained motionless.

William had by this time somewhat recovered, and as soon as he was able to stand he came on board, when the mere sight of him revived the spirits of the forces. The besieged were now at their last gasp; they knew that the fleet had sailed, and guessed at its progress by the burning villages, but they knew also that the wind was contrary and that it could not advance to their help. Bread, maltcake, and horseflesh had disappeared, even the leaves were stripped from the trees and eaten; mothers dropped down dead with dead children in their arms; a dreadful disorder like the plague carried off from 6,000 to 8,000 persons; yet still the people resolutely held out. At last a party of the most fainthearted surrounded the Burgomaster, Adrian van der Wert, and demanded a surrender. 'My life is at your disposal,' said the heroic chief; 'I can but die once, but I tell you I have made an oath to hold the city. It is a fate more horrible than famine to fall into the hands of the Spaniards. Take my body if it can be of any use to you, but expect no surrender while I am alive.' The discontent was stayed, but still there seemed no hope of relief. 'It were as easy to pluck the stars out of heaven as Leyden out of our hands,' cried the Spaniards, jubilantly.

But the Lord sent a great wind, and it blew the waves furiously on the shore and across the ruined dykes, and the floods rose on the panic-stricken Spaniards, a thousand of

whom were drowned, and the flotilla of barges sailed in at midnight over the waves amidst the storm and darkness. A fierce naval battle was fought amongst the branches of the great orchards and the chimney stacks of half-submerged farm-houses; the enemy's vessels were soon sunk, and on swept the fleet; and when they approached some shallows, the Zeelanders dashed into the sea and by sheer strength shouldered every vessel through. Before they could reach the town, however, there still remained the great fortress of Lammen, swarming with soldiers and bristling with artillery, which could not be left behind, while the town might still be starved before it could be reduced. At dead of night, however, the panic-stricken Spaniards fled, and to the surprise of the patriots, in the morning all were gone; then the fleet rode in through the canals, the quays lined with the famishing people to whom bread was thrown as they passed along amidst the tears of the population. As soon as the brave Admiral Boisot stepped on shore, a solemn procession repaired to the great church, nearly every living soul within the walls joining, where after a prayer had been offered up the whole vast multitude joined in a great thanksgiving hymn. But the emotion was too deep; they soon broke down, and the multitude wept like children. And on the day following the relief, when the north-west wind had done its work, behold, it shifted suddenly to the east, and again a tempest arose and blew back the waves whence they came, so that the land had rest, and the people were able once more to rebuild their dykes and restore the drowned fields. The whole story reads like a chapter in the history of the 'chosen people.'

The Prince of Orange, though still scarcely convalescent, appeared in the town next day; and as one proof of the gratitude of Holland for the heroism of its people, the University was then founded at Leyden.

We had passed the spire of an insignificant village on the right—'Ryswyk, where the Treaty was signed between

the Empire, England, France, Holland, and Spain in 1697,' said the guide-book oracularly. What was the treaty about? I know that we knew once, but this does not much mend the matter. I feel as if I were being examined in Russell's 'Modern Europe' and my information found very shaky. 'What was the treaty to settle?' I appeal to the 'intelligent man,' of whom one is perennially in search in any new place, but here even he is at fault. 'Madame, je ne puis vous en rien dire, je n'ai pas été à Ryswyc.' What a comfort it would be if the not having been at a place would honourably clear one at an examination! 'What are the dates of the two sieges of Vienna?' 'Sir, I cannot say; I have never been at Vienna.' 'What were the bases of the Treaty of Utrecht?' 'Mr. Professor, how should I know? I have never visited Utrecht.' And with a vague notion that it was 'some triumph of William III.'s negotiation' we swept on.

As Haarlem came in sight we passed over the fields wherein hyacinths, tulips, &c., blue, pink, yellow, and rainbow-coloured, are grown by the million, and make the country look like a garden parterre in spring. The alluvial soil when the peat is peeled off is found particularly productive for 'roots.'

'Are there any manufactures at Haarlem?' we ask of our last edition of the 'intelligent man' on our road to the great organ.

'Yes, madame,' replied he, 'the manufacture of onions' (bulbs).

The siege of this town preceded that of Leyden by a few months, and quite equalled it in heroism, but the end was far more painful. Indeed, the courage of Leyden must be estimated by the fact that she knew of the dreadful fate of her sister-city and yet was not afraid.

The position of the town was a most important one, on a narrow neck of land between the Zuyder Zee and the ocean, scarcely five miles across; with its fall the province

would have been cut in two, and the difficulty of resistance greatly increased. On the other side lay the Haarlem lake, covering seventy square miles of surface, very shallow but liable to great storms. The city was one of the largest and most beautiful in the Netherlands, but also one of the weakest; the walls were low, in bad order, and required a large garrison, instead of which they could only muster three thousand men, while thirty thousand Spaniards were encamped around it. It was winter, which at first gave the Hollanders some advantage, by enabling them to fight on their native ice, but after the first 'rapid, brilliant, and slippery skirmishes,' when, Alva's troops being worsted, he declared that 'such a thing was never heard of till to-day,' he ordered seven thousand pairs of skates, on which his soldiers were immediately made to practise their evolutions, and the balance was restored against the Netherlanders.

Again and again the indefatigable Orange sent in men, provisions, and ammunition, across the ice of the Haarlem Lake on sledges, often impelled by women and even children; every citizen became a soldier, and even the women took arms; and a corps of fighting women, all of respectable character, armed with swords, daggers, and muskets, did very efficient service in many fiercely-contested actions, within and without the walls.

The women in Holland have borne a distinguished part in the history of the country ever since the time when 'the Gaul was assisted in a struggle by his blue-eyed wife, gnashing her teeth and brandishing her vast and snowy arms,' as a soldier who fought under the Emperor Julian describes them. But in spite of the desperate resistance of the burghers, 'who fought as well as the best soldiers in the world could do,' wrote Alva, the iron circle gradually closed in on the devoted city. They repelled three fierce assaults, defeating the enemy with great loss; they sallied forth with brilliant success, bringing in provisions and cannon, and killing almost a man apiece of the Spaniards; they built up

the walls again as fast as the cannonade destroyed them, or when they were blown up by mines. Horrible barbarities were committed by the Spaniards on the few prisoners taken, but at length Alva introduced a fleet of war-boats on the lake, and all the provisions in the town having been exhausted, the townsfolk could do no more. As they could get no quarter, they determined on cutting their way through the camp, with the women and children in the midst of a square. 'It was a war such as had never been seen or heard of in any land on earth,' wrote Alva to Philip II. The General, Don Frederic Alva, would willingly have abandoned the siege, but his father threatened to renounce him if he did so. At last, fearing that the desperate citizens would set fire to the town, he offered ample forgiveness to the place, having all the time in his pocket a letter from Alva ordering him 'not to let a soldier remain alive,' and to execute a large number of the citizens. Haarlem yielded, and the people laid down their arms. As soon as they were no longer to be feared, the massacre began, and for many days five executioners and their attendants were kept at work till they were exhausted, when the remaining prisoners were tied back to back, two and two, and drowned in the lake. Two thousand three hundred persons were thus murdered in cold blood, including the Calvinist minsters and most of the principal inhabitants of the place. But the heroic resistance had not been in vain; it exhausted the strength of the besieging army to such a degree that 'it was clear the Spanish empire could not sustain many such victories.' Twelve thousand men had perished of their choicest troops, and the expenditure of treasure had been enormous, while in four years' time the city was once again won back by the Netherlanders, whose constancy nothing could subdue.

What then was the Lake of Haarlem is now green with fields and young trees, and spotted with new red farmhouses, lying twelve feet below the level of the surrounding

low country. Another large space is being reclaimed, laid bare by the line of the new great ship canal from Amsterdam to the sea, on the other side of the railroad. The 'morcellement,' we heard, was much less than in France, though the laws are the same. 'It is impossible to feed cattle for dairy purposes on very small farms, so these are not cut up.' By far the largest cultivated part of the country is pasture.

The struggle between man and water in this marvellous country, only protected from being swallowed up in the high tides of every autumn by the line of low dunes and the artificial dykes, which are little more than wattles and sand bound together by the roots of the grass, almost haunts one. It is as if the voice of the sea was ever sounding in their ears, 'Watch, work, strengthen your dykes, or you will all be drowned!' The details of the draining of the Haarlem Lake are extremely curious; a circular canal was first made round the district to be operated on, built up like the 'levées' of the Po. Into this the water was (and is) pumped by four great steam-engines; it thence flows into a wider straight canal, ending with great sluices on the sea. These at low tide are opened, and the water runs away; but if the wind be strong on shore, and the tide high, whole days may elapse before the gates can be opened, and the water must wait with what patience it may, while the overgorged canals become full almost to overflowing.

Whole regiments of windmills are continually at work, keeping the balance even between the inland and outward waters, pumping up that of the low levels sufficiently high to enable it to find an exit into the sea. Besides this, they saw wood, grind flour, crush linseed, &c., &c., so that it is no wonder that they hold so honourable a place in Dutch art. It is found that they only raise the water profitably to a height of three or four feet, so that when ten or twelve feet have to be accomplished, three mills, in steps one above

another, are employed, each to do its own share of the work. There are said to be nine thousand of these industrious slaves in Holland. And Amsterdam would seem to be the very centre of the battalion. There is one in each angle of the now useless fortifications, and they are sprinkled up and down all along the outer canal. The town is the crown of wonder of engineering skill, patient labour, and untiring struggles with water, weather, and wind, for the whole place is below the level of the sea. It has struck its roots deep below, like a great patient oak, and there is almost as much material sunk beneath the feet as is to be seen above the heads of the inhabitants. The ugly palace alone is built upon more than seventy thousand piles.

H—— went to look at the building of an ordinary house in an ordinary street; he found that they came to water, or rather mud, as soon as they began to dig: in a space about thirty feet by twenty-five feet, eighteen piles, six inches square and thirty or forty feet long, were being driven by steam hammers, about two to the yard. Over the crossing beams and the flooring, Portland cement is generally laid, and the houses do not appear to be damp. But in the smaller streets, where the water is stirred by the long poles used to punt the barges, or by dredging, the smells were abominable, as there can be no outfall, and the drainage must be all laboriously pumped up out of the canals before it can run into the sea. Yet there is little fever; perhaps the liberal allowance of clean rain, perpetually pouring down from heaven, keeps them going. Still it was highly immoral thus to sin against every law of hygiene and not to suffer, and H—— held his nose in virtuous indignation as he passed along.

Nothing can be more picturesque than the infinite variety of queer gables and pediments, the ogees, scrolls, and dormer windows of the houses in the canal streets, each with a projection to which a crane can be attached,

jutting out from the topmost twist of the mouldings, like a unicorn's horn out of his forehead. In architecture it has been said that beautiful and strange ideas are found lying about old towns as in nature. The lines of the windows, varying in each house from those of its neighbour, give them the charm of individuality, even in a street, which we so sorely miss in London. There is a *trottoir* and generally a row of trees by each canal, which introduces another element unlike Venice.

We could see from our windows the large ships that enter through a drawbridge into the wider canals, with strange quaint varieties of stem and stern, the rigging and sails of different cuts and colours, many of their masts being unshipped to pass under the low side bridges. Here is a mass of hay, as large as a house, floating past on an almost invisible flat boat, and projecting far on each side of it; there comes an immense vegetable cargo; barrels of herrings, coals, cheese, butter, every kind of produce, were passing up and down, and a vast flotilla of wood, many hundred feet in length, which had come down the Rhine from the Black Forest or the Jura, with a little hut at each end, and piloted by a couple of families, who must have been months on their slow way. The opening of the great canal to the North Sea, which saves the long and dangerous passage round by the sandbanks of the Zuyder Zee, has greatly increased the commerce of the town, and it is said now to be rivalling or even cutting out that of Rotterdam. The harbour at the end of the canal just completed by English engineers, at the opening to the stormy ocean, is well worth studying. It cost millions of money, and both canal, sluices, and harbour are miracles of skill.

There was much talk of the scheme for drying up part of the Zuyder Zee; a dyke twenty-five miles long is to be thrown across its narrowest part, and the preparations for this embankment under water are such as would only be dreamt of in Holland. A raft of brushwood is made, on which, as

no natural stone is to be had, square masses made of sand and shingle, bound together by cement, are piled. These are towed out to their proper situation, when they are sunk, and another layer then brought and laid on the top of the first, the workmen in a diving-bell directing the operations.

A statue of Rembrandt adorns one of the numerous 'places,' but of Spinoza, as is not perhaps unnatural, no notice was taken in his native country till this year, when, two hundred years after his death, a statue of him was raised at the Hague. The account of an excommunication by the Synagogue, when he left the communion, is so singular that it may well be given as a 'picture' of the Jews of Amsterdam about 1656. A large and agitated congregation collected when it was known that the heretic refused to return into the fold, black wax candles were lighted, while the chanter chanted the dreadful words of the Interdict. He was declared 'accursed by the same curse wherewith Elisha cursed those wanton and insolent children,' &c., &c., 'by all the curses, anathemas, interdictions, and excommunications fulminated from the time of Moses, our master, to the present day.' 'In the name of the Lord of Hosts, Jah, and in the name of the globes, wheels, mysterious beasts,' &c., 'let him be cursed in heaven and earth, by the very mouth of the Almighty God,' 'by the mouth of the Seraphim and Opanim, and ministering angels,' &c. He was cursed 'by the seven angels who preside over the seven days of the week, and by the mouth of the seven principalities.' 'If he was born in March, the direction of which is assigned to Uriel, let him be cursed by the mouth of Uriel,' and so on through all the months. 'Let him be cursed wherever he turn; . . . may he perish by a burning fever, by a consumption and leprosy; may oppression and anguish seize him; . . . may he drink the cup of indignation, and curses cover him as with a garment; . . . let his sins never be forgiven and let God blot him from under the heavens;' thus through four octavo pages the fierce and

passionate denunciations run on, which do not, however, appear to have all been used on this occasion.

