VARIOUS

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Содержание

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MEMORIES OF MISS JANE PORTER

BY MRS S. C. HALL

The frequent observation of foreigners is, that in England we have few "celebrated women." Perhaps they mean that we have few who are "notorious;" but let us admit that in either case they are right; and may we not express our belief in its being better for women and for the community that such is the case: "celebrity" rarely adds to the happiness of a woman, and almost as rarely increases her usefulness. The time and attention required to attain "celebrity," must, except under very peculiar circumstances, interfere with the faithful discharge of those feminine duties upon which the well-doing of society depends, and which shed so pure a halo around our English homes. Within these "homes" our heroes – statesmen – philosophers – men of letters – men of genius – receive their first impressions, and the *impetus* to a faithful discharge of their after callings as Christian subjects of the State.

There are few of such men who do not trace back their resolution, their patriotism, their wisdom, their learning – the nourishment of all their higher aspirations – to a wise, hopeful, loving-hearted and faith-inspired mother; one who *believed* in a son's destiny to be great; it may be, impelled by such belief rather by instinct than by reason; who cherished (we can find no better word), the "Hero-feeling" of devotion to what was right, though it might have been unworldly; and whose deep heart welled up perpetual love and patience, toward the over-boiling faults and frequent stumblings of a hot youth, which she felt would mellow into a fruitful manhood.

The strength and glory of England are in the keeping of the wives and mothers of its men; and when we are questioned touching our "celebrated women," we may in general terms refer to those who have watched over, moulded, and inspired our "celebrated" men.

Happy is the country where the laws of God and nature are held in reverence – where each sex fulfills its peculiar duties, and renders its sphere a sanctuary! and surely such harmony is blessed by the Almighty – for while other nations writhe in anarchy and poverty, our own spreads wide her arms to receive all who seek protection or need repose.

But if we have few "celebrated" women, few, who impelled either by circumstances or the irrepressible restlessness of genius, go forth amid the pitfalls of publicity, and battle with the world, either as poets – or dramatists – or moralists – or mere tale-tellers in simple prose – or, more dangerous still, "hold the mirror up to nature" on the stage that mimics life – if we have but few, we have, and have had *some*, of whom we are justly proud; women of such well-balanced minds, that toil they ever so laboriously in their public and perilous paths, their domestic and social duties have been fulfilled with as diligent and faithful love as though the world had never been purified and enriched by the treasures of their feminine wisdom; yet this does not shake our belief, that, despite the spotless and well-earned reputations they enjoyed, the homage they received (and it has its charm), and even the blessed consciousness of having contributed to the healthful recreation, the improved morality, the diffusion of the best sort of knowledge – the *woman* would have been happier had she continued enshrined in the privacy of domestic love and domestic duty. She may not think this at the commencement of her career; and at its termination, if she has lived sufficiently long to have

descended, even gracefully from her pedestal, she may often recall the homage of the *past* to make up for its lack in the *present*. But so perfectly is woman constituted for the cares, the affections, the duties – the blessed duties of *un*-public life – that if she give nature way it will whisper to her a text that "celebrity never added to the happiness of a true woman." She must look for her happiness to home. We would have young women ponder over this, and watch carefully, ere the vail is lifted, and the hard cruel eye of public criticism fixed upon them. No profession is pastime; still less so now than ever, when so many people are "clever," though so few are great. We would pray those especially who direct their thoughts to literature, to think of what they have to say, and why they wish to say it; and above all, to weigh what they may expect from a capricious public, against the blessed shelter and pure harmonies of private life.[1]

But we have had some – and still have some – "celebrated" women of whom we have said "we may be justly proud." We have done pilgrimage to the shrine of Lady Rachel Russell, who was so thoroughly "domestic" that the Corinthian beauty of her character would never have been matter of history, but for the wickedness of a bad king. We have recorded the hours spent with Hannah More; the happy days passed with, and the years invigorated by Maria Edgeworth. We might recall the stern and faithful puritanism of Maria Jane Jewsbury; and the Old World devotion of the true and high-souled daughter of Israel – Grace Aguilar. The mellow tones of Felicia Heman's poetry linger still among all who appreciate the holy sympathies of religion and virtue. We could dwell long and profitably on the enduring patience and life-long labor of Barbara Hofland, and steep a diamond in tears to record the memories of L.E.L. We could – alas, alas! barely five-and-twenty years' acquaintance with literature and its ornaments, and the brilliant catalogue is but a *Momento Mori*! Perhaps of all this list, Maria Edgworth's life was the happiest; simply because she was the most retired, the least exposed to the gaze and observation of the world, the most occupied by loving duties toward the most united circle of old and young we ever saw assembled in one happy home.

The very young have never, perhaps read one of the tales of a lady whose reputation, as a novelist, was in its zenith when Walter Scott published his first novel. We desire to place a chaplet upon the grave of a woman once "celebrated" all over the known world; yet who drew all her happiness from the lovingness of home and friends, while her life was as pure as her renown was extensive.

In our own childhood romance reading was prohibited, but earnest entreaty procured an exception in favor of the "Scottish Chiefs." It was the bright summer, and we read it by moonlight, only disturbed by the murmur of the distant ocean. We read it, crouched in the deep recess of the nursery window; we read it until moonlight and morning met, and the breakfast bell ringing out into the soft air from the old gable, found us at the end of the fourth volume. Dear old times! when it would have been deemed little less than sacrilege to crush a respectable romance into a shilling volume, and our mammas considered *only* a five volume story curtailed of its just proportions.

Sir William Wallace has never lost his heroic ascendency over us, and we have steadily resisted every temptation to open the "popular edition" of the long-loved romance, lest what people will call "the improved state of the human mind," might displace the sweet memory of the mingled admiration and indignation that chased each other, while we read and wept, without ever questioning the truth of the absorbing narrative.

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[1] In support of this opinion, which we know is opposed to the popular feeling of many in the present day, we venture to quote what Miss Porter herself repeats, as said to her by Madame de Stael: "She frequently praised my revered mother for the retired manner in which she maintained her little domestic establishment, *yielding her daughters to society, but not to the world*." We pray those we love, to mark the delicate and most true distinction, between "society" and the "world." "I was set on a stage," continued De Stael, "I was set on a stage, at a child's age, to be listened to as a wit and worshiped for my premature judgment. I drank adulation as my soul's nourishment, *and I cannot now live without its poison; it has been my bane*, never an aliment. My heart ever sighed for happiness, and I ever lost it, when I thought it approaching my grasp. I was admired, made an idol, *but never beloved*. I do not accuse my parents for having made this mistake, but I have not repeated it in my Albertine" (her daughter.) "She shall not'Seek for love, and fill her arms with bays.' I bring her up in the best society, yet in the shade."

Yet, the "Scottish Chiefs" scarcely achieved the popularity of "Thaddeus of Warsaw," the first romance originated by the active brain and singularly constructive power of Jane Porter, produced at an almost girlish age.

The hero of "Thaddeus of Warsaw" was really Kosciuszko, the beloved pupil of George Washington, the grandest and purest patriot the Modern World has known. The enthusiastic girl was moved to its composition by the stirring times in which she lived; and a personal observation of, and acquaintance with some of those brave men whose struggles for liberty only ceased with their exile, or their existence.

Miss Porter placed her standard of excellence on high ground, and – all gentle-spirited as was her nature – it was firm and unflinching toward what she believed the right and true. We must not, therefore, judge her by the depressed state of "feeling" in these times, when its demonstration is looked upon as artificial or affected. Toward the termination of the last and the commencement of the present century, the world was roused into an interest and enthusiasm, which now we can scarcely appreciate or account for; the sympathies of England were awakened by the terrible revolutions of France, and the desolation of Poland; as a principle, we hated Napoleon, though he had neither act nor part in the doings of the democrats; and the sea-songs of Dibdin, which our youth *now* would call uncouth and ungraceful rhymes, were key-notes to public feeling; the English of that time were thoroughly "awake," the British Lion had not slumbered through a thirty years' peace. We were a nation of soldiers and sailors, and patriots; not of mingled cotton-spinners and railway speculators and angry protectionists; we do not say which state of things is best or worst, we desire merely to account for what may be called the taste for *heroic* literature at that time, and the taste for – we really hardly know what to call it – literature of the present, made up, as it too generally is, of shreds and patches – bits of gold and bits of tinsel – things written in a hurry to be read in a hurry, and never thought of afterward – suggestive rather than reflective, at the best; and we must plead guilty to a too great proneness to underrate what our fathers probably overrated.

At all events we must bear in mind, while reading or thinking over Miss Porter's novels, that, in her day, even the exaggeration of enthusiasm was considered good tone and good taste. How this enthusiasm was *fostered*, not subdued, can be gathered by the author's ingenious preface to the, we believe, tenth edition of "Thaddeus of Warsaw."

This story brought her abundant honors, and rendered her society, as well as the society of her sister and brother, sought for by all who aimed at a reputation for taste and talent. Mrs. Porter, on her husband's death (he was the younger son of a well-connected Irish family, born in Ireland, in or near Coleraine, we believe, and a major in the Enniskillen dragoons), sought a residence for her family in Edinburgh, where education and good society are attainable to persons of moderate fortunes, if they are "well born;" but the extraordinary artistic skill of her son Robert required a wider field, and she brought her children to London sooner than she had intended, that his promising talents might be cultivated. We believe the greater part of "Thaddeus of Warsaw" was written in London, either in St. Martin's-lane, Newport-street, or Gerard-street, Soho (for in these three streets the family lived after their arrival in the metropolis); though as soon as Robert Ker Porter's abilities floated him on the stream, his mother and sisters retired, in the brightness of their fame and beauty, to the village of Thames Ditton, a residence they loved to speak of as their "home." The actual labor of "Thaddeus" – her first novel – must have been considerable; for testimony was frequently borne to the fidelity of its localities, and Poles refused to believe that the author had not visited Poland; indeed, she had a happy power in describing localities.

It was on the publication of Miss Porter's two first works in the German language that their author was honored by being made a Lady of the Chapter of St. Joachim, and received the gold cross of the order from Wurtemberg; but "The Scottish Chiefs" was never so popular on the continent as "Thaddeus of Warsaw," although Napoleon honored it with an interdict, to prevent its circulation in France. If Jane Porter owed her Polish inspirations so peculiarly to the tone of the times in which

she lived, she traces back, in her introduction to the latest edition of "The Scottish Chiefs," her enthusiasm in the cause of Sir William Wallace to the influence of an old "Scotch wife's" tales and ballads produced upon her mind while in early childhood. She wandered amid what she describes as "beautiful green banks," which rose in natural terraces behind her mother's house, and where a cow and a few sheep occasionally fed. This house stood alone, at the head of a little square, near the high school; the distinguished Lord Elchies formerly lived in the house, which was very ancient, and from those green banks it commanded a fine view of the Firth of Forth. While gathering "*gowans*" or other wild flowers for her infant sister (whom she loved more dearly than her life, during the years they lived in most tender and affectionate companionship), she frequently encountered this aged woman with her knitting in her hand; and she would speak to the eager and intelligent child of the blessed quiet of the land, where the cattle were browsing without fear of an enemy; and then she would talk of the awful times of the brave Sir William Wallace, when he fought for Scotland "against a cruel tyrant; like unto them whom Abraham overcame when he recovered Lot, with all his herds and flocks, from the proud foray of the robber kings of the South," who, she never failed to add, "were all rightly punished for oppressing the stranger in a foreign land! for the Lord careth for the stranger." Miss Porter says that this woman never omitted mingling pious allusions with her narrative, "Yet she was a person of low degree, dressed in a coarse woolen gown, and a plain *Mutch* cap clasped under the chin with a silver brooch, which her father had worn at the battle of Culloden." Of course she filled with tales of Sir William Wallace and the Bruce, the listening ears of the lovely Saxon child who treasured them in her heart and brain, until they fructified in after years into the "Scottish Chiefs." To these two were added "The Pastor's Fireside," and a number of other tales and romances; she contributed to several annuals and magazines, and always took pains to keep up the reputation she had won, achieving a large share of the popularity, to which, as an author, she never looked for happiness. No one could be more alive to praise or more grateful for attention, but the heart of a genuine, pure, loving woman, beat within Jane Porter's bosom, and she was never drawn *out* of her domestic circle by the flattery that has spoiled so many, men as well as women. Her mind was admirably balanced by her home affections, which remained unsullied and unshaken to the end of her days. She had, in common with her three brothers and her charming sister, the advantage of a wise and loving mother – a woman pious without cant, and worldly-wise without being worldly. Mrs. Porter was born at Durham, and when very young bestowed her hand and heart on Major Porter; an old friend of the family assures us that two or three of their children were born in Ireland, and that certainly Jane was among the number;[2] although she left Ireland when in early youth, perhaps almost an infant, she certainly must be considered "Irish," as her father was so both by birth and descent, and esteemed during his brief life as a brave and generous gentleman; he died young, leaving his lovely widow in straightened circumstances, having only her widow's pension to depend on. The eldest son – afterward Colonel Porter – was sent to school by his grandfather.

