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I.—THE PROFESSION OF THE TEACHER.

THE ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE GOVERNESSES' BENEVOLENT INSTITUTION, from 1843 to 1856.

IN casting a preliminary glance over the vast field of female paid labour in this country, a field which may be roughly calculated to embrace about three millions of women, or half its female population, we are well assured that one department will chiefly interest the majority of our readers;—namely the Profession of the Teacher. And this for an obvious reason, that it is the only profession open to an educated woman of average ability. Few are aware of the extent to which women of the lower classes are employed in undomestic labour, in the factory, the workshop, and the field;—but while *all* our lady readers have received instruction from some class of governess, there is probably not one who has not also some relative or cherished friend either actually engaged in teaching, or having formerly been so engaged. We find families who have no link with the army, the navy, or the church; others, who in all their wide-spread connection have kept aloof from trade;—but from the highest to the lowest rank in which a liberal education is bestowed, we shall find some cousin or friend who is a governess. Indeed, it is not a question of rank at all, for the unmarried female members of the small merchant's family enter the profession from natural necessity, and the fortuneless daughters of the highly connected clergyman have often no other resource. It is a platform on which middle and upper classes meet, the one struggling up, the other drifting down. If a father dies, or a bank breaks, or a husband is killed,—if brothers require a college education to fit them for one of the many careers open to an M.A., or orphan nephews and nieces are cast helpless upon a woman's heart, here is the one means of breadwinning to which access alone seems open,—to which alone untrained capacity is equal or pride admits appeal.

This brief statement sums up the conclusion to which many melancholy narratives of dire suffering and long struggle furnish

ample evidence; and there is perhaps no social reform for which the time is so ripe, or which English men and women would so eagerly carry out, as any reasonable plan for getting rid of this particular form of destitution, arising in great measure from the overcrowding of the Profession of the Teacher. To the attainment of this end two distinct modes of action are available, with a heavy penalty on the neglect of *either*. We must relieve existing needs, and if possible prevent their recurrence;—the one course demands the best sympathies of the heart, the other the best exertions of the intellect.

Towards the first object, that of meeting facts as they are, a vast effort has been made during the course of the last fifteen years. The story is told in the series of reports which we have placed at the head of this article, and it is evident that in rallying, so to speak, the members of the profession round this group of institutions, an indirect effect to the great advantage of its general status has also been produced, and a certain *esprit de corps* infused, which has a strong tendency to raise the rate of attainment and the rate of salary. We will condense the leading facts of this narration, which places in the strongest, the most startling light, the extent of that suffering which the institution was designed to relieve;—and shows, no less remarkably, the power of a few kind hearts and clear heads, when also backed up by unflinching wills for fifteen years.

The germ of the institution dates from the year 1841, but little was done until 1843, when the society was newly organized, many members were added to the committee, and the Rev. David Laing undertook the office of Honorary Secretary. On application to the late Duke of Cambridge, he presided at a public meeting in the month of May of the latter year; the Duchess of Gloucester, the Duchess of Cambridge, and the Queen Dowager gave their names; subscriptions were entered, and donations bestowed; and within a month of the public meeting the first practical plan was organized for action, in the form of a ladies' committee, for "affording assistance privately and delicately to ladies in temporary distress." The committee met once a fortnight, and the amount of actual *destitution* among educated women, which thus came to their ears, is appalling to imagine. Many who would have shrunk from appealing to private charity "hailed the establishment of the institution as a message from Providence to save them from despair;" and from the month of June 1843 until the following March, the ladies committee received and examined a hundred and two cases, and assisted fifty-six; of the remainder the greater number were "reluctantly declined for want of sufficient funds." The report gives a sad classification of some of the cases relieved in this first year's work; one woman had "saved nothing during twenty-six years of exertion, having supported her mother, three younger sisters, and a brother, and educated the four." Three were entirely

empoverished by attempts to uphold their fathers' efforts in business. Six were burdened by the support of invalid sisters who had no other props in life; and three were *incapable of taking another situation from extreme nervous excitement, caused by over exertion and anxiety.* In short, says the Report, "the inquiries made into these cases may be briefly stated to show how many governesses spend the early part of their lives *in working for others.*" Her time of exertion comprising "twenty-five years at the utmost, at a salary commencing at 25*l.*, and seldom exceeding 80*l.* per annum, if domestic ties take part of her savings, or if ill health come, attended by that worst of all pains, *compulsory rest*—not only stopping the accumulation of her little fund, but instantly preying on it —how shall the governess provide for herself in her old age?"

As some slight solution of this fearful question—fearful when the sex, the years, and the probable physical delicacy of the class referred to are considered—the general committee set themselves to work to found annuities for aged governesses. In this first year 500*l.* was got together and invested to create a perpetual annuity of 15*l.*; and for this small yearly sum there at once appeared about thirty candidates, *many of them entirely destitute.*

By 1850 the number of annuitants at 15*l.* per annum was seventeen, for which annuities a proportionate capital had been raised, while twenty-five received 20*l.*, and one annuity amounted to 30*l.* These annuities were all *permanent*, and upon the death of any recipient another is elected.

In like manner, 1852 saw the Ladies' Committee distributing temporary assistance to the amount of 1000*l.* a year.

The third branch of exertion consisted in the formation of provident annuities, paid for by the teachers themselves. Contracts were made at the National Debt Office, on better terms than the Life Assurance offices would afford; and between March 1843 and March 1844, the Honorary Secretary received 2351*l.* 9*s.* 9*d.* from ladies towards the purchase of annuities for themselves. In 1856 the amount received was 8758*l.*; and two hundred and seventy-four ladies had *secured* their annuities,—"an amount of permanent usefulness to the society's credit, which is often overlooked by those of its friends who think more of the relief of distress than of its prevention." The *total* amount received for provident annuities during the working of this branch had reached in 1858 to the enormous sum of 164,000*l.*

The general principle of assurance is so little applied or understood by the female sex, that no greater kindness can be done to working women than to put them in the way of such safe and profitable investments of their earnings, thus helping them to modes of self help which they have neither the knowledge nor the courage to attempt alone.

In 1844 another branch of usefulness was planned, namely, a

temporary home for Governesses out of situations, where they could be more cheaply and respectably lodged than elsewhere; and in connexion with this Home, a system of free registration. The latter plan was first carried into operation at the office in 1845, and in 1846 was transferred to the Home, which received, during the first six months of its existence, fifty-two governesses as inmates.

Finally, in 1849, an aged asylum was completed and inhabited, and in 1856 its inmates numbered twenty-two.

Our readers will perhaps be tired of all these dates and figures, but only by their aid can we present even the slightest outline of what has been done by this long series of labours. We will now gladly turn to some of the many beautiful anecdotes of tender Christian feeling among these numbers of women, both among those who gave and those who received;—nay, in some cases, the poorest were also the givers. We find in one of the earliest reports that, particulars having reached the ladies' committee of a young governess who was dying at Cheltenham, a request was forwarded to a friend in that distant town, who adopted the duty of the metropolitan institution, and watched her to the last. In May of the same year a lady sent 15*l.* to be divided among the unsuccessful candidates for annuities; another sent 7*l.* for the same purpose; and in November "an anonymous friend sent through Messrs. Hoare the noble donation of 100*l.*, to be divided amongst ten of the unsuccessful candidates, at the discretion of the Committee." This friend afterwards proved to be Dr. Thackeray, Provost of King's College, Cambridge, who on his decease in 1851 bequeathed an annuity to the Society.

Here is a short story of a more delicate and tender kindness than humanity can often bring forward. The following letter was received from a former successful annuitant, whose *whole income was* 40*l.*

"I am quite happy here, and rather useful to my fellow creatures. I purposed writing next month to Mr. Laing, to do me a very great favour next polling-day.

"I want him to be so good as to take the trouble to select from the poorest, the most friendless, the shabbiest dressed of my sister governesses, who may the next polling-day present themselves, and necessarily retire disappointed; ask him to invite such an one to spend a month with me. I shall give the heartiest welcome, and try to warm and cheer her the December time, whoever she may be, agreeable or the reverse. I shall try to live nicely during her sojourn. The mercies I at this moment enjoy ought for a few weeks to be shared with the disappointed!" Meeting this invitation as it deserved, a lady was sent to whom change of air and kindness were deemed most valuable, and the visitor remained "nine weeks under her peaceful roof," remarking of her hostess, in a letter, "Often have I seen her, aged as she is, making up, in a suitable way, garments for the poor, that she had begged for the purpose from her richer neighbours. It is astonishing to see how

much she contrives to do for her fellow creatures with an amount per annum that would by many be deemed too small to procure bread and cheese for herself."

With regard to the great age which occasionally marks the candidates, we find that in 1851 Miss Maurice, an unwearied friend to the institution, collected enough money to entitle herself to a presentation to the asylum, which was given to an aged lady, eighty-one years old; a period of human existence at which it is somewhat painful not to know "where to lay one's head."

The eighth annuity founded (in 1845) was at the suggestion of the Bishop of Durham, who offered to give 50*l.*, if nine other parties would contribute the same amount, towards the necessary 500*l.* Six other names were received in a fortnight.

One more extract and we have done. It is a sort of cornice to all the preceding ones. The latest report states that "on a recent occasion there were one hundred and twenty candidates for three annuities of 20*l.* each. One hundred and twenty ladies, many reared in affluence, and all accustomed to the comforts and luxuries of at least our middle ranks—all seeking an annuity of 20*l.*! Of these, ninety-nine were unmarried; and out of this number fourteen had incomes of, or above, 20*l.*, eleven derived from public institutions or private benevolence, and three from their own savings; twenty-three had incomes varying from TWENTY SHILLINGS to 17*l.*; and eighty-three had absolutely NOTHING. It will be recollected that all these ladies are above fifty years of age; and, of the utterly destitute, forty-nine were above sixty."

Here we close our account of one of the most remarkable charities of modern times, which is at this moment pursuing its active career, and which, in drawing attention to an amount of sheer destitution before unsuspected, will create final results far more extensive than the immediate relief to individuals. Yet we may well ask ourselves what would have become of these individuals, but for such timely relief? The more aged recipients of annuities or inmates of the asylum would have lived with relatives, not with children, for a small proportion are married; and in innumerable instances they must have depended on the slender earnings of nieces whom they had brought up to their own profession, thus laying the seed for fresh misery of a like kind. A glance over the many cases wherein teachers have been the only supports of orphans will confirm the truth of this assertion; for when their own "aged mother" and "invalid sisters" are dead, on whom can they lean in life except upon the children whom they have fed and taught upon their own insufficient means? When even this refuge fails them, they literally come upon the *workhouse*. Nor is this, O dear tender-hearted reader, an imagination. Go thou into our parish workhouses in dreary London, and investigate the past histories of some of those pale figures lying on the narrow

couches of the female wards, and thou wilt find there drifted waifs and strays from the "upper and middle classes" who pass long months and years in pauper clothing upon a pauper's fare.

Such a search would convince the brave and honest independence of those who say, "Let us work hard while we have strength, on the terms that society allows; and when we cannot do so any more, let us suffer privation in silence, let us not accept charity as a substitute for sufficient wages," that the wide-spread efforts made for governesses during the last fifteen years have been justified by the occasion. No one who accepts the Christian religion as a rule of life can deny what Turks and Pagans both preach and practise,—that the simple direct effort to relieve pain and poverty is one of the primary duties of a human creature. In a highly "civilized" community, where a degraded class exists who live systematically upon the fruits of begging, and whom indiscriminate aid can only corrupt further, there may be cogent reasons against street-giving of halfpence to blind beggars with baskets, and destitute families with six small children of impossible relative ages, walking in a graduated procession at a snail's trot. But while listening to the political economist who warns us that charity is often only another name for self-indulgence in feeling, sowing the seeds of greater misery than it professes to alleviate, we must not forget that the limitations to this doctrine imposed by justice and by religion are sufficient of themselves to constitute a positive code. We must *not* train up any class to depend on the exertions of others; but we *must* set ourselves to work to help those who suffer, in such a way as may tend to lessen their present pain and their future need, without counting too closely the money value of the precious ointment bestowed upon that humanity which we share in common.

We very much doubt whether the action of our poor-law, doling out scanty help with a grudging hand, which seems to offer an ill-defined right in the place of honest charity, is not more degrading to our lower classes than almsgiving. We are *sure* it is more degrading than alms bestowed by those who throw their hearts in with them. But at any rate it is our plainest duty to feed the hungry and to clothe the naked, and to afford shelter to the aged, while striving that benefit to the individual shall not result in injury and degradation to the class.

For, be it observed, life is no such smooth and easy matter that we can say of any one who has fallen into misfortune that it is their fault, or that of any one now living. It has pleased Providence to place us in a moral atmosphere of so many mingled elements that we cannot in many cases assign the particular causes of a particular poverty. There are such things as hereditary diseases and hereditary incapacity;—banks will break and swallow up the fortunes of helpless hundreds, and a commercial crisis drags into its vortex

houses which were guiltless of speculation or expense. And so we see on all hands, that, while certain general laws can be discovered which form the moral scheme of Providence, there come up individual questions every day which cannot be settled by reference to any such laws. We know, as a matter of certainty, that the drunken workman will bring his children to hunger and cold;—yet we cannot, therefore, let the children die. We may come to fixed conclusions as to the causes which lie at the root of the difficulty of earning a livelihood experienced by ladies;—yet we none the less have *this* generation of such ladies to care for, remembering the story of the good Samaritan, who, when he saw that the stranger was wounded, did not stop to speculate on the best way of rendering roads secure from thieves, but *went to him and bound up his wounds.*

We have entered on this dry explanation of what we conceive to be the right way of viewing large public charities privately administered, because we believe there are many people of first-rate intellect and conscience, alike among the rich and the poor, who recoil from the idea of giving or of receiving any material aid. We believe, with the whole might of our convictions, that for human creatures to help one another freely, when that love which is the bread of life is given together with the bread that perisheth, honours both the giver and the receiver, and can be degrading to none. We have every reason to believe that, in this particular instance of the Governesses' Benevolent Institution, the greatest, the most sisterly tenderness and delicacy has been shown in the transactions between the society (as represented by its lady members) and the teachers, while the remarkable results obtained by the funds placed at their disposal prove the zealous attention which must have been bestowed upon the institution by experienced men; and the mass of *facts* thus brought to light serve as a wise and efficient basis of argument for those more diffusive efforts which will tend to cut off the evil at its source, by directing the industry of educated women into other and more profitable channels.

Let us now turn to this, after all, most important side of the question, and see upon what point of certainty we can first fix our attention. It is the opinion of the gentleman who has for years acted as honorary secretary, (a post which has in this instance been anything but a mere name,) and under whose observation all the accumulated details of the various connected institutions have fallen, —it is his decided opinion that the number of *first-class* governesses is not greater than the demand for their services, and that, although, taking this for granted, the salary of a woman of unusual professional ability and attainment cannot rise higher than that of a small Government clerk, at from 100*l.* to 200*l.* a year, still this sum can be secured, and absolute penury avoided. But this supposes the governess to be highly accomplished according to the standard now insisted upon by the "nobility and gentry," to be well conversant

with two or more foreign languages, and to be marked in dress and manner by all the elegance of a highly-bred lady. Such a woman, capable of teaching Horace to little Lord Edward, and of reading Dante and Schiller with young Lady Isabella, will probably secure what is considered to be relatively, if not absolutely, a "good salary." Where then falls the strain? The question is easily answered; it falls upon the hundreds and thousands of women who, born in the middle class, live by its instruction; upon the daughters of professional men, who, educated themselves in the conventional degree of knowledge and accomplishments, suddenly, at the death of a parent, or the failure of an investment, rush into the Profession of the Teacher, and discharge its duties in all probability with honesty and thoroughness so far as they are able, but without any of that nicety of acquirement, or peculiar tact and science in imparting, which would enable them to outbid the hosts of sister governesses who are teaching on the same social level, and for equally low pay. The over supply of teachers has moreover reacted on the custom of the employers, who have set their ideas to a certain scale, and, if they educate their children at home, refuse to pay beyond a certain percentage on the whole family income for their instruction.

It remains for us to see what can be done to kill this evil at its root. How much can be done to mitigate its consequences may be read in these reports; but after all the *greatest* benefit achieved by the group of institutions of which they treat, consists in the degree of attention which they have drawn to the state of the profession at large. One part of the question is already in course of being answered. Every year sees an ever-increasing number of women devoting themselves to the Fine Arts. Their names are scattered about in the catalogue of the Royal Academy, and last spring a special exhibition was opened for the reception of works by female artists. Literature again is followed, as a profession, by women, to an extent far greater than our readers are at all aware of. The Magazines of the day are filled by them; one of the oldest and best of our weekly periodicals owes two-thirds of its contents to their pens. Even the leaders of our newspapers are, in some instances, regularly written by women, and publishers avail themselves largely of their industry in all manner of translations and compilations. In the reading-room of the British Museum, that magnificent abode of learning, the roving eye may any day detect the bowed heads and black silk dresses of ladies who come there for references on every subject under heaven; searching out obscure hints concerning the ways and words of defunct princesses, or well-nigh forgotten manipulations of antediluvian trades.

But the number of women who are adopting pursuits connected with literature and the arts must not blind us to the fact that they will always constitute the minority among even "skilled

labourers." For the smallest aptitude with the pen, and what would appear to be a very average power of arranging ideas in sequence, is not a very widely diffused intellectual gift. Among men, how small is the *comparative* number of artists and authors!—the hacks may perhaps be reckoned by thousands, the average writers by hundreds, the geniuses by tens. But when we speak of unemployed women, it is a question of *tens of thousands*. What then will the arts do for them, when every other woman one meets is ready to assure one that she could not write for the press "to save her life"?

And here we would remark on what we consider to have been very undeserved ridicule cast upon a sentence in Miss Leigh Smith's little pamphlet entitled 'Women and Work.' The sentence, which has been regarded as the *ne plus ultra* of wild arithmetic, runs thus —it occurs at the close of some remarks on female destitution:—

"Apprentice 10,000 to watchmakers; train 10,000 for teachers for the young; make 10,000 good accountants; put 10,000 more to be nurses under deaconesses trained by Florence Nightingale; put some thousands in the electric telegraph offices all over the country; educate 1000 lecturers for mechanics' institutions; 1000 readers to read the best books to the working people; train up 10,000 to manage washing-machines, sewing-machines, etc. Then the distressed needle-women would vanish; the decayed gentlewomen and broken-down governesses would no longer exist."

Now, to isolate this sentence so as to make it appear that any one person, or any dozen of committees, is expected thus to parcel out the population by thousands, is an absurdity which we are very sure was never contemplated by the writer of this energetic little pamphlet. It is merely a rapid summing up of the scale on which relief must be afforded before the enormous classes of destitute women, from the refined lady to the

> "Eighty thousand women in one smile,
> Who only smile at night beneath the gas,"

can be raised to the point of prosperous industry.

If, as may be seen in examining the census, forty-three per cent. of women above the age of twenty are either unmarried or widowed;—if one half of the female population of the country are paid labourers;—if, as the reports at the head of our paper suppose, the number of governesses alone may be assumed at fifteen thousand, and the number of paupers and worse than paupers enormously larger,—then it is evident that an ideal distribution of the gross amount into wholesome trades by tens of thousands is merely a forecasting of the results which we must set ourselves to obtain somehow.

To what ends then must we hope to see the intelligent female

labour of this Anglo-Saxon race directed, and how is the current to be turned into new channels?

To the first question we can see but one solution. Every race has its *spécialité* of function in the great sum total of humanity. While the Hindoo pecks rice, sleeps, bathes, fights, and embroiders coats of many colours, and the Mohammedan Arab sits cross-legged in the sun and plays endless games of backgammon, the Anglo-Saxon man digs and ploughs, spins and weaves, buys and sells. He is a sturdy sensible fellow, has a square forehead and an active body; he can calculate well, and usually knows how to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market. If he be neither literary nor artistic, and nationally he is surely neither the one nor the other, Mr. Bull has an unusually fair share of what is termed "good common sense." Has Mrs. Bull no feminine counterpart to these fine sterling qualities? We think she has. Mrs. Bull is what is usually termed a "motherly body," and not only looks after the children, but after the storeroom too. She weighs the cheese and bacon, and metes out the flannel. She looks after the farmer's men, and flatters her husband's customers with a certain honest frankness which is delightful to behold. In fine, the Englishwoman in country districts, where many duties lie ready to her hand, and where the mania for rising in life has not turned the best parlour into a boudoir, and the fiddle into a cornet à piston, represents the feminine side of the same active and sterling character which is supposed to mark the Englishman; witness a host of popular songs, tales, and caricatures. Nay, when Punch takes our gracious Queen as the typical lady of the country, what an indescribable air of wholesome activity he communicates to the picture, reminding one of Solomon's good woman! Surely then the daughters of our flourishing tradesmen, our small merchants and manufacturers, who remain single for a few, or more than a few years, may find some occupation more healthy, more exciting, and more profitable than the under ranks of governessing. If women so situated could more frequently assist their fathers and brothers as accountants or clerks, or would enter bravely into all such descriptions of *business* as are even now open to their sex, cultivating those virtues of order, economy, and punctuality which business demands, they would find themselves far more happily and successfully engaged than by rigidly confining themselves to what they deem the gentilities of private life, and selling themselves to a family but little above their own station for 25*l.* a year. And thus the higher class of governesses, who are fully educated up to the requirements of a higher social scale, would meet with but little competition and more assured pay.