These terrific objurgations were accompanied from time to time by the thrilling sounds of a trumpet; at length the black candles were melted drop by drop into a huge tub of blood, and as the lights were suddenly extinguished, the shuddering spectators, with a cry of execration, shouted 'Amen.' The end of the candles in the blood is also said to have been omitted in Spinoza's case.

The pleasures of persecution must indeed be great, when it is remembered how many of the Jews present had themselves sought refuge from the terrors of the Inquisition in free Holland, or were descended from those who had escaped from Spain, Portugal, and other Roman Catholic countries, and who yet used the liberty they had thus gained to denounce their brethren.

The Jews of Amsterdam are now a large and important body, with much of the trade of the town in their hands; particularly the special one of the cutting of diamonds, which is chiefly confined to this place.

'Water, water everywhere, and not a drop to drink,' one cannot help saying like the Ancient Mariner. There is great difficulty in getting any good enough for the purpose, and strangers are warned against the ordinary supply as against poison; but some has been found of late, purified by the natural filter of the sands of the dunes. To a Dutchman it would seem impossible to have enough of it about his house, whether in town or country. With a canal in front and another on each side, he will add an artificial pond in his small garden, as a finish quite necessary for his comfort and pleasure; and the smoking houses and gazebos hang by preference over a canal.

The pictures are everywhere a continual feast, especially the portraits, which adorn the walls of buildings in what would be only second-rate country towns in another land. Such great masters as Van der Helst and Frank Hals are

not sufficiently known and appreciated in England. There was a wonderful picture of a lady in a ruff by Hals in the Loan Collection this year, and an Admiral Van Tromp in the Spencer gallery, still at South Kensington, which are perfectly marvellous in their vivid life; his later pictures are very inferior, however, and degenerate into coarseness. It is singular that no specimens of the works of so important an early painter as Antonio Moro are to be found in his own country; they must be sought for in England and Spain, where he chiefly worked. There is a Queen Mary among Lady Ashburton's pictures, a somewhat flattered likeness, sent by the Queen herself to Philip II. before their marriage, and a portrait of a lady in the National Gallery, about 1585, which are also very remarkable in themselves, and for the history of the art in the Low Countries.

When portraits are by a master-hand there can be no class of painting more truly interesting. The real presentment of a great man by a great artist will be allowed by everyone to be unsurpassable in value, as a combination of history, study of character, psychological (and phrenological, as far as the form of the skull), well worth study. But even more than this, the likenesses of perfectly unknown and even commonplace men and women, immortalised by such men as Rembrandt, Van der Helst, Rubens, in the north, and Morone, Giorgione, and Titian in the south, are themselves of the deepest interest.

To see before you a real human being, whose mind can 'be read behind his face,' as Tennyson puts it, bearing the traces of the joys and sorrows, the feelings and sympathies, common to all our race, must always have a charm which no pictures of gods and goddesses however good, not even 'ideal' apostles and martyrs, can ever possess. Of course there are exceptions to this, but only in the very highest class of imaginative works, such, for instance, as the great Descent from the Cross by Rubens at Antwerp.

It must always be an event in anyone's life first to

make acquaintance with that mighty picture, for, though the lines of the composition may be known by heart from prints and photographs, every person must then feel that he first obtains any real idea of the work. Indeed the light and shade of prints and photographs is often so utterly unlike that of the originals, that they are confusing more than helping, in their very meagre and inaccurate translation of a master. Colour, too, here takes a new value, even with those who have loved it best, in looking at this its perhaps greatest achievement. It is not merely that the extreme glow and richness enhance infinitely the wonderful breadth of light and shade, and glorious harmony of lines, but here its element seems required to tell the story completely. It is itself a factor, necessary to the expression of the scene, not a mere enhancement of the rest—not only pleasure to the eye, but felt to be part of the explanation of the meaning of the whole.

Where every quality is thus complete, there is a feeling of utter satisfaction in sitting opposite the picture, which is indescribable in its repose.

Once only in his life did Rubens reach that supreme height. The other pictures of his at Antwerp, which one is called on to admire, are miracles of facile skill in adventurous drawing, like the 'Elevation of the Cross' in the opposite transept of the cathedral—triumphs of sleight of hand in the art of hues; but here only has he attained to the passion of inspiration in religious thought and feeling. It is like a great oratorio by Handel; the youngest and most ignorant can understand enough to enjoy, the most learned and experienced are lost in wonder and admiration at the treasures of his genius. It seems strange that he never should have attained to anything approaching the sublimity of this work. The gallery at Antwerp is full of pictures of his, enormous in size, and considered 'very fine,'—that 'rollicking' piece of colour, 'La Vierge au Perroquet,' among others,—but one can

hardly believe them to be by the same head and heart as the one great piece framed in its appropriate setting of the grand cathedral. There is an immense charm in the contrast of the two sides of the Predella with the centre: the almost pastoral 'sweetness and light' of the young peasant mother, in her great shading Flemish hat, mounting some rude steps to greet Elizabeth, on one side, with a deep blue landscape seen below the arch; on the other side she is stretching out her arms a little anxiously for the babe who is held up in Simeon's hands. 'A sword shall pierce through thine own soul also,' he may be saying—a first tender note of sorrow, a hint of the coming woe.

The feeling of 'contrary motion' (as it would be called in music), the contrast of these two with the sombre magnificence of the deep tragedy of the great central picture, must be seen to be understood at its full value, and for this engravings are scarcely any help. All the pictures are plays upon the word 'Cristofero,' who was the patron saint of the Guild of Arquebusiers, from whom Rubens bought a piece of land for a house. They stipulated for a picture of St. Christopher in payment, and in his princely magnificence he presented them with five altogether, for the backs of the two flaps are painted also.

Colour as a means of expression takes new character in the Netherlands; it is like a new language, or rather like a new mode of expression, by symphonies of harmonious hues.

In Rembrandt this is arrived at by contrast, almost by negations, and a brilliant piece of gorgeous harmony is produced almost without positive hues at all—the warm glow of a deep, dark background makes a blue or green appear so by juxtaposition; a dull red tells like a jewel on a neutral tint, and the flesh-tints, those most indescribable of hues, become living, as in the great *chefs-d'œuvre* of portrait-painting, the 'Five Syndics,' or the 'Burgomaster Six' and his wife.

Colour, however, seems to be an instinct more than a science; a half-naked Hindoo squatting among his piles of wool, dyeing them with herbs chosen by himself, and not knowing any reason why, will compose a marvel of harmony which all the kingdoms of Europe, with all their art-schools combined, cannot approach. Here and there a single painter arises, in an isolated place, some Sir Joshua, with his almost magic loveliness of delicate harmonies, some Gainsborough, old Crome, or Turner, but it is not carried on. In France the specimens are quite as rare. Meissonier is too artificial. E. Frere is very tender and charming, though a little dim in his key of hues. Colour, however, is now as dead in the Low Countries as in the wretched daubs of modern Italy, and the painful cold greys of the German modern school. The secret, the knack, the feeling, has died out with them of the old time, as may be seen almost more distinctly in the painted glass, the magnificent *walls* of colour, as they may almost be called, thirty and forty feet high, which adorn quite insignificant churches in both Belgium and Holland. Comparing them with the much-cried-up Munich windows at Cologne, or the horrors perpetrated at Westminster Abbey and some other of our cathedrals, it seems almost inexplicable how, with the old models before the eyes of those who seek, the poverty, the rawness which sets one's teeth on edge in most modern glass could have been perpetrated.

At Gouda, a few miles from the Hague, are some gorgeous specimens equal to those given by Charles V. and his sisters to St. Gudule at Brussels, splendid in design as in richness of dark hues. All these form pictures in stained glass, which theoretically hardly appears to be its legitimate province of work, intended as it is to be seen against the light and therefore semi-transparent, but the effect is too grand to think of anything but such results.

When we steamed away from Amsterdam the flat world was blotted out by rain and mist—nothing was to be seen but perspectives of straight lines of earth, trees, and water,

each cut short by fog. Every field was not only like a sponge full of water, but looked so rotten with ooze that it seemed as if the cows must sink down through the bogs towards the centre of the earth. They were on the point of being taken under shelter for the winter, as it would be impossible for cattle to live in the open in such a climate; yet they thrive and give ample produce. Both men and beasts, indeed, look healthy and well-doing all over a country which seems like a raft, floating only just so far as to keep its head above that water which it requires the almost superhuman efforts of its inhabitants to resist and make use of.

It is a grand thing to see the theatre where such great deeds, both moral and material, have been performed by man, but it must require the constitution of a Dutchman to be able to live there in bad weather.

[Since these pages were written, the Queen of the Netherlands, and the eloquent historian of the great deeds of her country, whom she valued so highly, have passed away within a few days of each other. Mr. Motley has, alas! not lived to complete the story of the land which he has done so much to make known to the world. He was engaged on the Thirty Years' War at the time of his death.

The Queen was a very remarkable woman, full of noble objects and great interests. Most European languages were familiar to her, and the rare knowledge she possessed of the literature as well as the politics of England, France, and her own Germany gave a deep and varied interest to her thoughts and conversation. She was the intelligent centre for all that was worthy in Holland, where her sympathy and assistance were ready for every good work of whatever kind. She will indeed be missed. She was only fifty-nine, and her country and those she honoured with her friendship might have hoped for many more years of so valuable a life.]

MYSTERIES, MORALITIES, AND THE DRAMA.[1]

'THE stage,' says Lessing, 'which means the world, is not only the mirror of life, but also a school of morals. In Germany it has exercised a powerful influence upon public morality and public taste.' That the morals of the theatre both react on the social standard of a country and are a consequence of it must, indeed, be evident. The 'Revue des Deux-Mondes' (no prejudiced witness against France) some time back described the disastrous effect of the habit of laughing at family virtue in the French drama. A husband in a play, it said, is by prescription dull, cruel, or somehow greatly in the wrong, and the interest and compassion are all for those who break the law. Continually to hold up a confiding husband as an object of ridicule, whom it is a venial fault to cheat, and who is, at all events, in a ludicrous position—to make the laugh systematically on the wrong side—cannot be done with impunity, especially with a nation so susceptible to ridicule as the French; and the tone of morality has suffered in proportion. 'Cannot the French, with all their talent, find some other subject of interest,' says another observer, 'than the perpetual breaking of the marriage law, which is now the sole subject of their plays?'

But these outcries against the abuse of the drama only prove its power over men, not that it is a wrong thing in itself. And with regard to the uncultivated portion of the people—those who most require the refining influence of

[1] *Contemporary Review*, 1875.

art, and whom we are now so anxious to reach—there can be no doubt that the mimetic art is the one of all others most easy to understand. It requires a certain amount of imagination to realise written words—it requires a peculiar culture to enjoy pictures, sculpture, architecture—but the joint appeal to eye and ear, the sight and sound of the living passion acted before their faces, has a never-failing effect upon a rude audience, greater indeed, perhaps, in proportion to the want of education. Moreover, enthusiasm is catching, and the sympathetic impulse of numbers assists the dull and slow perceptions of the many to perceive what they ought to feel by following the lead of the quicker intelligences: emotion gains like fire. And to allow such a powerful engine of instruction to be wasted as we do, because it is often abused, is the more strange a mistake, as acting of some kind is quite certain to go on in this and every other country in the world to the end of the chapter. The influence of the Puritans set a seal of wickedness on the stage in England, which has tended to demoralise it, as the ban of the Roman Catholic Church on actors has done to the profession abroad. There is no doubt, however, that the Elizabethan drama, with all its faults, had a healthy, strengthening influence on the nation; and the corrupt plays of the days of Charles II. were both cause and effect of the reaction against the asceticism of the Puritan rule. In the early ages of the world, especially before printing had made it possible for the solitary man and the poor man to raise a world for himself out of books, the drama was the great source of amusement and enlightenment to the nation. In Greece, whenever it was desired to 'point a moral' or give information concerning the wishes of the gods, a magnificent tragedy, by the greatest masters of the art, was presented gratis to the public. The Athenian 'demos,' however, was, in fact, an aristocracy, whose manual labour was done for it by slaves, and therefore cannot be an example for our 'masses.' Moreover the genius of

the English people for art is so inferior to that of the Greeks, that we can never hope to reach so high a level of taste as that of the Athenian theatre. A London audience would find Æschylus 'heavy,' and vote Sophocles to be 'prosy.'

The earliest intention of serious stage performances in all countries was evidently to put before the eyes of each people that which was most important and interesting in the national life. The resistance of the atom Greece to the overwhelming hordes of the Persian; the return of the chiefs from Troy; the Nemesis attending even involuntary crime in Œdipus, and of parricide even in a just cause with Orestes; the great Titan Prometheus suffering for humanity, and conqueror even in defeat—a general idea of 'vindicating the laws of God to man;' these were the great subjects chosen to act in Greece.