We have glanced briefly at Sir Robert Ker Porter's wonderful talents, and Anna Maria, when in her twelfth year, rushed, as Jane acknowledged, "prematurely into print." Of Anna Maria we knew personally but very little; enough, however, to recall with a pleasant memory her readiness in conversation, and her bland and cheerful manners. No two sisters could have been more different in bearing and appearance: Maria was a delicate blonde, with a *riant* face, and an animated manner – we had said almost *peculiarly Irish*– rushing at conclusions, where her more thoughtful and careful sister paused to consider and calculate. The beauty of Jane was statuesque, her deportment serious yet

[2] Miss Porter never told me she was an Irishwoman, but once she questioned me concerning my own parentage and place of birth; and upon my explaining that my mother was an English woman, my father Irish, and that I was born in Ireland, which I quitted early in life, she observed *her own circumstances were very similar to mine*. For my own part, I have no doubt that she was Irish by birth and by descent on the father's side, but it will be no difficult matter to obtain direct evidence of the facts; and we hope that some Irish patriotic friend will make due inquiries on the subject. During her life, I had no idea of her connection with Ireland, or I should certainly have ascertained if my own country had a claim of which it may be justly proud.

cheerful, a seriousness quite as natural as her younger sister's gayety; they both labored diligently, but Anna Maria's labor was sport when compared to her elder sister's careful toil; Jane's mind was of a more lofty order, she was intense, and felt more than she said, while Anna Maria often said more than she felt; they were a delightful contrast, and yet the harmony between them was complete; and one of the happiest days we ever spent, while trembling on the threshold of literature, was with them at their pretty road-side cottage, in the village of Esher, before the death of their venerable and dearly-beloved mother, whose rectitude and prudence had both guided and sheltered their youth, and who lived to reap with them the harvest of their industry and exertion. We remember the drive there, and the anxiety as to how those very "clever ladies" would look, and what they would say; we talked over the various letters we had received from Jane, and thought of the cordial invitation to their cottage – their "mother's cottage" – as they always called it. We remember the old white friendly spaniel who looked at us with blinking eyes, and preceded us up-stairs; we remember the formal, old-fashioned courtesy of the venerable old lady, who was then nearly eighty – the blue ribbons and good-natured frankness of Anna Maria, and the noble courtesy of Jane, who received visitors as if she granted an audience; this manner was natural to her; it was only the manner of one whose thoughts have dwelt more on heroic deeds, and lived more with heroes than with actual living men and women; the effect of this, however, soon passed away, but not so the fascination which was in all she said and did. Her voice was soft and musical, and her conversation addressed to one person rather than to the company at large, while Maria talked rapidly to every one, or *for* every one who chose to listen. How happily the hours passed! we were shown some of those extraordinary drawings of Sir Robert, who gained an artist's reputation before he was twenty, and attracted the attention of West and Shee[3] in his mere boyhood. We heard all the interesting particulars of his panoramic picture of the Storming of Seringapatam, which, the first of its class, was known half over the world. We must not, however, be misunderstood – there was neither personal nor family egotism in the Porters; they invariably spoke of each other with the tenderest affection – but unless the conversation was *forced* by their friends, they never mentioned their own, or each other's works, while they were most ready to praise what was excellent in the works of others; they spoke with pleasure of their sojourns in London; while their mother said, it was much wiser and better for young ladies who were not rich, to live quietly in the country, and escape the temptations of luxury and display. At that time the "young ladies" seemed to us certainly *not* young; that was about two-and-twenty years ago, and Jane Porter was seventy-five when she died. They talked much of their previous dwelling at Thames Ditton, of the pleasant neighborhood they enjoyed there, though their mother's health and their own had much improved since their residence on Esher-hill; their little garden was bounded at the back by the beautiful park of Claremont, and the front of the house overlooked the leading roads, broken as they are by the village green, and some noble elms. The view is crowned by the high trees of Esher-place, opening from the village on that side of the brow of the hill. Jane pointed out the *locale* of the proud Cardinal Wolsey's domain, inhabited during the days of his power over Henry VIII., and in their cloudy evening, when that capricious monarch's favor changed to bitterest hate. It was the very spot to foster her high romance, while she could at the same time enjoy the sweets of that domestic converse she loved best of all. We were prevented by the occupations and heart-beatings of our own literary labors from repeating this visit; and in 1831, four years after these well-remembered hours, the venerable mother of a family so distinguished in literature and art, rendering their names known and honored wherever art and letters flourish, was called home. The sisters, who had resided ten years at Esher, left it, intending to sojourn for a time with their second brother, Doctor Porter, (who commenced his career as a surgeon in the navy) in Bristol; but within a year the youngest, the light-spirited, bright-hearted Anna Maria died: her sister was dreadfully shaken by her loss, and the

[3] In his early days the President of the Royal Academy painted a very striking portrait of Jane Porter, as "Miranda," and Harlowe painted her in the canoness dress of the order of St. Joachim.

letters we received from her after this bereavement, though containing the outpourings of a sorrowing spirit, were full of the certainty of that reunion hereafter which became the hope of her life. She soon resigned her cottage home at Esher, and found the affectionate welcome she so well deserved in many homes, where friends vied with each other to fill the void in her sensitive heart. She was of too wise a nature, and too sympathizing a habit, to shut out new interests and affections, but her *old ones* never withered, nor were they ever replaced; were the love of such a sister-friend – the watchful tenderness and uncompromising love of a mother – ever "replaced," to a lonely sister or a bereaved daughter! Miss Porter's pen had been laid aside for some time, when suddenly she came before the world as the editor of "Sir Edward Seward's Narrative," and set people hunting over old atlases to find out the island where he resided. The whole was a clever fiction; yet Miss Porter never confided its authorship, we believe, beyond her family circle; perhaps the correspondence and documents, which are in the hands of one of her kindest friends (her executor), Mr. Shepherd, may throw some light upon a subject which the "Quarterly" honored by an article. We think the editor certainly used her pen, as well as her judgment, in the work, and we have imagined that it might have been written by the family circle, more in sport than in earnest, and then produced to serve a double purpose.

After her sister's death Miss Jane Porter was afflicted with so severe an illness, that we, in common with her other friends, thought it impossible she could carry out her plan of journeying to St. Petersburgh to visit her brother, Sir Robert Ker Porter, who had been long united to a Russian princess, and was then a widower; her strength was fearfully reduced; her once round figure become almost spectral, and little beyond the placid and dignified expression of her noble countenance remained to tell of her former beauty; but her resolve was taken; she wished, she said, to see once more her youngest and most beloved brother, so distinguished in several careers, almost deemed incompatible – as a painter, an author, a soldier, and a diplomatist, and nothing could turn her from her purpose: she reached St. Petersburgh in safety, and with apparently improved health, found her brother as much courted and beloved there as in his own land, and his daughter married to a Russian of high distinction. Sir Robert longed to return to England. He did not complain of any illness, and every thing was arranged for their departure; his final visits were paid, all but one to the Emperor, who had ever treated him as a friend; the day before his intended journey he went to the palace, was graciously received, and then drove home, but when the servant opened the carriage-door at his own residence he was dead! One sorrow after another pressed heavily upon her, yet she was still the same sweet, gentle, holy-minded woman she had ever been, bending with Christian faith to the will of the Almighty – "biding her time."

How differently would she have "watched and waited" had she been tainted by vanity, or fixed her soul on the mere triumphs of "literary reputation." While firm to her own creed, she fully enjoyed the success of those who scramble up – where she bore the standard to the heights – of Parnassus; she was never more happy than when introducing some literary "Tyro" to those who could aid or advise a future career. We can speak from experience of the warm interest she took in the Hospital for the cure of Consumption, and the Governesses' Benevolent Institution; during the progress of the latter, her health was painfully feeble, yet she used personal influence for its success, and worked with her own hands for its bazaars. She was ever aiding those who could not aid themselves; and all her thoughts, words, and deeds, were evidence of her clear, powerful mind, and kindly loving heart; her appearance in the London *coteries* was always hailed with interest and pleasure; to the young she was especially affectionate; but it was in the quiet mornings, or in the long twilight evenings of summer, when visiting her cherished friends at Shirley Park, in Kensington-square, or wherever she might be located for the time – it was then that her former spirit revived and she poured forth anecdote and illustration, and the store of many years' observation, filtered by experience and purified by that delightful faith to which she held – that "all things work together for good to them that love the Lord." She held this in practice, even more than in theory: you saw her chastened yet hopeful spirit beaming forth from her gentle eyes, and her sweet smile can never be forgotten. The last time we saw her, was

about two years ago – in Bristol – at her brother, Dr. Porter's house in Portland-square: then she could hardly stand without assistance, yet she never complained of her own suffering or feebleness – all her anxiety was about the brother – then dangerously ill, and now the last of "his race." Major Porter, it will be remembered, left five children, and these have left only one descendant – the daughter of Sir Robert Ker Porter and the Russian Princess whom he married, a young Russian lady, whose present name we do not even know.

We did not think at our last leave-taking that Miss Porter's fragile frame could have so long withstood the Power that takes away all we hold most dear; but her spirit was at length summoned, after a few days' total insensibility, on the 24th of May.

We were haunted by the idea that the pretty cottage at Esher, where we spent those happy hours, had been treated even as "Mrs. Porter's Arcadia" at Thames Ditton – now altogether removed; and it was with a melancholy pleasure we found it the other morning in nothing changed; it was almost impossible to believe that so many years had passed since our last visit. While Mr. Fairholt was sketching the cottage, we knocked at the door, and were kindly permitted by two gentle sisters, who now inhabit it, to enter the little drawing-room and walk round the garden; except that the drawing-room has been re-papered and painted, and that there were no drawings and no flowers, the room was not in the least altered; yet to us it seemed like a sepulchre, and we rejoiced to breathe the sweet air of the little garden, and listen to a nightingale, whose melancholy cadence harmonized with our feelings.

"Whenever you are at Esher," said the devoted daughter, the last time we conversed with her, "do visit my mother's tomb." We did so. A cypress flourishes at the head of the grave; and the following touching inscription is carved on the stone:

HERE SLEEPS IN JESUS A CHRISTIAN WIDOW

JANE PORTER

OBIIT JUNE 18TH, 1831, ÆTAT. 86;

THE BELOVED MOTHER OF

W. PORTER, M.D., OF SIR ROBERT KER PORTER,

AND OF JANE AND ANNA MARIA PORTER,

WHO MOURN IN HOPE, HUMBLY TRUSTING TO BE BORN

AGAIN WITH HER UNTO THE BLESSED KINGDOM

OF THEIR LORD AND SAVIOUR

RESPECT HER GRAVE, FOR SHE MINISTERED TO THE POOR

[From the Gallery of Nature.]

SHOOTING STARS AND METEORIC SHOWERS

From every region of the globe and in all ages of time within the range of history, exhibitions of apparent instability in the heavens have been observed, when the curtains of the evening have been drawn. Suddenly, a line of light arrests the eye, darting like an arrow through a varying extent of space, and in a moment the firmament is as sombre as before. The appearance is exactly that of a star falling from its sphere, and hence the popular title of shooting star applied to it. The apparent magnitudes of these meteorites are widely different, and also their brilliancy. Occasionally, they are far more resplendent than the brightest of the planets, and throw a very perceptible illumination upon the path of the observer. A second or two commonly suffices for the individual display, but in some instances it has lasted several minutes. In every climate it is witnessed, and at all times of the year, but most frequently in the autumnal months. As far back as records go, we meet with allusions to these swift and evanescent luminous travelers. Minerva's hasty flight from the peaks of Olympus to break the truce between the Greeks and Trojans, is compared by Homer to the emission of a brilliant star. Virgil, in the first book of the Georgics, mentions the shooting stars as prognosticating weather changes:

> "And on, before tempestuous winds arise,
> The seeming stars fall headlong from the skies,
> And, shooting through the darkness, gild the night
> With sweeping glories and long trains of light."

Various hypotheses have been framed to explain the nature and origin of these remarkable appearances. When electricity began to be understood, this was thought to afford a satisfactory explanation, and the shooting stars were regarded by Beccaria and Vassali as merely electrical sparks. When the inflammable nature of the gases became known, Lavosier and Volta supposed an accumulation of hydrogen in the higher regions of the atmosphere, because of its inferior density, giving rise by ignition to the meteoric exhibitions. While these theories of the older philosophers have been shown to be untenable, there is still great obscurity resting upon the question, though we have reason to refer the phenomena to a cause exterior to the bounds of our atmosphere. Upon this ground, the subject assumes a strictly astronomical aspect, and claims a place in a treatise on the economy of the solar system.

The first attempt accurately to investigate these elegant meteors was made by two university students, afterward Professors Brandes of Leipsic, and Benzenberg of Dusseldorf, in the year 1798. They selected a base line of 46,200 feet, somewhat less than nine English miles, and placed themselves at its extremities on appointed nights, for the purpose of ascertaining their average altitude and velocity. Out of twenty-two appearances identified as the same, they found,

7 under 45 miles
9 between 45 and 90 miles
5 above 90 miles
1 above 140 miles.