The arts, literature, and tuition might be safely left to provide for the livelihood of *clever* women, if *sensible* women would but turn their sense to its many legitimate spheres of action. But,

women will not manage washing and sewing machines, work electric telegraphs, keep tradesmen's books, or set up shops, so long as they think, and so long as society enforces the idea, that by so doing they forfeit caste and are rendered unfit to associate with "ladies," though their fathers, brothers, and prospective husbands may each and all be engaged in some form of business.

For in truth a most insane notion seems to prevail that there are only one or two occupations which a woman can pursue and retain the social status of a gentlewoman. A more baseless chimera never weighed like an incubus upon the energies of human creatures. Let any young lady *try* how far society would support her if she entered a telegraph office, or opened a stationer's shop, or took a place as show-woman in any of our enormous clothing establishments. We can guarantee to any such enterprising individual, if in other respects a cultivated and pleasant woman, the "social suffrages" of a large circle of "ladies" who would eagerly lend the assistance of their private gentility, would invite her to their houses, and applaud

> the adventurous *she*,
> Who in the first bark dared the unknown sea;

while if two, three, or a dozen women of the professional ranks took a like course, the fanciful distinction between different grades of occupation for a livelihood would be as little generally perceptible as that between the famous enigmatical sums of "six dozen dozen and half a dozen dozen."

We can willingly admit, what the slightest experience of different social circles would prove, that these experiments are far easier in London than in the provincial villages and towns. In the latter, where the local strata are better defined, and people care infinitely more about preserving them intact than they do in the metropolis, and don't like to tolerate what geologists would call "a dip" or "a fault" in the ground, the young lady who audaciously invaded the desk or the counter, or worked the needles at a local station, might find some little difficulty in maintaining her ground at tea parties. The young gentlemen might refrain for a while from asking her to dance; their mammas *might* feel a greater dread of a "low connection" than if she had remained a nursery governess. But even in "our village" we believe that the surgeon's eldest daughter might brave and conquer these obstacles and be none the less a Queen of Twelfth Night; and though at first all the neighbours would whisper mysteriously that Miss H. certainly *had* a "bee in her bonnet," it would be soon found that the said bee made more honey than other people's butterflies, and would be declared quite a respectable and praiseworthy insect.

And if the worst came to the worst, and one were not asked out to tea—why then one might stay at home by the fire of one's own

earning, inside one's own door, and snugly locked up by one's own key, teaching the widow's son to read, and the motherless bairn to sew, or holding comfortable converse with Dickens and Thackeray, Tennyson and Mrs. Browning, or some of those elder spirits among "the just made perfect" who have left us records of earnest lives and holy deaths, as a compensation for living people whom we have not met because they would not meet us,—because we kept a shop!

Into the general stream of business, then, whose tributary rivulets are of different complexion in different localities, we desire to turn the intelligent female labour of the Anglo-Saxon race. The second question we proposed was,—*how* are we to effect the change? It can only be effected on the required scale by every young woman who must "go out" from the domestic hearth asking herself, "Is there nothing else which I can, for better pay than that of a governess, undertake at the cost of a little courage? Can I not enter somebody else's shop, or set up one of my own with some friend? Or is there not some situation as clerk or accountant, or superintendent, for which I can fit myself if I look out sharply?" Such an one, casting her gentility on the waters, would assuredly find it return to her again after not many days. And with married women in their own comfortable and well-considered homes lies the great onus in this matter, of sheltering with their motherly and sisterly sympathies the more exposed career of those who must at all events for some years seek their own bread. Let it once be clearly recognised that the young business-woman is shielded by the social intercourse of those who are technically called "ladies," and many of those graver objections which deter parents and guardians from allowing their charges to meet the world in shops and warehouses would be obviated. It is because these scattered young women are not so shielded, because when they disappear there is no large and reputable circle to hound the destroyer with indignation, that mischief sometimes occurs.

Before concluding we would fain make some allusion to a long and careful paper in 'Blackwood' for the current month (February). It is, we think, written by a man of strongly conservative tendency, but with much sense and kindliness. The writer believes that the cry about unemployed women nowadays is marked by much morbid exaggeration, and that young men struggle with equal difficulties as tutors, as clerks, as emigrants; and that it would be an excellent thing if all single women would get married as fast as they can, and the rest hold their tongues in a dignified manner. And he thinks that the *numbers* of solitary women are greatly exaggerated in the popular mind just at the present time. He instances the Bronté family as a case where the tutor brother failed, and the governess sisters succeeded, in working out a great career. All this is said with a certain pleasant paternal kindness, much as Sir Peter Laurie might

have put down suicide, and the only objection we have to make is that the article ignores facts. The exact number of women who are unmarried or widowed, and such proportion of them as have to work for their bread, are to be found stated in the census. Female pauperism (in the workhouses) can be estimated, and female emigration told, to a head: nobody need dispute about "exaggeration" till they have checked it by figures. But, supposing women to have as *good* chances of escaping destitution as men (which they have *not*), still everybody knows that destitution is for them a more awful thing; that there are depths of horror, of degradation, into which men cannot fall; and that, without any ugly reflections as to the comparative chances of the university tutor or the governess, there is cogent reason why prosperous Englishwomen, and those many good men who are willing to help them, should try with might and main to help their own sex to further industrial gains, and every reason why the young working women of the day should cast about for what their hand findeth to do, remembering that, after all, it is themselves who must clear the path to new occupations.

"*Who would be free, herself must strike the blow.*"

II.—A HOUSE OF MERCY.

A FEW days ago I visited the London Diocesan Penitentiary, situated at Highgate; a penitentiary for the most unfortunate of women.

This institution is principally supported by voluntary contributions, and is calculated to receive about eighty penitents. An ornamental cross over the entrance gate has, I believe, unfortunately created a prejudice in some minds against this Penitentiary as being Roman Catholic, whereas it is Protestant, a clergymen of the Church of England, who resides with his wife and family near to the institution, being at its head as Warden.

The impression left upon my mind by my visit is so agreeable, that I would willingly make others acquainted with this benevolent asylum for the despised and unhappy.

The place itself is a large mansion, standing in its own grounds, surrounded by high walls; a very healthy, airy, spacious abode.

The Warden, deeply interested in this and other social reforms, and who has long devoted himself to similar labours, has been now at the head of this establishment somewhat less than two years. He received us in his room, wearing his collegiate dress. The room is furnished simply, with oak chairs and an oak library table. A poor's-box hangs upon the wall; mottoes are painted above the

doors and mantel-piece; and upon the mantel-piece stands a small wooden cross.

We were first taken into the laundry, which now occupies what was formerly stables. The institution is in part supported by laundry-work, and during the London season a great deal of linen is sent from the West End to be got up by the girls. They were, however, busy washing and ironing their own clothes only, when we visited the laundry. No washing is received in the Penitentiary from the immediate neighbourhood.

Many scientific appliances have been introduced into the establishment for lessening the labour of washing and wringing the clothes. I observed to the Warden that I could not avoid questioning whether this were an advisable arrangement as regarded the education of the girls, for in an ordinary way household and domestic labour has none of these aids. Two instances had come under our own observation, of girls educated in public institutions where labour had in a similar manner been lightened, refusing when in service to perform common and necessary domestic work because it had never been required of them "in their school."

The Warden replied that in the case of this particular class of girls these scientific appliances were a great boon. The girls are generally placed in the laundry as soon as they have passed out of the noviciate class, the labour being simple and easy, thus lightened by these mechanical aids, and no longer too heavy for their generally feeble frames. The whole course of their previous lives having rendered the penitents weak, and utterly incapable of exertion requiring a considerable amount of muscular power, it is only by judicious arrangements that they can be gradually and without danger to health initiated into domestic work.

There were about ten girls occupied in the laundry when we entered.

All were perfectly silent, this being one of their *silent hours*. Some were dressed in pale grey, and others in pale blue gingham dresses; checked handkerchiefs, and small white caps. Beyond the laundry was the drying-ground, in which we noticed the scientific arrangement of the lines for drying the linen, all the lines radiating from a pole in the centre. It is a pity that this plan is not generally adopted, as thus the wind is caught from whatever point it blows.

There is accommodation in this establishment, as I have already said, for eighty girls, and there are constant applications for admission into it from refuges in London and other places; but although the funds would allow of more girls than forty, the number now within its walls, the Warden is deterred from receiving fresh penitents on account of the small number of "Sisters" in the establishment. All the instruction in domestic matters, and the oversight of the girls day and night, is confided to "Sisters of Mercy" who reside in the Home. At the present time there are but three

Sisters. I had some conversation with two of these ladies—Sister A. and Sister B. I will call them. Sister A. might be about thirty; the other was considerably older. Their countenances had that calmness so peculiarly belonging to their Sisterhood, and which so harmoniously blends with the sentiment of their caps of soft pure muslin, their black dresses, and the string of black beads and cross hanging round their necks. Both spoke with touching devotion of their mission, and of the deep interest they felt in the progress towards reformation in their charges, and of the heavenly peacefulness of their own lives. Sister B., the elder one, said, "I am advanced in life, and have seen much of the world; but never did I experience such true heart-felt joy, such peace and happiness, as I have felt within these walls. To feel that a power is given one of leading these poor stray sinners to our dear Lord; to know one's duty, and to be able cheerfully daily to perform it—and such a holy duty too! how great is our privilege! I only wish that we could persuade more ladies to join us in our labours. They do not know how much their aid is wanted; how holy is the life, or what an internal joy would animate their souls. And many ladies need sacrifice no really sacred worldly tie by joining us, for we can return to the world whenever we cease to feel that our duty is here. At any time of sickness or sorrow in our own families we can return to our homes, for we are bound by no vow."

I asked, did they not suffer physically from so much exertion, especially under circumstances such as theirs at present, where the small number of Sisters precluded all possibility of relaxation? But both Sister A. and Sister B. replied that certainly their bodies felt wearied by the time night arrived, and that it would be a great comfort occasionally to feel that half an hour could be called their own; but that their health was very good, better than before they had entered upon their vocation. And truly their countenances spoke of health and peace.

Sister A. conducted us over the dormitories. Each Sister has charge of her particular set or class of girls, and each class sleeps in a separate dormitory, receives instruction in a separate class-room, and takes exercise together in the grounds under the Sister's superintendence. At the various services in the chapel, and at meal-times in the dining-room, they all meet. Sister A.'s bed-room and class-room were a specimen of the others—a bright, cheerful little chamber, containing a French bed with white dimity hangings, a couple of chairs, a dressing-table and looking-glass, with a few small prints, and photographs from sacred pictures of the French and German schools, together with a small cross on the wall. Some sentences from the Scriptures were illuminated, and fastened as loving monitors on the wall opposite the bed, and above the little fireplace. Here too I observed sentences from the Gospels formed of dried box or ilex leaves sown upon paper with considerable

elegance. Sister A. said this was the work of the girls in spare moments, and upon Saints'-days and holidays, and was their only "fancy-work," and also a great delight; some of them executing this leaf-embroidery with much expertness and taste. A square aperture in the Sister's room opened into the dormitory, thus conveying all sounds to her attentive ear, even when the walls separated her otherwise from her charges.

The dormitory was a large chamber subdivided into about a dozen cubicles or small sleeping apartments by wooden partitions and doors which rose within a few feet of the ceiling, thus producing privacy to each occupant of the cubicle, and not preventing a free circulation of air. All here was scrupulously clean; each little iron bedstead stood covered with its mattress and blue and white checked coverlet; apparatus for washing standing by each bed. I noticed above several of the beds those little religious prints called in France "images," and which, though occasionally sentimental, frequently also have a peculiar sacred grace about them. These I observed had been well selected; they had been given to the girls by the Sisters and visitors. One particularly struck me. It was not bad in an artistic point of view, and the sentiment was affecting when you knew that it had been placed by the hands of the poor penitent above her pillow. A very narrow bridge spanned a deep chasm. A tall, commanding figure of Christ approached from the farther side towards a girl who, with outstretched arms and face of anguish, pleaded for aid, ready to fall as she stepped along the narrow, dizzy plank. Beneath it, if I rightly remember, were the words, "Aid me, O Lord, or I perish." There were also holy words and sentences embroidered in box and ilex leaves over many of the beds. The girls become greatly attached to their "cubicles," and regard the privacy and sense of possession there enjoyed as one of their greatest privileges. They are found greatly to develop a sense of self-respect in the girls.

I inquired from Sister A. whether there were any particular rules regarding cleanliness and bathing, as I should imagine that the free and ample use of cold water would be an important means towards reformation. She said that each week they took a bath, and that personal cleanliness was especially enjoined; but that it was difficult, whilst so many duties devolved upon one Sister, to be sure that their ablutions were as thorough as might be desirable. I have learned subsequently that the Warden is very desirous of fitting up a room in the house as a bath-room, but is as yet restrained from doing so until the requisite funds are obtained. The weekly bath takes place in the laundry at present, where the accommodation is by no means such as the Sisters consider desirable, and where the stone floor is prejudicial to health.

Silence was, Sister A. informed me, enjoined upon the girls in their bed-rooms, and the rule was rarely broken. At 10 o'clock the

Sister saw all the girls in their beds, and removed the light. At 6 in the morning she opened their door and aroused them. At 7 they all assembled for prayers in the chapel.

The class-room, which was opposite the dormitory, on the same floor, was like an ordinary school-room, with bare floor, and with a large deal table in the centre. Very little scholastic instruction, however, can at present be given, as the Sisters' powers are already so much over-taxed by their superintendence of the religious and domestic instruction. We found the girls in one class-room employed in sewing, in preparing clothes for those who were ready to leave the establishment. I noticed that above the chimney-piece of this room various instructions for the week were written up; their hours of silence, of religious service, &c. Also I observed that there was a list of the girls' names—names by which they were known in the establishment; each girl receiving a new name and new clothes when she enters this Penitentiary, and, as it is to be hoped, commencing a new life. The names were peculiar: they were Gertrudes, Amandas, Rosalines, Helenas, &c. I saw but a small number of Ruths, Marthas, or Marys. It is thought best on many accounts to give each girl a new name; it breaks off old associations, also helps to prevent her being immediately recognised in many instances, both within the institution, and also when she leaves it, and can resume her old baptismal cognomen. I rather wonder why such romantic names should have been given; it striking me that in many instances it might be injudicious in any way to foster the element of love of *romantic distinction* in these poor, frail, ignorant human breasts.

We also saw the girls walking up and down the broad walks of the beautiful grounds attached to the house, or sitting at work on benches beneath the old chestnuts or Portugal laurels. The sunshine falling upon their white caps and pale grey dresses made them, seen in the distance, grouped in the leafy arcade, resemble a flock of doves. Alas! poor, torn, desecrated doves, whose plumage had been soiled by the filth of great cities, how one's spirit longed for their purification and emancipation! The Sister in her black attire was seen moving about amongst the groups, talking with them, or sitting alone, a little apart, reading.

The Warden drew my attention to the abundance of apples, which almost weighed down many large old trees in the garden. "When I came here last year," he said, "these apple-trees caused us a great deal of annoyance. There were, of course, rules against apple-stealing, and many other rules. Yet the first thing which I did was to put them aside. 'We will have no formal code,' I said, 'till we see what laws are absolutely necessary. The fewer the rules the better.' I have found my plan," continued he, "to answer admirably. To break a rule is an act of disobedience: let us therefore have *as few as possible to break*. The Sisters and myself

made known the duties that had to be performed, and the times and seasons were fixed. All goes on like clock-work. The great thing is to adhere firmly and calmly to the few laws laid down, and also to simplify those laws as much as possible. I find, too, that to gain the confidence of each girl is of the highest importance, and to treat her as an individual, and not as one of a mass. I cannot treat any two of these girls exactly after the same fashion, because their natures, although alike in their broad features, differ in the detail. I receive a report every week from the Sisters of each girl's conduct, but it is not from this alone that I judge; I judge from my own observation. I am constantly amongst them, both when they do and when they do not expect me. These apple-trees were, as I said, a great stumbling-block on my arrival. They were legislated against, but that was of no avail. Such a state of affairs would never do: I made it known, therefore, that all apple pilfering was a cause of great displeasure to me; and I therefore put the girls upon their honour. This year you see what a crop we have, and the windfalls have lain safely beneath the trees. I know, however, only of three apples having been taken this autumn. I noticed C——, one of the prettiest and most intelligent of the girls here, skipping one morning off the grass very nimbly. She had no business to be where she was. I called her to me. 'C——,' I said, 'put your hand in your pocket and show me what you have got there.' She turned very red, and drew forth an apple. 'C——,' I continued, 'I am ashamed of you! ashamed of your doing such a mean, paltry thing! to break my trust in you *for a mere apple!* I am ashamed, I am disappointed indeed! I expected much better things from you!'

"You cannot imagine," pursued the Warden, "what a distress this was to her. It cut her up fearfully, because I had never concealed from her that I considered her a girl of first-rate abilities, and capable of almost any improvement. She is a wonderful little creature, this girl, sharp of mind, and agile of frame, and full of emulation. She would be at the top of the tree wherever she might be: she felt, therefore, my disappointment keenly.

"The second apple I found, with a piece bitten out, in the middle of a walk where one of the classes had been taking exercise. I took it into the classroom immediately, and showed it, saying that I felt convinced some of the class had been weak enough to disobey my wishes. All denied. I said this only made the matter much worse, because there was the apple with the piece bitten out of it, found where they only had just been: it testified against some one present—some one whose conscience must be now reproaching them with falsehood. I left them to be judged by God's voice within them. One of the oldest girls of the class burst out crying: 'Oh, Warden! I did it! I did it! oh, why did I disobey for a nasty apple? I don't know why I took it; I did not really care for it. Oh, forgive me!' She was

so much distressed at having told this falsehood, as well as having disobeyed, that she lost her appetite, and became so ill from distress of mind that the physician had to be sent for to see her. It was a fortnight before she recovered, or before I could induce her to receive the Communion; yet I discovered that she had flung down the apple immediately upon taking it, and when, as the apple itself testified, she had only bitten one piece out of it.

"The story of the third apple, however, is the most distressing of all. There is a girl in the house, D——, who was a most notorious girl in ——, a girl of most violent passions and temper, a girl who appears at times fairly possessed with a devil. She has been in prison three times for assaulting the police, and, when in her violent paroxysms, has been known to overpower two men. She is one of the most unmanageable cases conceivable, but has been here some months, and, until quite lately, had been progressing very favourably. A short time ago she showed her evil, violent temper again, and the violence continued to increase. She talked loudly even in hours of silence, was very insolent, and would dash about the room in her old fierce way. I was convinced that there must be a reason for this retrogression. She was always respectful to me, and I believed that I had gained her confidence, as it is my first endeavour to do with all these unfortunate girls. I asked her what had happened to change her thus unaccountably. After a little time she blurted out, 'The nasty apple! I have not had a moment's peace since I took it.' Her evil spirit had evidently again been aroused, and it seems no easy matter to dispel him. Two or three days ago I heard her talking violently, and dashing about in a most unbecoming manner. I brought her into my room; she looked very dogged, and did not restrain her violence of manner. I reasoned with her, setting her conduct before her. I spoke of the distress which her abominable conduct would cause to Mr. I——, at whose request she had been admitted into the house. She said that she did not care for him. I told her that, as she could not or would not master her fearful temper, there was no use in her remaining in the Penitentiary, but that if she returned to her old courses she knew well enough what awaited her—*death, death, body and soul!* She replied, 'I mean to go. I won't stay.' I replied, 'You shall have the opportunity of going.' I then directed that she should be dressed in her own clothes, and handed over to me.

"This was done, and when she re-appeared I desired her to follow me. She dashed about her dress with her hands as though she would have forced it from her body, and followed to the outer gate in a most excited state of feeling. As I applied the key to the lock, and the gate gently opened, I reminded her of God's mercy to her, of the doom awaiting her. I said, 'You go to your destruction, but may God still have mercy upon you.' The door

stood wide open, and the street was before her. The most agonizing cry burst from her, as if it would rend her frame; such a cry as that I never heard before; a cry that was unearthly, it seemed stifled in her throat, yet as if it burst forth through every pore of her skin. She threw herself from before the door against the adjoining fence, clutched at her clothes, buried her face in them, and stood convulsed from head to foot.

"I instantly closed the gate, and, after standing for a short time, took her by the arm and led her back into my room. There I placed her upon a chair, and without speaking let her grief have full vent; when it had somewhat subsided, I told her that I would offer her three things: Free liberty to leave the Penitentiary, permission to return into her class as before, or retirement for a season, in order that she might have time for reflection. She readily accepted the last proposal.