The religious drama is still an important feature in the East. 'Stories of the lives of the national heroes of India, Rama, and the like, can always draw appreciative audiences, to be counted by thousands;' while the 'Passion Play' of the death of Ali at the present moment stirs the fanatical zeal of the Mahometan Persians to a burning heat.[1] The early Christians, in the same way, put the proofs of their faith into so-called 'Mysteries,' and their social creed of what was high and heroic into 'Moralities;' and the uneducated public were probably none the worse, nor the less reverent, for seeing represented before them the scenes of our Saviour's life, or the celebration of the martyrdom for righteousness' sake of some saint, male or female, even though the spectacle might be marred to our taste by buffooneries, which were not to them in the least irreverent. We cannot go back in such matters. A manner of treating subjects, which was solemn in their eyes, would be simply ludicrous or disgusting in ours. It does not, however, follow that such a change is the effect of what can be called progress in any right sense of the word. The sights

[1] See the Miracle Play of *Hasan and Husain*, by Sir Lewis Pelly.

which are tolerated on London boards at the present day do not prove any advance in propriety; nor can the poetic sense certainly be said in any way to have improved among us. Shakespeare is scarcely acted in a single London theatre, except by fits and starts for the benefit of a star. We require something more sensational to stir our languid interest, *blasé* as our taste has become by high-spiced food of the coarsest description. That people can only be amused by that which really amuses them cannot be called a truism, for we by no means even generally carry it out in our pastimes. But are we sunk so low that what is really great and noble in art cannot be made popularly interesting at the present day? And must a play be spiced with vice to be popular?

The earliest performances in Europe, as in the East, were always on religious subjects; but then the struggle for the faith against the heathen, martyrdom for conscience' sake, were still among the 'burning questions' of the day, and the clergy had the good sense to utilise, instead of anathematising, the desire of the people for stage effect, even as early as the 'Dying Christ,' composed by St. Chrysostom. In the middle ages, the priests and monks were, as a rule, the only persons who could read and write, and the education of the people fell naturally into their hands. Their ideas of relaxation were naturally connected with religion; the monks had plenty of leisure, and occupied themselves in composing holy stories, and arranging the appropriate dresses and scenery. These were at first composed in or about the churches. Some of the scenes are directed to be conducted *cum cantu et organis*, as an adjunct to the Church service.

One of the oldest English 'Miracle plays' which remain to us is the 'Harrowing of Hell,' where our Saviour descends into Hades, to bring out the souls of ancient worthies who are to be saved. It consists of conversations between Dominus, Sathanus, the Porter of Hell, and seven

others. This was performed at the Whitsun feasts at Chester, and of the Corpus Christi at Coventry—the two most celebrated places for such performances. There seems to have been no fear of speaking out concerning dignities in them; the bad king is burning in hell fire; Regina Damnata laments her condition, 'which was so seemlye and is so sad.'

Dramatic entertainments, giving the chief Scriptural stories and the lives of saints, were known in England very long before the reign of Edward II.

Matthew Paris, writing in 1240, mentions the play, 'vulgarly called miracle,' of St. Catherine, acted at Dunstable, with *tableaux* and pantomime, by Geoffrey, afterwards Abbot of St. Albans, and his scholars. Fitzstephen, in the reign of Henry II., dwells on the 'holy plays, miracles wrought by confessors, and the sufferings of martyrs, which were acted in London.' In the 'Vision' of Piers Plowman, it is said that 'the miracles are not less frequented than markets and taverns,' and a worldly-minded friar is spoken of as better acquainted with Randal of Chester than his Paternoster. While Chaucer, describing the fashionable diversions with which the Wife of Bath amuses herself when her husband is absent in London during Lent, makes her say—

> Therefore make I my visitation
> To prechings eke and to pilgrimages,
> To plays of miracles and mariages.

The dresses were sometimes on a grand scale, and masks seem to have been worn by the actors as in a Greek play. In the wardrobe rolls of Edward III., in 1348, there are provided for a 'Ludus,' held on the feast of the birth of our Lord, in the castle at Guildford, 'eighty tunics of buckram of various colours; forty-two vizors of various similitudes, fourteen of the faces of women, fourteen of the faces of men with beards, fourteen of faces of angels made with silver; mantles embroidered with dragons, white tunics

wrought with heads and wings of peacocks, and others of swans with wings,' &c.

In the list of costs for a play of St. George, enacted in the open air at Bassingborne, in Cambridge, three shillings are charged for 'the painting of three fanchons' (phantoms) and 'four tormentours' (devils); one shilling for the hire of the field where the play was exhibited; and the poor author is put off with two shillings more; the whole amounting to two pounds.

In other places they were satisfied with dumb show. 'Certain small puppets were garnished by the priests, representing the Resurrection, with the parsons of Christi, the watchman, Marie, and others, the more lyvily to exhibite to the eye the hole action,' which seems to have resembled the presepio of an Italian church.

In Poulis Church at the feast of Whitsuntyde (the symbolism was very simple) the comynge down of the Holy Ghost was set forth by a white pigeon, let fly out of a hole that is yet (1570) to be sene in the roofe of the great ile, and by a longe censer, which, descendinge from the same place to the verye ground, was swinged up and down at such a length that it reached with thone swepe almost from the west gate to the quyre stairs, breathing a most pleasant perfume.

To act in a miracle play was not considered below the dignity of most important personages. The English fathers, at the Council of Constance, 1417, gave the 'Massacre of the Holy Innocents;' and the gravity of the subject was relieved by a low buffoon at the Court of Herod, who is dubbed a knight, to go on the adventure of killing the mothers of the doomed babies; the women have the best of it, however—they break his head with their distaffs and spinning wheels, abuse him as a coward, and send him about his business as a recreant.

As early as 1387, 'one Randall Higgenet, Moonke, of Chester, composed certaine mysteries in Latin,' and after-

wards made three journeys to Rome before he could obtain the Pope's permission to exhibit them in English. The prejudice of Mother Church against the vulgar tongue is the more curious in this instance, as 'Clement, the Bishop of Rome, had graunted the Bishop of Chester at that tyme a thousand dayes of pardon, and forty dayes of indulgence, to hear the said playes,' and they were clearly considered a religious exercise, yet the spectators must at first have been reduced to interpreting the show in a foreign tongue.

Revered lords and ladyes alle
That at this tyme assembled be
By this messuage understand ye shalle,
That one tyme there was Mayor of this Citie,
Sir John Arnway, Knight, who most worthelye
Contented himself to set out in playe
The devise of one Done (dominus) Randall, monke of Chester Abbey.

At a later period these Whitsun plays were 'altered, devised and made, by one Sir Henry Fraunces, also a Moonke.'

In oulde tyme, not only for the augmentation and encres of the holy and catholicke faith, and to exort the minds of the common people to good devotion and holsome doctrine, but also for the commonwelth of this Citty, a play and declaration of divers storyes of the Bible was made, beginning with the Creation and fall of Lucifer, and ending with the generall judgement of the world (a tolerably wide scope of subject), to be brought forth and played at the cost of the craftsmen and occupations of said Citty.

The twenty-five companies had each a drama of their own, to which they were yearly faithful.

The Tanners gave the 'Fall of Lucifer' 'with good speech, fyne players, and apparill comelye, which was witnessed by a numerous assembly of both sexes with much delight.'

The Drapers enacted the 'Creation' of the world,

probably as including the (to them) interesting introduction of clothes. Adam and Eve appeared, following the text, literally naked, and not ashamed. After long discourses from the Old Serpent, and 'the Fall,' they make themselves *subligacula* of leaves, according to the stage direction. 'To depart from the literal text in the slightest degree was heresy.' As to the actors, Quince the carpenter, Snug the joiner, and Bottom the weaver, in the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' were evidently taken from performances of the kind, which Shakespeare must himself often have witnessed.

The Water Drawers appropriately took the 'Deluge,' which is greatly enlivened by the proceedings of 'Noye's wif,' a worldly lady who cannot be persuaded to go into the Ark.

> 'For,' says she, 'I have gossopes every ech one,
> One fote further I will not gone,
> They shall not drown by St. John
> An I may save their lives.
> They loved me full well by Christ' (an anachronism in oaths),
> 'But' (unless) 'thou wilt lett them into thee chest,
> Ellis rowe forth away when thou liste
> And get thee another wif.'

Her husband grows extremely angry at her contumacy, but without effect; she will not stir, and Noye, in great trouble, exclaims—

> Come in, wif, in twenty devill ways,
> Or alles stand thee without.

Still the 'good Gossopes' sing that they must have some more drink.

> Here is a potell full of Malmesey good and strong,
> It will rejoyce both hart and tong;
> Though Noy thinke us never so long,
> Yet wee will drinke a tyte.

The sons next interfere, and Shem inquires whether they shall not bring in their mother by force :—

> 'In faith, moder, in ye shall
> Wither you will or noughte.'
>
> NOE.
>
> 'Well me wif into this boate.'
>
> [*She gives him a box on the ear.*
>
> 'Have you that for thee note' (necessity).
>
> NOE.
>
> 'A le Mary this whote
> A childre methinks my boate remeves,
> Our tarrying here heughly me grieves.'
>
> [*She is then forced into the ark.*

The Cappers and Linendrapers took the story of 'Balaam,' but Mr. Wright declares the observations of the ass are too unpleasant to be repeated. The Cooks related the 'Descent of Christ into Hell,' to redeem all the saunts of the older time. One woman, who is left behind, is a 'tavernere, a gentil gossope and tapstere,' who confesses having deceived many a creature, 'though her ale was noughte,' and she is warmly welcomed by the devils—a curious hit at the bad beer of the licensed victuallers five hundred years back, which has yet by no means lost its savour.

At Coventry the pageants were performed on Corpus Christi day, 'by the grey friars, with mighty state and reverence. Theatres for the several scenes, very large and high, placed on wheels, were drawn to all the eminent parts of the city, for the better advantage of spectators, giving the story of the Old and New Testament, composed in the old English Rithme, as appeareth by an antient MS., intituled Ludus Coventriæ,' says Cotton. 'I have been told by some old people,' Dugdale writes in 1657, 'who in their younger days were eye witnesses of these pageants, so acted, that the yearly confluence of people to see that show was extraordinary great, and yielded no small advantage to the city.'

At length, however, the simple religious spirit—like that of children, which alone could render such representations decent—decayed, and the disorders attending them became such that Bonner, in 1542, prohibited all manner of 'plays and interludes, &c., to be played, set foorth, or declared in churches or chapels.' William of Wykeham, indeed, as early as 1384, had refused longer to allow 'spectacula' (whatever they may have been) in the churchyard of the cathedral at Winchester. They were, however, revived by Mary, and a 'goodly stage play' was presented at the Grey Friars before the Lord Mayor, in her reign; and, again, in honour of the declaration of war with France, '"The Life of St. Olave" was enacted, which lasted four hours.'

In spite of the remonstrance of Archbishop Grindal, in 1563, plays continued to be acted on Sunday, in the time of Elizabeth, by the choristers of St. Paul's and the Royal Chapel.

Miracle plays were exceedingly popular in Wales from very early times, but diversified by long secular interludes, such as dialogues between Merlin and Taliesin, and between Arthur and Gwendwyver.

At first the miracle plays adhered strictly to Scripture or legend, but they gradually develop a sort of plot, and introduce some attempt at character. 'Moralities,' a sort of allegorical drama on more secular subjects—a more mundane amusement—gradually crept in. One of the earliest of these stories of which any copies remain is taken from the 'Romaunce of Kyng Robert of Cicyle, "How pride dude him beguile,"' which was acted at the High Cross at Chester in 1529.

Robert was a 'noble Kyng'—in all the world 'nas his peere;' 'he was faire and strong, and sumdele young. He had a broder in Greete Roome, Pope of al Christendome, and another in Alemagne, an Emperour, who wroughte payne to the Sarasins. He declares that there is no man lyvinge in no londe who can

withstand him.' In the midst of 'his prideful thoughts' he falls asleep in church during evensong. An angel takes his place, and his whole court are deceived, and follow him to the 'paleys.' Robert awakes in a fright, and is fallen foul of by the sextune, who calls him 'a fals thief, a losinger, intending holy church to robby.' He 'runs out fast,' and is maltreated by his own porter at his own gate. With difficulty he persuades the servants to bring him into the royal presence, when the angel king makes the miserable man 'fool of the hall.' He is then 'clothed with lodly (lothely) garments, hung with ffoxe's tayles many aboute' (the fool's coat). He is sent to lie with the dogs outside, and envies those beasts which are allowed to remain with their masters in the house. The angel makes an admirable sovereign, and goes to Rome to see his brothers in great pompe, accompanied by his fool. After a long and ignominious penance the penitent Robert is at last restored to his throne by the angel, never to err from false pride again.

The Inns of Court were always celebrated for their dramatic representations, and, as the taste for Scripture subjects died out, allegorical characters—Charity, Sin, Hope, Death, which had been always more or less introduced—took possession of the stage, very much to the injury of the dramatic interest. A satirical Morality, however, on 'The Marriage of Luther,' enacted by Gray's Inn in 1529, must have been much more entertaining.

Later still, classical subjects, under the title of 'Masques,' with all sorts of emblematic personages, became popular, and were performed at all great ceremonies before Elizabeth, 'and were the delight of the pedantic James.' Shakespeare makes Mr. Justice Shallow—when pluming himself on the fine things he had done as a young man—declare how, when he 'lay at Clement's Inn'—*i.e.* was studying the law—'I was then Sir Dagonet,' that is, had acted the part of King Arthur's fool in an interlude taken from the 'Morte d'Arthur,' often played in Shakespeare's time.