The greatest observed velocity gave twenty-five miles in a second. A more extensive plan was organized by Brandes in the year 1823, and carried into effect in the neighborhood of Breslaw. Out of ninety-eight appearances, the computed heights were,

4 under 15 miles
15 from 15 to 30 miles
22 from 30 to 45 miles

33 from 45 to 70 miles
13 from 70 to 90 miles
6 above 90 miles
5 from 140 to 460 miles.

The velocities were between eighteen and thirty-six miles in a second, an average velocity far greater than that of the earth in its orbit.

The rush of luminous bodies through the sky of a more extraordinary kind, though a rare occurrence, has repeatedly been observed. They are usually discriminated from shooting stars, and known by the vulgar as fire-balls; but probably both proceed from the same cause, and are identical phenomena. They have sometimes been seen of large volume, giving an intense light, a hissing noise accompanying their progress, and a loud explosion attending their termination. In the year 1676, a meteor passed over Italy about two hours after sunset, upon which Montanari wrote a treatise. It came over the Adriatic Sea as if from Dalmatia, crossed the country in the direction of Rimini and Leghorn, a loud report being heard at the latter place, and disappeared upon the sea toward Corsica. A similar visitor was witnessed all over England, in 1718, and forms the subject of one of Halley's papers to the Royal Society. Sir Hans Sloane was one of its spectators. Being abroad at the time of its appearance, at a quarter past eight at night, in the streets of London, his path was suddenly and intensely illuminated. This, he apprehended at first, might arise from a discharge of rockets; but found a fiery object in the heavens, moving after the manner of a falling star, in a direct line from the Pleiades to below the girdle of Orion. Its brightness was so vivid, that several times he was obliged to turn away his eyes from it. The stars disappeared, and the moon, then nine days old, and high near the meridian, the sky being very clear, was so effaced by the lustre of the meteor as to be scarcely seen. It was computed to have passed over three hundred geographical miles in a minute, at the distance of sixty miles above the surface, and was observed at different extremities of the kingdom. The sound of an explosion was heard through Devon and Cornwall, and along the opposite coast of Bretagne. Halley conjectured this and similar displays to proceed from combustible vapors aggregated on the outskirts of the atmosphere, and suddenly set on fire by some unknown cause. But since his time, the fact has been established, of the actual fall of heavy bodies to the earth from surrounding space, which requires another hypothesis. To these bodies the term aërolites is applied, signifying atmospheric stones, from αηρ, the atmosphere, and λιθος, a stone. While many meteoric appearances may simply arise from electricity, or from the inflammable gases, it is now certain, from the proved descent of aërolites, that such bodies are of extra-terrestrial origin.

Antiquity refers us to several objects as having descended from the skies, the gifts of the immortal gods. Such was the Palladium of Troy, the image of the goddess of Ephesus, and the sacred shield of Numa. The folly of the ancients in believing such narrations has often been the subject of remark; but, however fabulous the particular cases referred to, the moderns have been compelled to renounce their skepticism respecting the fact itself, of the actual transition of substances from celestial space to terrestrial regions; and no doubt the ancient faith upon this subject was founded on observed events. The following table, taken from the work of M. Izarn, *Des Pierres tombées du Ciel*, exhibits a collection of instances of the fall of aërolites, together with the eras of their descent, and the persons on whose evidence the facts rest; but the list might be largely extended.

Substance.	Place.	Period.	Authority.
Shower of stones	At Rome	Under Tullus Hostilius	Livy.
Shower of stones	At Rome	Consuls C. Martius and M. Torquatus	J. Obsequens.
Shower of iron	In Lucania	Year before the defeat of Crassus	Pliny.
Shower of mercury	In Italy		Dion.
Large stone	Near the river Negos, Thrace	Second year of the 78th Olympiad	Pliny.
Three large stones	In Thrace	Year before J. C. 452	Ch. of Count Marcellin.
Shower of fire	At Quesnoy	January 4, 1717	Geoffroy le Cadet.
Stone of 72lbs.	Near Larissa, Macedonia	January 1706	Paul Lucas.
About 1200 stones } — one of 120lbs. } Another of 60lbs. }	Near Padua in Italy	In 1510	Carden, Varcit.
Another of 59lbs.	On Mount Vasier, Provence	November 27, 1627	Gassendi.
Shower of sand for 15 hours	In the Atlantic	April 6, 1719	Père la Fuillée.
Shower of sulphur	Sodom and Gomorra		Moses.
Sulphurous rain	In the Duchy of Mansfield	In 1658	Spangenburgh.
The same	Copenhagen	In 1646	Olaus Wormius.
Shower of sulphur	Brunswick	October 1721	Siegesbær.
Shower of unknown matter	Ireland	In 1695	Muschenbroeck.
Two large stones, weighing 20lbs.	Liponas, in Bresse	September 1753	Lalande.
A stony mass	Niort, Normandy	In 1750	Lalande.
A stone of 7-1/2lbs.	At Luce, in Le Maine	September 13, 1768	Bachelay.
A stone	At Aire, in Artois	In 1768	Gursonde de Boyaval.
A stone	In Le Cotentin	In 1768	Morand.
Extensive shower of stones	Environs of Agen	July 24, 1790	St. Amand, Baudin, &c.
About twelve stones	Sienna, Tuscany	July 1794	Earl of Bristol.
A large stone of 56lbs.	Wold Cottage, Yorkshire	December 13, 1795	Captain Topham.
A stone of about 20lbs.	Sale, Department of the Rhone	March 17, 1798	Lelievre and De Drée.
A stone of 10lbs.	In Portugal	February 19, 1796	Southey.
Shower of stones	Benares, East Indies	December 19, 1798	J. Lloyd Williams, Esq.
Shower of stones	At Plaun, near Tabor, Bohemia	July 3, 1753	B. de Born.
Mass of iron, 70 cubic feet	America	April 5, 1800	Philosophical Mag.
Mass of iron, 14 quintals	Abakauk, Siberia	Very old	Pallas, Chladni, &c.
Shower of stones	Barboutan, near Roquefort	July 1789	Darcet Jun., Lomet, &c.
Large stone of 260lbs.	Ensisheim, Upper Rhine	November 7, 1492	Butenschoen.
Two stones, 200 and 300lbs.	Near Verona	In 1762	Acad. de Bourd.
A stone of 20lbs.	Sules, near Ville Franche	March 12, 1798	De Drée.
Several stones from 10 to 17lbs.	Near L'Aigle, Normandy	April 26, 1803	Fourcroy.

Some of the instances in the table are of sufficient interest to deserve a notice.

A singular relation respecting the stone of Ensisheim on the Rhine, at which philosophy once smiled incredulously, regarding it as one of the romances of the middle ages, may now be admitted to sober attention as a piece of authentic history. A homely narrative of its fall was drawn up at the time by order of the Emperor Maximilian, and deposited with the stone in the church. It may thus be rendered: "In the year of the Lord 1492, on Wednesday, which was Martinmas eve, the 7th of November, a singular miracle occurred; for, between eleven o'clock and noon, there was a loud clap of thunder, and a prolonged confused noise, which was heard at a great distance; and a stone fell from the air, in the jurisdiction of Ensisheim, which weighed two hundred and sixty pounds, and the confused noise was, besides, much louder than here. Then a child saw it strike on a field in the upper jurisdiction, toward the Rhine and Inn, near the district of Giscano, which was sown with wheat, and it did it no harm, except that it made a hole there: and then they conveyed it from that spot; and many pieces were broken from it; which the landvogt forbade. They, therefore, caused it to be placed in the church, with the intention of suspending it as a miracle: and there came here many people to see this stone. So there were remarkable conversations about this stone: but the learned said that they knew not what it was; for it was beyond the ordinary course of nature that such a large stone should smite the earth from the height of the air; but that it was really a miracle of God; for, before that time,

never any thing was heard like it, nor seen, nor described. When they found that stone, it had entered into the earth to the depth of a man's stature, which every body explained to be the will of God that it should be found; and the noise of it was heard at Lucerne, at Vitting, and in many other places, so loud that it was believed that houses had been overturned: and as the King Maximilian was here the Monday after St. Catharine's day of the same year, his royal excellency ordered the stone which had fallen to be brought to the castle, and, after having conversed a long time about it with the noblemen, he said that the people of Ensisheim should take it, and order it to be hung up in the church, and not to allow any body to take any thing from it. His excellency, however, took two pieces of it; of which he kept one, and sent the other to the Duke Sigismund of Austria: and they spoke a great deal about this stone, which they suspended in the choir, where it still is; and a great many people came to see it." Contemporary writers confirm the substance of this narration, and the evidence of the fact exists; the aërolite is precisely identical in its chemical composition with that of other meteoric stones. It remained for three centuries suspended in the church, was carried off to Colmar during the French revolution; but has since been restored to its former site, and Ensisheim rejoices in the possession of the relic. A piece broken from it is in the Museum of the *Jardin des Plantes* at Paris.

The celebrated Gassendi was an eye-witness of a similar event. In the year 1627, on the 27th of November, the sky being quite clear, he saw a burning stone fall in the neighborhood of Nice, and examined the mass. While in the air it appeared to be about four feet in diameter, was surrounded by a luminous circle of colors like a rainbow, and its fall was accompanied by a noise like the discharge of artillery. Upon inspecting the substance, he found it weighed 59 lbs., was extremely hard, of a dull, metallic color, and of a specific gravity considerably greater than that of common marble. Having only this solitary instance of such an occurrence, Gassendi concluded that the mass came from some of the mountains of Provence, which had been in a transient state of volcanic activity. Instances of the same phenomenon occurred in the years 1672, 1756, and 1768; but the facts were generally doubted by naturalists, and considered as electrical appearances, magnified by popular ignorance and timidity. A remarkable example took place in France in the year 1790. Between nine and ten o'clock at night, on the 24th of July, a luminous ball was seen traversing the atmosphere with great rapidity, and leaving behind it a train of light; a loud explosion was then heard, accompanied with sparks which flew off in all directions; this was followed by a shower of stones over a considerable extent of ground, at various distances from each other, and of different sizes. A *procès verbal* was drawn up, attesting the circumstance, signed by the magistrates of the municipality, and by several hundreds of persons inhabiting the district. This curious document is literally as follows: "In the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety, and the thirtieth day of the month of August, we, the Lieut. Jean Duby, mayor, and Louis Massillon, procurator of the commune of the municipality of La Grange-de-Juillac, and Jean Darmite, resident in the parish of La Grange-de-Juillac, certify in truth and verity, that on Saturday, the 24th of July last, between nine and ten o'clock, there passed a great fire, and after it we heard in the air a very loud and extraordinary noise; and about two minutes after there fell stones from heaven; but fortunately there fell only a very few, and they fell about ten paces from one another in some places, and in others nearer, and, finally, in some other places farther; and falling, most of them, of the weight of about half a quarter of a pound each, some others of about half a pound, like that found in our parish of La Grange; and on the borders of the parish of Creon, they were found of a pound weight; and in falling, they seemed not to be inflamed, but very hard and black without, and within of the color of steel: and, thank God, they occasioned no harm to the people, nor to the trees, but only to some tiles which were broken on the houses; and most of them fell gently, and others fell quickly, with a hissing noise; and some were found which had entered into the earth, but very few. In witness thereof, we have written and signed these presents. Duby, mayor. Darmite." Though such a document as this, coming from the unlearned of the district where the phenomenon occurred, was not calculated to win acceptance with the *savans* of the French capital, yet it was corroborated by a host of intelligent witnesses at Bayonne, Thoulouse, and Bordeaux, and by transmitted specimens

containing the substances usually found in atmospheric stones, and in nearly the same proportions. A few years afterward, an undoubted instance of the fall of an aërolite occurred in England, which largely excited public curiosity. This was in the neighborhood of Wold Cottage, the house of Captain Topham, in Yorkshire. Several persons heard the report of an explosion in the air, followed by a hissing sound; and afterward felt a shock, as if a heavy body had fallen to the ground at a little distance from them. One of these, a plowman, saw a huge stone falling toward the earth, eight or nine yards from the place where he stood. It threw up the mould on every side, and after penetrating through the soil, lodged some inches deep in solid chalk rock. Upon being raised, the stone was found to weigh fifty-six pounds. It fell in the afternoon of a mild but hazy day, during which there was no thunder or lightning; and the noise of the explosion was heard through a considerable district. It deserves remark, that in most recorded cases of the descent of projectiles, the weather has been settled, and the sky clear; a fact which plainly places them apart from the causes which operate to produce the tempest, and shows the popular term thunder-bolt to be an entire misnomer.