"She has been since then very quiet. She does not leave her room, but works there alone all day. I hope she may gain the victory. Hers is one of the worst cases I ever came across—a case so bad that I believe most persons would despair of it. She was sent here by Mr. ——, one of the visiting justices of the —— Prison. He heard a tremendous row in one of the cells, and, entering, saw this girl struggling with two of the jailors. She burst away from them, seized a stool, and defended herself with it. Aiming a lusty blow with it, the stool flew from the leg by which she held it, and lodged on the farther side of the room, the leg only descending upon the jailor's head—with anything but an agreeable effect, however. Had the stool itself descended upon the man, it might have killed or seriously injured him, for she wielded it with enormous strength.

"Mr. ——'s presence made the combatants pause, and either his words or his manner acted like a charm upon her. He showed her the narrow escape she had had of committing murder, speaking to her as though she were a reasonable being. She listened to him attentively, saying, 'How oddly you talk! I never heard such talk!' She promised him that she would be quite calm if force were not used with her. And she kept her word. Mr. —— subsequently became much interested in her, and, after her term of imprisonment expired, obtained her admission here after a short time of necessary probation in a London Refuge. He has indeed been a most kind friend to her."

I would willingly have listened much longer to the sad recitals of the Warden, but 12 o'clock was now upon the point of striking, and at that hour there is a service of about ten minutes in the chapel. I was glad to be allowed to be present at this service. To me it was singularly impressive and affecting. The chapel is one of the large rooms of the house, small as a chapel, though amply large enough to contain its unhappy penitents—yet *happy* penitents

rather in one sense, for here they learn to understand those wonderfully consolatory words spoken by the Saviour of the woman in the city who was a sinner: "Her sins, which are many, are forgiven: for she loved much." These divine words of mercy spoken by the lips of Divine Love are emblazoned in clear letters above the altar. Violet and white, lilac and grey, with a little crimson cloth about the altar, and crimson-cloth curtains with a black fleur-de-lis upon them which hang half-way down the chapel, are the sole colours in the apartment, which, though most simply fitted up, has a pure, cheerful, and devotional character. The altar-cloth is violet and white, with the words "He that eateth me, even he shall live by me," embroidered upon it. The floor is covered with cocoa-nut matting, and the wood-work is of varnished deal. The chapel makes a striking impression, simple as it is, when you enter it from the bare passages and unornamented rooms in the rest of the house. I could believe that it was very efficacious, thus making the chapel the *chief point of beauty* in the whole place.

The girls, as I learned from the Sisters, take great delight in their religious services, and are allowed upon holidays to decorate the chapel with wreaths. If prevented by illness from attending the services, they are quite impatient for permission to again enter the chapel. The services, which take place several times a day, are generally of about ten minutes' duration, except the morning and evening services. The service at which I was present consisted merely of the Litany chanted by the Warden, and responded to by the penitents and the Sisters. Kneeling amidst those unhappy girls snatched from a hell upon earth, with the sunshine streaming in through the clear windows upon their white-capped heads, and bowed grey and lilac forms, in the hushed silence to hear the Warden's voice chant forth, "O God, the Father of Heaven, have mercy upon us miserable sinners!" and then those young penitent voices reply, "O God, the Father of Heaven, have mercy upon us miserable sinners!" brought sudden tears to my eyes, and brings them again even now, when I recall the scene.

I cannot but believe that the religious services in such Refuges and Penitentiaries ought to be rendered as beautiful and as impressive as possible. All that is pure and lovely should, it seems to me, be brought to these poor girls connected with the words of Christ, He who spoke as never man spake to fallen woman.

I noticed one thing which surprised me when I saw the girls assembled in the chapel, and this was that amongst them there were not above half a dozen moderately good-looking. I did not see one remarkably handsome. The greater number were decidedly plain, and three at least were almost idiotic-looking. Of course when the girls enter the establishment they are generally much out

of health, and there is a physician who attends them. In cases of serious illness they are removed to a hospital, because there is not proper accommodation for them in the Home under such circumstances. Sister A., however, said that they regretted to send them from their care, as on their return they generally found to their grief that *morally* they had retrograded. The greatest difficulty seems to be preventing the girls conversing together upon their past lives. All that reminds them of old associations seems to call up the evil within them. An evil girl amongst the penitents will often do incalculable mischief, but then on the contrary good example produces its fruits in almost equal ratio.

This particular Penitentiary is a sort of "finishing school." It is a place to which girls who have been brought into some degree of order in Refuges are sent. To bring girls into this Home fresh from the streets or direct from prison would, the Warden assured me, be like bringing poison and death to the penitents. His idea is that reformation at best amongst these unhappy women is a very long process indeed. It is a work of time and *habit*, more than anything else. He never receives a girl nominally for less than two years: she may, however, stay with him a shorter time, but that depends upon the girl herself. Hope is an element through which this good man especially works. He and the Sisters always hold up their future career to the girls as the goal to be striven after, but it can only be attained by faithful fulfilment of present duty.

In course of time the Warden hopes that they shall be able to establish a Refuge in connexion with the Penitentiary—a Refuge into which he will be ready to receive the raw material which he and the Sisters will then endeavour to prepare for the higher school of probation. One thing has been observed in the course of reformation in all cases, almost without any exception, and this is that after about two months from the time a girl has entered a Refuge she begins to change; not for the better, *but rather for the worse.* A time of trial has arrived. The new life has lost its novelty, and the poor human creature pines for a change. This is a very critical time. She must be strengthened, encouraged, stimulated. Most probably she conquers her temptation and pursues her course again calmly: but again and again this trial comes at certain periods of her probation, but generally each conquest renders the succeeding attacks of the enemy weaker. The prospect of leaving a Refuge and entering a Penitentiary, of change from one class to another, from one kind of work to another, all act as salutary incitements to his hands by which he can influence their conduct, and encourage their fainting spirits.

I have had further conversation with the Warden regarding the Penitentiary. When the Warden first entered upon his office, an infirmary and surgery existed in the house. The physician attended, but the Sisters dispensed and administered the medicines. The

infirmary was an object of especial care to the Sisterhood. Several of the penitents appeared serious invalids. Two or three were supposed to be in consumptions. These poor girls excited the deepest sympathy. They were carried in the arms of their companions up and down stairs; sate or reclined wrapped up in shawls in the infirmary, or were propped with pillows upon the seats in the garden when taken out for fresh air. There reclining in the sunshine, the other girls crowded round them with tender solicitude, presenting them with little bouquets of flowers, or casting compassionate looks upon them. They were also frequently prayed for in the chapel.

The Warden said, "Perhaps I might be inclined to accuse him of hardness, and want of common sympathy, but in very truth he must confess that this state of things soon disgusted him; that he, after close observation, soon made up his mind that the infirmary was a mistake." When his plans were matured, he announced the astounding intelligence that the surgery and the infirmary would be done away with. The invalids would be sent to a hospital. This establishment was a penitentiary, not a hospital; it must be used for its legitimate purpose. He and the Sisters had to cure diseased minds, not diseased bodies. This announcement at first was hardly credited, it appeared so cruel, so monstrous in its want of sympathy. The tender hearts of the Sisters were greatly distressed; but, as the authority of the Warden is supreme, his will was forthwith carried out. Of the invalids three were carefully removed to a hospital where all was comfortably prepared for them, and the infirmary was turned into a class-room.

As the sagacious mind of the "unsympathetic" Warden had foreseen, the sick girls, no longer the supreme objects of interest and solicitude in their little world, began to recover with astonishing rapidity. For two out of the three cases, I believe, a fortnight at the hospital sufficed. The other, a more obstinate case, but in no degree serious, required a somewhat longer sojourn in the hospital ward; but she also, in due course, returned in health to the Penitentiary. Two out of these three girls, supposed to be at death's door less than two years ago, have now in good health recommenced their life in the outer world. One is gone to an excellent situation in the north of England, the other is now on her voyage to America, having there comfortable prospects opening for her.

I was anxious to learn what appeared to be the result of the system of training and discipline pursued in this Penitentiary. The Warden reminded me that, as girls were received into this institution nominally for two years, and as he himself had not yet been fully that term at the head of the establishment, he could scarcely speak of the effects which would flow from the present system of management. He could, however, show me some letters from girls who

had left the establishment, and so far he could not avoid being full of hope. Naturally there were instances of failure in all attempts to reclaim this unhappy class of transgressors; there were instances of a kind of middle course of partial success; but there were also not a few cases of most wonderful regeneration, and such were indeed "pearls beyond all price," worth any labour and sacrifice. No cases did the Warden appear to regard as utterly hopeless, except cases in which the confirmed habit of intoxication had been contracted.

It is not permitted for girls who have left the institution to correspond with their friends amongst the penitents; and this for various reasons, but especially for their own sakes, the fact of their writing to a Penitentiary being at once likely to betray their former condition to their fellow servants, or others around them. As this institution never willingly forgets or loses sight of any who have found refuge within its guardian walls, the girls who have quitted it may on any emergency, or when desirous of strengthening and encouraging counsel from a friend, write to the Warden; but they must address to him at his private residence. This permission is frequently made use of. Various of the letters the Warden kindly read to me; they evinced a sincere love for the institution, a great attachment to the Sisters, and frequently a yearning after the religious services. One letter was very beautiful, from the tender manner in which the writer spoke of the affection shown her by the child placed under her charge in her new situation. It was curious and interesting to observe how, in compliance with the injunctions given upon leaving the Penitentiary, these poor girls avoided all reference to the institution in their letters, even in the messages of remembrance and dutiful affection sent to the Sisters; they were sent to Mrs. or Miss ——, although these ladies' surnames had never been used in the institution, they having always been spoken of as Sister so-and-so, and addressed as "lady."

In speaking of letters, the Warden told me that the girls are permitted to correspond with their own families whilst within the Penitentiary, but that all letters must, before being sent, be read. Most generally the letters were such as could be forwarded without comment, but occasionally passages were met with in the letters which, being objected to, had to be re-written. It was curious to observe, he said, how frequently these letters were terminated in rhyme. There appears a latent love of poetry in many of these poor hearts, which shows itself strikingly in undeveloped poetic efforts. Generally the tenor of these rhymes is religious, sometimes so full of good feeling, that the Warden said he had occasionally taken copies of them. It happened not unfrequently that he thus obtained a new insight into the writer's heart, and was enabled to pluck up some rising weed of evil thought, or point out some rock of danger. This had been the case either that very morning, or a few

mornings previous to our conversation. A girl was writing home, and spoke of her brother's approaching marriage. She said, "I hope my brother will be happy; but I don't want to see his wife—I don't know why, but I have a prejudice against her." "Such a sentence as this could not pass," observed the Warden. "The poor girl did not know of what spirit she was when writing such words. I have shown her that this is cruel and unchristian, and that if the world were to act so towards her, who in truth is a great sinner, all door of hope would indeed be closed upon her. Having seen this letter enabled me to speak to her words which I hope may sink into her heart, and produce a more Christian temper."

The Warden spoke to me also of letters belonging to a very sad class; letters from girls who, having quitted the institution, had again fallen into evil ways. These were letters sad enough to make an angel mourn; anguished cries for help; letters filled with bitterest self-contempt and upbraiding; letters ill-spelt and ill-written, but couched occasionally in singularly eloquent words, in terms of strange refinement evidently caught in miserable intercourse with men of education. Often a markedly wayward, violent spirit breathed from the blurred and blotted words, mingling with a cry after deliverance. It was as though the hand which inscribed them had now been guided by a demon, now by a guardian angel.

The information respecting one letter lives in my mind as the last act of a gloomy tragedy. The writer said that she had suddenly left "her friend," the term always used by these poor friendless beings as if in bitter mockery of themselves, wherefore she knew not, except that something within her compelled her to leave him, and break her bonds. She wrote that she had "money in advance, and comfortable, nay, handsome apartments, but that she was impelled to go; and besought, in the most urgent terms, for help." She went on to say, that, if the Warden would but take compassion upon her, at a certain time, and at a certain place which she mentioned in Drury Lane, he would meet with her.

"What did you do?" I asked, "did you save her?"

"I called at the place mentioned," the benevolent Warden returned, "and found that the unhappy woman had been staying there in a miserable room; that she had spoken of expecting to see a clergyman, but she was gone! I could learn nothing more concerning her—the great vortex of this awful London appeared to have swallowed her up."

No girls having left the institution are ever again received within its walls. The Warden exerts himself when appealed to by the fallen, and procures their admission into similar institutions. "It is often a most painful duty to refuse re-admission," he said, "but this is a law impossible to break, and all penitents quitting us are aware of the existence of this law."

"After the girls have been under our care a certain time," pursued the Warden, "and I have cause to believe them sincere and in earnest, I am anxious to include them amongst what are termed the 'Enrolled Penitents.' By this they enter into a voluntary agreement to stay out, agreeable to my plans, their full term. A regular chronicle is kept of their conduct from the time of their first admission, and if, as Enrolled Penitents, bearing good characters, they leave this institution, they are entitled to a certain privilege during the remainder of their lives; that is, if they continue in the path of rectitude. Let misfortune have fallen upon any of these women in after years, they are invited to make known their condition to the Warden and the Sisters, who, as far as it lies within their power, are desirous of stretching forth a protecting hand. In any time of affliction let but these unfortunates reach the gates of this Penitentiary, and give one pull at its bell-handle, and the abode of friends is reached. We cannot of course take them into the institution; that would avail them nothing; but they will have encountered friends, and there are a thousand ways in which kind hearts may benefit the poor and the distressed. If, for instance, we will say, a woman has lost her husband, and has a number of little children dependent upon her sole exertions, we cannot probably give her money, but the Sisters can make up a bundle of clothes, and ways and means through various channels may be thought out for helping the mother to provide for the children: and many other instances could be given."

On entering the institution the clothes of the penitent are removed, and the dress of the establishment is given to her; whatever small possessions she may have brought with her are, together with the clothes in which she enters, given up to the Principal Sister. These clothes, having been cleansed, are put aside, ticketed with her *number*, not with her name, and do not again come into her possession unless she voluntarily leaves the Penitentiary or is expelled, a very rare occurrence, when, of course, she is re-clothed in her old garments, and goes forth into the world unprovided with the comfortable outfit given to the penitents who obediently and satisfactorily have lived out their time of probation.

Any money which the penitent may possess on her entrance is placed in the poor's box, and this plan has been decided upon for several reasons. It may happen that the girl is actuated by no real penitence in entering, and simply seeks the Penitentiary as a comfortable asylum for two or three weeks, leaving again as soon as the spirit of change seizes upon her. In that case any little money, frequently the wages of iniquity, removed from her and placed in the poor's box, is a small payment as it were towards the expenses of her board and lodging. If, on the contrary, she remains patiently and meekly, fulfilling her duties until the full term of her probation

is ended, upon quitting the house she stands in no need of this money, her wants being all provided for by the institution, and she going forth from its walls far richer in many ways than she entered. In this case the small sacrifice of her money is looked upon by her with pleasure as a mite given towards the support of an institution which has truly blessed her and her unhappy sisters.

Besides money and clothes, occasionally even valuable, a girl will bring in with her various small possessions, such as trinkets, books, &c.; all these are taken in charge by the Principal Sister, and placed in a bag, ticketed with the girl's number, as are her clothes. Neither upon leaving the institution under its protecting auspices does she receive these possessions back again, except in a very few instances. I was surprised to hear that as a general rule the books brought in were by no means of an immoral tendency. 'Pilgrim's Progress' is frequently found amongst them, and especially small volumes of poetry. But innocent as are these little volumes to look at, except in rare instances they are not returned. Many of them are presents from friends and old associates—as such they are indeed dangerous reminders of the forbidden past, and therefore remain a portion of the cast-off slough of sin. Gifts from parents, and brothers, and sisters, are, however, generally restored at parting. A new Bible and Prayer-Book are given to the departing penitent when clothed in the fresh pure garments prepared for her re-entrance into the outer world.

When a girl is ready for her departure, and a situation which in all respects is considered best suited to her peculiar character has been duly provided, she is sent for out of her class, and is informed that now her time of departure has arrived. If she accepts the situation she never again returns to her class, or again sees her class-companions. She is speedily prepared for her immediate departure by the Principal Sister, who has always store of clothes for outfits prepared, and, together with her outfit, departs in a cab under suitable care to her place of destination, or to some safe abode, where she can remain in comfort and security until she sets forth on her longer journey, should she happen to be destined for service far from the metropolis, or for emigration.

So much for this most benevolent and Christian labour of love, in which it seems to me that what now is most urgently required is a more numerous band of Sisters of Mercy. In this way also a door of comfort is opened to another class of women, who, though the educated and the wealthy, are frequently also the unhappy—a door, entering which they can find peace of mind and employment of the noblest description.

III.—MISS BOSANQUET.

CONSIDERABLE interest having been expressed concerning an incidental mention of Miss Bosanquet which occurred in a Scotch periodical some time since, we have thought that a few words explanatory of who she was, and what she did, might not be unacceptable to our readers, while it serves as a legitimate preface to a series of biographies which we hope to publish in this journal. Miss Bosanquet closed her long life in 1815, and yet she is intimately linked with much that is going on around us at this hour, having devoted her life to a multitude of labours which were at the time exceedingly unfashionable, indeed, considered eccentric in the highest degree. So wonderful a study is it to watch how we change our minds from generation to generation! Of district visitors, tract distributors, Sunday School teachers, and hospital nurses, Miss Bosanquet may be taken as the type.

She was born on the 1st of September, old style, 1739, when John Wesley was thirty-six years of age, and when Methodism had already begun to make great progress in London, Bristol, and other parts of the West of England. It was in this very year that Whitefield first began his famous preachings in the open air; and by the time the little daughter of the rich City family, who lived down at Leytonstone in Essex, grew old enough to think at all, she came under the influence of the wonderful religious revival which was spreading more widely year by year. Not, however, through her parents—they seem to have been worthy and religious people, but they disliked the extremes of Methodism, its daily habits, and its dress. It was a servant who first imbued the child with these ideas, and the tiny theologian wished that she could be burnt as a martyr, and so escape from the dilemmas into which she fell.

As might be expected, her excitable temperament preyed upon her health; the servant had left the family, and as no other member except a sister only a few years older sympathised in the intensity of her convictions, the little one struggled on, suffering much ill-health, but laying the foundations of that splendid power of self-devotion which finally made her a brave and healthy human being. Under the severe garb of Methodism, Mary Bosanquet seems to us to have achieved a sane mind in a healthy body, and in telling the story o her childhood she puts in a passing plea for more judicious care of exceptional infants like herself. At the age of thirteen she, by her father's desire, was confirmed at St. Paul's, and in the following year she lost her grandfather, Mr. Dunster, with whom she frequently lived. He was very religious, and she recalls having "been with him

in his chariot when he has suddenly stopped to reprove profane swearing in the road." But still, piety and "Methodism" were far apart, and Mr. and Mrs. Bosanquet had little suspicion that their child was inclining towards this dreaded sect. But the time was come when she found it necessary to declare herself before men;—or how should she avoid the playhouse, balls, gay dressing, and various inconsistencies which jarred upon her sensitive conscience? So she had a long conversation with her father, whom she quaintly describes as "a man of deep reason, calmness, and condescension," and he very naturally said, "Child, your arguments prove too much, and therefore are not conclusive. If what you say be true, then all places of diversion, all dress and company, nay, all agreeable liveliness, and the whole spirit of the world, is sinful." His daughter made answer, and said, "Sir, *I* see it as such, and, therefore, am determined no more to be conformed to its customs, fashions, or maxims."—"This was a season of great trial; but the Lord stood by me: glory be to his holy name!" So she went on at home, trying to accomplish a happy medium; but she naïvely describes how, still retaining her usual habits of dress, though she did not go to public diversions, she began to "find favour" in the eyes of the company who frequented her father's houses, and "felt in great danger of being carried down the stream."

"At this time I became acquainted with a gentleman in some degree religious, though I fear not deeply so. He professed much affection for me, and my religious friends advised me to think of him, as it was likely to be very acceptable to my parents, and would open a door to more religious liberty. But I cannot say he was agreeable to me. Neither my understanding nor affection could approve the proposal; yet I was hurt by unprofitable reasonings. Sometimes I thought it might be of the Lord; at others I could not see into it at all." At length, however, some conversation with a pious friend roused up all her latent yearnings to missionary life. "The affair of the gentleman was obliterated from my mind; and the prospect of a life wholly devoted to God drank up every other consideration." This young thing of eighteen "now saw the path in which she ought to walk," and very rationally concluded "not to think about a married life, for my present light was to abide single. But the Lord seemed to call me to more activity, insomuch that I cried out, 'Lord what wilt thou have me to do?'" and her conclusion was that she would live like the women of Gospel times, and be "wholly given up to the church." But the time came when Mr. and Mrs. Bosanquet could bear it no longer, and when, their daughter becoming more and more devoted to her Methodist friends, they dreaded the contagion for their sons. Mary was twenty-one years of age; she had a small fortune of her own; and it appeared that some decorous plan for her residence away from home might conduce to the harmony and affection of all parties, rather than a pro-

longed sojourn where every hour brought its own irritation. It seems that she had come to the conclusion that she ought to wear what was technically termed a "plain dress," because "it is not only the talent of money, but of time, which is thrown away by conformity to the world, entangling us in a thousand little engagements, which a dress entirely plain cuts through at once." We cannot refrain from giving our readers the entire story of her departure from home. It is very touching; it is what must have happened over and over again in the times of the early church, and of the English Reformation, and at all times of religious revival; and according to their own belief they will sympathise with the worthy parents or the enthusiastic child.