'The Moralities,' says Mr. Hallam, 'were much enlivened by the introduction of a witty, mischievous, and profligate character

called "the Vice," which gradually assumed a human individuality—a sort of Punch. Something resembling a modern comedy, "Ralph Roister Doister," was acted in 1540, which contains a lively picture of London manners among the citizens and gallants, and has a good deal of comic spirit and humour.'

In out-of-the-way places in Cornwall the Scripture plays lingered long even in England. Carew mentions the 'Guary Mirkl' in Cornwall, compiled out of the Bible—

But with that grossenes which accompanied the old Roman comedy. For representing it they raise an earthen amphitheatre in some open field [which must have resembled the arrangements at Ammergau], having the diameter of his enclosed playne some 40 or 50 feet. The country people flock from all sides, many miles off, to see and heare it, for they have therein devils and devices to delight as well the eye as the ear. The players conne not their parts with booke, but are prompted by one called the ordinary, who followeth at their back with the booke in his hand, and telleth them softly what they must pronounce aloud.

This has now dwindled into a Christmas drollery. The 'Mummers' are all that remains of the ancient magnificent devices, which have now shrivelled into a wretched farce, still lingering in country places, where the 'guizers'—*i.e.* the disguised men, with blackened faces and absurd dresses—perform to this day the play of 'St. George' (the Saint sometimes transmogrified into 'King George,' as a more familiar personage in their ears), Beelzebub, and a miracle-working doctor, who raises a dead man to life, utter what has become by the repetition of unwritten words almost unintelligible nonsense.

Throughout Christian Europe varieties of these mysteries and moralities, combining religion and amusement, continued till a later period. In France, where they were 'very fashionable and of high antiquity,' they were only knocked on the head by the Revolution. They, however, may be found in Brittany at the great fairs, generally given

as *tableaux vivants*. 'The parts are well sustained,' says an eye-witness, but as soon as the Mystery is over there is a rush to the pantomime, which often follows on the same stage, the person who represented Christ taking the part of harlequin.

As early as the twelfth century, a disciple of Abelard's wrote three plays, on the raising of Lazarus, the miracle of St. Nicholas, and the History of Daniel, which were very popular. The 'Mystère de Grizeldis Marquise de Saluce' is mentioned about 1390—the first appearance of 'Patient Grizzle,'—acted by the citizens of Paris. The French mysteries were chiefly performed by priests or religious communities, and some of the parts were not without danger in those early days of mechanical invention. At the Mystère de la Passion at Metz in 1487—

> God was personified by the Seigneur Miolle, curé of St. Victour, who was almost dead on the cross, but was succoured, and consented that another priest should be attached to the cross to complete the personification of the crucifixion for that day. Another priest called Messire Jean enacted Judas, and was almost dead with hanging, for his heart had ceased to beat, and he was unhung in all haste and carried away.

At the Feast of Asses, performed in honour of Balaam on Christmas day, the clergy walked in procession, fearless of ridicule, 'habited as prophets and holy fathers.' Moses in an alb or cope with a long beard and a rod in his hand; David wore a green vestment; Balaam, with an immense pair of spurs, rode on a wooden ass, in which was concealed a speaker.

The realism of some of the details is strange. The gushing of the blood in the Crucifixion was produced by means of an outre or leather wine bag under the actor's robe; the lance was run into it, and the purple liquid spurted out to figure the blood. In the martyrdom of St. Pol, the saint was decapitated on the stage; the head took three leaps, and a fountain of blood gushed out at each

step. 'The martyrdom of saints gave scope,' says Mr. Hallam, 'for the gratification which a great part of mankind seem to take in witnessing the endurance of pain.' In one of the Parisian plays, Santa Barbara was hung up by the heels on the stage. St. Denis was beheaded, took his head in his hands and coolly walked off with it.

At Chaumont, one of these mysteries was acted until quite lately, where the Père Eternel, 'coiffé d'une mitre,' with a long white beard, bore the golden ball of the Empire in his right hand. 'Priests and kings being the highest ideal among the people, divinity was shown under the pontifical and imperial dress.' At Perpignan, a man still living remembers himself acting the Père Eternel, with the utmost good faith and reverence. He was chosen for the honourable post as a good little boy, and was dressed in a cocked hat 'typical of the Trinity.'

A Morality on the story of Robert Duc de Normandy is still enacted in secluded Pyrenean villages, on a stage in the open market place. The performance lasts the whole day, and the chief attraction appears to be the part of Satans (in the plural) dressed in red. These come in and out at

[1] *Item for the coates of the III Kinges of Cologne*, Vs. iiij*d.* is in one account.

A miracle play was performed by the brethren of a Guild in the streets of Hull on Plough Monday. The subject generally was 'Noah's Flood.'

1485.—	To Noah and his wife	0	1	6
	To Robert Brown, playing God	0	0	6
	To a shipwright for clinking [*i.e.*, calking] Noah's ship	0	0	7
	Straw for Noah and his children	0	0	2
	To Noah for playing	0	1	0
	To the waits for going about with the ship	0	0	6
1494.—	To Thomas Sawyer, playing God	0	0	10
	To Jenkin Smith, playing Noah	0	1	0
	To Noah's wife	0	0	8
	For three skins for Noah's coat, making it, and a rope to hang the ship in the kirk	0	7	0
	Making Noah's ship	5	8	0
	Rigging Noah's ship	0	0	8

all the critical points, and have a great deal more to do with the conduct of events than the more holy personages.

In Germany, the earliest written dramas now existing are by the nun Erosvita of the Abbey of Gandersheim in Saxony; they are in Latin, and were represented by the young nuns belonging to the convent in the year 970, before the Bishop of Hildesheim and some great officers of the Emperor's household. She was called 'the Christian Sappho,' 'the tenth muse;' and, considering her secluded life, her subjects are curiously varied and show a great deal of power. In one play the climax foreshadows that of Romeo and Juliet, and John is resuscitated only to die again after recognising his beloved. In another, Sapience, accompanied by her three daughters, Faith, Hope, and Charity, visit Rome during the persecution of Hadrian, and are detected in proselytising. The three girls are tortured to death for their faith, while the mother stands by encouraging them to the end, collects and burns their scattered remains, and dies in a burst of enthusiastic devotion, uttering what is called in the 'Revue des Deux-Mondes' 'a magnificent hymn.'

Two volumes, in Latin, of the religious interludes which abounded in Germany during the middle ages still exist. The solitary living remnant of such plays, which is performed at Ammergau, is probably an exceptionally good specimen. The extreme seclusion of the place, the long intervals between the performances, which prevented the religious fervour from becoming blunted, have tended to preserve the original feeling with which they were treated. Besides which, the whole *mise en scène* has been remodelled by an æsthetic pastor, who obtained his inspirations from Munich artists; the groups, the dresses, have been studied to much effect, and in harmony with that 'local colouring' of which our ancestors had not the smallest notion. The anachronisms have been removed; which, however, one can hardly help regretting, so strong is their antiquarian

interest for us in the earlier plays. Altogether we have in it the glimpse of a truly pious representation, which strikes even those least disposed to admire, as a religious far more than a dramatic performance, the actors believing themselves to be carrying out a work pleasing to God, and playing accordingly, the peasant spectators behaving with much the same feeling as if they were in church.

At the present time, the high position of the stage and of the actors in Germany is as remarkable as the tone of the plays produced. 'The interest excited by the stage, and the importance attached to everything connected with it, are greater in Germany than in any other part of Europe, not excepting France or even Paris,' Mr. Carlyle observes. The extraordinary amount of time and thought devoted to dramatic writing, and even to very puerile details of acting, by both Goethe and Schiller, was only indeed typical of the national feeling. 'The stage is not merely considered as a recreation, as in France, but the Germans talk of it as a sort of lay pulpit, fitted to exalt some of our noblest feelings.' Literature has always held a very high position in Germany, and the theatre has taken the first place in literature. Accordingly, the lofty character of the dramas performed, the admiring interest taken in them by very ordinary spectators, and the respectability of everything connected with the stage, form a remarkable contrast with that of France, while the effect on the character of the people is considered by themselves to be very wholesome.

In Italy the religious drama was always extremely popular. As early as 1264 a society, 'del Gonfalone,' was established at Rome, specially to represent the Passion of Christ, and different forms of dumb show still continue to be enjoyed, with a pantomine acted round the 'Bambino,' who lies swaddled, crowned, and decorated with the rudest symbolism of sovereignty.

In Spain the dramatising of religion has brought out

the coarsest and worst forms of Roman Catholic superstition, even in the best of her writers. The belief 'that piety has nothing to do with virtue, and that every vice under the sun may be committed with impunity, yet the sinner's soul be saved at the end by the prayers of a saint, or the visit to a holy shrine,' must have been demoralising to the last degree. In a drama of Calderon's, performed before the court of Philip IV., the criminal does not even repent during his lifetime, and has to be resuscitated, in order to be saved by the intervention of a saint, after having killed his father, and meditated the death of his wife. Heresy was the greatest of crimes, and every breach of faith was permissible to bring back heretics into the fold. Calderon, in another of his plays, makes the 'Mother of God' come down on purpose to declare that there is no worse crime than to keep a promise given to infidels; in this case represented by the Moors.

In another of his dramas he represents Henry VIII. as repentant of his sins to the Church; the body of the wicked heretic, Ann Boleyn, is brought in, and he proclaims his daughter Mary as Queen before the assembled Parliament. She is called upon by them to swear that she will never repeal her father's acts, and refuses the crown on such terms. Her father vainly tries to persuade her to take the oath; telling the Parliament on the one hand that she can be deposed if they object to her, and telling his daughter in a whisper that when she is Queen she can do as she pleases. At last she is persuaded to swear. 'Under the conditions expressed?' says the minister. Mary (apart): 'I do *not* accept them.'

When religion and politics are thus conceived, it is not surprising that Spain should sink into its present deplorable state. In the 'Devil Preacher' there is a long parallel drawn out between St. Francis Xavier and the Saviour—both born in a stable, both assisted by twelve apostles, both beaten to blood, pierced by five glorious wounds, &c.

In Madrid, at the present moment, during Lent, sacred dramas are performed in the theatres by the same actors who play the very profane pieces of the remainder of the year, and the too great gravity of the subject is lightened by the hint of an intrigue once carried on between Pontius Pilate and Mary Magdalen, and by Judas pinching and pulling the hair of the children who are brought up to the Saviour, whenever the traitor can find a quiet opportunity. At Segovia, the *Times* correspondent describes 'the real old thing' as being played in the streets before delighted audiences, with the intense interest and the same habit of thought as in the fifteenth century. The reality of the events depicted is so great to the spectators that it is hard to obtain actors to play the unpopular parts, as, *e.g.* Judas runs a risk of having his head broken by zealous friends to religion.

It is difficult to define what constitutes the feeling of reverence, but it is clearly possible to lose much of the reality, while apparent respect for the outward form (as with ourselves at present) increases. There is a fastidiousness in taste, which is very different either from reverence or purity, and is seen especially in men of the world far removed from either,—who might be found enjoying the 'Duchesse de Gerolstadt,' and yet complaining of the plain speaking of Shakespeare. A homely manner of words reaching direct to the hearts of the audience by no means implied evil. 'A refined audience,' it has been said, 'will do many things which it will not bear to see represented; a vulgar audience will see many things represented that it will not do. The English who tolerated all the stabbings and poisonings of Shakespeare on their stage, committed hardly any crime during the fervour of that Civil War, which let loose all the political and religious passions of two great hostile parties.'

There are two elements which make the fortune of the stage. In the days of Shakespeare, it was the greatness of

the dramas themselves, not that of the actors, which caused their success. Besides which, in them were dramatised the interests and feelings of the day, political and social. In the play of Henry VIII. the King was but one generation removed from the spectators; his daughter was on the throne, or had only just died. In that period of the revival of the classics, Brutus and Coriolanus were household words, which appealed to every man and woman who could read, and the Roman plays reflected the struggles for liberty, and the aristocratic and democratic questions of the day, under a very thin disguise. There was an interest and a feeling for great subjects which astonish our present audiences, who go to the theatre only to be amused, and find Shakespeare 'very slow.'

In the last century, and the beginning of the present, came the period of great actors, while there were no writers of plays worth speaking of. Garrick, and at a later period Mrs. Siddons, and the Kembles, interpreted the inventions of past times, but no new dramas of any value were produced for their use. Now we have reached the age when neither the plays, nor the actors who appear in them, are great, when we are reduced to sensationalism and scenery, mechanical splendours, gorgeous dresses, numbers, 'spectacle,' and wholesale 'conveying' from the French. And the result can hardly be called a national success, even by the admirers of the system.

One cause of the decline of the stage in England is said to be the social habits of the upper classes, which make it difficult to fit theatrical amusements into the evening's arrangements. But, as they still contrive to go to the opera, it is evidently not the hours which cause them to frequent the play so little. Still, however produced, their absence is very lowering to the stage. Unless the drama is a really national amusement, play writers and play managers will not think it worth while to cater for the cultivated classes, but will invent situations, and use language pleasing to the

kind of audience which they must expect. It is cause and effect—if the 'unco guid' denounce the amusement as wrong, and the 'upper ten' renounce it as not fashionable, while the men of business are too busy to attend, the character of the drama must naturally go down when so large a portion of its educated hearers is cut off.