While this train of circumstances was preparing the philosophic mind of Europe to admit as a truth what had hitherto been deemed a vulgar error, and acknowledge the appearance of masses of ignited matter in the atmosphere occasionally descending to the earth, an account of a phenomenon of this kind was received from India, vouched by an authority calculated to secure it general respect. It came from Mr. Williams, F.R.S., a resident in Bengal. It stated that on December 19th, 1798, at eight o'clock in the evening, a large, luminous meteor was seen at Benares and other parts of the country. It was attended with a loud, rumbling noise, like an ill-discharged platoon of musketry; and about the same time, the inhabitants of Krakhut, fourteen miles from Benares, saw the light, heard an explosion, and immediately after the noise of heavy bodies falling in the neighborhood. The sky had previously been serene, and not the smallest vestige of a cloud had appeared for many days. Next morning, the mould in the fields was found to have been turned up in many spots; and unusual stones, of various sizes, but of the same substance, were picked out from the moist soil, generally from a depth of six inches. As the occurrence took place in the night, after the people had retired to rest, the explosion and the actual fall of the stones were not observed; but the watchman of an English gentleman, near Krakhut, brought him a stone the next morning, which had fallen through the top of his hut, and buried itself in the earthen floor. This event in India was followed, in the year 1803, by a convincing demonstration in France, which compelled the eminent men of the capital to believe, though much against their will. On Tuesday, April 26th, about one in the afternoon, the weather being serene, there was observed in a part of Normandy, including Caen, Falaise, Alençon, and a large number of villages, a fiery globe of great brilliancy moving in the atmosphere with great rapidity. Some moments after, there was heard in L'Aigle and in the environs, to the extent of more than thirty leagues in every direction, a violent explosion, which lasted five or six minutes. At first there were three or four reports, like those of a cannon, followed by a kind of discharge which resembled the firing of musketry; after which there was heard a rumbling like the beating of a drum. The air was calm, and the sky serene, except a few clouds, such as are frequently observed. The noise proceeded from a small cloud which had a rectangular form, and appeared motionless all the time that the phenomenon lasted. The vapor of which it was composed was projected in all directions at the successive explosions. The cloud seemed about half a league to the northeast of the town of L'Aigle, and must have been at a great elevation in the atmosphere, for the inhabitants of two hamlets, a league distant from each other, saw it at the same time above their heads. In the whole canton over which it hovered, a hissing noise like that of a stone discharged from a sling was heard, and a multitude of mineral masses were seen to fall to the ground. The largest that fell weighed 17-1/2 pounds; and the gross number amounted to nearly three thousand. By the direction of the Academy of Sciences, all the circumstances of this event were minutely examined by a commission of inquiry, with the celebrated M. Biot at its head. They were found in harmony with the preceding relation, and reported to the French minister of the interior. Upon analyzing the stones, they were found identical with those of Benares.

The following are the principal facts with reference to the aërolites, upon which general dependence may be placed. Immediately after their descent they are always intensely hot. They are covered with a fused black incrustation, consisting chiefly of oxide of iron; and, what is most remarkable, their chemical analysis develops the same substances in nearly the same proportions, though one may have reached the earth in India and another in England. Their specific gravities are about the same; considering 1000 as the proportionate number for the specific gravity of water, that of some of the aërolites has been found to be,

Ensisheim stone3233
Benares3352
Sienna3418
Gassendi's3456
Yorkshire3508
Bachelay's3535
Bohemia4281

The greater specific gravity of the Bohemian stone arose from its containing a greater proportion of iron. An analysis of one of the stones that fell at L'Aigle gives:

Silica46 per cent
Magnesia10 "
Iron45 "
Nickel 2 "
Sulphur 5 "
Zinc 1 "

Iron is found in all these bodies, and in a considerable quantity, with the rare metal nickel. It is a singular fact, that though a chemical examination of their composition has not discovered any substance with which we were not previously acquainted, yet no other bodies have yet been found, native to the earth, which contain the same ingredients combined. Neither products of the volcanoes, whether extinct or in action, nor the stratified or unstratified rocks, have exhibited a sample of that combination of metallic and earthy substances which the meteoric stones present. During the era that science has admitted their path to the earth as a physical truth, scarcely amounting to half a century, few years have elapsed without a known instance of descent occurring in some region of the globe. To Izarn's list, previously given, upward of seventy cases might be added, which have transpired during the last forty years. A report relating to one of the most recent, which fell in a valley near the Cape of Good Hope, with the affidavits of the witnesses, was communicated to the Royal Society, by Sir John Herschel, in March, 1840. Previously to the descent of the aërolites, the usual sound of explosion was heard, and some of the fragments falling upon grass, caused it instantly to smoke, and were too hot to admit of being touched. When, however, we consider the wide range of the ocean, and the vast unoccupied regions of the globe, its mountains, deserts, and forests, we can hardly fail to admit that the observed cases of descent must form but a small proportion of the actual number; and obviously in countries upon which the human race are thickly planted many may escape notice through descending in the night, and will lie imbedded in the soil till some accidental circumstance exposes their existence. Some, too, are no doubt completely fused and dissipated in the atmosphere, while others move by us horizontally, as brilliant lights, and pass into the depths of space. The volume of some of these passing bodies is very great. One which traveled within twenty-five miles of the surface, and cast down a fragment, was suppose to weigh upward of half a million of tons. But for its great velocity, the whole mass would have been precipitated to the earth. Two aërolites fell at Braunau, in Bohemia, July 14, 1847.

In addition to aërolites, properly so called, or bodies known to have come to us from outlying space, large metallic masses exist in various parts of the world, lying in insulated situations, far

remote from the abodes of civilization, whose chemical composition is closely analogous to that of the substances the descent of which has been witnessed. These circumstances leave no doubt as to their common origin. Pallas discovered an immense mass of malleable iron, mixed with nickel, at a considerable elevation on a mountain of slate in Siberia, a site plainly irreconcilable with the supposition of art having been there with its forges, even had it possessed the character of the common iron. In one of the rooms of the British Museum there is a specimen of a large mass which was found, and still remains, on the plain of Otumba, in the district of Buenos Ayres. The specimen alone weighs 1400 lbs., and the weight of the whole mass, which lies half buried in the ground, is computed to be thirteen tons. In the province of Bahia, in Brazil, another block has been discovered weighing upward of six tons. Considering the situation of these masses, with the details of their chemical analysis, the presumption is clearly warranted that they owe their origin to the same causes that have formed and projected the aërolites to the surface. With reference to the Siberian iron a general tradition prevails among the Tartars that it formerly descended from the heavens. A curious extract, translated from the Emperor Tchangire's memoirs of his own reign is given in a paper communicated to the Royal Society, which speaks of the fall of a metallic mass in India. The prince relates, that in the year 1620 (of our era) a violent explosion was heard at a village in the Punjaub, and at the same time a luminous body fell through the air on the earth. The officer of the district immediately repaired to the spot where it was said the body fell, and having found the place to be still hot, he caused it to be dug. He found that the heat kept increasing till they reached a lump of iron violently hot. This was afterward sent to court, where the emperor had it weighed in his presence, and ordered it to be forged into a sabre, a knife, and a dagger. After a trial the workmen reported that it was not malleable, but shivered under the hammer; and it required to be mixed with one third part of common iron, after which the mass was found to make excellent blades. The royal historian adds, that on the incident of this *iron of lightning* being manufactured, a poet presented him with a distich that, "during his reign the earth attained order and regularity; that raw iron fell from lightning, which was, by his world-subduing authority, converted into a dagger, a knife, and two sabres."

A multitude of theories have been devised to account for the origin of these remarkable bodies. The idea is completely inadmissible that they are concretions formed within the limits of the atmosphere. The ingredients that enter into their composition have never been discovered in it, and the air has been analyzed at the sea level and on the tops of high mountains. Even supposing that to have been the case, the enormous volume of atmospheric air so charged required to furnish the particles of a mass of several tons, not to say many masses, is, alone, sufficient to refute the notion. They can not, either, be projectiles from terrestrial volcanoes, because coincident volcanic activity has not been observed, and aërolites descend thousands of miles apart from the nearest volcano, and their substances are discordant with any known volcanic product. Laplace suggested their projection from lunar volcanoes. It has been calculated that a projectile leaving the lunar surface, where there is no atmospheric resistance, with a velocity of 7771 feet in the first second, would be carried beyond the point where the forces of the earth and the moon are equal, would be detached, therefore, from the satellite, and come so far within the sphere of the earth's attraction as necessarily to fall to it. But the enormous number of ignited bodies that have been visible, the shooting stars of all ages, and the periodical meteoric showers that have astonished the moderns, render this hypothesis untenable, for the moon, ere this, would have undergone such a waste as must have sensibly diminished her orb, and almost blotted her from the heavens. Olbers, was the first to prove the possibility of a projectile reaching us from the moon, but at the same he deemed the event highly improbable, regarding the satellite as a very peaceable neighbor, not capable now of strong explosions from the want of water and an atmosphere. The theory of Chladni will account generally for all the phenomena, be attended with the fewest difficulties, and, with some modifications to meet circumstances not known in his day, it is now widely embraced. He conceived the system to include an immense number of small bodies, either the scattered fragments of a larger mass, or original accumulations of matter, which, circulating

round the sun, encounter the earth in its orbit, and are drawn toward it by attraction, become ignited upon entering the atmosphere, in consequence of their velocity, and constitute the shooting stars, aërolites, and meteoric appearances that are observed. Sir Humphry Davy, in a paper which contains his researches on flame, strongly expresses an opinion that the meteorites are solid bodies moving in space, and that the heat produced by the compression of the most rarefied air from the velocity of their motion must be sufficient to ignite their mass so that they are fused on entering the atmosphere. It is estimated that a body moving through our atmosphere with the velocity of one mile in a second, would extricate heat equal to 30,000° of Fahrenheit – a heat more intense than that of the fiercest artificial furnace that ever glowed. The chief modification given to the Chladnian theory has arisen from the observed periodical occurrence of meteoric showers – a brilliant and astonishing exhibition – to some notices of which we proceed.

The writers of the middle ages report the occurrence of the stars falling from heaven in resplendent showers among the physical appearances of their time. The experience of modern days establishes the substantial truth of such relations, however once rejected as the inventions of men delighting in the marvelous. Conde, in his history of the dominion of the Arabs, states, referring to the month of October in the year 902 of our era, that on the night of the death of King Ibrahim ben Ahmed, an infinite number of falling stars were seen to spread themselves like rain over the heavens from right to left, and this year was afterward called the year of stars. In some Eastern annals of Cairo, it is related that "In this year (1029 of our era) in the month Redjeb (August) many stars passed, with a great noise, and brilliant light;" and in another place the same document states: "In the year 599, on Saturday night, in the last Moharrem (1202 of our era, and on the 19th of October), the stars appeared like waves upon the sky, toward the east and west; they flew about like grasshoppers, and were dispersed from left to right; this lasted till day-break; the people were alarmed." The researches of the Orientalist, M. Von Hammer, have brought these singular accounts to light. Theophanes, one of the Byzantine historians, records, that in November of the year 472 the sky appeared to be on fire over the city of Constantinople with the coruscations of flying meteors. The chronicles of the West agree with those of the East in reporting such phenomena. A remarkable display was observed on the 4th of April, 1095, both in France and England. The stars seemed, says one, "falling like a shower of rain from heaven upon the earth;" and in another case, a bystander, having noted the spot where an aërolite fell, "cast water upon it, which was raised in steam, with a great noise of boiling." The chronicle of Rheims describes the appearance, as if all the stars in heaven were driven like dust before the wind. "By the reporte of the common people, in this kynge's time (William Rufus)," says Rastel, "divers great wonders were sene – and therefore the king was told by divers of his familiars, that God was not content with his lyvyng, but he was so wilful and proude of minde, that he regarded little their saying." There can be no hesitation now in giving credence to such narrations as these, since similar facts have passed under the notice of the present generation.