"As soon as I saw my way clearly, I ventured to open my mind to my father concerning dress, as I had done before with regard to public places; entreating him to bear with me while I endeavoured to show him my reasons for refusing to be conformed to the customs, fashions, and maxims of the world. He heard me with great patience; and as I loved him tenderly, it came very near me to oppose him. My trials increased daily. I was perplexed to know how far to conform, and how far to resist. I feared, on the one hand, disobedience to my parents; and on the other, disobedience to God.

"One day my father said to me, 'There is a particular promise which I require of you, that is, that you will never, on any occasion, either now or hereafter, attempt to make your brothers what you call a Christian.' I answered (looking to the Lord), 'I think, sir, I dare not consent to that.' He replied, 'Then you force me to put you out of my house.' I answered, 'Yes, sir, according to your views of things, I acknowledge it; and if I may but have your approval no situation will be disagreeable.' He replied, 'There are many things in your present situation which must be, I should think, very uncomfortable.' This I acknowledged, and added, that, 'If he would but say he approved of my removal, I would take a lodging which I heard of at Mrs. Gold's, in Hoxton Square; but that no suffering could incline me to leave him, except by his free consent.' He replied, with some emotion, 'I do not know that you have ever disobliged me wilfully in your life, but only in these fancies; and my children shall always have a home in my house.' As I could not but discern a separation would take place (though I knew not how or when), I judged it most prudent to take the lodgings, that, in case I should be suddenly removed, I might have a home to go to; which I preferred to the going into any friend's house as a visitor. I also hired a sober girl, to be ready whenever I might want her. I informed my mother, a short time after, of the steps I had taken. She gave me two beds, one for myself, and a little one for my maid; and appeared to converse on it in a way of approval. Something, however, seemed to hold us, on both sides, from bringing it to the point.

"For the next two months I suffered much: my mind was exercised with many tender and painful feelings. One day my mother sent me word, 'I must go home to my lodgings that night.' I went down to dinner, but they said nothing on the subject; and I could not begin it. The next day, as I was sitting in my room, I received again the same message. During dinner however, nothing was spoken on the subject. When it was over I knew not what to do. I was much distressed. I thought, if they go out without saying anything to me, I cannot go; and if they should not invite me to come and see them again, how shall I bear it? My mind was pressed down with sorrow by this suspense. Just as they were going out, my mother said, 'If you will, the coach, when it has set us down, may carry you home to your lodging.' My father added, 'And we shall be glad to see you to dinner next Tuesday.' This was some relief. I remained silent. When the coach

returned, I ordered my trunk into it; and struggling with myself, took a kind leave of each of the servants, as they stood in a row in tears, in my way out of the house. About eight o'clock I reached my lodging.

"It consisted of two rooms, as yet unfurnished. I had neither candle, or any convenience. The people of the house I had never seen before, only I knew them by character to be sober persons. I borrowed a table and a candlestick, and the window-seat served me as a chair. When bolting my door, I began to muse on my present situation.

"The prejudices of education are strong, especially in those persons who have been brought up rather in high life. The being removed from a parent's habitation seemed very awful. I looked on myself as being liable to a deep reproach, and trembled at the thought. But I remembered that word, 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.'

"My maid being now come, and having lighted a fire in the other room, and borrowed a few things of the family, she begged me to come into it, as the night was very cold. And now my captivity seemed turning every moment. That thought, I am brought out from the world; I have nothing to do but 'to be holy, both in body and in spirit,' filled me with consolation. Thankfulness overflowed my heart; and such a spirit of peace and content poured into my soul, that all about me seemed a little heaven."

Mary Bosanquet, having now entered on her chosen life, shortly after fixed her residence at Leytonstone, in a house of her own, where she received a pious friend as inmate. Gradually a few Methodists gathered about them, and formed a Society, while in the care of destitute orphans her hours were fully occupied. From the time she was seventeen she observes that "some drawings towards the care of children had dwelt on my mind," but "for a good while our family consisted of a servant, six orphans, and ourselves." But as her friend Mrs. Ryan was an invalid, they presently engaged a governess for the children, who increased in number; some serious women were added to the household: altogether they received thirty-five children and thirty-four grown persons, though not at one time. The elder members of the family rose between four and five, and all breakfasted at seven on herb tea and milk porridge, and the first lesson which they endeavoured to impress on the young ones was, that "an idle person is the devil's cushion on which he rolls at pleasure." It was an industrial training school, as four or five of the bigger girls were each week kept out of the classes by turns, and employed in housework, cooking, etc., that they might be accustomed to every sort of business, and there was labour enough in so large a family. We wish we had space to give the details of this life, and to show the perpetual work which fell to the lot of Miss Bosanquet. It naturally followed, from the early neglect which the orphans had suffered, that they had bad health, and many of the grown people were also sickly, for to her warm heart poverty and ill health were a passport; but she quietly observes that "in the end all recovered who came in infirm." She says that Mrs. Ryan was to her as a mother, helping her, in spite of sickness, to carry out all her plans;—and an uncle, writing to her, "My dear child, with much pleasure I have heard of your charitable undertaking, which I pray God to bless and succeed," sent her an *annual* gift of two hun-

dred and fifty guineas. Her parents, dying in 1767, within a short period of each other, expressed towards her the greatest tenderness, and augmented her fortune, which proved they were fully satisfied with the result of that conviction which in its growth had given them so much pain.

But we must not linger over this part of her life, but proceed to her removal from Leytonstone, and settlement in Yorkshire, at a place called Crosshall, in the West Riding.

Mrs. Ryan died shortly after the removal; but before the final step was taken, and when, the house at Leytonstone being too small, with no land attached to it, the two friends were consulting together as to what course they should pursue, Mrs. Ryan thus addressed Miss Bosanquet:—

"'My dear, I hardly know how to rejoice in the prospect of death, because I see no way for you. I shall leave you in the hands of enemies, but God will stand by you.' I said, 'My dear love, can you think of any way for me? It is sometimes presented to my mind that I should be called to marry Mr. Fletcher.'* She replied, 'I like him the best of any man, if ever you do take that step. But unless he should be of a very tender disposition towards you, you would not be happy: but God will direct you.'"

From this time we occasionally, through the course of long years, meet with observations about "Mr. Fletcher;" and though a certain Mr. ——, in Yorkshire, formed for her a most romantic attachment, and, as she quaintly observes, "made me an offer of his hand, his heart, and his purse," she would not listen to his suit. We must give a curious anecdote about this affair; it seems that the gentleman, who had lost a wife whom he tenderly loved, had heard of Miss Bosanquet, and thought that perhaps she "was brought to Yorkshire by the Providence of God to repair his loss." But he was personally unacquainted with her, till

"One day, as I was returning from a little journey where I had been to meet some people, we called at an inn to bait the horse. Mr. —— was standing at a window of that inn. I came out, and stood some time at the block waiting for my horse. A thought struck his mind, 'I should like that woman for a wife;' —but instantly he corrected it with that reflection, I know not whether she be a converted or an unconverted person; a married or a single woman. Just then Mr. Taylor came up with the horse. The gentleman knew him, and, coming out to speak to him, was much struck to find it was me."

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* "The pious reader will not be displeased to see that such an impression was made on such a mind, preceding the union of that admirable couple. The impression was mutual. In a letter from Mr. Fletcher to Mr. Charles Wesley (see Mr. Fletcher's Works, vol. vii.) we find the following sentiments. 'You ask me a very singular question,—I shall answer it with a smile, as I suppose you asked it. You might have remarked that for some days before I set off for Madeley I considered matrimony with a different eye to what I had done: and the person who then presented herself to my imagination was Miss Bosanquet. Her image pursued me for some hours the last day, and that so warmly, that I should, perhaps, have lost my peace, if a suspicion of the truth of Juvenal's proverb, *Veniunt a dote sagittæ* ("The arrows come from the portion," rather than from the lady), had not made me blush, fight, and flee to Jesus, who delivered me at the same moment from her image, and the idea of marriage.' There will be some regret, perhaps, felt, that a long and suffering time should intervene before that union. But it was all ordered for the good of both,—for an eternal union,—'for the marriage of the Lamb!'"—*Note to Memoir.*

This is one of the many indications, scattered through the memoir, that Miss Bosanquet possessed remarkable power of personal fascination. She certainly was not a beautiful woman—her portrait marks the reverse—but something tender and genial must have beamed in her countenance, which won men, women, and children alike.

On she went, farming, teaching, preaching, praying, and, when she got into trouble, falling back on the memory of Mr. Fletcher, whom she had not seen for fifteen years, and who seems, in their mutual youth, to have been deterred by her superior wealth from offering marriage. How deeply this celebrated man had impressed her imagination may be seen by an extract from her diary in 1773:—

"*Nov. 6th, Monday.*—I have received some upbraiding letters, asking me if I yet believed I should see those words fulfilled, 'I will restore to you the ears the locusts have eaten'? In the midst of my trials it is sometimes presented to my mind, Perhaps the Lord will draw me out of all this by marriage. Opportunities of this kind occur frequently; but no sooner do I hear the offer, but a clear light seems to shine on my mind, as with this voice, 'You will neither be holier nor happier with this man.' But I find Mr. Fletcher sometimes brought before me, and the same conviction does not intervene. His eminent piety, and the remembrance of some little acts of friendship in our first acquaintance, look to me sometimes like a pointing of the finger of Providence. And yet I fear lest it should be a trick of Satan to hurt my mind. I know not even that we shall see each other on this side eternity. Lord, let me not be drawn into a snare! Well, this I resolve on, to strive against the thought, and never to do the least thing towards a renewal of our correspondence. No, I will fix my eye on 'the hundred forty and four thousand:' praying only to live and die to God alone."

But

"In the month of August, 1777, going into a friend's house, who was just come from the Conference, he said, 'Do you know that Mr. Fletcher, of Madeley, is dying? Indeed, I know not but he is dead. If he hold out a little longer, he is to go abroad; but it is a pity, for he will die by the way, being in the last stage of a consumption.' I heard the account with the utmost calmness. For some days I bore his burden before the Lord, and constantly offered him up to the will of God. A few days after, another of my acquaintance wrote word—'Mr. Fletcher is very bad; spits blood profusely, and perspires profusely every night. Some have great hope that prayer will raise him up; but for my part, I believe he is a dying man, as sure as he is now a living one.' As I was one day in prayer, offering him up to the Lord, these words passed my mind, 'The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.' I said, 'Lord, I dare not ask it; I leave it to thy sacred will: thy will be done!'

"The following thoughts occurred to my mind,—If the Lord should raise him up, and bring him in safety back to England, and he should propose such a step, could I doubt its being of God, after such an answer to prayer? Yet fearing a deception, I cried to the Lord to keep me in his narrow way, whatever I might suffer, and felt an unaccountable liberty to ask the following signs, if it really were of him. 1. That Mr. Fletcher might be raised up. 2. That he might be brought back to England. 3. That he would write to me on the subject, before he saw me, though we had been so many years asunder, without so much as a message passing on any subject. 4. That he would in that letter tell me,—It had been the object of his thoughts and prayers for some years. It came to my mind further, that, should this occur in the end of the year 1781, it would be a still greater confirmation, as Providence seemed to point me to that season as a time of hope."

The rest of the story, coincidences and all, must likewise be told in her own words :—

"The 7th of June, 1781, as I before observed, was the day that began my fourteenth year in Yorkshire. On that day I took a particular view of my whole situation, and saw difficulties as mountains rise all around me. Faith was hard put to it. The promise seemed to stand sure, and I thought the season was come; yet the waters were deeper than ever. I thought also, how shall I now hold fast that word so powerfully given to me, 'The Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver'?

"At length 'the cloud arose as a man's hand.' The very next day, June the 8th, I received a letter from Mr. Fletcher, in which he told me, That he had for twenty-five years found a regard for me, which was still as sincere as ever; and though it might appear odd he should write on such a subject when but just returned from abroad, and more so without seeing me first, he could only say that his mind was so strongly drawn to do it, he believed it to be the order of Providence.

"In reading this letter I was much struck. So many circumstances all uniting,—1. The season it came in. 2. His writing on the subject before we had met, after an absence of fifteen years; and without his having the most distant suspicion of my mind being inclined towards it. 3. His mentioning, That for twenty-five years he had had the thought. All these particulars answered to the marks which I had laid down. His unexpected recovery also, and safe return, so plainly pointed out the hand of Providence, that all ground of reasoning against it seemed removed. Yet, on the other hand, a strange fear possessed my mind, lest I should take any step out of the order of God: nor was Satan wanting to represent great trials before me, which he told me I should not have strength to stand in.

"We corresponded with openness and freedom till August the 1st, when he came to Cross Hall, and abode there a month, preaching in different places with much power; and having opened our hearts to each other, both on temporals and spirituals, we believed it to be the order of God we should become one, when he should make our way plain.

"He then returned to his parish, a hundred and twelve miles from the place where I lived; for we could not think of taking the step till my affairs were more clearly settled. So we took our leave of each other, committing all into his hand who 'does what he will with his own.'

"In about five weeks he returned; but still all seemed shut up; no way opened either for disposing of the farm, or of the family. Conversing one day with Mrs. Clapham, of Leeds, she said, 'What do you stick at? The Lord has done so much to convince you that this is to be your deliverance, how is it that you do not believe, and obey his order? I verily believe, if you would take the step in faith, your way would be made plain directly.'"

So, after a few more pros and cons, Miss Bosanquet married the good man whom she had loved, and who had loved her, from her youth upwards; and "on Monday the 12th of November, 1781, in Batley Church, we covenanted in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, to 'bear each other's burdens,' and to become one for ever."

For three years and a half we now read in her diary the most joyful utterances of married happiness. John William de la Flechere, whose foreign birth was almost obliterated from memory by his long and arduous services in the English ministry, was a native of Nyon, in Switzerland. His father was of good family, and had been an officer in the French army. His son also in early youth adopted the profession of arms; but coming to England on a

visit while yet quite a young man, he fell into society which deepened the impressions of religion upon his ever reverent and sensitive mind, and entered the ministry as a clergyman of the Church of England, and was presently made Vicar of Madeley. The Methodists had not at that time separated from the Church, and Mr. Fletcher lived and died in the communion, though an intimate friend and disciple of John Wesley's. He was in all ways a remarkable man; in person tall, dignified, and of great skill in manly exercises, owing to his youthful training. He was an accomplished classical scholar, and versed in polite literature; but in later life his whole being was given over to the service of Christianity. His political opinions were high Tory, and were so acceptable to George III., that that monarch desired to give him preferment. But Mr. Fletcher, who cared nothing for riches, and whose Toryism only sprang from his constitutionally loyal and somewhat romantic mind, made the characteristic answer that "he wanted nothing but more grace." The humble vicar of Madeley was a man whose endowments might have placed him on the eminence of a Fénélon, or a St. Vincent de Paul. But he chose to spend his life in comparative obscurity, among a sect who were then ridiculed as fanatics and despised as fools, and his name therefore is appreciated or disregarded in proportion as the great religious revival of the last century is held to be a glory or a reproach. But there are hundreds of thousands of the lower classes in England and America to whom the name of "Fletcher of Madeley" is a dear household word, and we know not what any man might more desire.

Such was the husband of whom Miss Bosanquet writes, "I have such a husband as is in everything suited to me. He bears with all my faults and failings, in a manner that continually reminds me of that word, 'Love your wives as Christ loved the Church.' *His constant endeavour is to make me happy; his strongest desire, my spiritual growth.*"

Three years they lived together at Madeley, occupied in onerous parish duties; and then a fever, caught in visiting his people, struck him down. The details of that last illness are all told in a long letter written by Mrs. Fletcher to Mr. Wesley,—the terrible week of anguish in which every hour brought more certain doom, and the prayer which struggled with his failing breath, "*Head of the Church, be head to my wife!*" It is impossible, in the space of this paper, to do more than to indicate the outlines of a story which for public and for private interest exceeds to our mind almost any biography we know; linked as it is by the closest connection to the great measures of social amelioration which have marked this century. In all essential respects Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher were democratic, and the spirit of their exertions was immeasurably wider than their creed, and that was not bigoted, though devoutly orthodox. They adopted fellowship with

the great bulk of the Protestant communions;—and perhaps no pages in Mrs. Fletcher's memoirs are more characteristic than those descriptive of her intercourse with the Roman Catholic priest in Madeley, and with her husband's nephew, who was a Deist. For those who differed from her in controversy she had sweet courtesy and clear statements of her own views; for those who were of one faith with herself she had sympathy and tenderness unbounded; for those who agreed with her neither in belief nor in practice she cherished hope and charity up to the farthest limits possible to one of her decided creed. After her husband's death she passed her long thirty years of widowhood in Madeley; and so great was the respect of the new vicar for Mrs. Fletcher, that, as he did not reside himself, he allowed her to recommend the curate, who was invariably appointed according to her recommendation. Infinitely characteristic were the last words she uttered, December 8th, 1815. Having failed, by reason of great age, for many days, she was closely tended by a female friend. The last night of her life she insisted on this lady going to bed, and then said, "That's right; now, if I can rest I will; *but let our hearts be united in prayer, and the Lord bless both thee and me.*" In the night she slept quietly away, and went to join him of whom, thirty-one years after his death, she had written, —"*It seems but yesterday, and he is near and dear as ever.*"

IV.—BRADSHAW THE BETRAYER.

By Amelia B. Edwards.

"Oh Doricles! your praises are too large."—Winter's Tale.

I am a conscientious traveller, and I believe in Mr. Murray. I visit all the churches, climb all the mountains, admire all the pictures, and put up at all the inns which he recommends to my notice. When he predicts that "the traveller will behold with a shudder the boiling torrent which plunges beneath his feet to a depth of &c. &c.," I peep over the precipice and shudder accordingly. When he kindly observes that "the traveller will here leave the carriage, and, by ascending the bank at the bend of the road, be delighted with a most extensive and beautiful prospect," I get out, and am delighted on the spot. In short, Mr. Murray tells me what is proper to be done, and I do it; which saves a great deal of trouble, and secures me against anything like misplaced enthusiasm.

There was also a time when I believed in Mr. Bradshaw, and pinned my faith upon the 'Continental Railway Guide:' but that

dream is over. Faithless Bradshaw! an impartial public shall decide our grievance.

It was between four and six years ago. I had been all about the Pyrenees, and a little way into Spain, and was now jogging homeward by easy stages through the north of France. Travelling alternately by rail and diligence, and occasionally settling down in some large town for the sake of exploring the neighbourhood, I came one day to the city of Abbeville, and took up my quarters at the hotel *Tête de Bœuf*.

"Mine inn" was spacious and gloomy; my bed-room spacious and gloomy; my bed a catafalque with dusty amber satin hangings. There were faded frescos on all the walls. There was a smell of damp earth in all the passages. Everything was dismal. Everything was decaying. The very waiter looked grey and mouldy, as if he had been laid aside somewhere and forgotten till the moment of my arrival.

I sat down amid my luggage, and sighed. The waiter sighed likewise.

"Anything to be seen in this town?" I asked despondingly.

The waiter stroked his chin, and eyed me contemplatively.

"The Cathedral, M'sieur."

"Nothing but the Cathedral?"

"The city, M'sieur."

"Oh," said I, "the Cathedral and the city. Anything else?"

He coughed, dusted a chair, and affected not to hear. I always know what that sort of deafness means. I am a traveller, and used to it. There was a long pause.

"When can I dine?" I inquired at last.

"Table-d'hôte at six, M'sieur," sighed the waiter.

I glanced at my watch, and found that it wanted ten minutes to four.

"*Eh bien!*" said I, resignedly. "I will stroll about till six."

Whereupon my melancholy friend bowed me down stairs, and into the courtyard.

A few steps brought me to the Cathedral. It was grey and shadowy, and vast, and quite bare of decorations. There was a triangular stand of votive tapers flickering and guttering in one corner, and a very old peasant woman on her knees before the altar. I sat down on a stone bench, and fell into a musing contemplation of the stained glass oriel, and the long perspective of the pillared aisles. Presently the verger came out of the vestry-room. He was a short, plump, inquisitive-looking man, with a loose black gown, and slender black legs, and a pointed nose. He laid his head on one side, looked at me with one glittering eye, and picked his way daintily across the church towards where I was sitting. Altogether he was very like a raven.