Yet there are so few modes of influencing the many that it seems strange to neglect the direction of one of the most vivid and striking. 'I should like to have the direction of a penny theatre,' said a great philanthropist. No one, indeed, can hear of the effect upon the young population of the east of London of such plays as 'Jack Sheppard,' and the other heroes of dramatised police reports, held up for admiration there, or even study the faces which are looking with such rapt delight at Punch's manœuvres, and listen to the storms of applause with which the resounding blows inflicted on his wife are received, without feeling what queer ideals for the worship of the race are growing up before our very eyes—what strange qualities are exhibited as admirable to the people—without an attempt on our parts to afford anything better of a scenic kind for their amusement.

It may be said that the sentiment for 'Dick Turpin,' 'Jack,' and 'Punch,' is not all bad—that they are the rude incarnation of 'pluck' and fearlessness under difficulties, qualities which are supposed to condone their other crimes. Still, the undying popularity of Punch bears no good augury for the conduct to their families of the future husbands and fathers, still in petticoats and jackets, who are looking on.

There has been a reaction during the last twenty years against the exclusiveness by which good music, good pictures, fine buildings, were reserved for those who could pay high prices for their entertainment; and in spite of their shortcomings. the Crystal Palace, South Kensington, and the Albert Hall, have brought much of these within the

reach of the many. With regard, however, to museums and picture galleries, except as a harmless way of spending a holiday, little good can be expected in our present state of civilisation. Let anyone station himself in the National Gallery, or even among the modern pictures at Kensington, and look round with a tolerably approachable manner, and he will be assailed with questions as to their meaning which are almost incredible in their utter want of understanding of the subjects. The queries are not so much silly as sad, showing a want of imagination and a crassness of ignorance which, among people who walk daily by print shops of every description, must be heard to be realised.

We want art sights whose meaning is easier to reach, more exciting, more realistic and vivid than these, which, indeed, only the theatre is able to give to the masses. There can be no doubt that the effect of bringing bodily before the eyes of the people the thoughts, feelings, and passions of its heroes—the ideal, in short, of its age—may be made very stirring, as it was of old. The imagination of the uneducated is slow to move, except for material objects, and requires moving by sensible appeals to both eye and ear. 'Let other people have the making of the laws, if I can have the writing of the songs,' might be said with more truth of plays. A 'chanson' no longer bears the same sway even in France, but the influence of the theatre has increased. The number of houses open, and of the spectators present, at Paris, is greater now than at any previous period, while the species of garbage presented to them is worse than ever —a moral charnel-house, as it was called the other day. 'A French play cannot apparently be conceived which does not derive its interest from a love intrigue between a married woman and some gay Lothario.' Although the stage has never had the same share of influence in England, and has never sunk quite so low in morality, its effect on us is still great, while its standard seems to be deteriorating day by day.

The whole question of amusement requires to be gone into nationally, and set upon a footing different from the present one. It has hitherto been looked on as a misfortune that pleasure should be required at all for the people. It was to be tolerated in a sort of underhand way until they should consent to attend mathematical classes and scientific disquisitions (which is certainly not the ideal of relaxation of the upper classes for themselves!) If the people dance, it can only be at public-houses; if they go to the cheap theatres, it is at their peril, morally and mentally. Amusement, it is clear, must be legitimatised and raised, before we can lift the taste of the people above gin shops, dancing saloons, and 'penny gaffs.' Mechanics' Institutes can appeal only to a very small fraction of the working people. It would take many centuries of sermons (particularly as at present given) to neutralise the effect of a run of 'Jack Sheppards,' even if they could be made to reach the same stratum of society. We must get at the interest of the people by something different from either.

There is a most interesting and important discussion in Plato's 'Republic' on the education of a nation by a 'right use of pleasure.' We have not yet, in two thousand years, attained such knowledge, or even attempted to define what really is 'pleasure.' 'True art,' he says, 'is ennobling,' and we have still to seek the manner of popularising art among our people. All European governments, whether Republican, as in France, or despotic, as in Germany, have shown their feeling as to the importance of the theatre for keeping their populations in good humour and occupying them innocently, by liberal 'subventions' from the State, but we have still to ascertain in England how best it may be made to serve their pleasure by a 'right use.'

And until our philanthropists and statesmen recognise this field of amusement as a very important one, not to be left to haphazard speculation, to the managers of dancing saloons and Alhambras, to the writers of pantomimes, and

translators of French obscenities, we shall have advanced but a little way in the task of raising and purifying the taste of the people. Of late the tendency has been, indeed, rapidly downwards, instead of upwards, as the progress of education might have led us to hope.

In the light of the prohibitions and warnings found necessary by two successive Lord Chamberlains, an earnest effort in this direction appears to have become one of the most useful objects that our wise men and our good men could propose to themselves.

OLD WELSH LEGENDS AND POETRY.[1]

It is almost a greater misfortune in a literary than in a political point of view to belong to one of the smaller nationalities of Europe—to have to write in a dialect which in the struggle for life has come off second or even third or fourth best in the race. Probably in its beginning 'Platt Deutsch' was quite as good an instrument for the expression of thought as 'Hoch Deutsch,' but the last has become the vehicle in which Goethe and Schiller, Kant and Lessing, Luther and Niebuhr have uttered their ideas, which are read by millions of cultivated men all over the world, while the first has dwindled into the speech of such little states as Mecklenburg and Oldenburg, and is unknown to almost all beyond their borders.

Often it has been some one great writer, such as Dante or Luther, who, by employing his own among the many shifting dialects of his country, has so moulded and fixed it that it shall last for ever; while the others, such as the Neapolitan and Piedmontese on one hand, the Suabian and Tyrolese on the other, have mouldered or shrivelled into mere patois.

Even among more independent languages, few are the patient students who think it worth while to learn Danish in order to read Oehlenschläger in the original, and with literature of still greater pretensions, how little hold has Spanish on the common run of readers or scholars even with 'Don Quixote' in his own tongue as the reward of their diligence.

[1] *Contemporary Review*, Feb. 1876.

When the nationality possesses nothing that can be called a literature at all, and can only show a far-off echo of ancient songs and traditions, its chance is still less of ever obtaining any European recognition, except from archæologists, *savans*, and philologists.

There is one great exception—but Sir Walter Scott, when working up the traditions of the Scotch Highlands, though akin to the people and living in the country, wrote in a cosmopolitan language, in which he so transfigured and popularised them, that they have become the common property of Europe, almost of the world.

Yet the freebooters and smugglers, the heroes of small insurrections and petty fights in the Highlands, are not more really interesting than those of Wales. The Scotch scenery is not more beautiful than that of many Welsh mountain and lake districts. But while Rob Roy and Roderick Dhu are household words, and Loch Lomond and Loch Katrine are visited in a sort of pilgrimage by strangers from all countries (including hosts of our own cockneys), who ever heard of the tragedy of Lake Idwal ? or visited the wild stern valley, till now inaccessible except from the sea, hemmed in by black precipices and high hills, where a tumulus was to be seen of old, the grave of Vortigern, 'the dishonoured,' called 'one of the three arrant traitors of the Island of Britain,' for inviting over Hengist and Horsa, and for giving up the Island of Thanet to gain the fair Rowena, daughter of one of the invaders ?

The 'strong men' who lived before Agamemnon, the 'fair maids,' not especially of Perth, have found no bard; and we are so used to the caprices of the fate by which one subject is taken and another left, that we are stolidly indifferent to the raw material when we find it, and refuse to recognise the genuine poetic element of the subjects *in situ*, which crop up in every direction in Wales, unused and unnoticed, and which in proper hands might move us so deeply.

There is a beautiful little legend belonging to a popular saying or proverb, as to the qualities and duties which should distinguish one who rules, the risking of the very objects of ambition, the quiet sacrifice of self which belongs to the highest order of hero.

Bran Bendigeid (the blessed) and his army are marching 'on an enterprise,' and come to a magic river with a loadstone in it. 'Lord,' said his chieftains, 'knowest thou the nature of this river, that none can pass over it, and that there is no bridge? What counsel dost thou give concerning a bridge?' said they. 'There is none,' said he, 'except that he who will be chief let him be a bridge. I will be so,' said he. And then was that saying first uttered, and it is still uttered as a proverb. 'So when he had lain down across the river, hurdles were placed upon him and the host passed over thereby.' Perhaps the demon of the stream required to be appeased.

Of a sterner sort and in a later age comes the poetic fancy that the spirit of a wicked Wynn, who oppressed the poor some 200 years ago, is imprisoned in chains behind the Swallow waterfall, where he may be heard to lament and groan to this day, especially when bad weather is coming on!

The story of Bodidris has a less tragic end. The place pays no tithe, and the reason is thus given. A certain Dean of St. Asaph, name and date unknown, demanded it in vain, and, full of rage at the contumelious resistance of the uplanders, marched up the pass with a party of his men-at-arms. Down came Bodidris to meet them with his mountain clan behind him. A great fight took place, the Dean was slain and his party repulsed. Then the mountain men paid every possible honour to the churchman and buried him in a gigantic stone coffin, still shown with pride—and Bodidris pays no tithe to this day!

At Criccieth lived Sir Howel, 'of the Pole-axe,' the constable of the Castle in 1356 and onwards.

At the battle of Poictiers he being on foot dismounted the French King, cutting off his horse's head at a blow with his battle-axe, and taking him prisoner, for which feat Sir Howel was knighted by the Black Prince, and was allowed to bear the arms of France with a pole-axe argent. Further to perpetuate the memory of his services, the prince ordered that, at the expense of the Crown, a mess of meat should be served every day before the axe with which he had performed these wonderful feats. After it had appeared before the knight, it was taken down and distributed amongst the poor people. Even after his death and until the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth it was served up as usual, and given to the poor for the sake of his soul, and there were eight yeoman attendants to guard the mess, called yeomen of the Crown, who had each 8*d.* a day constant wages.

To return to more ancient days, however, as still more curious. Near the Bala lake is a rocky cell still to be seen, where the legend says that the poet, warrior, and prince, old Llywarch, ended his days. He was son of the 'King of the North Britons,' or Cumberland, bordering on the great forest of Caledonia; and, according to the Triads, was 'one of the three unambitious princes, one of the three counselling warriors of the island of Britain;' 'one of the three free and discontented guests at the court of Arthur,' where he spent his youth, but from which he retired at last in disgust. He fought, however, under his chief, at the disastrous battle of Llongworth, which he celebrated in a song. He returned afterwards to Wales, to help in the defence of his country against the Saxons, and allied himself with his cousin Prince Urien, 'one of the three bulls of battle,' who was soon afterwards assassinated. He then took refuge with the Prince of Powis, who was shortly defeated and slain. Then, having lost all his sons in the wars, and outlived his three beautiful daughters, his patrimony gone—weary, sad, ruined, and dispirited, his cause lost, and his country overrun by the enemy—Llywarch retired to this cell, and poured forth his soul in lamentation over his four-and-twenty sons, 'adorned with gold torcs' for

their prowess in battle, in elegies which are very touching even at this far-off day, particularly one beginning—

> Clamorous are the birds, the strand is wet;
> Clear is the welkin, large is the wave,
> The heart is palsied with longing.

One dismal song is on his own decrepitude, how he is grown old and coughs (and he always hated a cough), and ugly, and no girl will care to kiss him!

> The four most hateful things to me through life
> Are met together in me with one accord—
> The cough, old age, sickness, and grief.

There are the elements of a great tragedy in the story of Llys Helig, still so living that it was turned into a rude 'cantata,' and performed lately by the Penrhyn slate quarry-men, both music and poetry being 'home-made.' It refers to one of two curious traditions accounting for great inroads of the sea, which within historical times have changed the face of the country—both of course, according to the manner of legends, caused by the wickedness of the owners of the land. The first relates how a great part of what is now the Bay of Cardigan belonged to Seitheryn, king of the plain of Guidno, 'one of the three arrant drunkards of the Island of Britain.' In a fit of intoxication, he let the sea in through the dams which secured the low lands from its inroads; the whole country was permanently inundated, 'sixteen cities were destroyed,' and it is small comfort to hear that the wretch himself 'perished in the disaster he had caused.'

The other tells how the tract of shallow sand which divides the line of coast by Penmaenmawr from what is now the Island of Anglesey comes to be under water. The place is still called 'the Sands of Wailing.' At extremely low tides, the fishermen declare they can trace the foundations of a palace 'forty yards towards the great sea, 100 yards towards St. Seiriol's (*i.e.* Puffin's) Island,' &c. It belonged to Helig, the lord or prince of the whole country about Abergele, and a number of places whose names cannot

be identified, and Earl of Hereford. He had one daughter, Gwendyd, who was asked in marriage by Bleddyn, 'a neighbour;' but she refused him because he did not wear a gold torc, which belonged by right to great chiefs, or was given for prowess in battle. Its absence was therefore a sign either that he was not brave, or was of inferior condition. In despair at his rejection, he suddenly hears that an English prisoner, who had been captured by Prince Rhun, and detained at his fortress, Caer Rhun, on the banks of the Conway, is about to be set at liberty. The captive having ingratiated himself with the chief, who was 'one of the three blessed princes of the Island of Britain,' was to be sent home with gifts, especially a gold torc. Bleddyn goes to the fortress, and offers himself as guide to the Englishman across the mountains. They start together, the darkness comes on, the wolves howl, a storm arises, and in the wild night Bleddyn murders the man who had trusted him, takes from him the collar of gold, and hurries back with it to Gwendyd. She promises to marry him, but asks how he got the torc. He tells her the story of the murder, and says with horror that the body lies still unburied. She bids him return and bury it at once, lest the thing should come to the ears of Rhun. He goes according to her bidding; but, while digging the grave, he hears a voice cry, 'Daw dial, daw'—Vengeance is coming, vengeance. In terror he rushes from the place, returns to Gwendyd, and beseeches her to give up the collar. 'It were better for them never to marry than to suffer this terrible judgment.' Like an inferior Lady Macbeth, she is quite unmoved by the threat, refuses to give up her spoil, sends him back once again to bury the body, and bids him ask, if the voice returns, when the vengeance will arrive. Bleddyn goes again to the mountain, drags the bleeding body into a grave, and, as he is throwing earth upon it, hears the unearthly scream again from above, repeating 'Vengeance comes, vengeance.' Bleddyn, as he was desired,

inquires 'When?' The voice replies, 'In the days of your children and grandchildren.' He returns and tells Gwendyd; and the stern woman answers undaunted, that the doom does not signify to them, for they shall both be dead before that day shall arrive.