The first grand phenomena of a meteoric shower which attracted attention in modern times was witnessed by the Moravian Missionaries at their settlements in Greenland. For several hours the hemisphere presented a magnificent and astonishing spectacle, that of fiery particles, thick as hail, crowding the concave of the sky, as though some magazine of combustion in celestial space was discharging its contents toward the earth. This was observed over a wide extent of territory. Humboldt, then traveling in South America, accompanied by M. Bonpland, thus speaks of it: "Toward the morning of the 13th November, 1799, we witnessed a most extraordinary scene of shooting meteors. Thousands of bodies and falling stars succeeded each other during four hours. Their direction was very regular from north to south. From the beginning of the phenomenon there was not a space in the firmament equal in extent to three diameters of the moon which was not filled every instant with bodies of falling stars. All the meteors left luminous traces or phosphorescent bands behind them, which lasted seven or eight seconds." An agent of the United States, Mr. Ellicott, at that time at sea between Cape Florida and the West India Islands, was another spectator, and thus describes the scene:

"I was called up about three o'clock in the morning, to see the shooting stars, as they are called. The phenomenon was grand and awful The whole heavens appeared as if illuminated with sky-rockets, which disappeared only by the light of the sun after daybreak. The meteors, which at any one instant of time appeared as numerous as the stars, flew in all possible directions, except from the earth, toward which they all inclined more or less; and some of them descended perpendicularly over the vessel we were in, so that I was in constant expectation of their falling on us." The same individual states that his thermometer, which had been at 80° Fahr. for four days preceding, fell to 56°, and, at the same time, the wind changed from the south to the northwest, from whence it blew with great violence for three days without intermission. The Capuchin missionary at San Fernando, a village amid the savannahs of the province of Varinas, and the Franciscan monks stationed near the entrance of the Oronoco, also observed this shower of asteroids, which appears to have been visible, more or less, over an area of several thousand miles, from Greenland to the equator, and from the lonely deserts of South America to Weimar in Germany. About thirty years previous, at the city of Quito, a similar event occurred. So great a number of falling stars were seen in a part of the sky above the volcano of Cayambaro, that the mountain itself was thought at first to be on fire. The sight lasted more than an hour. The people assembled in the plain of Exida, where a magnificent view presented itself of the highest summits of the Cordilleras. A procession was already on the point of setting out from the convent of Saint Francis, when it was perceived that the blaze on the horizon was caused by fiery meteors, which ran along the sky in all directions, at the altitude of twelve or thirteen degrees. In Canada, in the years 1814 and 1819, the stellar showers were noticed, and in the autumn of 1818 on the North Sea, when, in the language of one of the observers, the surrounding atmosphere seemed enveloped in one expansive ocean of fire, exhibiting the appearance of another Moscow in flames. In the former cases, a residiuum of dust was deposited upon the surface of the waters, on the roofs of buildings, and on other objects. The deposition of particles of matter of a ruddy color has frequently followed the descent of aërolites – the origin of the popular stories of the sky having rained blood. The next exhibition upon a great scale of the falling stars occurred on the 13th of November, 1831, and was seen off the coasts of Spain and in the Ohio country. This was followed by another in the ensuing year at exactly the same time. Captain Hammond, then in the Red Sea, off Mocha, in the ship Restitution, gives the following account of it; "From one o'clock A.M. till after daylight, there was a very unusual phenomenon in the heavens. It appeared like meteors bursting in every direction. The sky at the time was clear, and the stars and moon bright, with streaks of light and thin white clouds interspersed in the sky. On landing in the morning, I inquired of the Arabs if they had noticed the above. They said they had been observing it most of the night. I asked them if ever the like had appeared before? The oldest of them replied it had not." The shower was witnessed from the Red Sea westward to the Atlantic, and from Switzerland to the Mauritius.

We now come to by far the most splendid display on record; which, as it was the third in successive years, and on the same day of the month as the two preceding, seemed to invest the meteoric showers with a periodical character; and hence originated the title of the November meteors. The chief scene of the exhibition was included within the limits of the longitude of 61° in the Atlantic Ocean, and that of 100° in Central Mexico, and from the North American lakes to the West Indies. Over this wide area, an appearance presented itself, far surpassing in grandeur the most imposing artificial fire-works. An incessant play of dazzlingly brilliant luminosities was kept up in the heavens for several hours. Some of these were of considerable magnitude and peculiar form. One of large size remained for some time almost stationary in the zenith, over the Falls of Niagara, emitting streams of light. The wild dash of the waters, as contrasted with the fiery uproar above them, formed a scene of unequaled sublimity. In many districts, the mass of the population were terror-struck, and the more enlightened were awed at contemplating so vivid a picture of the Apocalyptic image – that of the stars of heaven falling to the earth, even as a fig-tree casting her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. A planter of South Carolina, thus describes the effect of the scene upon the ignorant

blacks: “I was suddenly awakened by the most distressing cries that ever fell on my ears. Shrieks of horror and cries for mercy I could hear from most of the negroes of three plantations, amounting in all to about six or eight hundred. While earnestly listening for the cause, I heard a faint voice near the door calling my name. I arose, and taking my sword, stood at the door. At this moment, I heard the same voice still beseeching me to rise, and saying, ‘O my God, the world is on fire!’ I then opened the door, and it is difficult to say which excited me most – the awfulness of the scene, or the distressed cries of the negroes. Upward of one hundred lay prostrate on the ground – some speechless, and some with the bitterest cries, but with their hands raised, imploring God to save the world and them. The scene was truly awful; for never did rain fall much thicker than the meteors fell toward the earth; east, west, north, and south, it was the same.”

This extraordinary spectacle commenced a little before midnight, and reached its height between four and six o’clock in the morning. The night was remarkably fine. Not a cloud obscured the firmament. Upon attentive observation, the materials of the shower were found to exhibit three distinct varieties: – 1. Phosphoric lines formed one class apparently described by a point. These were the most abundant. They passed along the sky with immense velocity, as numerous as the flakes of a sharp snow-storm. 2. Large fire-balls formed another constituency of the scene. These darted forth at intervals along the arch of the sky, describing an arc of 30° or 40° in a few seconds. Luminous trains marked their path, which remained in view for a number of minutes, and in some cases for half an hour or more. The trains were commonly white, but the various prismatic colors occasionally appeared, vividly and beautifully displayed. Some of these fire-balls, or shooting-stars, were of enormous size. Dr. Smith of North Carolina observed one which appeared larger than the full moon at the horizon. “I was startled,” he remarks, “by the splendid light in which the surrounding scene was exhibited, rendering even small objects quite visible.” The same, or a similar luminous body, seen at New Haven, passed off in a northwest direction, and exploded near the star Capella. 3. Another class consisted of luminosities of irregular form, which remained nearly stationary for a considerable time, like the one that gleamed aloft over the Niagara Falls. The remarkable circumstance is testified by every witness, that all the luminous bodies, without a single exception, moved in lines, which converged in one and the same point of the heavens; a little to the southeast of the zenith. They none of them started from this point, but their direction, to whatever part of the horizon it might be, when traced backward, led to a common focus. Conceive the centre of the diagram to be nearly overhead, and a proximate idea may be formed of the character of the scene, and the uniform radiation of the meteors from the same source. The position of this radiant point among the stars was near γ Leonis. It remained stationary with respect to the stars during the whole of the exhibition. Instead of accompanying the earth in its diurnal motion eastward, it attended the stars in their apparent movement westward. The source of the meteoric shower was thus independent of the earth’s rotation, and this shows its position to have been in the regions of space exterior to our atmosphere. According to the American Professor, Dr. Olmsted, it could not have been less than 2238 miles above the earth’s surface.

The attention of astronomers in Europe, and all over the world, was, as may be imagined, strongly roused by intelligence of this celestial display on the western continent; and as the occurrence of a meteoric shower had now been observed for three years successively, at a coincident era, it was inferred that a return of this fiery hail-storm might be expected in succeeding Novembers. Arrangements were therefore made to watch the heavens on the nights of the 12th and 13th in the following years at the principal observatories; and though no such imposing spectacle as that of 1833 has been witnessed, yet extraordinary flights of shooting stars have been observed in various places at the periodic time, tending also from a fixed point in the constellation Leo. They were seen in Europe and America on November 13th, 1834. The following results of simultaneous observation were obtained by Arago from different parts of France on the nights of November 12th and 13th, 1830:

Place.	Meteors.
Paris, at the Observatory	170
Dieppe	36
Arras	27
Strasburg	85
Von Altimarl	75
Angou	49
Rochefort	23
Havre	300

On November 12th, 1837, at eight o'clock in the evening, the attention of observers in various parts of Great Britain was directed to a bright, luminous body, apparently proceeding from the north, which, after making a rapid descent, in the manner of a rocket, suddenly burst, and scattering its particles into various beautiful forms, vanished in the atmosphere. This was succeeded by others all similar to the first, both in shape and the manner of its ultimate disappearance. The whole display terminated at ten o'clock, when dark clouds which continued up to a late hour, overspread the earth, preventing any further observation. In the November of 1838, at the same date, the falling stars were abundant at Vienna: and one of remarkable brilliancy and size, as large as the full moon in the zenith, was seen on the 13th by M. Verusmor, off Cherburg, passing in the direction of Cape La Hogue, a long, luminous train marking its course through the sky. The same year, the non-commissioned officers in the island of Ceylon were instructed to look out for the falling stars. Only a few appeared at the usual time; but on the 5th of December, from nine o'clock till midnight, the shower was incessant, and the number defied all attempts at counting them.

Professor Olmsted, an eminent man of science, himself an eye-witness of the great meteoric shower on the American continent, after carefully collecting and comparing facts, proposed the following theory: The meteors of November 13th, 1833, emanated from a nebulous body which was then pursuing its way along with the earth around the sun; that this body continues to revolve around the sun in an elliptical orbit, but little inclined to the plane of the ecliptic, and having its aphelion near the orbit of the earth; and finally, that the body has a period of nearly six months, and that its perihelion is a little within the orbit of Mercury. The diagram represents the ellipse supposed to be described, E being the orbit of the earth, M that of Mercury, and N that of the assumed nebula, its aphelion distance being about 95 millions of miles, and the perihelion 24 millions. Thus, when in aphelion, the body is close to the orbit of the earth, and this occurring periodically, when the earth is at the same time in that part of its orbit, nebulous particles are attracted toward it by its gravity, and then, entering the atmosphere, are consumed in it by their concurrent velocities, causing the appearance of a meteoric shower. The parent body is inferred to be nebular, because, though the meteors fall toward the earth with prodigious velocity, few, if any, appear to have reached the surface. They were stopped by the resistance of the air and dissipated in it, whereas, if they had possessed any considerable quantity of matter, the momentum would have been sufficient to have brought them down in some instances to the earth. Arago has suggested a similar theory, that of a stream or group of innumerable bodies, comparatively small, but of various dimensions, sweeping round the solar focus in an orbit which periodically cuts that of the earth. These two theories are in substance the Chladnian hypothesis, first started to explain the observed actual descent of aërolites. Though great obscurity rests upon the subject, the fact may be deemed certain that independently of the great planets and satellites of the system, there are vast numbers of bodies circling round the sun, both singly and in groups, and probably an extensive nebula, contact with which causes the phenomena of shooting stars, aërolites, and meteoric showers. But admitting the existence of such bodies to be placed beyond all doubt, the question of their origin, whether original accumulations of matter, old as the planetary orbs, or the dispersed trains of comets, or the remains of a ruined world, is a point beyond the power of the human understanding to reach.

A FIVE DAYS' TOUR IN THE ODENWALD

A SKETCH OF GERMAN LIFE

BY WILLIAM HOWITT

The Odenwald, or Forest of Odin, is one of the most primitive districts of Germany. It consists of a hilly, rather than a mountainous district, of some forty miles in one direction, and thirty in another. The beautiful Neckar bounds it on the south; on the west it is terminated by the sudden descent of its hills into the great Rhine plain. This boundary is well known by the name of the Bergstrasse, or mountain road; which road, however, was at the foot of the mountains, and not over them, as the name would seem to imply. To English travelers, the beauty of this Bergstrasse is familiar. The hills, continually broken into by openings into romantic valleys, slope rapidly down to the plain, covered with picturesque vineyards; and at their feet lie antique villages, and the richly-cultivated plains of the Rhine, here thirty or forty miles wide. On almost every steep and projecting hill, or precipitous cliff, stands a ruined castle, each, as throughout Germany, with its wild history, its wilder traditions, and local associations of a hundred kinds. The railroad from Frankfort to Heidelberg now runs along the Bergstrasse, and will ever present to the eyes of travelers the charming aspect of these old legendary hills; till the enchanting valley of the Neckar, with Heidelberg reposing amid its lovely scenery at its mouth, terminates the Bergstrasse, and the hills which stretch onward, on the way toward Carlsruhe, assume another name.

Every one ascending the Rhine from Mayence to Mannheim has been struck with the beauty of these Odenwald hills, and has stood watching that tall white tower on the summit of one of them, which, with windings of the river, seem now brought near, and then again thrown very far off; seemed to watch and haunt you, and, for many hours, to take short cuts to meet you, till, at length, like a giant disappointed of his prey, it glided away into the gray distance, and was lost in the clouds. This is the tower of Melibocus, above the village of Auerbach, to which we shall presently ascend, in order to take our first survey of this old and secluded haunt of Odin.

This quiet region of hidden valleys and deep forests extends from the borders of the Black Forest, which commences on the other side of the Neckar, to the Spessart, another old German forest; and in the other direction, from Heidelberg and Darmstadt, toward Heilbronn. It is full of ancient castles, and a world of legends. In it stands, besides the Melibocus, another tower, on a still loftier point, called the Katzenbuckel, which overlooks a vast extent of these forest hills. Near this lies Eberbach, a castle of the descendants of Charlemagne, which we shall visit; the scenes of the legend of the Wild Huntsman; the castles of Götz von Berlichingen, and many another spot familiar by its fame to our minds from childhood. But besides this, the inhabitants are a people living in a world of their own; retaining all the simplicity of their abodes and habits; and it is only in such a region that you now recognize the pictures of German life such as you find them in the *Haus Märchen* of the brothers Grimm.

In order to make ourselves somewhat acquainted with this interesting district, Mrs. Howitt and myself, with knapsack on back, set out at the end of August, 1841, to make a few days' ramble on foot through it. The weather, however, proved so intensely hot, and the electrical sultriness of the woods so oppressive, that we only footed it one day, when we were compelled to make use of a carriage, much to our regret.

On the last day in August we drove with a party of friends, and our children, to Weinheim; rambled through its vineyards, ascended to its ancient castle, and then went on to Birkenau Thal, a charming valley, celebrated, as its name denotes, for its lovely hanging birches, under which, with much happy mirth, we dined.