"*Bonjour*, Monsieur," said he, with fluent politeness, and just the

sort of croaking voice that suited his general appearance. "Monsieur is a stranger. Monsieur admires the Cathedral. *Bien!* Monsieur has discernment, and the Cathedral is superb. We have nothing finer in France, Monsieur. Our tracery is unique; our nave is admirable; our stained glass is of the first quality, and upwards of six centuries old. Before the high altar of this Cathedral, Monsieur, our good King Louis XII., surnamed the father of his people, married Madame *la Princesse* Mary of England."

"Yes, and died of gaiety and late hours in less than half-a-year," said I. "A pretty lesson to old gentlemen of seventy-three who marry young ladies of nineteen!"

"*Plait-il?*" croaked the verger, greatly puzzled; for this part of the story was not included in his lesson.

"And have you nothing to show?" I asked. "No remarkable tombs? no pictures? no statues?"

The verger fixed a knowing eye upon me, and looked more bird-like than ever.

"The treasury, Monsieur; the episcopal jewels; the relics, the inestimable relics! the great toe of Saint Celestine of Cressy, and the tongs with which St. Dunstan took the devil by the nose. Tickets at two francs each."

"Lead the way," said I, pulling out my two francs: "lead the way, and hand over the ticket. Let us see the inestimable relics!"

But instead of leading the way, he drew back, and hesitated.

"Unfortunately," said he, "the treasury cannot be shown to fewer than five persons. If Monsieur has friends in Abbeville, or if Monsieur has no objection to pay for the five tickets—"

"Pay for five tickets, indeed!" I echoed, indignantly. "Ten francs for St. Dunstan's tongs, and St. Somebody's toe! I would not buy them at the price!"

The verger shrugged his shoulders, and considered.

"There were two pious pilgrims here this morning," he said, "both devoutly desirous of admission. They will return to-morrow; and, if Monsieur will leave me his address, it is possible that we may be enabled, between this and then, to make up the party."

I scribbled the name of my hotel on the back of my card, left it in his keeping, and wandered out again into the streets.

I cannot say that I was delighted with Abbeville. Mr. Murray did not insist that I should be, and I had left Mr. Bradshaw locked up in my portmanteau. The squares were grass-grown, the canals were foul and weedy, the public buildings were dirty and dilapidated, and the houses all looked as if they had turned their backs to the streets. It may be gloriously picturesque, and I have no doubt that it was a charming town in the estimation of Samuel Prout, Esquire; but, for my own part, I am not enthusiastic about gutters and gables, and object to a population composed exclusively of old women.

I found myself at six o'clock in a desert of dining room with an oasis of table. I was the only guest. It was a dismal meal; the mouldy waiter attended upon me; and I had bad dreams in the catafalque all night long.

While I was breakfasting the next morning I received a message from my friend the verger. Another traveller had turned up; the pilgrims were still anxious for a sight of the relics; and the authorities consented for once to open the treasury-doors in favour of four.

Punctual as I was to the time appointed, the pilgrims were there before me—a pair of stalwart, broad-shouldered, barefooted Capuchins, odorous of garlic and cognac. One had a patch across his eye; the other was lame, and wore a bandage round his ankle. Both kept their hoods well over their faces, and neither was exactly the sort of mendicant that one would prefer to meet towards dusk upon a lonely road among the mountains.

The fourth traveller had not yet arrived, so I returned to the stone seat of yesterday, and the Capuchins paced up and down before the treasury door, conversing in whispers. Thus five—ten—fifteen minutes went by, and the chimes jangled at the quarter.

The pilgrims, who had been glancing up at the clock every half-dozen seconds or so all the time, now grew more and more impatient.

"*Ce diable de voyageur!* will he never come?" was the overloud and somewhat irreverent exclamation of the monk with the patch.

His companion shrugged his shoulders, glanced hurriedly in my direction, and muttered some inaudible reply.

I rose, and went towards them.

"I fear," said I, "that we shall all be disappointed this morning; for the treasury cannot be seen after midday, and it now wants but twenty minutes to the hour."

The pilgrims groaned and wagged their heads simultaneously.

"We are poor servants of the church," said the former speaker, crossing himself with great humility. "We are making a pilgrimage to all the *objets saints* of the department. It is a great delay to us, Monsieur,—a melancholy delay!"

"And a spiritual privation, Brother Ambroise," added the other, with a profound sigh.

"Ay, a spiritual privation, indeed," echoed Brother Ambroise. "Holy things are meat and drink to miserable sinners such as we."

I murmured a civil assent; but could not help thinking in my own mind that such bulky saints could scarcely be indifferent to meats and drinks of a merely temporal nature.

"Have you been long on this pilgrimage?" I asked, not knowing what next to say.

"Twenty days, Monsieur," replied Brother Ambroise. "Twenty days, during which we have journeyed upon foot, and entirely depended upon the alms of the charitably disposed."

This was a broad hint; but I determined not to observe it.

"Twenty days is a long time," said I. "You must have visited a great many towns, and seen a great many churches, in the course of your journey."

"Oh, a great many—thanks to the holy saints! a great many," replied the Capuchins, wagging their heads together, as before.

"You have been to Amiens, of course?"

They looked at each other, and hesitated.

"Ye—yes, we have been to Amiens," said brother Ambroise, with another glance at the clock. "And we are on our way to—to—"

"Boulogne," interposed his companion, promptly.

"Exactly so, Brother Paul. To Boulogne—Ah! *les voici!*"

His quick ear had caught the echo of approaching footsteps, and there, sure enough, came the verger, picking his steps up the centre aisle, followed by a slim young gentleman, with fair hair, blue glasses, a note-book, and an umbrella.

The former carried a huge bunch of keys, and proceeded pompously to unlock the treasury door: the latter, who had been the cause of the delay, began murmuring a torrent of explanations and apologies, to which nobody listened. The chimes jangled another quarter—the last bolt was drawn—and in another moment we found ourselves standing in the midst of a large, ill-lighted apartment, surrounded by presses and glass cases, and decorated with a huge black crucifix at the farther end.

"Messieurs—reverend pilgrims," croaked the raven, unlocking press number one, and beginning with a bow to his audience; "you here see the breviary used by his Majesty King Charles X. when he visited our Cathedral in the year 1827, and the cushion pressed by his Majesty's royal knees. Also an embroidered glove worn by his Majesty during the service, and found near his Majesty's chair, after his Majesty and his Majesty's royal suite had left the church."

"Up—p—pon my word, that's very curious!" ejaculated the slim tourist, who had an impediment in his speech, and was already at work upon the note-book. "I must p—p—put that down. What year did you say—1527?"

But the raven jingled his keys with dignified indifference, and stalked on to press number two: whereupon 1527 went down as the date of an interesting historical anecdote of the middle ages.

"You now behold," continued he, with a wave of the hand, "the reliquary of St. Celestine de Cressy. This valuable shrine was presented to us in the year 1630, by Monseigneur le Cardinal Richelieu. It is of silver gilt, enriched with precious stones; and measures one

foot and a half in length, by eight inches in height. I open the lid, and the object which you perceive enclosed in a small glass box is the most sacred toe of the saint and martyr before-mentioned."

"And what do you suppose it's worth?" asked Brother Ambroise, bending eagerly forward.

"Worth!" croaked the verger, indignantly. "Worth, indeed! Why, 'tis inestimable! Saint Celestine had but one leg at the period of her martyrdom; and that great toe, permit me to tell you, is nothing less than unique!"

"G—g—good gracious!" exclaimed the tourist, scribbling away as fast as his pencil would carry him. "A saint with one leg, and a lady, too! Wouldn't m—m—m—miss that for the world!"

Press number three was now thrown open, and discovered some four or five shelves, adorned with rich cups, vases, censers, and sacramental vessels. The pilgrims exchanged glances of admiration, the tourist began a fresh page, and the raven flourished his keys more consequentially than ever.

"A cup of rock crystal, with gold cover, supposed to be engraved by Benvenuto Cellini; a statue of St. Barnabas, in solid silver, five inches and a half in height; a very ancient crozier-head, silver gilt; a patera, of antique Byzantine workmanship, enamelled, and of great value. We were offered seven thousand francs for this bea-*u*-tiful work of art, not many years since, but declined to part with it."

The one eye of Brother Ambroise glittered with pious fervour.

"Oh, Brother Paul," said he emphatically, "is not this a consoling sight? Ought we not to rejoice in the riches of our beloved Church?"

Whereupon Brother Paul cast an enthusiastic glance at the ceiling, struck himself on the breast with both his fists, and said,—

"Ay, indeed, Brother Ambroise; but should we not at the same time be thankful that these things possess no attraction for us? Is it not the glory of our order, that we love poverty better than riches, fasting better than feasting, and wooden platters better than all the gold and silver vessels in the world?"

"Verily we do!" responded Brother Ambroise with a groan of humble satisfaction. "Verily we do!"

Here the verger, who had been listening with his head on one side, drew a deep sigh of admiration, and with especial ceremony unlocked press number four.

"You are now about to see the greatest treasure that we possess," said he; "the crowning glory of our collection, Messieurs—the pride of Abbeville—the envy and delight of surrounding districts!"

The Capuchins uttered a simultaneous "Ah!" and pressed to the front—the raven flung open the doors, pointed to a shapeless frag-

ment of rusty iron reposing on a crimson velvet cushion, fell into an attitude, and in a tone of modest triumph announced—

"The tongs with which St. Dunstan took the devil by the nose!"

The pilgrims drew back in silence. It might be my profane fancy; but they certainly looked disappointed. Not so the energetic tourist. He protested that the thing was "m—m—marvellous!" and entreated five minutes' delay to make a sketch of the interesting object.

The verger consented, a chair was brought, and the artist began.

"If I had but a piece of India-rubber and a d—d—double B!" sighed he.

"I think," observed Brother Paul with great alacrity, "that the gentleman should have more light! would it not be possible, my son, to draw that blind higher?"

The verger, thus paternally addressed, deposited his keys on the table, muttered something about "notions," mounted a little set of library steps, and complied. At that instant Brother Paul was seized with a violent fit of coughing, and Brother Ambroise, passing beside the table, took the keys up carelessly in his hand.

The blind was obstinate, and, instead of going up, came down with a run. When it was at last arranged, the Cathedral bell was ringing for service, and long before the tourist had shaded his sketch to his own satisfaction, the verger declared that we could stay no longer.

"Let us return thanks to our patron saint, Brother Ambroise!" ejaculated the lame pilgrim: "for our replenishment of spirit has been great."

Whereupon Brother Ambroise devoutly kissed and returned the keys, and gave the verger his blessing.

It was a cheap donation, and neither my stammering countryman nor I got off so easily. The people were assembling for mass as we went out. The Capuchins went one way—the stranger and I another. He was all admiration of what he had seen, what he had not seen, and what he was going to see.

"B—b—beautiful country," said he. "B—b—beautiful churches—interesting nation! I'm going to P—P—Paris to-morrow."

"Ah," said I with a yawn—"you'll be delighted with Paris."

"I know I shall," replied he. "I'm going to write a b—b—book about it. Good morning!"

"Good morning," said I, and returned to mine inn to breakfast.

Sitting over that desolate meal, I asked myself what was next to be done? Abbeville was "used up." I had seen the Cathedral, and I had seen the town, and even Mr. Murray confessed that the tourist could do no more. I had also an objection to pass another night in the catafalque. To go I had determined; but the question was—where? In this emergency I recollected that I had not yet

consulted Mr. Bradshaw, so I sought out the 'Continental Railway Guide' from the substrata of my portmanteau, turned to page 185, and read as follows :—

"ABBEVILLE.—A fortified town, containing about 18,000 inhabitants, situated on the river Somme, twelve miles from the beautiful and picturesque town of St. Valery-sur-Somme."

"The beautiful and picturesque town of St. Valery-sur-Somme!" I repeated aloud. "Why, 'tis the very thing! Blessed be the name of Bradshaw—I'll go this afternoon! Waiter—kellner—garçon! What conveyances are there to St. Valery-sur-Somme?"

"To St. Valery?" repeated the waiter, regarding me with an air of melancholy surprise. "Monsieur is going to St. Valery?"

I nodded impatiently.

"Monsieur has friends at St. Valery?"

"Friends! not I."

"Business, perhaps?"

"No—nor business either. I'm going for pleasure—to see the place. What does that concern you, pray?"

The waiter shrugged his shoulders apologetically.

"*Je vous demande pardon, M'sieur.* I—I but inquired. There is nothing to see at St. Valery, M'sieur. Nothing whatever. But M'sieur is the best judge."

I cast an affectionate eye at the 'Continental Railway Guide,' page 185.

"Nothing to see, indeed!" said I with quiet triumph. "There are the beauties of nature—there is a picturesque old town—there is exquisite sketching. Bah! I should not wonder if I stayed there till the end of the month!"

The waiter looked down incredulously, and the dismallest ghost of a smile flitted across his countenance. It was evident that *he* had no soul for the picturesque!

"As Monsieur pleases," said he submissively. "Monsieur was inquiring"——

"About the conveyances! well?"

"Well, Monsieur, there is a passage-boat daily, by the river. That goes at midday. There is also a *cabriolet de poste*. That goes at ten o'clock every morning."

"And there is nothing going this afternoon?"

"Nothing; unless Monsieur chooses a *voiture particulière*. We have an excellent travelling carriage at Monsieur's disposal."

However I had no fancy for a trip *en grand seigneur*, so I decided to wait till to-morrow, and went out to inquire into the comparative merits of the passage-boat and the cabriolet.

There was something very refreshing in the idea of a water journey.

I recalled all my joyous boatings up the Medway and the Thames;

my adventures on the Rhine and the Moselle; my feats and failures on the Cam in college days long since gone by; and thus pleasantly running over my "rambles by rivers," made my way towards that part of the Somme called the *Rive des Bateaux*.

It was a dismal spot just within the fortifications. To the left lay the city; to the right high embankments, a drawbridge, a stretch of flat country, and a long perspective of canal-like river bordered by files of monotonous poplars. The first object that met my eyes was the passage-boat moored up beside a tiny wooden landing-place. It was a heavy, square-built, green and yellow boat, with a dirty little pavilion at the poop. The interior of this pavilion was furnished with benches, and lit by a row of little windows all the way round. On a shelf of deck near the prow sat some three or four grimy men, cooking their dinner over a brazier; and between this shelf and the pavilion the boat was laden with wood, hay, charcoal, and market produce. Altogether it was by no means an inviting conveyance, and looked more like a coal barge with a shabby omnibus on deck than anything else that I can think of.

While I was yet observing these things, a fat official, with a gold band to his cap, rolled lazily out of a little red bureau attached to the quay, and hung out a tariff of the tolls and rates of conveyance.

"Pray when does this boat leave," I asked; "and how long does it take to go from here to St. Valery?"

The fat official brought a huge cigar out of his pocket, stabbed it deliberately with a pin in two places, and stuck it in his mouth before replying.

"Starts at midday *précis*," said he. "Arrives between six and seven."

"Six hours to travel twelve miles!" I exclaimed. "Surely there must be some mistake!"

"Fourteen miles by the river," replied he, phlegmatically. "Nine stations."

"And the fare?"

"Pavilion, seven francs: deck four."

I hesitated, looked again at the boat, and thought it uglier and more uncomfortable than ever.

"And is the scenery interesting?" I inquired, presently.

"*Plaît-il?*" said the fat official, looking somewhat puzzled.

"The—the river, you know! Is it pretty? Is there anything to see?"

He sucked silently at his cigar, turned a fishy eye upon me, stared languidly up the stream and down the stream, and finally pointed with his thumb towards the perspective of poplars.

"*C'est bien*," said he, with placid satisfaction; "*c'est très bien, cette rivière-ci.* It is just like this all the way."

"Just like this all the way!" I repeated, drawing a deep breath. "*In*-deed! Then I wish you a very good day."

The official touched his cap with one finger, and closed his eyes, which was the nearest approach to a bow that he could take the trouble to make. Whereupon we parted—that is to say, he remained where he was, and I strode indignantly away.

"I will go by the *cabriolet de poste*," I muttered to myself, as I went along. "I shall go early, and I shall go quickly, and I dare say the road is delightful!"

The *Bureau des Messageries* was just opposite my hotel, and the office was occupied by a very pretty young girl, a cat, and a canary. I took off my hat, and was greeted with a smile and a curtsy.

"Will Mademoiselle be so kind as to inform me of the earliest departure for St. Valery?" I asked, with my best French air and accent.

"The *cabriolet* leaves at ten to-morrow morning, and the fare is eleven francs," replied the young lady with great politeness.

I laid the money on the table, and she entered my name in the ledger, and handed me a small green ticket.

"Mademoiselle is acquainted with St. Valery?" I ventured timidly to inquire.

Mademoiselle looked down, coquetted with the corner of her apron, and admitted that she had frequently visited the place in question.

"And Mademoiselle was pleased with the town—found it picturesque and agreeable?"

She shrugged her shoulders, and arched her eyebows as only a Frenchwoman can.

"*Ma foi! non*, Monsieur," said she. "It is *triste* — miserably *triste!*"

"By *triste*," said I, "you would imply retired; but a place may be retired and very lovely at the same time. I have heard that St. Valery is charming."

"*Vraiment?*"

"Ah, Mademoiselle is of a different opinion!"

She smiled and shook her head with the air of a person who is too polite to offer a contradiction.

"*Pardon*," said she. "I do not doubt that Monsieur's information is correct. Tastes are so different!"

"And appearances so deceptive," added I to myself, as I walked out of the bureau. "That girl is pretty and vivacious; but she has no mind. After all, however, one need never hope to find localities appreciated by those who live upon the spot. The Romans quarried the Coliseum for building materials; and the boatmen who rowed me from Geneva to Versoix could not tell me the name of Mont Blanc!"

And so the rest of that day went drearily by, and I hated Abbe-

ville, and despised the natives, and loathed the hotel *Tête de Bœuf*, and wearied of the waiter, and almost lost my faith in human nature.

—Bradshaw excepted! Bradshaw to whom I trusted for to-morrow morning's deliverance—Bradshaw whom I never doubted for an instant—Bradshaw the inestimable—Bradshaw the veracious—Bradshaw the . . . . . Well, I won't mind that just at present!

The resignation with which I dined in the desert, and retired once more to rest beneath the funereal amber satin draperies of the catafalque; the cheerful alacrity with which I rose the next morning; and the benevolent frame of mind in which I discharged my bill, and feed the melancholy waiter, can never be described. At a quarter to ten o'clock I despatched my luggage to the bureau, and at ten precisely I followed it.

It was market-day, and the space in front of the hotel was lined with stalls, and thronged with noisy peasants. Stacks of fruit and vegetables obstructed the pavement; rude barrows and *charrettes* blocked up the roadway; the population of old women seemed to have been multiplied by twenty; and high above all the noise and bustle jangled the perpetual chimes. I crossed the street with difficulty, and in the midst of this confusion looked round in search of the *cabriolet de poste*. Save the barrows, the *charrettes*, and one yellow dilapidated, weather-beaten, perilous-looking cart, with a penthouse roof and a patched leather apron, standing at the corner of the street, there was no kind of conveyance in sight. I wandered into the stableyard of the bureau, but found it empty. I peeped into the office, but saw only the canary. I grew nervous. I began to fear that I had mistaken the hour, and that the *courier* had started without me. In this emergency I addressed myself to a sunburnt stripling who was lolling on a bench outside the door with a pipe in his mouth, and a short thong-whip across his knees. He looked about sixteen, was very shabby and ragged, wore *sabots* and no stockings, and had little gold rings in his ears.

"Can you tell me," said I, "if the *cabriolet* has started?"

"Will start as soon as ever the letters come up from the station," said he, pointing with his pipe to the cart at the corner. "There it stands."

"That rickety old *charrette!*" I exclaimed. "That the government mail! Impossible!"

The boy grinned and shrugged his shoulders.

"I'll complain to the authorities," I continued, indignantly. "Eleven francs to ride twelve miles in such a wretched concern as that! Why, it's an imposition; and—and—where can I find the *courier?*"

The boy knocked the ashes out of his pipe.

"I am the *courier*," said he, very coolly; "and if you're the pas-

senger for St. Valery, you'd better take your seat; for here come the letters."

As he spoke the railway omnibus rumbled round the corner. I had no resource but to obey or stay behind; so I scrambled up as best I could, and found myself condemned to a cushionless bench about six inches in width, and the society of a very little boy with the hooping cough. In another moment the letter-bag was tossed in —the *gamin courier* seized the reins, uttered a wild whoop, and sprang upon the shafts—the omnibus-driver favoured us with a cut of his whip—the idlers gave a delighted shout—the old market-women scrambled out of the way—and off we rattled at full speed over the stones.

Whoop! Sacr-r-r-r-re! The *gamin* flourishes his whip—the harness-bells jingle—the hotel *Tête de Bœuf* is left far behind—and the grey old mountainous Cathedral is out of sight in no time.