They are married, and come into possession of Llys (Palace) Helig, with its beautiful gardens and orchards; but the prophecy is known to hang over them, that God will bring down judgment because of the atrocious deed they have done, and that 'when water and small fish are found in the cellars of Llys Helig, their time will have come.' Years pass on, and a great feast is at length given by Bleddyn and Gwendyd to their children and grandchildren, in honour of their prosperity, and as a kind of bravado to the doom. Suddenly the sea rushes in, everybody is drowned, 'the whole district was overwhelmed, as it continues until this day.' The 'juggling fiend that keeps the word of promise with our ear, and breaks it to our hope,' had deceived them as is its custom.

The feeling by which every uncommon accident of nature is referred, either to a retribution for the crimes of man or the immediate action of some divinity or hero, is as common in Welsh legend as it is among all early races. In the Pyrenees, the Brèche de Roland was the cut made through the highest ranges of the mountains into Spain by the sword of the great Christian champion against the Moors; and the footprint of his horse as he sprang is shown below in the rock. Near Mold the same sort of mark is shown as the 'stone of the horse's hoof of Arthur.' On the St. Gothard, a mighty rock near the Pont du Diable was dropped by the angry devil, to crush the daring man who outwitted him in the building of the bridge. In Guernsey a tall, solitary stone, surrounded by a number of small ones, is the result of the games of the 'petites dames,' the fairies. The centre one was 'piquée,' as a mark for their missiles; the little ones had been brought in their

'dévantés' (aprons), to fling at the chief stone; and the number showed how much good play there had been. In Wales the demigod Arthur is responsible for most of the uncommon phenomena to be seen in the mountains. He, too, has 'played at quoits' near Harlech, and again in Pembrokeshire; his 'table' is the great flat-topped rock in Redwharf Bay in Anglesey. His 'stone' is in Glamorgan, his 'chair' is in Brecknockshire, and, finally, 'Arthur's harp' (the constellation Lyra) perpetuates his name in heaven.[1]

As in other mythologies, some strange mode of birth is devised for every hero, which it is conceived will connect the merely human with the unseen world; there is no barrier between gods and men—all are inextricably mixed together. With Arthur's birth, thrown ashore on the ninth wave of the sea, we have grown familiar of late in his new history. Taliesin, 'radiant brow,' his poet laureate (!), is given a semi-divine origin from Ceridwen, a sort of earth-goddess or magician—'the great mother.'

The account of Merlin is extremely circumstantial. 'He was born of an Incubus,' says Giraldus Cambrensis, therefore he was two removes from a devil; 'he lived in the days of Vortigern, and was contemporary both with Arthur and Taliesin.' 'He was born at Carmarthen, which signifies' (an etymology is never wanting in such cases) 'the city of Merlin. At his birth he was covered with black hair, and began to speak immediately, expostulating with his nurse as to something of which he disapproved' (intolerable baby)! He was the trusted friend of Arthur, an enemy of malignant sorcerers, thus he had overcome Owen Lawgoch 'with the red hand,' and his troops, who lie to this day enchanted in his cave. His prophecies were regarded for centuries with the utmost respect, and fill many un-

[1] In the same strain of hyperbole it is told of certain chiefs: 'Blackness, obscurity, and darkness were their three cupbearers; strength, robustness, and vigour their three horses; wrath, pursuit, and swiftness their three hounds.'

intelligible pages of Geoffrey of Monmouth. At length, by the use against him of his own most dreaded spell, won from him, as is so well known, by a treacherous witch of a woman, he was shut up in a rocky cave at Dynevor. It was in the summer season, at the time of butterflies, and if you dig you may still find them there, spellbound, and turned into stone trilobites; which is very hard on the butterflies, who had clearly nothing to do with the matter.

Magic and sorcery, fiends, enchanters, witches, charmers, abound in the old stories. The descendants of the mighty magicians 'who drew down the moon with their enchantments,' are still to be found among Welsh outlying districts in the shape of wise men and wise women. If a cow loses its calf or the horses founder, if the sheep are lost, or any one is sick of a disease beyond the art of the place, it is because the owner's 'name has been cursed.' This is done by throwing a pin into certain wells of power, with the proper ill-wishes uttered over it in due form, the spell then clings to the victim, and he and his goods alike waste away. It is another form of the incantations over waxen images of an enemy which were set before the fire to melt, or stuck full of pins, each meaning a pang, in France and elsewhere during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The spell may, however, be reversed if the pin is fished out again with the necessary ceremonies, and by the right person, but this costs money. The belief leads to its own accomplishment. A labouring man at B——, hearing that he had been cursed, took to his bed, paralysed with fright; he declared that he had lost all power in his arms and legs, His wife and children were starving, and he himself on the high road to death, when his master's sister came to see him, ordered him to get up directly, and come to work in the garden of the 'great house.' The counter influence was strongest, he took heart, began to work as he was told, and all went on well with him. But he had himself uncursed all the same!

An old clergyman at the beginning of this century made

a profession of exorcism. He was once asked how he could lend himself to such superstition among his flock, and replied that he could not alter their belief which made them miserable, and that all he did was to give them comfort and assistance. He then gave an account of what had once happened to himself. A farmer's wife came to tell him that they were half ruined, everything about their place went wrong without any cause, their fences were broken, their beasts were lamed or destroyed, their poultry died, while within the house the china came to grief, the linen was burnt; she knew they were cursed, and entreated him to come and undo the spell. He went up to the farmhouse, which was on a lonely mountain, and desired to be left alone in the kitchen. Suddenly the poor woman rushed in to say that while she was preparing tea three tea-cups had been mysteriously broken, and the servant girl had appeared with a goose hanging to her apron. He sat considering with his head on his hand, and then desired the girl might be sent in to him. He looked at her sternly, and said: 'You know something about this.' She denied it vehemently; 'You want to "break" my character.' 'You had better confess,' he said, solemnly; whereupon she became still more violent. At last he drew out his pocket-book and began to write: 'If you don't tell me the truth directly I will make a pair of horns to grow out of your head.' She then fell on her knees, entreating for mercy, and confessed that a neighbour, anxious to get the farm, had bribed her to do all the mischief possible in order to induce the owners to believe themselves bewitched and to leave the place. The clergyman made her promise that nothing of the kind should ever happen again; if it did, he said, he would make the horns grow instantly. He then went out and told the farmer he had uncursed the place, and all went on rightly from that time; but he had never revealed the reason until that moment.

In another case a clergyman, celebrated for exorcisms,

was sent to a house haunted by the devil close to the sea-shore. He went and spent three nights there alone, after which he announced that he had done the deed, 'but that the devil was the hardest he had ever had to deal with.' He never would reveal what took place. It was probably some smuggling transaction. He died rich, as he was well paid for such operations.

Another instance of the extraordinary power which, it is supposed, can be exerted by very ordinary individuals, is accomplished by throwing oneself on one's knees and repeating the Cursing Psalms, when the dreadful wishes of David for his enemies are made to cling to the person thus prayed against. 'The devil can quote Scripture,' indeed. This pagan and devilish use of the Bible and the change of name, not of nature, which has taken place in many an ancient local deity, may still be met with in Brittany, where there was a Celtic goddess of Hate, now transmogrified into 'Nôtre Dame de la Haine.' If three *aves* are uttered at nightfall in her chapel near Treguier, winged with the proper directions against the hated person, 'death happens irrevocably within the year to him or her.'

Many of the Welsh legends have travelled from the far East, and are part of the inheritance which we of the Aryan race have in common with our Indian ancestors. Beddgelert has no prescriptive right to the story of the faithful hound and his passionate master. In the earliest edition, it is a poisonous snake which has entered the cradle of the chief's child, and a tame mongoose, the 'hereditary enemy of the serpent,' which kills the invader, and is slaughtered by the violent father when he finds his babe lying in a heap of discomposed shawls, before he discovers his mistake.

The end of the story of the birth of Taliesin might have come straight from the 'Arabian Nights.' Ceridwen, his 'great mother,' desires 'the good gifts of inspiration, knowledge, and immortality,' for her coming babe. These were to be obtained by boiling herbs in a cauldron for a

year and a day, till the 'three blessed drops of the water of the endowment of the spirit' 'are slowly distilled out of it,' by which knowledge of futurity is also obtained. While the goddess (or magician, whichever she be) is collecting the necessary ingredients—'berries, the foam of the sea, purifying cresses, wort,' 'cheerful, placid vervain, which has been borne aloft and kept apart from the moon,' the cauldron is warmed by the breath of nine damsels. She then stations Gwion the little, of Llanfair, in the city of the feast, in Powis the land of rest, to watch the boiling, and a blind man, Morfda, the raven of the sea (cormorant), to keep up the fire. But one day, while she is absent fetching her herbs, the cauldron suddenly boils over, as is the manner of cauldrons, and the three precious drops alight on the finger of Gwion and burn it; he puts it up to his mouth and immediately his eyes are opened. As the first-fruits of his knowledge he sees the impending wrath of Ceridwen (it needed little inspiration to guess at this, when the trouble of a year was thus wasted), she seized an oar and struck the blind Morfda on the head. 'I am innocent!' cried he. She then threw herself upon Gwion, who transformed himself into a hare, she became a greyhound bitch, which chased him towards a river. He leapt in and became a fish, she turned into a she-otter and pursued him. He became a bird, and the goddess made herself a sparrow-hawk. Shuddering with dread, he perceived a heap of clean wheat upon a floor, and dropped as a grain into the midst; she scratched him out and swallowed him. He became a babe (Taliesin) which immediately began to sing, &c. &c. All this is curiously like the transmigrations in the story of the second royal Calender in the 'Arabian Nights,' in 'the ancient characters of those they call Cleopatra.' A trial of strength takes place between a Ginn and a princess who is a magician. He becomes a frightful lion, the princess a sharp sword: they pass through the successive stages of fish, birds, cats, wolves, till at last 'the Ginn turned into a worm and hid in a

pomegranate, which rolled over and broke; the princess into a cock, which picked out all the seeds but one, &c. &c. The princess ends by becoming a fire, when the Ginn is reduced to a heap of ashes; the poor lady is, however, so much injured that she dies—a far more tragical ending than that of Taliesin, the babe, who grows up and flourishes, and always goes on singing through life!

One of the poems ascribed to him, 'The Battle of the Trees,' begins with a long string of the states through which he has passed. Over this many a bitter battle has been fought; the older school of critics declaring it to be a specimen of the belief in the transmigration of souls, the metempsychosis of the old faith; the neologists declaring it to be nothing but a 'romance tale' of magic, like many in the Mabinogion:—

> I have been in many shapes
> Before I reached a form congenial:
> I have been a narrow blade of a sword,
> I have been a drop in the air,
> I have been a shining star,
> I have been a word in a book,
> I have been a book in the beginning;
> I have been a light in a lantern
> A year and a-half,
> I have been a bridge for passing over
> Threescore rivers;
> I have journeyed as an eagle,
> I have passed as a boat on the sea,
> I have been a chief leading the battle,
>
> . . . .
>
> I have been a shield in fight,
> I have been the string of a harp,
> Enchanted for a year,
> In the foam of water;
> I have been a brand in the fire,
> I have been a tree in the woodland:
> There is nothing in which I have not been.

It would seem as if here there were something more than the mere tricks of change of the ordinary sorcerer of

the Welsh legends. 'Illusion,' however—to make a thing seem that which it is not—is one of the stock devices in the 'tales.' One of the prettiest instances occurs in the story of Branwen, 'the white-bosomed,' married to a cruel king of Ireland, whose brother goes over with an army to revenge her ill-treatment, and is defeated and struck by a poisoned arrow. He desires his seven companions—the only ones left—to cut off his head and carry it to the White Mount in London, and bury it with the face towards France. As long as the head was there England was safe from invasion; but Arthur dug it up, 'not choosing to hold the islands of the mighty by anything but his own valour against an enemy, and England has been in danger ever since.' (If Bran's head could only be found again, what millions of money might be saved in our defence!) As the seven go along on their errand they are exposed to divers temptations, and at Harlech they listened to the song of the birds of Rhianon, the daughter-in-law of King Lear, which sang so sweetly that all appreciation of time vanished under their spell, and, forgetting their mission, they abode there seven years. This is but another version of the idea that time is not a positive quantity, as in the legend of the young monk who is troubled by doubts whether he shall not weary of the saintly occupations of heaven. Careworn at the thought, he wanders into a thick wood, near the convent, where he hears a bird sing so enchantingly that he is beguiled into listening, till he believes it to be late in the evening. He returns hurriedly to the monastery to find everyone dead whom he has ever known, and, in the sudden age which falls upon him, he dies, 'fearing that eternity itself will not be long enough to enjoy the sweets of heaven.' Another illustration of the very poetic truth that time cannot be measured by any material calculation of its duration, but by our thoughts and feelings—that in periods of very intense enjoyment and sorrow, or even of deep thought, we are unconscious of its lapse,

engrossed as we are by the strength of our own internal emotions and quite oblivious of the outer world.