Scrambling among the hills, and winding up the dry footpaths, among the vineyards of this neighborhood, we were yet more delighted with the general beauty of the scenery, and with the wild-flowers which every where adorned the hanging cliffs and warm waysides. The marjorum stood in ruddy and fragrant masses; harebells and campanulas of several kinds, that are cultivated in our gardens, with bells large and clear; crimson pinks; the Michaelmas daisy; a plant with a thin, radiated yellow flower, of the character of an aster; a centaurea of a light purple, handsomer than any English one; a thistle in the dryest places, resembling an eryngo, with a thick, bushy top; mulleins, yellow and white; the wild mignonnette, and the white convolvulus; and clematis festooning the bushes, recalled the flowery fields and lanes of England, and yet told us that we were not there. The meadows had also their moist emerald sward scattered with the grass of Parnassus, and an autumnal crocus of a particularly delicate lilac.

At the inn, at the mouth of Birkenau Thal, we proposed to take the eilwagen as far as Auerbach, but that not arriving, we availed ourselves of a peasant's light wicker wagon. The owner was a merry fellow, and had a particularly spirited black horse; and taking leave of our friends, after a delightful day, we had a most charming drive to Auerbach, and one equally amusing, from the conversation of our driver.

After tea we ascended to Auerbach Castle, which occupies a hill above the town, still far overtopped, however, by the height of Melibocus. The view was glorious. The sunset across the great Rhine plain was magnificent. It diffused over the whole western sky an atmosphere of intense crimson light, with scattered golden clouds, and surrounded by a deep violet splendor. The extremities of the plain, from the eye being dazzled with this central effulgence, lay in a solemn and nearly impenetrable gloom. The castle in ruins, seen by this light, looked peculiarly beautiful and impressive. In the court on the wall was an inscription, purporting that a society in honor of the military career of the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt, in whose territory and in that of Baden the Odenwald chiefly lies, had here celebrated his birthday in the preceding July. Round the inscription hung oaken garlands, within each of which was written the name and date of the battles in which he had been engaged against the French. An altar of moss and stones stood at a few yards' distance in front of these memorials, at which a peasant living in the tower told us, the field-preacher had delivered an oration on the occasion.

In the morning, at five o'clock, we began to ascend the neighboring heights of Melibocus. It took us an hour and a quarter. The guide carried my knapsack; and as we went, men came up through different footpaths in the woods, with hoes on their shoulders. When we arrived on the top, we found others, and among them some women, accompanied by a policeman. They were peasants who had been convicted of cutting wood for fuel in the hills, and were adjudged to pay a penalty, or in default, to work it out in hoeing and clearing the young plantations for a proportionate time – a much wiser way than shutting them up in a prison, where they are of no use either to themselves or the state.

The view from the tower, eighty feet in height, over the great Rhine plain, is immense and splendid, including two hundred villages, towns, and cities. The windings of the magnificent Rhine lie mapped out below you, and on its banks are seen, as objects of peculiar interest, the cathedral of Speier, the lofty dome of the Jesuits' church at Mannheim, and the four towers of the noble cathedral of Worms. In the remote distance, as a fitting termination to this noble landscape, are seen the heights of the Donnersberg, the Vosges, and the Schwarzwald.

The policeman, who followed us up into the tower, mentioned the time when the inhabitants of that district had hastened thither to watch the approach of the French armies, and pointed out the spot where they were first seen, and described their approach, and the terrors and anxieties of the people, in the most lively and touching manner.

The wind was strong on this lofty height, and the rattling of the shutters in the look-out windows in the tower, and of their fastenings, would have been dismal enough on a stormy night, and gave quite a wildness to it even then. The view over the Odenwald was beautiful. Half covered with wood, as far as you could see, with green, winding straths between them, distant castles, and glimpses of the white walls of low-lying dorfs or villages, it gave you an idea of a region at once solitary and attractive. The whole was filled with the cheerful light of morning, and the wooded hills looked of the most brilliant green. We descended, and pursued our way through the forest glades with that feeling of enjoyment which the entrance into an unknown region, pleasant companionship, and fine weather, inspire. When we issued from the woods which clothe the sides of Melibocus, we sate down on the heathy turf, and gazed with a feeling of ever-youthful delight on the scene around us. Above us, and over its woods, rose the square white tower of Melibocus; below, lay green valleys, from among whose orchards issued the smoke of peaceful cottages; and beyond, rose hills covered with other woods, with shrouded spots, the legends of which had reached us in England, and had excited the wonder of our early days – the castle of the Wild Huntsman – the traditions of the followers of Odin – and the strongholds of many an iron-clad knight, as free to seize the goods of his neighbors as he was strong to take and keep them. Now all was peaceful and Arcadian. We met, as we descended into the valley, young women coming up with their cows, and a shepherd with a mixed flock of sheep and swine. He had a belt around him, to which hung a chain, probably to fasten a cow to, as we afterward saw cows so secured.

We found the cottages, in the depths of the valleys, among their orchards, just those heavy, old-fashioned sort of things that we see in German engravings; buildings of wood-framing, the plaster panels of which were painted in various ways, and the windows of those circular and octagon panes which, from old association, always seem to belong to German cottages, just such as that in which the old witch lived in *Grimm's Kinder und Haus Märchen*; and in the *Folk Sagor* of Sweden and Norway. There were, too, the large ovens built out of doors and roofed over, such as the old giantess, *Käringen som vardt stekt i ugnen*, was put into, according to German and Scandinavian legends. The people were of the simplest character and appearance. We seemed at once to have stepped out of modern times into the far-past ages. We saw several children sitting on a bench in the open air, near a school-house, learning their lessons, and writing on their slates; and we wept into the school.

The schoolmaster was a man befitting the place; simple, rustic, and devout. He told us that the boys and girls, of which his school was full, came, some of them, from a considerable distance. They came in at six o'clock in the morning and staid till eight, had an hour's rest, and then came in till eleven, when they went home, and did not return again till the next morning, being employed the rest of the day in helping their parents; in going into the woods for fuel; into the fields to glean, tend cattle, cut grass, or do what was wanted. All the barefooted children of every village, how ever remote, thus acquire a tolerable education, learning singing as a regular part of it. They have what they call their *Sing-Stunde*, singing lesson, every day. On a black board the *Lied*, song, or hymn for the day, was written in German character in chalk; and the master, who was naturally anxious to exhibit the proficiency of his scholars, gave them their singing lesson while we were there. The scene was very interesting in itself; but there was something humiliating to our English minds, to think that in the Odenwald, a portion of the great Hyrcanian forest, a region associating itself with all that is wild and obscure, every child of every hamlet and cottage, however secluded, was provided with that instruction which the villages of England are in a great measure yet destitute of. But here the peasants are not, as with us, totally cut off from property in the soil which they cultivate; totally dependent on the labor afforded by others; on the contrary, they are themselves the possessors. This country is, in fact, in the hands of the people. It is all parceled out among the multitude; and, wherever you go, instead of the great halls, vast parks, and broad lands of the few, you see perpetual evidences of an agrarian system. Except the woods, the whole land is thrown into small allotments, and upon them the people are laboring busily for themselves.

Here, in the Odenwald, the harvest, which in the great Rhine plain was over in July, was now, in great measure, cut. Men, women, and children, were all engaged in cutting it, getting it in, or in tending the cattle. Everywhere stood the simple wagons of the country with their pair of yoked cows. Women were doing all sorts of work; reaping, and mowing, and threshing with the men. They were without shoes and stockings, clad in a simple, dark-blue petticoat; a body of the same, leaving the white chemise sleeves as a pleasing contrast; and their hair, in some instances, turned up under their little black or white caps; in others hanging wild and sunburnt on their shoulders. The women, old and young, work as hard as the men, at all kinds of work, and yet with right good-will, for they work for themselves. They often take their dinners with them to the fields, frequently giving the lesser children a piece of bread each, and locking them up in their cottages till they return. This would be thought a hard life in England; but hard as it is, it is better than the degradation of agricultural laborers, in a dear country like England, with six or eight shillings a week, and no cow, no pig, no fruit for the market, no house, garden, or field of their own; but, on the contrary, constant anxiety, the fear of a master on whom they are constantly dependent, and the desolate prospect of ending their days in a union work-house.

Each German has his house, his orchard, his road-side trees, so laden with fruit, that if he did not carefully prop up, and tie together, and in many places hold the boughs together with wooden clamps, they would be torn asunder by their own weight. He has his corn-plot, his plot for mangel-wurzel or hay, for potatoes, for hemp, etc. He is his own master, and he therefore, and every branch of his family, have the strongest motives for constant exertion. You see the effect of this in his industry and his economy.

In Germany, nothing is lost. The produce of the trees and the cows is carried to market. Much fruit is dried for winter use. You see wooden trays of plums, cherries, and sliced apples, lying in the sun to dry. You see strings of them hanging from their chamber windows in the sun. The cows are kept up for the greater part of the year, and every green thing is collected for them. Every little nook where the grass prows by roadside, and river, and brook, is carefully cut with the sickle, and carried home, on the heads of women and children, in baskets, or tied in large cloths. Nothing of any kind that can possibly be made of any use is lost. Weeds, nettles, nay, the very goose-grass which covers waste places, is cut up and taken for the cows. You see the little children standing in the streets of the villages, in the streams which generally run down them, busy washing these weeds before they are given to the cattle. They carefully collect the leaves of the marsh-grass, carefully cut their potato tops for them, and even, if other things fail, gather green leaves from the woodlands. One can not help thinking continually of the enormous waste of such things in England – of the vast quantities of grass on banks, by roadsides, in the openings of plantations, in lanes, in church-yards, where grass from year to year springs and dies, but which, if carefully cut, would maintain many thousand cows for the poor.

To pursue still further this subject of German economy. The very cuttings of the vines are dried and preserved for winter fodder. The tops and refuse of the hemp serve as bedding for the cows; nay, even the rough stalks of the poppies, after the heads have been gathered for oil, are saved, and all these are converted into manure for the land. When these are not sufficient, the children are sent into the woods to gather moss; and all our readers familiar with Germany will remember to have seen them coming homeward with large bundles of this on their heads. In autumn, the falling leaves are gathered and stocked for the same purpose. The fir-cones, which with us lie and rot in the woods, are carefully collected, and sold for lighting fires.

In short, the economy and care of the German peasant are an example to all Europe. He has for years – nay, ages – been doing that, as it regards agricultural management, to which the British public is but just now beginning to open its eyes. Time, also, is as carefully economized as every thing else. They are early risers, as may well be conceived, when the children, many of whom come from considerable distances, are in school at six in the morning. As they tend their cattle, or their swine,

the knitting never ceases, and hence the quantities of stockings, and other household things, which they accumulate, are astonishing.

We could not help, as often before, being struck in the Odenwald with the resemblance of the present country and life of the Germans to those of the ancient Hebrews. Germany, like Judea, is literally a land flowing with milk and honey: a land of corn, and vine, and oil. The plains are full of corn; the hill-sides, however stony, are green with vineyards; and though they have not the olive, they procure vast quantities of oil from the walnut, the poppy, and the rape. The whole country is parceled out among its people. There are no hedges, but the landmarks, against the removal of which the Jewish law so repeatedly and so emphatically denounces its terrors, alone indicate the boundaries of each man's possession. Every where you see the ox and the heifer toiling beneath the primitive yoke, as in the days of David. The threshing-floor of Araunah often comes to your mind when you see the different members of a family – father, mother, brother, and sister, all threshing out their corn together on the mud floor of their barn; but much more so when you see them, in the corn-field itself, collect the sheaves into one place, and treading down the earth into a solid floor, there, in the face of heaven and fanned by its winds, thresh out on the spot the corn which has been cut. This we saw continually going forward on the steep slopes of the Odenwald, ten or a dozen men and women all threshing together. A whole field is thus soon threshed, the corn being beaten out much more easily while the ear is crisp with the hot sun.

Having taken leave of the schoolmaster, his scholars, and his bees, with whose hives nearly all his house-side was covered, we pursued our way to the Jägerhaus on the top of the Felsberg, one of the highest hills in the Odenwald. The day was splendid, with a fine breeze, and all around was new, cheerful, yet solitary, bright and inspiriting. The peasants in the harvest-fields, the herds watching their cattle, gave us a passing salutation, and when within sight of you, took off their hats, even at a field's distance. We walked on in great enjoyment, here sitting to look back on the scenes we had left, or to drink from the glittering waters that we had to pass.

Just as we were about to enter the woods again, we met an old woman slowly wandering on from some cottages among the trees by the wood-side. She had a leathern belt round her waist, and a cord fastened to it, by which she led her cow to graze in the thickets and by the foot-path, while her hands were busy with her knitting. A boy, about seven years old, was leading a kid by a chain, letting it crop the flowers of the hawkweed in the grass. The old woman saluted us cheerfully; told us that the boy's father was in America, and his mother gone out to service, and that he was intrusted to her care. Could there be any thing more like a scene in the old *Märchen*, or less like one in England?

[From Howitt's Country Year-Book.]