Whoop! Sacr-r-r-r-re! Through the market-place—up one street, down another, and over a dangerous old wooden bridge that groans and creaks beneath our wheels! Now we pass the boundary of the fortifications, and enter upon a dreary, straggling suburb that seems to get longer the farther we go; and now, as we draw near the barrier where he must pause for the "*visite*," our charioteer subsides into a state of comparative tranquillity, and our speed slackens. The presentation of a paper, the peering in of a mus-tachioed gendarme, and the perilous introduction of a bayonet close beside my legs, constitutes the "*visite;*" after which we go on at a much slower pace than before.

We are now in the open country, and jogging along a straight sandy road, bordered by poplars and pollards—the very twin brother to the uninviting canal of yesterday. The country round is wide and waste, and the little farmhouses are scattered thinly here and there. Sometimes we pass a waggon with the driver dozing in his place—sometimes a country girl in a cloak and hood, or a weather-beaten old *cantonnier* at work upon the road. The heat becomes almost intolerable, and before we have travelled a couple of miles we are powdered over with a fine white dust that is especially tormenting. Then the little boy drops off into an uneasy sleep, and has to be propped up with my portmanteau; and the *gamin*, who is taking it very easily just now, and allowing the horse to go at his own pace, dangles his legs lazily to and fro, lights his pipe, pulls out a wellworn and very greasy-looking letter, and begins to read. He continues in this state of quiescence for a mile or more, till the drowsy influences of the scene begin to tell upon myself. Then, just as I also am beginning to nod, he starts into a state of frantic animation, yells, cracks his whip, urges his horse to a shambling gallop, plunges round the corner of the road and through the main street of a village that has hitherto lain unseen behind the hill, and so pulls up before the door of the single *auberge* with the air of

one who has driven hard all the way, and exhausted himself in the service of an ungrateful government.

Thus, at an intermittent pace which is alternately furious or funereal according as we approach a village or traverse a lonely country road, we journey on our way. By and bye the landscape grows more and more desolate; the heat more and more oppressive. Dreary sandhills and undulating sweeps of furzy common succeed to the fields and farms about Abbeville. Habitations become fewer and farther between. Vegetation almost ceases. The horse's feet sink deep at every step, and the drifting sand-dust swirls up in our faces with every hot gust of the north-east wind.

We have been four hours and a half upon the road already; it is close upon three o'clock; and a long hill glares before us in the sun.

"From the top yonder," says the *gamin* composedly, "we shall come in sight of the sea."

"The sea! Is St. Valery near the sea?"

"*Mais certainement.* Did not Monsieur know that?"

I did not know it, and I am not pleased to know it. I am not fond of the sea-side. I hate bathing. I am not clever at coast scenery, and I never could draw a boat in my life. Altogether I begin to have misgivings on the subject of what I have come to see; and when we do reach the top of the hill and I catch a glimpse of that glittering line that bounds the horizon like a silver scimitar, I turn away mine eyes in disgust, and feign a sulky sleep.

The feigned sleep merges insensibly into a real one, from which I am by and bye awakened by more yelling and whooping on the part of the driver, by the headlong jolting of the *cabriolet*, and by the transition from a soft dusty road to the rough pavement of a town.

It is a street bordered by houses on one side and a quay on the other. The houses are of the poorest, and the population of the shabbiest description. The town consists of a single irregular street about a mile in length, and the prevailing trade appears to be in cockles and cordage. At the farther extremity, on a little sandy eminence, stands a small grey-steepled church surmounted by a forlorn wooden telegraph that has long fallen into disuse, and still points upwards with one lank arm, like a skeleton of ill omen. The river at this point almost ceases to be a river, and widens out between low sandy banks to its junction with the sea. The opposite shore is so far distant that only the ghostly outline of a lighthouse and some trees is visible; and between that shore and St. Valery stretches such a dreary waste of mud, and slime, and sand as I have never seen in my life before or since. Imagine the mouth of the Nore with the tide out and all the water gone, save a narrow current which ripples along a groove in the midst of the river-bed, and you will at least have formed some vague notion of the aspect of St. Valery at low water.

Moored beside the quays, or hauled up high and dry on the banks farther down, lie merchant-vessels, barks, and fishing-boats, of various builds and sizes. Some are undergoing repairs; some are being laden, some unladen; and round about them all, in every stage of idleness or activity, swarm scores of rough, weatherbeaten seamen, with big boots, and Guernsey shirts, and little gold rings in their brown ears.

Seeing, but scarcely noting these things at the moment, I am jolted along, between the ships and the houses, and set down, half awake, before the door of an inn. It is but a mean *auberge*, though the best in the place, and it bears the sign of the *Lion d' Or*. I turn to the waiter, who lolls carelessly against the door, and signify my intention of remaining for the night. But he, instead of responding with that cheerful alacrity which one is accustomed to expect, only shakes his head, and surveys me and my luggage with superb indifference.

"Our rooms," says he, loftily, "are all engaged. Monsieur will probably find accommodation at the *Couronne*."

This is discouraging; but I compromise the matter by arranging to dine at the *Lion d' Or* at six o'clock, even though I have to seek a bed elsewhere. Hereupon the waiter unbends, the *gamin* gets his *pourboire*, the cabriolet clatters away at full speed; and, after a brief rest and a hasty lunch, I stroll out to see the town, and beat up my quarters at the *Couronne*.

Alas! the *Couronne* was an *auberge* infinitely smaller, meaner, and dirtier than the *Lion d' Or*, and lay down close beside the strand, at some distance from the quays. There was a gaunt flagstaff planted in the dreary little garden at the back, and a pile of shells, broken bottles, and vegetable refuse, before the door. The public room was full of seafaring men—the landlord himself looked like a retired smuggler—the atmosphere of the house was suggestive of tar, tobacco, and cognac—and there was a tiny model of a frigate over the fireplace of the tap-room. Altogether *La Couronne* was about the last inn in France which I should voluntarily have chosen for a night's lodging; but there was no help for it.

Here then I found myself forced to apply for accommodation. The landlord was too busy with his customers to attend to me, and the landlady referred me to a deaf old *fille de chambre*, as withered and weird as one of Macbeth's witches.

"A bed?" said she, peering and blinking in my face, and holding one hand hollowed over her ear. "Ay, to be sure! Two, if you please—two, if you please!"

"*Merci*, one will be enough. Can I see the room?"

She nodded, stumped up stairs slowly before me, in her heavy *sabots*, and led the way into a large, cold, comfortless chamber, which contained two beds, and looked as if it had not been occupied for months.

"Have you no other room than this?" I asked, shivering.

"Yes, it is rather chilly," mumbled the *fille de chambre*, "but Monsieur can have a fire in the stove."

"Very well," said I, resignedly; "I shall be in about nine or ten o'clock.

"Three francs a night, and fifty centimes for attendance. Does Monsieur prefer the bed next the door, or the bed next the fire?"

"Either: if I have but the room to myself. Remember, if you please, that I pay for both these beds."

"Good: the bed next the door. Monsieur may rely upon it that everything shall be as comfortable as possible." And the old woman blinked cunningly to herself, in the full persuasion that she had not betrayed her deafness by a single blunder.

More disconsolate than ever, I parted from her with a nod and a trifling gratuity, and made my way out as quickly as I could, turning my face inland, and leaving the town at my back. But landwards or seawards, it was all dreary alike! A boat-building yard; a weir; the mouth of another poplar-bound canal; a few heavy, round-shouldered trading smacks lying up sideways on the slimy shore; a knot of barefooted women washing linen; a rope-walk; another miserable *cabaret;* and a cluster of fishermen's hovels .... these were all the sights and incidents that I beheld by the way. I went up to the weir, and sat down upon a line of stone parapet. I looked to the right—land, sand, poplars, a canal, and universal flatness! I looked to the left—strand, sand, mud, houses, boats, and universal flatness! I thought of Abbeville with tender regret; I sighed for the hotel *Tête de Bœuf;* I could have embraced the mouldy waiter! Then—then I turned to Bradshaw, Bradshaw the Betrayer, and upbraided him bitterly.

"Is this," I exclaimed, opening the 'Continental Railway Guide,' page 185, "is this the 'beautiful and picturesque town of St. Valery-sur-Somme,' which you, and you alone, O faithless one! have induced me to visit?

> Oh, Bradshaw! I believed thee true,
> And I was blest in so believing;
> But till this hour . . . ."

I broke off abruptly. My feelings would not allow me to continue; and as it was by this time approaching six o'clock, I rose and went back moodily to dinner.

I have no wish to preserve either a record or a recollection of that dismal meal; but surely that bill of sixteen francs must lie heavily upon the conscience of mine host of the *Lion d'Or!*

A bottle of indifferent Bordeaux; a copy of the '*Moniteur*' four days old; a couple of cigars; and a pleasant game at billiards in the public room, with an intelligent young Breton who told me that he was a commercial traveller, helped to pass away the remainder of

the evening, and, for a while, to divert my attention from the subject of my night's lodging. As the hours progressed, however, I could not help thinking of it, and the later it grew the more reluctant I became. The truth was that I had taken an almost childish aversion, not only to my room at the *Couronne*, but to the situation of the inn itself, to its landlord, its frequenters, and its ancient *fille de chambre*. In vain did I reason with myself; the feeling was strong upon me, and at eleven o'clock, when my new acquaintance bade me good night, and the rest of the guests dispersed, I had more than half a mind to pass the night upon a sofa at the *Lion d'Or*, and have nothing whatever to say to the room which I had already engaged. But I was ashamed to confess my weakness, and so the condescending waiter bowed me out.

The moon had risen now, and the tide was coming in fast. Already the narrow midway current had expanded into a broad, shining stream; and some of the farthest boats, which in the afternoon had lain sprawling on the mud like stranded whales, were riding buoyantly at anchor. The night was lovely, and I would fain have lingered out for some time longer, but that I feared to find the doors of mine inn closed against me. It was a needless precaution. The night-trade of *La Couronne* seemed to be in even a more flourishing state than that of the day; and what with the singing, and laughter, and smoking that was going on in the tap-room, I could find no one to attend to me, so quietly possessed myself of a candle and stole up to my room.

The fire had been lighted, and was almost out, and the chamber looked almost as comfortless as ever. My first proceeding was to lock myself in; but the key was rusty and would not turn, and there was no bolt anywhere: my next was to draw the blinds, pile more wood upon the embers, and make myself as comfortable as circumstances would allow. It was a long time before I could overcome my uneasiness sufficiently to go to bed, and even then I only took my boots and cravat off, and lay down in my clothes.

A lonely waterside inn—a gang of riotous revellers—a door that could not be secured! Do what I would, I could not keep from thinking of this; or, if I did succeed for a few moments, it was only to dwell upon something still worse. I recalled all the dreadful tales I had ever read, or heard, of double-bedded rooms, and midnight murders, and unknown bodies drifted out to sea. I recollected one story of a bed that sank through the floor, and another of a bed that smothered its occupant by means of a descending tester. I wondered if anybody had ever died in this one, or if, by the flickering fire-light, I should presently see a pale face staring at me from between the curtains of the other. In short, I was thoroughly nervous, and had suffered my imagination to run upon ghosts, "deadly murder, spoil, and villany," till at last I was fain

to draw the counterpane up over my head, and count scores of imaginary sheep till I fell asleep.

I dreamt; but, except that it was painful and confused, I have no recollection of my dream. Neither do I know how long I slept. It may have been but a few minutes, and it may have been an hour; but when I woke, it was with an instantaneous summoning of all my self-possession, and with the consciousness of a human presence in the room. To lie quite motionless, and to leave the counterpane still shrouding up my head and face was the result of my first impulse—to listen breathlessly my second.

A heavy footstep crossing the floor—a candle set down roughly on the table—the drawing up of a chair beside the fire—and a prolonged yawn, convinced me that the intruder was alone. Presently he threw a fresh log on the fire, and soon after that an odour of coarse tobacco filled the room. At this point, having overcome my first terrors, I felt a strong inclination to make known my presence; but, somehow, I hesitated, and half in curiosity, half in apprehension, lay still, and listened.

Thus a quarter of an hour or more went by, and some revellers from the inn parlour went out, singing, and shouted a noisy farewell to those who remained behind. Then a clock struck on the landing, and my unknown visitor, after shuffling restlessly in his place, got up, and paced to and fro between the window and the door. By and bye he opened the casement, and leaned out; whereupon I ventured to lift a corner of the quilt; for what with the mildness of the night, the heat of the fire, and the oppressive closeness of my concealment, I was almost smothered. A breath of cool air, however, and one glimpse of a bulky, broad-shouldered man in a loose pea-coat and woollen cap, was all that I could obtain. Scarcely had he looked out when he exchanged a hurried greeting with some one down below.

"Come up," I heard him say. "Come up. All's safe here!"

With this he closed the window—I cowered down beneath the counterpane—a second heavy footfall came creaking up the stairs, and another man entered the room.

"All right?" asked the first comer, eagerly; and, strange to say, I seemed to have heard his voice before.

"All right," replied the other, depositing some heavy burthen on the floor, and drawing a deep breath of relief. "But I've had to walk more than a mile, *et ça pèse comme le diable!*"

"And you met no one?"

"*Parbleu!* I came face to face with a *sergent de ville* just against the landing-place yonder; but I touched my cap, and he said 'Good-night,' and I went my way, and he went his, and there's nothing to fear if we can only drop out to sea before daybreak!"

"Yes—but it wants an hour still to high tide, and they've moored

her so close in shore that only the high tide will float her! Cursed fools that they were!"

"And we must wait here another hour?"

"*Tonnerre de Dieu!* there's no help for it!"

The new comer struck the table heavily with his fist, and muttered a string of oaths, half of which were wholly unintelligible to me; and, somehow, his voice, as well as his companion's, struck upon my ear with a familiarity that urged my curiosity to the keenest pitch. If I might only trust to the gloom of this part of the room, and venture on another peep! just as I was about to dare it, the second stranger spoke again.

"Have you nothing to drink?" said he moodily.

"Drink!" echoed the other; "I should think so, indeed! why, mate, here's a flask of the real old Schiedam, if that will content you!"

A growl of satisfaction, a deep-drawn breath, and a hearty smack of the lips, was the reply that followed. I could resist no longer. I drew the quilt down gently to the level of my eyes, held my breath, and looked out.

They were both seafaring men, and the second wore much the same kind of dress as the first—a costume which is conventionally adopted by stage-smugglers, but which in actual life is chiefly confined to the seamen of French and Dutch trading smacks, and to our own north-coast fishers. The first comer sat with his back to me; but the other, who was now returning the flask across the table, had his face turned straight towards me. It was a tawny, sullen countenance, and one that I felt certain I had seen before. When had we met, though? and where? These were difficult questions, and the longer I looked the more I became puzzled to answer them. It was like a face seen in a dream, and only half remembered—strange, and yet familiar—like and unlike at the same time!

I was not long left in doubt, however; for his companion took the flask, held it to the light to see how much of the liquor was gone, nodded solemnly, said "Here's to your spiritual glorification, Brother Ambroise!" and drank a deep draught out of the bottle!

This sally evoked a hoarse laugh from both, under cover of which I ventured to shift my position, so as to conceal myself still more effectually. These, then, were my friends the pious pilgrims of the day before yesterday! I recognised them well enough now—Brother Paul was the first, and Brother Ambroise, who had miraculously recovered the sight of his left eye, was the second. I am bound to confess that this discovery affected me with a very unpleasant sensation all down my back, and caused a rushing noise in my ears that obliterated for some seconds every other sound.

When I next looked up, Paul was bending eagerly forward, and Ambroise was lifting a carpet-bag from the floor to the table.

"If the *sergent de ville* had asked to see what was in this," said

he, unbuckling the straps at the mouth of the bag, "I should not have wished him good night quite so civilly!"

"What would you have done?" inquired Paul with a grim chuckle.

"Brained him," was the brief but significant reply.

I turned cold all over.

The last buckle was now undone, and Ambroise plunged in his arm, and brought out a silver cup.

"That's worth having," said Paul, weighing it in his hand with the air of a connoisseur; "and the Schiedam would taste well out of it—eh, mate?"

"Better out of this," growled the other, producing a superb gold tazza with a jewelled lid. "Diable how that red stone sparkles at the top!"

He held it at arm's length, admiringly, till his companion lost patience, and snatched it from his hand.

"Go on, can't you!" said he sharply. "What comes next? Where's the gold box? That's the best of the lot, and I put it in myself while you were after the candlesticks. Hah! there it is—there it is! Set it on the table."

My head swam—I could not believe my eyes! Was it——yes, it was indeed the precious shrine of St. Celestine de Cressy, presented in 1630 by Cardinal Richelieu!

I understood it all now—remembered all, even to the manner in which the verger's keys had been handled by Brother Ambroise. They had robbed the Cathedral!

"Well, what next?"

"Nothing now," said Ambroise gruffly, sweeping the cups back into the bag and packing away the shrine on the top of them. "The tide must be up by this time, and——*Holà!* whose boots are these?"

"Boots!" exclaimed the other, who had gone over to the window. "Boots! What do you mean?"

"Mean!" echoed Ambroise, snatching the candle from the table, and crossing the room at a single bound. "Death of my life! there's some one in the bed!"

As long as I live I shall never forget the horror of that moment. To keep my eyes closed, to regulate the rising and falling of my breath, and to preserve an utterly passive expression of face and attitude was the result of an instinct beyond myself. My power of thought was for the moment annihilated; and I feigned sleep as the spider feigns death, almost without knowing how or why I did it.

"He's asleep," said Paul,

"He's acting," said Ambroise, and flashed the candle before my eyes.

Not a nerve quivered. I seemed endued with a supernatural

mastery over every fibre of my frame, and never flinched, though the effort was agony.

"It's very well done," said Ambroise between his teeth; "but it's not real. No man could have slept through the noise we've made."

"Yes he could, if he'd been drinking," replied Paul. "Don't you see he has gone to bed in his clothes, and isn't that a proof of the state he was in when he came up?"

"Proof or no proof," said Ambroise with a terrible imprecation, "I'll"——

He broke off abruptly, and I heard a click, like the opening of a clasp-knife.

At this moment I gave myself up for lost, and a dead cold gathered at my heart. Then Paul interposed again.

"Give me the knife," I heard him say. "I'll test him, and then . . . ."

His voice dropped to a whisper; there was a muttered argument; a pause; a moment of maddening suspense! Then the quilt was pulled back, a hot breath ruffled the hair upon my brow, and a keen, cold, deadly edge, fine as the edge of a razor, was drawn slowly across my throat.

The quiver of an eyelid, the flutter of a breath would have betrayed me; but the love of life was stronger than the fear of death, and, thank God! I lay passive and placid as before.

Paul burst into a loud laugh, and tossed the knife back to its owner.

"*Ivre-mort, pardieu!*" said he. "I'd as soon suspect the walls of listening!"

Ambroise muttered an angry oath, and turned away.

"You're too easy," he said sullenly. "There's nothing like a dead man's tongue to keep a secret!"

At this moment a long shrill whistle echoed under the window like the wail of a Banshee.

"The signal!" cried both in a breath. Ambroise shouldered the bag; the light was blown out; in their eagerness to be gone all else was forgotten; and the next instant I heard their footsteps tramping down the stairs!

To struggle to an upright posture and fall back powerless was all that I could do. The blessed sense of safety was too much for me, and I fainted!

* * * * *

The story of the robbery at Abbeville needs no further repetition from my pen; but to those who are not familiar with the particulars it may be interesting to add that none of the stolen treasure was ever recovered, and neither of the dexterous pilgrims seen or heard of more. The robbery was committed on the evening of their flight, and of my trying adventure at St. Valery. It was supposed

to have been done about nine o'clock, and the church was entered from a window overlooking a patch of waste ground beside the canal —a spot of which I still have a sketch in my possession. The keys by which they unlocked the presses were found in the corridor close by; and a locksmith living somewhere in the suburbs of the town testified to having innocently manufactured them from some wax impressions intrusted to him by two holy pilgrims, one of whom was lame, and the other blind of an eye. From the description which I was enabled to give of both these individuals, it was conjectured that they were two brothers of the name of Carpeaux, natives of Hâvre, who had been more than once convicted of petty misdemeanours, and were supposed of late years to be connected with the coast-smuggling of France and Holland. Whether they prospered on their sacrilegious gains, time and chance can alone determine. For my part, I expect that they will come to the galleys some day, and that we shall then hear more about them.

In the mean time, suffer me, O Reader, to whisper a word of advice at parting. If thou art at home, by all means stay there. It is the safest and happiest place in the world, depend on it. But if, like me, thou hast the Continental mania, do as I do—believe in Mr. Murray—never try to find out anything for yourself—and avoid Bradshaw the Betrayer!

V.—GRIEF.

An ancient enemy have I,
And either he or I must die;
For he never leaveth me,
Never gives my soul relief,
Never lets my sorrow cease,
Never gives my spirit peace,—
For mine enemy is Grief!