One great drawback to any enjoyment of Welsh poetry and legend for outsiders has been the extraordinary badness of most of the translations, both of prose and verse, which are generally bombastic, heavy, and pointless to the last degree. Sometimes it seems as if the translator, hardly understanding English or Welsh, as it happens, has picked out the first meaning given in his dictionary—as Chateaubriand is supposed to have translated Milton without taking the trouble of learning the tongue in which his author wrote. When the poem consists in parallelisms, like those of the Psalms—the repetition of the thought in different words, or of the same word in a different sense—the point is often entirely lost. As, for instance, there is a sanitary triad which says :—

'There are three medicines of the medicine men of Myddvai, water, honey, and hard work.' This loses much of its savour when turned into, 'the three remedies of the physicians,' &c. &c.

The Bardic Triads (whether these are ancient or modern) are certainly not given any fair chance, when a curious variety of purgatory through which the purification of man takes place, is worded 'the soul which perambulates the gradations.'

In the Damhegion or Fables the squirrels and crows converse together in the most Johnsonian English, and 'all the little fishes talk like big whales,' as Boswell declared would be the case if the great doctor consented to write a fable.

The alliterations, the peculiarities of metre, on a difficult and complex system, the 'peculiar kind of rhythm,' cannot, of course, be given in a translation, but why should not the names be spelt in English as well as the text? Guinevere, Winifred, and Gwendolin are accepted as beautiful names, but Gwenhywyfar is fearful to look upon, and who

could be pathetic over the woes of a heroine Gwynyfyrydd or Gwynrddydd? or glow over the great deeds of a hero Gwrtheyn? The page gives one the impression of a spelling lesson upon impossible combinations of consonants.

But the chief drawback to the study of Welsh legend has been that, as a German author observes, 'most old Cambrian writers have been utterly destitute of all capacity for historical criticism.' In the prescientific ages of literature they went even beyond the limits of decent self-glorification in which all nations thought it patriotic to indulge. 'Welsh was the language in which Adam made love to Eve' (this also is the belief of the Servians concerning their own tongue). 'If two children were shut up so that they never heard any language spoken whatever, they would be found to speak Welsh.' Their early histories are not satisfied with Brut, who confronts us in all our early English accounts, but go back to Annun of Troy, 'a second son,' 'a hero,' who 'was the first king of Cambria;' 'his identity with Eneas cannot be doubted,' he colonised 'the land of honey,' 'the land of green hills,' this 'fair land.' Tewged the dark succeeded to the kingdom, ninth from Annun, and 'strangers came from Troy in his time.' Sixty-two kings are mentioned before Morgan, nephew of the cousin of Arthur—'rejecting all fabulous accounts,' 'the affirming testimonies concerning this distinguished character,' the chronicler tells us complacently of his own labours.

Reams of paper are wasted upon proving that 'the Hyperboræans, mentioned by Hecatæus, were the same as the Cymri,' that when their priest Abaris is said to have carried an arrow round the world fasting, and presented it to Pythagoras, 'this referred, mystically, to the doctrine of the Druids concerning the circle of Abred and a future state.' Also that 'Pythagoras probably received the doctrine of metempsychosis from the Druids.' Although the Welsh pedigree is probably fabulous which mentions casually, some time after its opening, that 'about this time the

creation of the world took place,' yet Noah was only one of the long line of ancestry which headed the trees of families who had any respect for themselves or their descent, while Arthur, Vortigern, and Madoc were showered in *ab libitum*.

The Welshman described by Borde, writing in 1542, says:—

> I am a gentylman and come of Brutes blood,
> My name is Ap Rycie ap Davy, ap Flood.
> I love our Lady for I am of hyr kynne.

Every poem has a fabulous antiquity assigned to it, and the most mythical personages are credited with dates and histories, as elaborately as the dissenting ministers whose biographies generally stand in close juxtaposition with them in most dictionaries of 'eminent Welshmen,' which pass indiscriminately from one class of worthies to the other, with a calm conviction that all the lives are equally credible and equally authentic, that makes one's hair stand on end.

If an account of music is to be written, it begins—'British history mentions one Blegywrith, a king of Britain, about 199 years before Christ' (let us, above all things, be correct on this important point of a year), 'who was a great master of instrumental music, and on that account was called the god of harmony.'

When the question is 'Who invented letters?' we find that 'they came from Einigan the Giant, fifth from Noah, the aged, who began with the three holy letters, B G D.' 'These first arrived in a shaft of light from heaven. It was in the time of Prydain, about one thousand before Christ.'

Even the doctors' prescriptions and the druggists' stuff must spring from fairyland. There is a pretty introduction to a treatise, which contains all the science of healing from the days of Howel the Good and the sixth century. It shows how the lore was obtained from a mermaid, and was transmitted through her descendants, the family of Rhivallon. 'These continued to be the greatest physicians in Wales, until they died out in the seventeenth century.'

It tells how the widow of a farmer who had been killed in the wars of Independence had an only son, who used to take her cattle to the Black Mountain, near the lake of Llyn y van Vach, in Caermarthenshire. One day he saw there a beautiful maiden combing her hair, as she sat on the water, and looking into it as a mirror. He held out the bit of barley-bread and cheese in his hand (a very unromantic bait!) She shook her head and said—'Hard baked is thy bread, 'tis not so easy to catch me.' She was fairer even than the maidens of Myddvai, of whom it is said—

> There is white snow
> On the mountain brow,
> And greenwood on the Verdai;
> Young birch so good,
> In Cum Bran wood,
> And lovely girls at Myddvai.

The next day he goes with unbaked dough in his hand, which tender gift he offers to the lady with his heart and vows of eternal love. Again she refuses him, saying—'Unbaked is thy bread, I will not have thee.' (If this is intended as a lesson on bad housewifery, and that the mermaid would not come to a house where the bread was so bad, we must all agree with her.) The next day the young man returns with bread baked neither too much nor too little; the lady appears, and consents to become his wife, but she tells him if ever he gives her three causeless blows she must leave him. She then suddenly disappears and returns with a twin sister, exactly like herself, and a very respectable venerable father, who bids him choose between his daughters. He is sorely puzzled, but having noticed his fair one's sandal, guesses right and avoids the snare. Her father then gives her as many sheep, cattle, goats and horses as she can count without drawing breath. She cunningly counts only up to five, and repeats it again and again, which could be done faster, and gets her a large

number. Each set of animals comes out of the lake when called for and follows the couple home.

They live together for many years and have three sons. One day she is asked to a christening and is unwilling to go; he sends her for a horse on which to ride, and slaps her with a glove when she refuses. She reminds him that this was the first causeless blow.

The next blow he gave takes place at a wedding, when she suddenly bursts into tears; her husband taps her on the shoulder, and she replies: 'I weep because people when they marry are entering on trouble, and so should you, for you have smitten me twice.' The third time is at a funeral, where she bursts out laughing; again he touches her on the shoulder, and she says: 'I laugh because when men die they go out of trouble,' adding that now she has no choice but to leave him. And she goes up towards the mountains, calling aloud to the

> Brindled cow, white speckled, spotted cow, bold freckled,
> The four field, swart mottled,
> The old white-faced, and the grey geingen,
> With the white bull from the court of the king;
> And the little black calf, though hung upon the hook,
> Come thou also, quite well home.

They came at her call, even the little black calf, which had been killed and cut up, gathered its limbs together, and walked off with the rest. Four oxen were ploughing in a field, but all came at her summons in song; and then the whole company followed her to the lake, six miles off, and disappeared in the waters, leaving the mark of a furrow, which the plough made as it was drawn in by the oxen, which may be seen at this day as a testimony. Her husband never saw her again, but she often appeared to her eldest son, Rhivallon, telling him it was his mission to benefit mankind in pain and misery, and promising that he and his family should become the greatest medicine-men in the country. She not only gave him 'a bag of prescrip-

tions,' but took him to the dingle of the Doctor, showed him many excellent herbs there, and taught him their virtues, and which the family (wisely) wrote down for the benefit of mankind, as are given in the book:—

> The grey old man in the corner
> Heard the story from his father,
> Which he had learnt from his own parent,
> And after them I have remembered.

The true genesis of all tradition.

A charm or two ends the book, which, if they belong to her lore, would tend to show that the mermaid was as good a (Roman) Christian as her contemporaries:—

FOR THE TOOTHACHE A CHARM.

St. Mary sat on a stone, the stone being near her hermitage, when the Holy Ghost came to her, she being sad. Why art thou sad, mother of my Lord, and what pain tormenteth thee?' 'My teeth are painful; a worm called megrim has pierced them, and I have chewed and swallowed it.' 'I adjure thee, daffin o negrbina' (probably the demon of toothache), 'by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the Virgin Mary, and God the munificent Physician' (who is therefore evidently a different personage from 'the Father'), 'that thou do not permit any disease, dolour, or hurt, to affect this servant of God here present, in tooth, eye, head, or in the whole of her teeth together. So be it. Amen.'

'To induce sleep' seems to have been an easier task in the mermaid's days than it is at present. 'Take a goat's horn, and carve thereon the names of the Seven Sleepers, making a knife's haft. And these are their names—Anaxeimeys, Malchus, Marsianus, Denys, Thon, Serapion, Constantynn. When the names are cut, lay the knife under the sick man's head, unknown to him, and he will sleep.'

The antiquity of Welsh poetry and legend has been, no doubt, greatly exaggerated, and if the time and trouble spent in absurd speculations concerning the Druids, attempts to evolve all the gods and goddesses of Greece out of rude hints concerning Hu and Ceridwen, or in trying to prove the affinity between Hebrew and Welsh, had been used in sifting the historical evidence, and the allusions contained in the poems, some order would by this time have been worked out of the chaos of words. These poems have been often put together, says Zeuss, from older versions without understanding them, or they have been written down from oral recitation without connection or meaning. It has already been seen what light can be thrown upon them by Mr. Nash, though in rather a merciless spirit for the feeling of legendary lore.

Their interest is often great, as traces of extremely early manners and customs are to be found in the stories, triads, and the histories of saints. Their present form dates from MSS. of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but many of the materials from which these have been compiled, even if the exact words have not survived, have clearly come down from very rude ages. In the Mabinogion there is no money of any kind, and though there is much mention of gold, its value is always given, in what Sir Henry Maine tells us was the usual coin of very early times—*i.e.* cattle. In one story, Kiluch, the hero, 'rides forth on a steed, with the head dappled grey, of four winters old, and upon him was a four-cornered cloth of purple, and an apple of gold at each corner, and every one of the value of 100 kine; and there was precious gold of the value of 300 kine upon (Kiluch's) shoes and his stirrups, from his knee to the tip of his toe.'

The ransom for a man's life varies exceedingly; sometimes it is as low as 'three very good oxen.' Evidently life was cheap in those days, for a horn mounted with gold is mentioned in the Liber Landavensis as of the value of sixteen

cows; a sword, whose value was twelve cows; a hawk, worth six cows. Many ornaments and arms therefore stood higher in the estimate of society.

One of the most curious uses of gold, as contradistinguished from money, is when 'the penalty for insulting the king of Aberffraw'[1] is given as 'a plate of the thickness of a ploughman's nail who has been seven years in employment.' And 'King Brochwael,' having quarrelled with a Bishop of Llandaff, there is 'adjudged to him the length and breadth of his own face in pure gold' as a fine—the thickness here is not mentioned, and it is to be hoped that the bishop's face was not a long and wide one! Payment in kind is common for all kinds of service. 'The three things lawful for a bard to exact, in his circuit of minstrelsy, are grain, milk, and honey.' Meat is not mentioned. Honey is a most important item in the food of high and low—while made into mead, it was the substitute for both wine and beer.

There appears to be little doubt that the earlier poems were never committed to writing, but transmitted from bard to bard, with variations celebrating the deeds of the different chiefs before whom they were sung. Probably some of the sentiment mentioned by Cæsar—that it was not lawful to commit things sacred to writing, and that it was not well to 'have men neglect the exercise of their memory by trusting to letters'—was not uncommon among the bards. Their song was more valuable, and was more their own, while it continued confined to the minstrel's own keeping. Memory, among those who cannot read or write, can be cultivated, as we know, to an extent of which we degenerate men, who keep our recollections in our note-books, have few examples. The power is found in a high degree among savage tribes, *e.g.* Dr. Moffat mentions the minute accuracy with which the Bechuanas relate long series of facts and observations.

[1] Liber Landavensis. Kings were as plentiful as blackberries in Glamorgan.