THE MYSTERIOUS PREACHER

In one of those strolls which I have always loved to take into different and little frequented parts of these kingdoms, I fell in with a venerable old man, dressed in black, with very white hair, and of a mild, somewhat melancholy and intelligent look. It was a beautiful scene where I first encountered him – in a wood, on the banks of a noble river. I accosted the old man with a remark on the delightfulness of the time and place; and he replied to my observations with a warmth, and in a tone, which strongly affected me. I soon found that he was as enthusiastic a lover of nature as myself – that he had seen many of the finest portions of the kingdom, and had wandered through them with Milton or Shakspeare, Herbert or Quarles, in his hand. He was one of those who, reading with his own eyes and heart, and not through the spectacles of critics, had not been taught to despise the last old poet, nor to treat his rich and quaint versification, and his many manly and noble thoughts, as the conceits and rhymes of a poetaster. His reverence for the great names of our literature, and his just appreciation of their works, won upon me greatly. I invited him to continue his walk; and – so well was I pleased with him – to visit me at my rustic lodgment.

From that day, for some weeks, we daily walked together. I more and more contemplated with admiration and esteem the knowledge, the fine taste, the generous sentiments, the profound love of nature which seemed to fill the whole being of the old man. But who and whence was he? He said not a word on that subject, and I did not, therefore, feel freedom to inquire. He might have secret griefs, which such a query might awaken. I respect too much the wounded heart of humanity carelessly to probe it, and especially the heart of a solitary being who, in the downward stage of life, may, perchance, be the stripped and scathed remnant of a once-endeared family. He stood before me alone. He entered into reminiscences, but they were reminiscences connected with no near ties; but had such ties now existed, he would in some hour of frank enthusiasm have said so. He did not say it, and it was, therefore, sufficiently obvious, that he had a history which he left down in the depths of his heart, beyond the vision of all but that heart itself. And yet, whatever were the inward memories of this venerable man, there was a buoyancy and youthfulness of feeling about him which amply manifested that they had not quenched the love and enjoyment of life in him.

On different days we took, during the most beautiful spring, strolls of many miles into distant dales and villages, and on the wild brown moors. Now we sate by a moorland stream, talking of many absorbing things in the history of the poetry and the religion of our country, and I could plainly see that my ancient friend had in him the spirit of an old Covenanter, and that, had he lived in the days of contest between the church of kings and the church of God, he would have gone to the field or the stake for his faith as triumphantly as any martyr of those times. It was under the influence of one of these conversations that I could not avoid addressing to the old man the following youthful stanzas, which, though they may exhibit little poetry, testify to the patriotism which his language inspired:

My friend! there have been men
To whom we turn again
After contemplating the present age,
And long, with vain regret,
That they were living yet,
Virtue’s high war triumphantly to wage.

Men whose renown was built
Not on resplendent guilt —
Not through life’s waste, or the abuse of power,
But by the dauntless zeal

With which at truth's appeal,
They stood unto the death in some eventful hour.

But he who now shall deem,
Because among us seem
No dubious symptoms of a realm's decline —
Wealth blind with its excess
'Mid far-diffused distress,
And pride that kills, professing to refine —

He who deems hence shall flow
The utter overthrow
Of this most honored and long happy land,
Little knows what there lies
Even beneath his eyes,
Slumbering in forms that round about him stand.

Little knows he the zeal
Myriads of spirits feel
In love, pure principle, and knowledge strong;
Little knows he what men
Tread this dear land again,
Whose souls of fire invigorate the throng.

My friend! I lay with thee
Beneath the forest tree,
When spring was shedding her first sweets around.
And the bright sky above
Woke feelings of deep love,
And thoughts which traveled through the blue profound.

I lay, and as I heard —
The joyful faith thus stirred,
Shot like Heaven's lightning through my wondering breast
I heard, and in my thought
Glory and greatness wrought,
And blessing God – my native land I blest.

Now we entered a village inn, and ate our simple luncheon; and now we stood in some hamlet lane, or by its mossy well, with a group of children about us, among whom not a child appeared more child-like or more delighted than the old man. Nay, as we came back from a fifteen or twenty miles' stroll, he would leap over a stile with the activity of a boy, or run up to a wilding bush, covered with its beautiful pink blossoms, and breaking off a branch hold it up in admiration, and declare that it appeared almost sinful for an old man like him to enjoy himself so keenly. I know not when I more deeply felt the happiness and the holiness of existence, the wealth of intellect, and the blessings of our fancies, sympathies, and affection, than I used to do as this singular stranger sate with me on the turf-seat at the vine-covered end of the old cottage, which then made my temporary residence, on the serene evenings of that season, over our rustic tea-table, and with the spicy breath of the wall-flowers of that little garden breathing around us, and held conversation on many a subject of moral

and intellectual speculation which then deeply interested me. In some of those evening hours he at length gave me glimpses into his past existence. Things more strange and melancholy than I could ever have suspected had passed over him, and only the more interested me in him.

Such had been our acquaintance for some months, when, one evening, happening to be in the neighboring town, and passing through a densely-populated part of it, I saw a number of people crowding into a chapel. With my usual curiosity in all that relates to the life, habits, and opinions of my fellow-men, I entered, and was no little surprised to behold my ancient friend in the pulpit. As I believed he had not observed me enter, and as I was desirous to hear my worthy friend, thus most unexpectedly found in this situation, without attracting his attention, I therefore seated myself in the shade of a pillar, and awaited the sermon. My surprise, as I listened to it, was excessive, on more accounts than one. I was surprised at the intense, fervid, and picturesque blaze of eloquence that breathed forth from the preacher, seeming to light up the whole place, and fill it with an unearthly and cloudy fire. I was more astonished by the singularity and wildness of the sentiments uttered. I looked again and again at the rapt and ecstatic preacher. His frame seemed to expand, and to be buoyed up, by his glowing enthusiasm, above the very height of humanity. His hair, white as snow, seemed a pale glory burning round his head, and his countenance, warm with the expression of his entranced spirit, was molten into the visage of a pleading seraph, who saw the terrors of the Divinity revealed before him, and felt only that they for whom he wrestled were around him. *They* hung upon that awful and unearthly countenance with an intensity which, in beings at the very bar of eternal judgment, hanging on the advocacy of an angel, could scarcely have been exceeded; and when he ceased, and sat down, a sigh, as from every heart at once, went through the place, which marked the fall of their rapt imaginations from the high region whither his words and expressive features had raised them, to the dimness and reality of earth. I could scarcely persuade myself that this was my late friend of the woods and fields, and of the evening discourse, so calm and dispassionate, over our little tea-table.

I escaped cautiously with the crowd, and eagerly interrogated a man who passed out near me who was the preacher? He looked at me with an air of surprise; but seeing me a stranger, he said he thought I could not have been in those parts long, or I should have known Mr. M – . I then learned that my venerable acquaintance was one whose name was known far and wide – known for the strange and fascinating powers of his pulpit eloquence, and for the peculiarity of his religious views. The singularity of those notions alone had prevented his becoming one of the most popular religious orators of his time. They had been the source of perpetual troubles and persecutions to him, they had estranged from him the most zealous of his friends from time to time; yet they were such only as he could lay down at the threshold of Divine judgment; and still, wherever he went, although they were a root of bitterness to him in private, he found in public a crowd of eager and enthusiastic hearers, who hung on his words as if they came at once warm from the inner courts of heaven.

The sense of this discovery, and of the whole strange scene of the last evening, hung powerfully upon me through the following day. I sat on the bench of my cottage window, with a book in my hand, the greater part of it, but my thoughts continually reverted to the image of the preacher in the midst of his audience; when, at evening, in walked the old man with his usual quiet smile, and shaking me affectionately by the hand, sat down in a wooden chair opposite me. I looked again and again, but in vain, to recognize the floating figure and the exalted countenance of the evening.

The old man took up my book, and began to read. A sudden impulse seized me which I have never ceased to regret. I did not wish abruptly to tell the old man that I had seen him in the pulpit, but I longed to discuss with him the ground of his peculiar views, and said,

“What do you think, my friend, of the actual future destiny of the – ?”

I made the question include his peculiar doctrines. He laid down the volume with a remarkable quickness of action. He gazed at me for a moment with a look humbled but not confused, such as I had never seen in him before, and, in a low voice, said,

“You were then at my chapel last night?”

"I was," I replied.

"I am sorry – I am sorry," he said, rising with a sigh. "It has been a pleasant time, but it is ended. Good-by, my dear young friend, and may God bless you!"

He turned silently but quickly away.

"Stop!" I cried. "Stop!" But he heard or heeded not. I ran to the gate to lay hold on him, and assure him that his sentiments would not alter my regard for him, but I observed him already hastening down the lane at such a speed that I judged it rude and useless at that moment to pursue.

I went down that day to his lodgings, to assure him of my sentiments toward him, but door and window were closed, and if he were in he would not hear me. Early next morning a little ragged boy brought me a note, saying a gentleman in the lane had given it to him. It simply said:

"Dear young friend, good-by. You wonder at my abruptness; but my religion has always been fatal to my friendship. You will say it would not with you: so has many another assured me; but I am too well schooled by bitter experience. I have had a call to a distant place. No one knows of it, and I trust the name to no one. The pleasure of your society has detained me, or I had obeyed the call a month ago. May we meet in Heaven! C.M."

He was actually gone, and no one knew whither.

Time had passed over, and I had long imagined this strange and gifted being in his grave, when in a wild and remote part of the kingdom, the other day, I accidentally stumbled upon his retreat, and found him in his pulpit with the same rapt aspect, uttering an harangue as exciting, and surrounded by an audience as eagerly devouring his words.

[From Chesney's Expedition to the Euphrates and Tigris.]

ASSYRIAN SECTS

There are two remarkable sects, one of which, called the Mendajaha (disciples of John), is found scattered in small communities in Basrah, Kurnah, Mohammarah, and, lastly, Sheikh el Shuyukh, where there are about three hundred families. Those of Basrah are noticed by Pietro de la Valle who says the Arabs call them Sabeans. Their religion is evidently a mixture of Paganism, Hebrew, Mohammedan, and Christian. They profess to regulate their lives by a book called the Sidra, containing many moral precepts, which, according to tradition, have been handed down from Adam, through Seth and Enoch; and it is understood to be in their language (the Chaldee), but written in a peculiar character. They abhor circumcision, but are very particular in distinguishing between clean and unclean animals, and likewise in keeping the Sabbath with extraordinary strictness. The Psalms of David are in use, but they are held to be inferior to their own book. They abstain from garlic, beans, and several kinds of pulse, and likewise most carefully from every description of food between sunrise and sunset during a whole moon before the vernal equinox; in addition to which, an annual festival is kept, called the feast of five days. Much respect is entertained for the city of Mecca, and a still greater reverence for the Pyramids of Egypt, in one of which they believe that their great progenitor, Saba, son of Seth, is buried; and to his original residence at Haran they make very particular pilgrimages, sacrificing on these occasions a ram and a hen. They pray seven times a day, turning sometimes to the south and sometimes to the north. But, at the same time, they retain a part of the ancient worship of the heavenly bodies, adding that of angels, with the belief that the souls of the wicked are to enjoy a happier state after nine hundred centuries of suffering. The priests, who are called sheikhs, or chiefs, use a particular kind of baptism, which, they say, was instituted by St. John; and the Chaldee language is used in this and other ceremonies.

The other religion, that of a more numerous branch, the Yezidis, is, in some respects, like the Mendajaha, but with the addition of the evil principle, the exalted doctor, who, as an instrument of the divine will, is propitiated rather than worshiped, as had been once supposed. The Yezidis reverence Moses, Christ, and Mohammed, in addition to many of the saints and prophets held in veneration both by Christians and Moslems. They adore the sun, as symbolical of Christ, and believe in an intermediate state after death. The Yezidis of Sinjar do not practice circumcision, nor do they eat pork; but they freely partake of the blood of other animals. Their manners are simple, and their habits, both within and without, remarkable for cleanliness. They are, besides, brave, hospitable, sober, faithful, and, with the exception of the Mohammedan, are inclined to tolerate other religions; they are, however, lamentably deficient in every branch of education. Polygamy is not permitted, and the tribes intermarry with each other. The families of the father and sons live under the same roof, and the patriarchal system is carried out still further, each village being under its own hereditary chief.

THE APPROACH OF CHRISTMAS

The time draws near the birth of Christ,
The moon is hid, the night is still;
A single church below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the mist

A single peal of bells below,
That wakens at this hour of rest
A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
In lands where not a memory strays,
Nor landmark breathes of other days.
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

Tennyson's "In Memoriam".

[From Dickens's Household Words.]

UGLINESS REDEEMED – A TALE OF A LONDON DUST-HEAP

On a murky morning in November, wind northeast, a poor old woman with a wooden leg was seen struggling against the fitful gusts of the bitter breeze, along a stony, zig-zag road full of deep and irregular cart-ruts. Her ragged petticoat was blue, and so was her wretched nose. A stick was in her left hand, which assisted her to dig and hobble her way along; and in her other hand, supported also beneath her withered arm, was a large, rusty, iron sieve. Dust and fine ashes filled up all the wrinkles in her face; and of these there were a prodigious number, for she was eighty-three years old. Her name was Peg Dotting.