Pale he is, and sad and stern;
And where'er he cometh nigh,
Blue and dim the torches burn,
Pale and shrunk the roses turn;
While my heart that he has pierced
Many a time with fiery lance
Beats and trembles at his glance:
Clad in burning steel is he,
All my strength he can defy;
For he never leaveth me—
And one of us must die!

I have said, "Let ancient sages
Charm me from my thoughts of pain!"
So I read their deepest pages,
And I strove to think—in vain!
Wisdom's cold calm words I tried,
But he was seated by my side:—
Learning I have won in vain;
She cannot rid me of my pain.

When at last soft sleep comes o'er me,
A cold hand is on my heart;
Stern sad eyes are there before me,
Not in dreams will he depart:
And when the same dreary vision
From my weary brain has fled,
Daylight brings the living phantom,
He is seated by my bed.

Bending o'er me all the while,
With his cruel bitter smile,
Ever with me, ever nigh;—
And either he or I must die!

Then I said, long time ago,
"I will flee to other climes,
I will leave mine ancient foe!"
Though I wandered far and wide,—
Still he followed at my side.

And I fled where the blue waters
Bathe the sunny isles of Greece;
Where Thessalian mountains rise
Up against the purple skies;
Where a haunting memory liveth
In each wood and cave and rill;
But no dream of gods could help me—
He went with me still!

I have been where Nile's broad river
Runs upon the burning sand;
Where the desert monster broodeth,
Where the Eastern palm-trees stand;
I have been where pathless forests
Spread a black eternal shade;
Where the lurking panther hiding
Glares from every tangled glade;
But in vain I wandered wide!
He was always by my side!

Then I fled where snows eternal
Cold and dreary ever lie;
Where the rosy lightnings gleam,
Flashing through the northern sky;
Where the red sun turns again
Back upon his path of pain;—
But a shadowy form was with me—
I had fled in vain!

I have thought, "If I can gaze
Sternly on him he will fade,
For I know that he is nothing
But a dim ideal shade."
As I gazed at him the more,
He grew stronger than before!
Then I said, "Mine arm is strong,
I will make him turn and flee:"
I have struggled with him long—
But that could never be!

Once I battled with him so
That I thought I laid him low;
Then in trembling joy I fled,
While again and still again
Murmuring to myself I said,
"Mine old enemy is dead!"
And I stood beneath the stars,
When a chill came on my frame,
And a fear I could not name,
And a sense of quick despair,
And, lo!—mine enemy was there!

Listen, for my soul is weary,
Weary of its endless woe;
I have called on one to aid me
Mightier even than my foe.
Strength and hope fail day by day;
I shall cheat him of his prey;
Some day soon, I know not when,
He will stab me through and through;
He has wounded me before,
But my heart can bear no more;
Pray that hour may come to me:
Only then shall I be free;
Death alone has strength to take me
Where my foe can never be;
Death, and Death alone, has power
To conquer mine old enemy!

VI.—PROPERTY OF MARRIED WOMEN.

In the summer and autumn of 1855 petitions were circulated throughout England representing the injustice of the law respecting the property and earnings of married women, and imploring Parliament to take the matter into immediate consideration. These petitions, organised and started by a couple of philanthropic ladies, resulted in March, 1856, in the presentation to both Houses of a petition signed by 3000 women; in addition to this Woman's Petition, petitions from all parts of the country poured in, bearing the signatures of upwards of 26,000 men and women. Thus, there was no mistaking the profound and universal interest felt in the question, and the absolute necessity for immediate alleviation.

In the month of June following, a public meeting was held, at which Sir John Pakington presided, and wherein the Law Amendment Society took a prominent part. This society referred the subject to a committee, which entered into a full and comprehensive examination of it in all its relations, and received important information respecting the laws of foreign countries: a general report was framed and a bill carefully prepared, which Lord Brougham presented early in February, 1857, to the House of Lords, and Sir Erskine Perry later to the House of Commons. This bill, strongly supported in its first and second readings, was checked in the House of Commons by a promise from the Government to take the subject into consideration during the recess, and to bring forward a measure of its own: a promise as yet unredeemed.

Clause XXI. of the new Divorce Act may fairly be regarded as a concession to the imperious demand of the public for instant legislation for the relief of married women; and how sorely the partial protection this clause affords was needed is evidenced in the numerous cases daily applying under it in the police courts of the metropolis alone. But, great as this relief is, it covers but a small portion of the hardship and injustice complained of, and the necessity for a radical reformation of the laws affecting the property and earnings of married women remains untouched.

As the law now stands, protection is afforded to the earnings and property of a wife deserted by her husband, but it makes provision for no case where desertion has not taken place, thus leaving unprotected a large class of sufferers who are subjected to the daily loss of their property or earnings by the presence of a dissolute or unprincipled husband.

It also leaves untouched the anomaly in our law which arises from the different mode in which Courts of Common Law and Courts of Equity deal with questions relating to the property of husband and wife. The Courts of Common Law recognise no separate existence in the wife during marriage, and give all her personal property and earnings to the husband absolutely; the Courts of Equity, on the other hand, secure to the wife, through the medium of trusteeships, a separate control over her own property, and preserve it for herself and her children. Now, to obtain this advantage, the property of the wife must either have been settled on her by a trust deed, or a suit have been instituted in Chancery, either of which proceedings can be taken only by a person possessed of some amount of property; so that we have here, in practice, a notorious instance of one law for the rich and another for the poor.

The object of the bill presented by Lord Brougham and Sir Erskine Perry is to secure to *all* married women control over their property and earnings acquired either before or after marriage: a law thus simple and comprehensive will reach all classes of society, and with nothing short of this can law and justice be reconciled.

The important and absorbing measures before Parliament this session, measures affecting the prosperity, greatness, and dignity of the nation, necessarily preclude all hope of a "Woman's Property Bill" being brought forward at present: still the question will not be allowed to drop. A committee is working in London for the purpose of collecting evidence of the cruelty and injustice of the laws affecting the property and earnings of married women, and for the promotion of petitions throughout the country; so that when the bill is again brought forward it may be supported, as before, by public opinion thus publicly expressed. Cases of cruelty and hardship under the working of the present law come constantly before the notice of all members of the community. It is the duty of every man and woman interested in the question to strengthen the hands of this committee* by reporting such cases upon their own personal authority and guarantee; inquisition into the private affairs of any sufferer, or exposure thereof, being thus precluded, while the interests of the cause are substantially forwarded.

It should never be forgotten that all reform originates with the people, and that the sustained and organised expression of public opinion can alone lead to a successful issue. Lord Brougham and Sir Erskine Perry, with many other distinguished men, both in and out of the House, are warm advocates of this measure; but, without the earnest and unflagging support of all interested in it, we may never hope to see it pass into the laws of the land.

VII.—NOTICES OF BOOKS.

1.—*The Angel in the House.* By Coventry Patmore. *2nd Edition.* John W. Parker and Son, West Strand.

How much is implied when we are told at the counter of a circulating library that "everybody" is asking for a book! And this was what was said to us three days ago of 'The Angel in the House.' The particular cause of the demand is probably some favourable review in a widely spread periodical. But as even reviews cannot thrust mustard and sawdust down the throat of that amiable monster the Public, a book cannot continue many days in request unless it meet the public mind. It may be the channel of just that information which everybody desires to obtain, like the enormous tome yclept 'Livingstone;' it may be the

* All communications to be addressed to Maria S. Rye, Secretary, care of Mrs. Frank Malleson, 145, New Bond Street, W.

last new novel which holds up the mirror to everybody's private absurdities, like the 'Virginians;' or it may echo back the tones of a great man departed, like 'Tom Brown's Schooldays.' It may be full of passion and incident, showing existence such as highly strung natures find it to be, and the more phlegmatic like to fancy it;—or it may be a minute delicate painting of every-day life *en beau*, a picture of the world on a summer Sunday, a book which, seizing the characteristics of a people and a time, contrives to represent them at once faithfully and gracefully; so that intelligent readers are delighted with the truth of the portraiture, and gratified to find the result so handsome. Such a book was 'Sir Charles Grandison;'—such a book is 'The Angel in the House.'

Let no one smile at the comparison, and think it an indignity to the modern poem to compare it to the ancient novel,—dusty fusty seven volumes, printed in close small type. We will undertake to prove it good.

When Richardson, exceedingly disgusted at the coarseness of Fielding, proposed to give a picture of real life among the drawing-rooms of England, all the educated ladies of that day delighted in his photographic art. Sir Charles Grandison is intensely *true*, and the powder and the periwigs, the bowing and the scraping, the maroon velvet coats with gold buttons, and petticoats looped up with cherry-coloured ribbon, are only the outward covering to as real a group of *dramatis personæ* as ever walked the stage of romance.

When he said to her, "Ah, my dear Angel!" and she replied, casting down her eyes, "O, best of men!" they were none the less Harriet and Charles, and we believe that a more perfect picture of a past time does not exist in any language, except in private letters and diaries, than is given in 'Sir Charles Grandison' of the early days of George III.

In the same sense, 'The Angel in the House' is an absolutely accurate account of a betrothal and espousal which took place some ten years ago in Salisbury Close. Doubtless, if the inquiring reader will search the 'Times' of that year, he will find (in the month of July) a paragraph running thus:—"At Salisbury Cathedral, by the Dean, father to the bride, Honoria Churchill, to Felix Vaughan, Esq., of ——;" and in these finely printed pages he will find all the delightful details. Society in Salisbury Close is at once elegant and religious—so is this book; it is full of subtle refinements of speech, of dress, of manner, and it aims at the constant subjection of all life to an interior law; this also is true of the book. People who live in Salisbury Close pay the most delicate reverence to womanhood—in Salisbury Close;—so does this book. Life there is intellectual, well-ordered, affectionate; it is a triumph to the credit of poor, blind, naughty, ugly humanity, to have succeeded in bringing this rare aloe-blossom of existence into flower, and we are delighted with

our poet for fixing its loveliness on canvas. Perhaps in another hundred years we may be on the decline;—the Russians may have played the part of Goths and Vandals, and destroyed our social fabric;—we may be fighting some dire battle in which men and women alike will convulse to the gigantic proportions of Michael Angelo. At any rate we need but look below us now to find the ground of humanity, unbroken or roughly ploughed, bearing grass, tares, breadstuffs, and deal for tables. So let us be thankful for our tall white aloe-blossom, and be pleased at this painting on ivory of society in Salisbury Close.

But we here come to the one quality, if quality it can be called, which rather constitutes the essential mould of this poem;—it is,—in no bad sense, but most unmitigatedly,—*conventional*. We mean that at no other place than in this country, and in no other rank than in that rank, and at no other time of the world's history did people conduct their courtship and their wedding in that manner; and the story is so told that the young college-bred squire, and the Dean's eldest daughter, are only present to our sympathies under those particular outside characteristics, and could no more have made love, and got married, in those wretchedly awkward and narrow circumstances which oblige people to go to Gravesend for their one day's wedding trip, and then back to keep the ledger and make the beds, than Sir Charles Grandison could have wooed and won his Harriet Byron if he had suddenly found himself transformed into Alonzo the Brave and the lady into Imogene the Fair. A maroon coat and silk tights were *necessary* to Grandison; until he got them, he would have had no platform on which to display his many fine and noble attributes. In the same way, we cannot conceive what vision Mr. Coventry Patmore could in his most prolific moments embody, of a woman who could not afford to wear white kid gloves, —or at least a muslin gown and blue sash.

Many great poems have been quaint and conventional enough in their accessories. Chaucer and Dante paint good and fair women, great and gallant men, in all the moral costume of their respective ages; yet in the characters they draw burns some living fire of universal humanity which keeps the story ever fresh, and makes us knit, each in our succeeding generation, perpetual friendship with those people of the older time.

But when—putting aside the question of how far readers yet unborn will be able to enter into the somewhat restricted circle of 'The Angel in the House,'—we, of the year of grace 1858, read this romance in verse, we are at a loss to express how very delicate, truthful, and beautiful it appears to us. It is like one of Messonier's paintings, so elaborately minute in its analysis of feeling and of beauty, that every page seems enough for the text of a volume. There is no waste in Mr. Patmore's rhyme: he says nothing till he thoroughly means to say it, and then he says it thoroughly—and

his extraordinary insight will make many a woman wonder how he learnt

> "Her secret (privilege of the bard),
> Whose fancy is of either sex."

What, for instance, put this into his head? of a wife—

> "She loves with love that cannot tire;
> And when, ah woe! she loves alone,
> *Through passionate duty love flames higher,*
> *As grass grows taller round a stone.*"

Here, simply and exquisitely expressed, is the instinct which makes the poor beaten creature in our police-courts beg off the offender at any risk.

Sometimes we meet with wise verses, whose wisdom puts Martin Farquhar Tupper to shame, as

> "Keep your undrest familiar style
> For strangers, but respect your friend;
> Her most whose matrimonial smile
> Is and asks honour without end.
>
> * * * * *
>
> Respects with three-fold grace endue
> The right to be familiar; none
> Whose ways forget that they are two
> Perceive the bliss of being one."

Among the finest pages are those which contain the preludes to each canto, and as we turn them over we are puzzled which to choose and which to omit, having so little space. A reviewer in one of the Quarterlies says of Mr. Patmore, that his estimation of women is too *non-intellectual* for his verse to find much favour in women's eyes. There is some truth in this. Exalting his Honoria to the position of an angel, he gives her but little reality as a human being, and, except a very fair share of English beauty, and the fine breeding of a dean's daughter at twenty-two, we can find no special reason for his idolatry. Her father tells her husband on the wedding morn, that—

> "Her worst point is she 's apt to spend
> Too much on alms-deeds and on dress;"

but this want of judicious economy affords but a vague point after all! and we suppose that Honoria really had a soul to be saved like other mortals, and that the awful alternatives of existence were possible to her as to the rest of the world. Nevertheless, we will not quarrel with Mr. Patmore on this head. Some poets love to analyse and reproduce great characters; he has painted an exquisite picture of the passion of love as felt by a man for a *good woman*, simply as such, and we need ask no more from the poet who can do this so perfectly.

Nevertheless, we think, on examining this edition, and remem-

bering Mr. Patmore's earliest poems, published from ten to fifteen years ago, that some gentle remonstrances have been from time to time infused into his ear, and that in deference to them he has put a stronger line to his portraits here and there, and given his ladies more of the individuality they would certainly require in this work-a-day world. We think he would hardly now describe (as in his first volume) a fine and noble woman first consenting to read, and then being morally destroyed by—French novels! We conclude by quoting the prelude to canto seven, which contains an affirmation which should satisfy his female readers that he pays them honour due:—

"To heroism and holiness
How hard it is for man to soar,
But how much harder to be less
Than what his mistress loves him for!
There is no man so full of pride,
And none so intimate with shame,
And none to manhood so denied,
As not to mend if women blame.
He does with ease what do he must,
Or merit this, and nought's debarr'd
From man, when woman shall be just
In yielding her desired regard.
Ah, wasteful woman, she who may
On her sweet self set her own price,
Knowing he cannot choose but pay,
How has she cheapen'd paradise!
How given for nought her priceless gift,
How spoil'd the bread and spill'd the wine,
Which spent with due, respective thrift,
Had made brutes men and men divine."

2.—*Year After Year.* By the Author of 'Paul Ferroll.' Saunders and Otley.

In days such as these, when everybody writes books, the reader or reviewer hails with satisfaction the appearance of a new work by a known and popular author, and settles himself down complacently for some hours of quiet and uninterrupted enjoyment, with somewhat of the same feeling with which one prepares to pass an evening, after a prolonged absence, with an old and valued friend. The earlier pages may be shy and coy, glancing over the surface of things, as is almost always sure to be the case in the first moments of renewed intercourse with an old friend; but we know there are better and deeper things before us, and so, whether as reader or friend, we press courageously on; and only when the reading is over, the last page of the book turned, or the good-bye spoken and the hall-door closed, do we venture to ask ourselves where are the fire and force of other days—where the tenderness and pathos which so endeared both author and friend to our remembrance?

After this, need we say that 'Year after Year' is a disappoint-

ment? Judged by Paul Ferroll, it will not stand its ground at all. Judged by itself, it is defective in plot and exaggerated in character and sentiment, while in style it is wholly wanting in those striking and original qualities which so eminently characterize its predecessor.

What story there is, centres round a brother and sister, children of the same father, but by different mothers, Gray being the legitimate offspring, Katherine the illegitimate. The book opens with the death of the father when Gray is about twelve years of age; upon which, the young gentleman solemnly constitutes himself father and mother as well as brother to his young sister, who repays his chivalrous affection and protection with the devotion of her whole life. A guardian there is who figures occasionally in the background, but the young people are left pretty much to their own devices, and the consequences can well be imagined. Gray quickly outruns his allowance, gets into debt to a friend, and, when pressed for repayment, betakes himself, of his own accord and on his sole responsibility, to a money-lender in the neighbourhood, who is represented as only too glad to get the young baronet thus into his clutches.

At the time of this event, which gives colour to all that follows, our precocious hero is under fourteen! The success of this first application to the generous Mr. Carn, leads, as a matter of course, to subsequent ones, till Gray, whose majority does not take place till he has attained the age of twenty-four, begins seriously to consider the accumulating liabilities, and determines to retrench after a fashion of his own.

He said that upon due consideration it had appeared to him that people, for whom he did not care, benefited by his fortune more than they had any right to do. He thought that what Izaac Walton said was very true, "that the rich man's park was for him who looked at it, his house for the guests who had no trouble or expense and enjoyed it."

"Why, now, for instance, Katherine," said he, "don't you, and don't I sleep in two of the smallest rooms in the house, that the others may be the *company* rooms; and the garden and the deer-park, why, you know, if ever a pine or a buck is finer than the rest, they say, 'Oh, don't eat it to-day, sir, because there's only you and Miss Katherine.' Now, I'll not treat the world; I'll treat you and myself, and then we shall see if we have not plenty of money."

The practical part of this discourse was that he meant to renounce every article of expense which, upon calculation, he found was spent to make other people possess his fortune instead of himself. He knew it was not a usual mode of proceeding; but he intended never to accept as a reason for doing anything, "Oh, but everybody does so; oh, but what will the neighbours say?" I cried out with admiration that he was quite right; for, being still younger than he, these well-ordered words, in the first place, sounded to me perfectly reasonable; and in the next, whatever Gray did I thought well done; therefore, he got no good counsel from me, and, without opposition, went on to lay down his plans.

This eccentric mode of retrenchment of course scandalises Gray's rich neighbours, but he perseveres; atoning for his want of hospitality to his equals by his kindness and consideration for his inferiors. Matters thus proceed, and Gray is entertaining a Christmas party of his tenants and dependants, when a Mr. Carey, an old

friend and a sensible man of the world, makes his appearance upon the scene, and, by judicious management, combined with the influence of a young and pretty wife, finally persuades Gray to return to civilized habits, and open the hall once more to his equals.

The love of brother and sister grows with their growth. Katherine, indeed, "lives, moves, and has her being" in Gray; sees and knows nothing beyond or beside him, and is devoted to him heart and soul. In one of their botanical rambles the following scene occurs:—

We went on in silence a little way. It was a misty autumnal day, and our path lay up a brook which came along the bottom of a narrow valley, the sides of which were covered with wood: the brook leaped over the little ledges of rock which composed its bed, and the red berries of the briony hung in garlands over it. At a little distance up this dingle was a cleared space, where in a former fall charcoal had been burned, and which still remained a round, black, dry spot among the underwood. This bare circle stood at the top of a bank, and beneath it a footpath wound down the side of the dell at the top of which we were now standing. Just below us, and at the foot of this little hill, there appeared as we came to the top a party of wandering artisans, tinkers and chairmenders, as appeared by the materials loaded on the backs of the two donkeys which composed part of their train.

"This path ought to be stopped," said Gray; "they all steal wood as they walk along, as a matter of course."

"But they ornament the place to the amount of the damage done," said I, looking at the bare black locks of the children, the lean dog, the group made by ragged men and women, the projecting burthens of the donkeys. One of the latter, however, soon attracted a different kind of notice. He was a weak beast, almost hidden under his load, and seemed to be making useless efforts to climb the steep ascent after his comrade, which had soon, with all the company but one, gained half the height of the hill. The man who drove him urged him on by the most savage blows and curses, and the miserable animal, straining its weak limbs and receiving the blows on its outstretched muscles, was a piteous spectacle indeed.

"Holloa!" cried Gray, "a little pity, friend, would not be out of the way."

The man looked up, saw us, and began hoping for a shilling directly. "Lord, your honour, he is the laziest beast—it's all his cunning—I am the pitifullest master to dumb things that ever was seen."

"It's well that his own opinion can't be asked," said Gray.

"It's a desperate hot day," said the gipsy, not attending to this remark, "and hard work getting this cross creature up the hill; but if I had the price of only half a pint of ale at the top, I would not hurry him."