Even among our own servants, it will generally be found that those of the older *régime*, whose literary powers are small, remember infinitely better than those of the new school, who are far more what is called 'educated'—a wide word, which often covers a perfect morass of ignorance and pretension. Long poems, like the 'Iliad' and the 'Eddas,' are known to have been transmitted with the greatest verbal accuracy; and the Welsh stories, poems, and bardic traditions probably came down from mouth to mouth, from very far old times, before ever they were committed to writing. The Triads were an ingenious invention, they thought, of 'an oral record, more certain than writing itself'—a means of preserving the history and biography, the science, and morals (such as they were) of the time. Great use was made of alliteration, and of divisions into lines in particular order, and of sets of names, as helps to the memory. The mystic value of certain numbers was strong among them, particularly three, seven, and forty—as among the Jews, where Job's three daughters and seven sons are twice repeated in his life; the seven days his friends mourned with him; the 'seven pillars with which Wisdom has builded her house;' the seven times Jericho was surrounded; the seven-branched candlestick; the seventh day, month, year, and seven times seven for the jubilee; the forty years in the wilderness, of Jonah's warning to Nineveh, of Solomon's reign, of Ezekiel's penance—are all evidently typical of some perfect number. On the same principle, St. David is called 'one of the seven distinguished cousins of the Island of Britain.' Arthur grants a refuge for seven years, months, and days; Cadoc has seven fishes sent him for food miraculously every day. Forty is a favourite number for payments in kind made to the Church—as, for instance, forty loaves of bread, and forty dishes of butter, are a common quantity in the records of rents paid to the bishops of Llandaff. 'The fee of a bard, for his vocal song at a festival, was forty pence,

when he was a disciple—twice forty for a master.' And here, in the eighty pence, we have the first appearance of that mystic six-and-eight-pence which has often puzzled, and more often angered us, when seen in another kind of fee.

The Triads, containing their records of proverbial sayings, the qualities of distinguished persons, odd bits of history, medical receipts and moral precepts, are sometimes both curious and beautiful. The age of the bardic triplets is doubted, but whenever written they are very interesting.[1]

The three fears of a wise man are—the fear of God, the fear of sin, the fear of too great riches.

The three fears of a foolish man are—the fear of man, the fear of the devil, the fear of poverty.

The three powers of God in making the world—will, wisdom, love.

[1] There are some very remarkable passages in the collection called *Barddas*, supposed to contain the lore of the bards; even if, as the sceptics believe, these were invented at the end of the eighteenth century, they are hardly less curious.

First comes the ascent of life, after the manner of Mr. Darwin, from the 'lowest possible form in the water, mounting up through every degree and shape of body and life, in water, earth, and air, to the state of man, in the circle of Abred, where his condition was grievous during the age of ages.'

The 'teacher' declares that he has 'passed through every form capable of life in water, earth, and air; and there happened unto me every severity, hardship, evil, and suffering. And but little was the goodness of heaven before I became a man.'

'Thou hast said that it was in virtue of God's love thou camest through all these, and didst see and experience all this. How can this take place by the love of God, and how many signs of the want of love during thy migration in Abred?'

Then follows this explanation of the origin of evil: 'Heaven cannot be obtained without seeing and knowing everything; but it is not possible to see and know everything without suffering everything. And there can be no full and perfect love that does not produce those things which are necessary to lead to the knowledge that causes heaven, for there can be no heaven without.' . . .

This does not resemble the ordinary tone of thought in 1780, when it seemed to have appeared, and if it was composed by old 'Iolo,' he must have been a very remarkable man. There is, however, nothing else in his remains at all resembling it.

Three things which God cannot be—feeble, unwise, unmerciful.

Three things required by God of man—faith, obedience, and to do justice.

Three things without which there can be neither God nor goodness—perfect knowledge, perfect will, power. [The modern philosopher, like F. Newman, puts will, consciousness, character, but leaves out goodness.]

Three likenesses of a man to a devil,—frightening a child, obstructing the way, laughing at evil.

The Sayings often show a great sense of humour. 'None can go to heaven on a feather bed' has plenty of meaning in it.

No one is a hero when naked among thistles.

Hast thou heard the saying of the toad while caressing its baby? All the world loves its own likeness.

What comes from afar is always fine; what is easily got is despised and base.

Happy the man who is as wise as the pig.

This may be in earnest, not ironical. The pig in his wild state is full of sagacity and self-restraint. It is said, 'if he has once been made drunk he will never touch the unclean thing again.' 'The deepest water will be smoothest' is a very lifelike saying among the shallow, brawling streams of the Welsh mountains.

Hast thou heard the saying of the bard of Teilo of quick reply? Man desires, but it is God only who gives.

Mabon, the dragon chief of Mon, while giving instruction to his sons, tells them that 'Except God there is no searcher of hearts.'

The saying fullest of deep feeling and sense, however, is by one Fagan, one of the earliest Christian missionaries in Wales—'Where God is silent it is not wise to speak.'

Proverbs seem to have had a peculiar charm for the Welsh, and the number of them recorded is greater than in almost any other country. They are sometimes arranged in metrical Triads, sometimes constitute a whole song.

It is strange that hitherto nothing in the shape of a ballad or story in verse has been found, such as are common in all other 'folks-lore.' The legends, for instance, concerning Arthur, which are very numerous, are all in prose. They give an account of him, curiously unlike the beautiful ideal put before us of late, in such beautiful verse. In the Mabinogion [1] he is a 'jolly fellow,' fond of feasting and minstrelsy, who 'sits in the centre of his hall upon a seat of green rushes, covered with flame-coloured satin, and a cushion of red satin was under his elbow.' For, as the Triad says, 'There are three things proper for a man to have in his house—a virtuous wife, his cushion in his chair, and his harp in tune.' He does not approve of being interrupted 'while the knife is in the meat and the drink is in the horn,' and 'no one then may enter but the son of a king or a *craftsman bringing his craft.*' 'Collops of meat, well cooked and peppered, and gold-mounted horns' are on his table. He is very good-natured and gives everybody everything which they ought not to have, because, like King Herod, he cannot refuse 'the boon,' and never asks what it is before granting it.

In another legend he has a terrible encounter on Snowdon with the Giant Rhitta Gawr, 'one of the three great regulators of Britain.' He has trimmed and lined his robe with the beards of kings whom he 'has slain as tyrants, and made them beardless, *i.e.*, slaves, on account of their tyranny and oppression;' he summons Arthur as one of them to come and fight with him or send his beard, for which the highest place is reserved. In the 'Chronicle of British Kings' Arthur himself, of course, gives a different

[1] A collection of very ancient 'Popular Tales,' translated by Lady Charlotte Guest.

account of the matter, and takes pride in having won the robe from the giant, whom he slays.

In the story of the 'Blessed Cadoc,' we hear how

A brave general of the Britones, with surname Longhand, slew three soldiers of Arthur; who pursued him everywhere, till no one would protect him. Wearied by frequent flights, he came a fugitive to the man of God, where he stayed seven years. Arthur then pursued him to the River Usk with a large force of soldiers, when Cadoc entreated that the question might be referred to skilful judges. Then after the manner of enemies they disputed the matter, with bitter words, from both sides the river for a length of time—[this sort of mutual abuse before coming to the fight is very Homeric]. After a pause in the quarrel the judges decreed that Arthur should receive for the redemption of every one of his men three very good oxen. Others, however, said that a hundred cows [rather a large discrepancy] was the price of a man that was killed, as was from ancient times the judgement of the Britones appointed by kings and generals. Arthur in an insolent manner refused cows of one colour only, and with much wrangling would have them with the forepart red and the hindpart white [apparently a sort of sheet cow] which could not be got. The man of God then sent for them of any colour, and caused them to appear of the right colour in Arthur's eyes [the 'illusion' of the old Welsh wizards again]. But after they were put into his hands they were, by the direction of God, turned into bundles of fern! which miracle being seen by Arthur, he humbly asked pardon, and granted the refuge again for seven years, seven months, and seven days. After which all the cows, which had become fern, were found safe in the stalls of their owners, and the place is still called Trefredennæ.

Another legend relates how 'St. Padarn was resting himself in his church, after much labour by sea, when a certain tyrant named Arthur, having looked at his coat [a present from the 'patriarch of Constantinople!' says one account], was seized with the affection of avarice, and when the saint refused to give it him tried to take it by force.' 'The tyrant, in an insulting manner, treading the earth, levels

it with his foot,' cries one of the Saint's disciples running up. 'May the earth swallow him,' answered Padarn. With the word, the earth opened its bosom to some depth, and swallowed Arthur up as far as his chin, who immediately acknowledged himself guilty, and on asking pardon the earth delivered him up. With bended knees he begged favour of the saint, and obtaining it, took Padarn for his perpetual patron, and so departed.

In general, Arthur's name appears only to be a sort of convenient peg on which to hang any story, or any action which requires a local habitation.

The stories in general are like a rude sort of fairy tale —impossible adventures strung together with little attempt at character or connection, continually bringing in a fresh story sideways, probably in honour of any fresh patron before whom the poem was said or sung, and full of curious points in manners. Much of the poetry is quite unintelligible, full of allusions to persons and ideas, the meaning of many of which is probably irrecoverably lost.

The metaphors are often forced and turgid, and the excessive love of antithesis makes any prolonged reading of the aphorisms and sayings sometimes exceedingly tiresome. There is, too, a want of the sense of proportion, an extravagance in the similes and the characters, which detracts even from the better passages. Still nothing can be more graceful than the fancies here and there—such as that of the maiden who was made by charms and illusions out of flowers. 'So they took the blossoms of the oak and the blossoms of the broom and the blossoms of the meadow-sweet, and produced from them a maiden, the fairest and most graceful that man ever saw.' Wherever another heroine, Olwen, 'of slender eyebrow, pure of heart,' treads, four white trefoils spring up, 'and her fingers and her hands were fairer than the blossoms of the wood anemone amidst the spray of the meadow fountain.' The anemone has pale pink tips to its white petals; it is a comparison showing minute observation and love of nature. Both these are very marked in

many of the songs, the names and the music of which are very old. Although the words now sung are modern, they often express the sentiment of the older form. 'The Rising of the Lark,' 'The Ash Grove,' 'Watching the Wheat,' 'The Blue Morning,' 'The Valley of the folding of the Lambs,' 'The Yellow-beaked Blackbird,' and a pretty one very popular at Eisteddfods, where the laughing maidens come to fill their pitchers at the waterfall which laughs for joy at hearing their songs, are all charming 'motifs.' There is a poem in praise of Gwen (Blanch), said to be of the twelfth century, where the poet sends his love-songs by the seamew, 'the Queen of the Severn Sea, whose kingdom is the nine waves of the sea,' with the same personifying of nature.

The long struggles for independence of the mountaineers, first against the 'pagan Saxons,' as they call them, and later up to the time of Edward I., were celebrated in various forms of verse, growing sadder and sadder till the people became more reconciled to their fate. Their epigrams and sharp sayings were, however, clearly a great comfort to them. For instance:—

> There are three things that are never satisfied—a wolf, a cormorant, and the greed of an Englishman.
>
> There are three things that no man is the happier for having—a flea in his bed, a thorn in his porridge, and the company of an Englishman.
>
> Three things seldom heard are an invitation by a miser to a feast, the marvellous birds of Rhianon, and a song of wisdom from the mouth of an Englishman. [These taunts must have had a peculiar savour when uttered before their enemies in a tongue which they could not understand.]

The rigid rules to which the bards had subjected their verse, and the narrow limits of the particular form of Triads, &c., of which they were so fond, must have tended to prevent the development of the higher forms of poetry. The unity of a composition is spoiled when each link is

finished like a separate jewel. In a joint composition of words and music, which all Welsh poems seem to have been, the words generally are found to come off second best, and music evidently bore a very important share in the performances of the bards. After all, however, if a great poet had really arisen among them, we know how he would have broken 'the green withes and cords' with which he might have been bound. But enough that is beautiful still remains to make it very desirable that some effort should be made to publish a good translation of the best poems. The difficulty is of course great, for in any work of art the form and the idea are almost equally important, or it is not a work of art at all. If we take one of the exquisite little poems of Schiller, and put down the thoughts and images contained in it, in our best prose, it will be seen that the subtle charm, which forms the beauty of the original, has almost entirely evaporated. How then can we hope to seize more than a small part of the very peculiar essence of poetry so far removed from us in time, in feeling, and in its record of manners?

Still the attempt ought to be made. The productions of a people who held their singers and poets in such honour as in Wales, even taking the lowest view of the position of the bards, must be interesting. They led the way in battle, they were the 'repositories' of the history, they kept the genealogies and records of claims for land and service, upon which depended the 'law' of the clans, and to refuse them a boon seems to have been almost impossible for a great chief. Their influence is known to have been great in Wales up to the reign of Henry II. The triad may have been partly in jest which says, 'The three monarchs of a country are—the bards, who teach good kinds of knowledge for the education of a tribe—judges, who enact the right and the law—and lords, that is, Kings and Princes,'—adding slily, 'Others put it, princes, judges, bards!' Yet enough exists to show the real power they possessed.

Much that is valuable still probably remains to be extracted from the very miscellaneous piles of MSS.,[1] both public and private, that continue to lie unread, many of them scarcely even looked into. The interest to us of the earlier compositions is great, inasmuch as they, we must remember, take us back into the fierce old wild times of the same race which once sparsely inhabited the whole of Britain—'the islands of the mighty,' as they were fondly called; and give us the like poems and tales (if not even absolutely the same) which solaced and amused the rude chiefs who drank mead and cut each other's throats so cheerfully in our own England; and among other places on the 'White Mount,' *i.e.* Tower Hill, in that London which now seems so impossibly distant from them in manners, thought, and habits of life.

[1] Such as those of Lord Ashburnham, Lady Llanover, &c., &c.

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