"I'll not pay you for sparing him," said Gray. "Spare him because he is your own beast."

"May the flesh of me fall off my own bones, if I do!" cried the man, and in a great passion he fell upon the animal, cudgelling him, while he bit his own under lip for fury.

Now Gray grew angry also. "Hold! I tell you; I won't see such cruelty. The animal cannot stir."

Again the man paused, but it was out of habitual deference to anybody possessing rank and money, and not from any decrease of anger: the passion was obliged to vent itself by some means, so he began bemoaning himself, and wishing first himself dead, and then the poor donkey; and then cried out to Gray to shoot it. "Shoot it, sir, through the head. I wish it were dead, and a hundred feet under the ground; shoot it, I say, and I'll carry the load myself."

"Say it again," said Gray, "and I will."

"I tell you do then," cried the man, "and I wish it had been done a year ago, before ever I wasted thistles on it."

"Stand out of the way, then," said Gray, levelling his gun.

"Holloa, what then! hey!" said the man, not intending to be taken at his word, but retreating.

Gray drew the trigger, and shot it dead in a moment. It was a foolish thing, but so it was, and he said to me, "I don't repent at all of it. If he did not mean to be taken at his word, what did he speak for?"

Meantime, there was such a hurly raised by the gipsy, and the noise of the gun was so striking, that all the horde came running back to see what was the matter. Our attention was caught by them at first, but, looking at the fallen hero of the fray again, there appeared tumbling their way out of his panniers first one pheasant, then another pheasant, victims of the poaching gipsy, who, when he saw them, began to lay aside his rage, and tried to kick them among the fern. But Gray had seen them too certainly, and down the bank he rushed to seize his lawful prey. The lord of the fallen donkey took up a stone, and aimed it so truly, that he hit him a blow upon his head, which staggered and nearly brought him to the ground. He recovered his footing, however, and darted on. His gun was too formidable a weapon to be withstood, and, after another volley of missiles, the gipsies, male and female, fled up the steep side of the opposite bank, and left all the prey in the hands of the victor. Gray was delighted with success, eager to pursue and punish the poachers, and the hurt he had received from the stone passed unregarded. He would not feel it; he would not acknowledge that he was injured by it; and persevered till he had secured the gipsy, and had him safe under the custody of the gamekeeper.

The result of this blow upon his head brings Gray to death's door. Haunted by the fear of leaving Katherine unprovided for, he knows no rest; and it is only after signing a document which he has caused to be drawn up, leaving Katherine all his personal property, that he falls into a sleep which saves his life. At length he attains his protracted majority, and the day of reckoning comes.

His guardian's savings are quickly transferred to the account of the money-lender, leaving a considerable sum unpaid, while provision has also to be made for a sum of ten thousand pounds which he insists upon settling on his sister. These several matters are finally arranged through the medium of insurances upon his life, and, relieved of these anxieties, Gray sets off alone for an autumnal excursion to the Continent. Katherine feels this, the first absence, most acutely.

The old year had ended, and the new year begun, ill. I was restless and uneasy; I was like a child in the dark, who longs, even to passion, to throw its arms round some friendly neck and feel itself safe. All the time I acknowledged that I should be half ashamed, when he did come back, of my own irritability and restlessness: but only as a thirsty man is of his thirst after he has drunk a full appeasing draught. I counted the days that remained of his absence, and set myself resolutely against receiving any more letters of delay to put off again my happiness. Nor did any come; there was no more obstacle, no more hindrance; the day remained fixed; there came only an assurance that he would be at home on the morrow at such an hour. All was right now; Dr. Monkton got the same intelligence, and came over to Buckwell; he slept well that night, I believe; but *I* scarcely slept at all, and was up in the cold winter dawn, from mere inability to lie in bed.

How Grey returns, and what his end, we will not divulge. Suffice it, that he dies, and, as the first part of the book has little else in the way of feeling, than a curious, and, we think, exag-

gerated, development of fraternal affection, so the last part turns entirely upon Katherine's devotion to the memory of her brother, impeached by the refusal of the various insurance offices to pay the sums claimed, on the ground of insanity and concealed physical ailments. Of course, the episode of the gipsy and the slaughtered donkey is brought in evidence, and there are not wanting other proofs of eccentricity, to use a mild word, which encourage the combined offices to send the case to trial. How Katherine comes to London, lives in a mean lodging, applies personally to Director after Director, meeting with a rebuff here and an impertinence there, often failing but never discouraged; how, strong in love and faith, she conjures, wheedles, and coaxes invalid and half-crazy witnesses to give evidence in favour of her brother; how the threatened poverty to herself weighs nothing in the balance against her idolized brother's memory and good name; how, finally, she and her cause prevail, the reader must learn for himself.

It is a meagre plot on which to hang much of interest or excitement, and if, in some respects, 'Year after Year' be unworthy the reputation of the talented author of 'Paul Ferroll,' no little skill and address are evidenced in rendering such a book readable.

3.—*The Morals of May Fair.* Hurst, Blackett, and Co.

Why the author should have selected that homœopathic portion of the fashionable West End "to point a moral and adorn a tale," when the follies and vices held up to derision have no such local habitation, and the *dramatis personæ* are equally innocent of house or home therein, we are at a loss to conjecture. Possibly, the alliteration was the temptation to the title, for May Fair has no more to do with the book itself than Timbuctoo or the man in the moon.

Bloomsbury, Brittany, Portland Place, and Wimbledon, divide the honours of the scene; and the "Morals" we suspect to be as native to Belgravia and Tyburnia as May Fair.

A doting uncle, an unloved and unloving wife, consequent estrangement, and subsequent separation; a fashionable and handsome young author for the hero, and an artless girl for the heroine, sacrificed to the selfish passion and lax principles of her lover, till the reader welcomes the grave that saves her from his pursuit, furnish no very novel ingredients for a three volume tale. A certain freshness of diction, power of observation, and *savoir vivre*, however, lend a charm to the book and carry one pleasantly on to the end. The author writes of what he (or she?) has seen, and the characters are suffered to point the moral for themselves. There is no lack of interest either in plot or incident. Some of the scenes are forcibly rendered, and the innate purity of Marguerite is admirably conceived and

sustained to the end. 'The Morals of May Fair' is a favourable specimen of the class of fashionable novels to which it belongs.

4.—*The Letters of a Betrothed.* Longman, Brown, & Co.

WHOEVER loves spring flowers, the chaste snowdrop, the pure, frank primrose, the tender perfume of the violet, and the passionate sweetness of the hyacinth, will enjoy, as their types, these charming 'Letters of a Betrothed.' They are the reflection of a loving heart, a pure mind, and a cultivated intellect; and, whoever Frank and Honoria may be, and we like to believe them *bonâ fide* persons, sure we are that such a betrothed love as is here depicted will merge its spring blossoms in the fulness and beauty of a rich, ripe summer, and lose none of its glory in the mellowed hues of autumn. A "Life-love" it is, and this little volume is worth a whole library of ordinary novels.

5.—*Home and School.—Dick Hasluck.—Voices from the Garden.—Rhymes worth remembering for the Young.—How to choose a Wife.—How to choose a Husband.* Partridge & Co., Paternoster Row.

CHILDREN'S books are so numerous in the present day, and the lessons, whether of science or morals, which are wrapped up in the thin veil of amusement offered to the unsuspicious juvenile mind, are so frequently dry, mistaken, and even pernicious, that it is no slight praise to say the above little volumes are entirely harmless, and may be safely, and in some cases profitably, read by children however young.

The two pamphlets of advice, 'How to choose a Wife,' and 'How to choose a Husband,' are, as their titles indicate, intended for children of a larger growth. They are sensible, free from cant, and the advice is not only well expressed, but very judicious, while the warnings are adapted to throw light on the faults and failings which cause most of the minor miseries of married life. They are full of home-truths, and the counsel offered is sound and sensible.

VIII.—PASSING EVENTS.

The heavy gloom which overshadowed the close of the year 1857 from the great revolt in India and the disastrous state of commercial affairs had begun to pass away in some measure before the termination of the Christmas holidays. The welcome news of the relief of Lucknow, and of the rescue of the numerous party of ladies and children so long shut up within the Residency, as well as of all who were left of the gallant and devoted band of their defenders, inspired more cheerful anticipations for the coming year, which subsequent intelligence tended on the whole to confirm. Many bright names were indeed added to the list of losses by which these victories were so dearly won, and the joy for every triumph was dashed by cruel regrets—as military triumphs commonly are.*

Towards the end of January public attention was in a great measure diverted from the solemn heroic tragedy acting in India by the dazzling festivities of a royal bridal—that of the Princess Royal, a young creature of seventeen, the eldest child of Queen Victoria, with the Prince Frederick William of Prussia, the heir-presumptive to the throne of that country.

Simultaneously with this event, however, we find occurrences of a different character demanding notice; and in conformity with the sound rule which recommends swallowing what is unpleasant first, and the dainty afterwards to take the taste out, we turn away for the moment from the loyal throng hastening to the wedding, to ask what mean those ominous sounds that reach our ears from the other side of the Channel—it may be sounds of distant thunder, or only of some theatrical imitation of it, which does not sound very awful when you know how it is got up.

To understand what they mean, it must be stated that on the evening of the 14th of January an atrocious attempt had been made to assassinate the Emperor and Empress of France.

In the afternoon of that day certain young gentlemen, dining at a Café Anglais, on the Boulevard des Italiens, were informed by the waiter, without any affectation of mystery, that a man had just been arrested, carrying a bomb-shell, a poniard, and a revolver loaded with a peculiar kind of conical-shaped balls, with a barbed nail at the end—called, we believe, Devisme balls. They were further informed that the guards had been doubled on the Emperor's way to the Opera, as if "something were in the wind." But we will give the remainder of the story in the words of our informant,† who, as will be seen, was present, or, as our neighbours say, *assisted* on the occasion.

"Up we jumped, settled our bill, and went to the Opera to secure our tickets, and then came out again to wait for their Majesties. Just as they turned into the street there was a tremendous roar, and we saw a shell bursting behind the carriage, and a *Cent-Gardes* fall dead—people shrieking away like mad. The Emperor's coachman immediately jumped the horses on one side, and galloped up to the verandah, when a second shell burst right under the carriage, wounding the Chief of the Secret Police, who was opening the door, killing one of the horses and seven lancers, besides wounding one of our own party. No sooner was that one burst than a third came and destroyed the carriage.

"The Emperor came out, looking rather white, and supporting the fainting Empress, whom he carried to her box. I managed to get into the house, and when some little time afterwards they came forward, a deafening cheer arose from all parts of it. A gentleman who was with them in the carriage was severely wounded, and the carriage itself blown to pieces. People say, 'Tis of no use trying to kill him; he seems to bear a charmed life.'

* The immense accumulation of details connected with Indian war make it impossible for us to do more than note a few of its principal events in the brief space we propose to fill every month with a contribution to the history of our time.

† The writer is induced to give this extract from a private letter, having seen no other by an eye-witness. "Our special correspondent," on this occasion, was a near relative.

"Whatever stories you may see in the newspapers, these are the facts, as I was within five feet of the carriage; and I think myself very lucky to have escaped, as the people were all dropping round me at each discharge."

It is hardly necessary to say that the news of this villany was received in England with general indignation; for whatever differences of opinion may exist among the English people, murder is not a method of settling them approved by any class. It was, therefore, with a feeling of blank astonishment they discovered a disposition in their supposed friendly allies to cast upon them the imputation of something like complicity in the transaction.

Among the congratulations on the escape, naturally poured into the Tuileries from all quarters, came certain addresses from the army, on which their subsequent publication in the 'Moniteur' conferred an air of official authority.

First we find—

The Army of Lyons—expressing its willingness to shed its blood *in all places, to reach* and annihilate the artisans of regicide.

Then comes the 5th Regiment of Lancers—polite, but "afflicted, that powerful friends, whose brave armies so lately combated by their side, should be *covering with their protection* conspirators and assassins," &c.

The 19th Military Division follows on the same side, as the lawyers say, but is considerably fiercer. Their hearts are "filled with indignation and wrath against the *accomplices* of those sanguinary anarchists"—videlicet, their unsuspecting neighbour John Bull.

The 82nd Regiment is still more explicit. It prays to be allowed to seek for those anarchists "*even in the recesses of their dens*"—supposed to signify Leicester Square, and the pleasant streets thereunto adjacent.

In this awfully threatening state of affairs we listen for the first time, with some interest, to the account of an official ball—namely, that given by Lord Cowley, in Paris, to celebrate the marriage of the Princess Royal; and are comforted to hear that his Majesty Napoleon III., in "blue coat and black continuations," showed the light of his gracious countenance to the company there assembled.

After this came what might have been expected—symptoms of uneasiness in the mercantile classes of France, and a downward tendency of all kinds of "securities" in that country. In the mean time we are not surprised to find that the Emperor, as an undoubtedly brave man, and somewhat better acquainted with England and the English than the heroes of the 'Moniteur,' "much regrets" the publication of these swaggering demonstrations, and afterwards sends a distinct official declaration through Count Walewski to the same effect. In a letter addressed to that nobleman by Count Persigny, and dated "Paris, Feb. 6th," he says that "if, in the enthusiastic manifestations of the devotion of the army," words have been inserted which have seemed to indicate unfriendly feelings towards England, *the Emperor enjoins him to say to Lord Clarendon how much he regrets it.* Whether the symptoms of uneasiness in the mercantile classes of France, and the Emperor's expressions of regret, stand towards each other in any relation of cause and effect, is a matter on which there are different opinions. At all events one thing is clear: the proposition that catching your hare is an indispensable preliminary to cooking it—which we imagined axiomatic— is, it seems, not admitted by the exciteable braves of the 'Moniteur.'

That neither the English people nor the English Government had the faintest suspicion of the existence of a conspiracy appears to these fine fellows no sort of reason why they should not have punished it.

No less than twelve English newspapers have been seized in Paris, and the able and independent writers of the Revue des Deux Mondes informed that, if they do not choose to write for the Revue Contemporaine, lately purchased by the Government, they will do well not to write at all.

Turn we now to a pleasanter theme—to a throne which has no need to surround itself with these painful and vigilant precautions, and to a Sovereign whose private and domestic affairs become, through the hearty sympathy of her subjects, those of the people at large. The bells rang in merrily the morning of the wedding-day (January 25th); and raw and cold as was the atmos-

phere, and though trees and grass were covered with white frost, the park was soon filled with a dense throng of loyal folks, prepared to wait patiently for several hours, to be rewarded at last by a sight of the royal carriages, or a momentary glimpse of their occupants. There was something to us touching in the affectionate interest and unenvying pleasure with which tens of thousands of poorly fed and hardly worked people regarded the gorgeous festivities in which they had no further participation.

Shall we tell (with a view to the edification of posterity) how the young bride and her royal mother rejoiced all eyes as they passed "in a state carriage with cream-coloured horses," and alighted at a covered way lined with scarlet, the pillars supporting it wreathed with holly and laurustinus in full flower, and decorated with the blended colours of England and Prussia—how they walked up a staircase all blooming, in this January weather, with roses and camellias—how the Queen wore a robe of lilac velvet, and bore on her brow "a castellated crown of pearls and diamonds," while the glorious Koh-i-Noor sparkled on her bosom—how the Princess, paler than usual, but only on that account the more charming, with a gorgeous veil hanging in massive folds behind, walked with downcast eyes up the centre of the Chapel Royal, through a glittering galaxy of plumed and jewelled gazers, between walls hung with crimson, to the altar, where her princely bridegroom is waiting for her, and gallantly kneels to kiss her hand and manifest his lover-like devotion to the assembly?

Everything was as it should be: the bridegroom's responses in the ceremony were, as we are informed, loud and clear, the bride's faint and tremulous; and then come the tender embraces of mother and daughter, and the general reciprocation of kisses, and a few tears, without which no wedding is complete. Authorities differ as to the precise quantity shed, but fortunately all agree that when the bridal pair left the chapel "the Princess had recovered her colour, and her eyes sparkled with light."

In the afternoon the patient populace in front of Buckingham Palace reached the "high top-gallant of their joy" by the Queen, the bride and bridegroom, and the whole brilliant throng good-naturedly coming out and showing themselves on the balcony.

Other topics of a widely different character have, however, to be touched upon.

A Royal Commission has been appointed, chiefly through the exertions of Mr. Sidney Herbert, to inquire into the sanitary condition of the army; and, towards the middle of February a feeling of painful surprise was excited by the discovery that the treatment of British soldiers, when living peaceably at home in their barracks, was such as to inflict greater suffering and loss upon them than the manifold fatigues and dangers of war. The actual rate of mortality among these fine young men was proved before the Committee of Inquiry, including, besides Mr. Sidney Herbert, Sir James Clark, Dr. Sutherland, Colonel Sir H. Stork, and other eminent persons, to be higher than in any other class of the population, even those engaged in what were regarded as the most unwholesome occupations; that the noble-looking fellows whom, as they pass through the streets in their gay and glittering uniforms, the eyes of their countrymen follow with admiration not unmingled of late with feelings of kind regard, go home to dwellings whose wretched accommodations, and deficiencies of light, of air, and of water, expose them to the incessant murderous attacks of the only foe for which they are no match; namely, disease, and especially the fell disease, consumption. As if this were not enough, their food too is so bad and tasteless that it is continually thrown away, from the inability of the men to eat it.

One witness declared that a soldier never knew what a healthy dwelling was till he committed a crime, and was sent to the comparatively airy cell of a military dungeon; that no comfort, or even decency, of civilized life, was to be found in an English barrack; that soldiers are packed in beds only one foot from each other, and often in subterranean rooms; and that, from the foul and heated atmosphere thus created, they are turned out suddenly into piercing cold and rain, without even the slight protection against the weather granted to policemen in the shape of an oilskin cape.

As however the facts relating to this subject are now embodied in a rather bulky Blue-Book containing a large amount of evidence from Miss Florence Nightingale, we propose to return to it for some further information next month.

The 31st of January also must not be allowed to pass without a red letter to mark it as the day on which the Leviathan, the very biggest ship ever known or heard of in the world, took the first step towards showing that she was not likewise the biggest blunder ever made by naval architect.

One last sacrifice of a humble coal-barge, which was ignominiously and incontinently scuttled for being in her way, was offered up to her as she was lowered from her cradles, and then the heroine of Millwall was positively afloat. Not only have three months, and we are afraid to say how many thousands of pounds, been devoted to her launch, but we are sorry to be obliged to add several lives—on one occasion by the breaking of certain portions of launching gear, and on another by the downfall of a scaffolding on which crowds of imprudent worshippers of Mr. Brunel's huge performance had climbed, in order to see over into the yard and watch her progress. Many foreigners came over to see the launch early in *November*, and were then under great uneasiness lest they should be too late. It is to be hoped they did not find the time long.

In the latter part of February intelligence was received from China that on the 23rd of December last English and French ships of war began to assemble in the Canton river opposite the city, with the purpose of bombarding it if the attempted negotiations with the Chinese Viceroy Yeh should fail. The river was so densely covered by the large house-like boats in which a considerable portion of the Chinese population pass nearly their whole lives, that at first only a very narrow channel of water was visible; but they moved slowly away from the impending danger, and retired unmolested into various creeks and canals, though many of the smaller boats, more intent on profit than patriotism, continued up to the last moment to paddle about among the hostile ships, and dispose of oranges and other acceptable articles of provision for the refreshment of the enemies about to attack their city.

At length, on the morning of the 28th, a heavy fire was opened upon it, and 900 of the French troops and 4600 of the English landed, and almost immediately captured two forts. All night long rockets were fired into the devoted town, the houses of which were seen blazing in all directions; and when the mail left on the following day, it brought a brief note from the commanding officer stating that the city had been captured.*

We must not pass without a word an incident that may hereafter be found to be of even higher import than it may now seem—namely the return of Dr. David Livingstone to the wilds of Africa, under far more favourable auspices than on his former journey, and carrying with him, with much material help, the fervent good wishes of all who desire the abolition of slavery, and the diffusion of genuine Christianity. It would be difficult to overrate the good effects that may be hoped for from a work so happily begun; but in this, as in other instances, we are reminded of one of the chief difficulties of recording events so near the period of their occurrence. The picture may indeed glow with a somewhat warmer colour than when the historian sits down to describe, not the living time of which he is himself a part, but men and things long since passed away; but it is not always easy to the contemporary to find the true focal distance from whence to make a correct estimate of their real importance. Many a great flaring impostor of an event that has attracted all eyes, and stunned all ears, has been speedily blown away into silence and eternal forgetfulness, while some still small voice, scarcely audible at the moment, will be found to have whispered of what, regarded in its great results, might be considered the event of the time.

Lord Palmerston's Ministry has been defeated on the Foreign Refugees Bill by a majority of nineteen, and has resigned; Lord Derby being intrusted with the formation of a new cabinet.

* Later despatches state that Commissioner Yeh was taken on the 5th of January, attempting to escape in the dress of a coolie.