About a quarter of a mile distant, having a long ditch and a broken-down fence as a foreground, there rose against the muddled-gray sky, a huge dust-heap of a dirty-black color – being, in fact, one of those immense mounds of cinders, ashes, and other emptyings from dust-holes and bins, which have conferred celebrity on certain suburban neighborhoods of a great city. Toward this dusky mountain old Peg Dotting was now making her way.

Advancing toward the dust-heap by an opposite path, very narrow and just reclaimed from the mud by a thick layer of freshly broken flints, there came at the same time Gaffer Doubleyear, with his bone-bag slung over his shoulder. The rags of his coat fluttered in the east-wind, which also whistled keenly round his almost rimless hat, and troubled his one eye. The other eye, having met with an accident last week, he had covered neatly with an oyster-shell, which was kept in its place by a string at each side, fastened through a hole. He used no staff to help him along, though his body was nearly bent double, so that his face was constantly turned to the earth, like that of a four-footed creature. He was ninety-seven years of age.

As these two patriarchal laborers approached the great dust-heap, a discordant voice hallooed to them from the top of a broken wall. It was meant as a greeting of the morning, and proceeded from little Jem Clinker, a poor deformed lad, whose back had been broken when a child. His nose and chin were much too large for the rest of his face, and he had lost nearly all his teeth from premature decay. But he had an eye gleaming with intelligence and life, and an expression at once patient and hopeful. He had balanced his misshapen frame on the top of the old wall, over which one shriveled leg dangled, as if by the weight of a hob-nailed boot, that covered a foot large enough for a plowman.

In addition to his first morning's salutation of his two aged friends, he now shouted out in a tone of triumph and self-gratulation, in which he felt assured of their sympathy – "Two white skins, and a tor'shell-un."

It may be requisite to state that little Jem Clinker belonged to the dead-cat department of the dust-heap, and now announced that a prize of three skins, in superior condition, had rewarded him for being first in the field. He was enjoying a seat on the wall in order to recover himself from the excitement of his good fortune.

At the base of the great dust-heap the two old people now met their young friend – a sort of great-grandson by mutual adoption – and they at once joined the party who had by this time assembled as usual, and were already busy at their several occupations.

But besides all these, another individual, belonging to a very different class, formed a part of the scene, though appearing only on its outskirts. A canal ran along at the rear of the dust-heap, and on the banks of its opposite side slowly wandered by – with hands clasped and hanging down in front of him, and eyes bent vacantly upon his hands – the forlorn figure of a man in a very shabby great-coat, which had evidently once belonged to one in the position of a gentleman. And to a gentleman it still belonged – but in *what* a position! A scholar, a man of wit, of high sentiment, of refinement, and a good fortune withal – now by a sudden "turn of law" bereft of the last only, and finding that

none of the rest, for which (having his fortune) he had been so much admired, enabled him to gain a livelihood. His title deeds had been lost or stolen, and so he was bereft of every thing he possessed. He had talents, and such as would have been profitably available had he known how to use them for this new purpose; but he did not; he was misdirected; he made fruitless efforts, in his want of experience; and he was now starving. As he passed the great dust-heap, he gave one vague, melancholy gaze that way, and then looked wistfully into the canal. And he continued to look into the canal as he slowly moved along, till he was out of sight.

A dust-heap of this kind is often worth thousands of pounds. The present one was very large and very valuable. It was in fact a large hill, and being in the vicinity of small suburb cottages, it rose above them like a great black mountain. Thistles, groundsel, and rank grass grew in knots on small parts which had remained for a long time undisturbed; crows often alighted on its top, and seemed to put on their spectacles and become very busy and serious; flocks of sparrows often made predatory descents upon it; an old goose and gander might sometimes be seen following each other up its side, nearly midway; pigs rooted round its base, and, now and then, one bolder than the rest would venture some way up, attracted by the mixed odors of some hidden marrow-bone enveloped in a decayed cabbage leaf – a rare event, both of these articles being unusual oversights of the searchers below.

The principal ingredient of all these dust-heaps is fine cinders and ashes; but as they are accumulated from the contents of all the dust-holes and bins of the vicinity, and as many more as possible, the fresh arrivals in their original state present very heterogeneous materials. We can not better describe them, than by presenting a brief sketch of the different departments of the searchers and sorters, who are assembled below to busy themselves upon the mass of original matters which are shot out from the carts of the dustmen.

The bits of coal, the pretty numerous results of accident and servants' carelessness, are picked out, to be sold forthwith; the largest and best of the cinders are also selected, by another party, who sell them to laundresses, or to braziers (for whose purposes coke would not do so well); and the next sort of cinders, called the *breeze*, because it is left after the wind has blown the finer cinders through an upright sieve, is sold to the brick-makers.

Two other departments, called the "soft-ware" and the "hard-ware," are very important. The former includes all vegetable and animal matters – every thing that will decompose. These are selected and bagged at once, and carried off as soon as possible, to be sold as manure for ploughed land, wheat, barley, &c. Under this head, also, the dead cats are comprised. They are, generally, the perquisites of the women searchers. Dealers come to the wharf, or dust-field, every evening; they give sixpence for a white cat, fourpence for a colored cat, and for a black one according to her quality. The "hard-ware" includes all broken pottery, pans, crockery, earthenware, oyster-shells, &c., which are sold to make new roads.

"The bones" are selected with care, and sold to the soap-boiler. He boils out the fat and marrow first, for special use, and the bones are then crushed and sold for manure.

Of "rags," the woolen rags are bagged and sent off for hop-manure; the white linen rags are washed, and sold to make paper, &c.

The "tin things" are collected and put into an oven with a grating at the bottom, so that the solder which unites the parts melts, and runs through into a receiver. This is sold separately; the detached pieces of tin are then sold to be melted up with old iron, &c.

Bits of old brass, lead, &c., are sold to be melted up separately, or in the mixture of ores.

All broken glass vessels, as cruets, mustard-pots, tumblers, wine-glasses, bottles, &c., are sold to the old-glass shops.

As for any articles of jewelry, silver-spoons, forks, thimbles, or other plate and valuables, they are pocketed off-hand by the first finder. Coins of gold and silver are often found, and many "coppers."

Meantime, every body is hard at work near the base of the great dust-heap. A certain number of cart-loads having been raked and searched for all the different things just described, the whole of it now undergoes the process of sifting. The men throw up the stuff, and the women sift it.

"When I was a young girl," said Peg Dotting —

"That's a long while ago, Peggy," interrupted one of the sifters: but Peg did not hear her.

"When I was quite a young thing," continued she, addressing old John Doubleyear, who threw up the dust into her sieve, "it was the fashion to wear pink roses in the shoes, as bright as that morsel of ribbon Sally has just picked out of the dust; yes, and sometimes in the hair, too, on one side of the head, to set off the white powder and salve-stuff. I never wore one of these head-dresses myself – don't throw up the dust so high, John – but I lived only a few doors lower down from those as *did*. Don't throw up the dust so high, I tell 'ee – the wind takes it into my face."

"Ah! There! What's that?" suddenly exclaimed little Jem, running as fast as his poor withered legs would allow him, toward a fresh heap, which had just been shot down on the wharf from a dustman's cart. He made a dive and a search – then another – then one deeper still. "I'm *sure* I saw it!" cried he, and again made a dash with both hands into a fresh place, and began to distribute the ashes, and dust, and rubbish on every side, to the great merriment of all the rest.

"What did you see, Jemmy?" asked old Doubleyear, in a compassionate tone.

"Oh, I don't know," said the boy, "only it was like a bit of something made of real gold!"

A fresh burst of laughter from the company assembled followed this somewhat vague declaration, to which the dustmen added one or two elegant epithets, expressive of their contempt of the notion that *they* could have overlooked a bit of any thing valuable in the process of emptying sundry dust-holes, and carting them away.

"Ah," said one of the sifters, "poor Jem's always a-fancying something or other good – but it never comes."

"Didn't I find three cats this morning!" cried Jem; "two on 'em white 'uns! How you go on!"

"I meant something quite different from the like o' that," said the other; "I was a-thinking of the rare sights all you three there have had, one time and another."

The wind having changed and the day become bright, the party at work all seemed disposed to be more merry than usual. The foregoing remark excited the curiosity of several of the sifters, who had recently joined the "company," the parties alluded to were requested to favor them with the recital; and though the request was made with only a half-concealed irony, still it was all in good-natured pleasantry, and was immediately complied with. Old Doubleyear spoke first.

"I had a bad night of it with the rats some years ago – they run'd all over the floor, and over the bed, and one on 'em come'd and guv a squeak close into my ear – so I couldn't sleep comfortable. I wouldn't ha' minded a trifle of at; but this was too much of a good thing. So, I got up before sun-rise, and went out for a walk; and thinking I might as well be near our work-place, I slowly come'd down this way. I worked in a brick-field at that time, near the canal yonder. The sun was just a-rising up behind the dust-heap as I got in sight of it; and soon it rose above, and was very bright; and though I had two eyes then, I was obligated to shut them both. When I opened them again, the sun was higher up; but in his haste to get over the dust-heap, he had dropped something. You may laugh. I say he had dropped something. Well – I can't say what it was, in course – a bit of his-self, I suppose. It was just like him – a bit on him, I mean – quite as bright – just the same – only not so big. And not up in the sky, but a-lying and sparkling all on fire upon the dust-heap. Thinks I – I was a younger man then by some years than I am now – I'll go and have a nearer look. Though you be a bit o' the sun, maybe you won't hurt a poor man. So, I walked toward the dust-heap, and up I went, keeping the piece of sparkling fire in sight all the while. But before I got up to it, the sun went behind a cloud – and as he went out-like, so the young 'un he had dropped, went out after him. And I had my climb up the heap for nothing, though I had marked the place were it lay very percizely. But there was no signs at all on him, and no morsel left of the light as had been there. I searched all about; but found nothing

'cept a bit o' broken glass as had got stuck in the heel of an old shoe. And that's my story. But if ever a man saw any thing at all, I saw a bit o' the sun; and I thank God for it. It was a blessed sight for a poor ragged old man of three score and ten, which was my age at that time."

"Now, Peggy!" cried several voices, "tell us what you saw. Peg saw a bit o' the moon."

"No," said Mrs. Dotting, rather indignantly; "I'm no moon-raker. Not a sign of the moon was there, nor a spark of a star – the time I speak on."

"Well – go on, Peggy – go on."

"I don't know as I will," said Peggy.

But being pacified by a few good-tempered, though somewhat humorous compliments, she thus favored them with her little adventure:

"There was no moon, nor stars, nor comet, in the 'versal heavens, nor lamp nor lantern along the road, when I walked home one winter's night from the cottage of Widow Pin, where I had been to tea, with her and Mrs. Dry, as lived in the almshouses. They wanted Davy, the son of Bill Davy the milkman, to see me home with the lantern, but I wouldn't let him 'cause of his sore throat. Throat! – no, it wasn't his throat as was rare sore – it was – no, it wasn't – yes, it was – it was his toe as was sore. His big toe. A nail out of his boot had got into it. I *told* him he'd be sure to have a bad toe, if he didn't go to church more regular, but he wouldn't listen; and so my words come'd true. But, as I was a-saying, I wouldn't let him light me with the lantern by reason of his sore throat —*toe*, I mean – and as I went along, the night seemed to grow darker and darker. A straight road, though, and I was so used to it by day-time, it didn't matter for the darkness. Hows'ever, when I come'd near the bottom of the dust-heap as I had to pass, the great dark heap was so zackly the same as the night, you couldn't tell one from t'other. So, thinks I to myself —*what* was I thinking of at this moment? – for the life o' me I can't call it to mind; but that's neither here nor there, only for this – it was a something that led me to remember the story of how the devil goes about like a roaring lion. And while I was a-hoping he might not be out a-roaring that night, what should I see rise out of one side of the dust-heap, but a beautiful shining star of a violet color. I stood as still – as stock-still as any I don't-know-what! There it lay, as beautiful as a new-born babe, all a-shining in the dust! By degrees I got courage to go a little nearer – and then a little nearer still – for, says I to myself, I'm a sinful woman, I know, but I have repented, and do repent constantly of all the sins of my youth, and the backslidings of my age – which have been numerous; and once I had a very heavy backsliding – but that's neither here nor there. So, as I was a-saying, having collected all my sinfulness of life, and humbleness before heaven, into a goodish bit of courage, forward I steps – little furder – and a leetle furder more —*un*-til I come'd just up to the beautiful shining star lying upon the dust. Well, it was a long time I stood a-looking down at it, before I ventured to do, what I arterwards did. But *at* last I did stoop down with both hands slowly – in case it might burn, or bite – and gathering up a good scoop of ashes as my hands went along, I took it up, and began a-carrying it home, all shining before me, and with a soft, blue mist rising up round about it. Heaven forgive me! – I was punished for meddling with what Providence had sent for some better purpose than to be carried home by an old woman like me, whom it has pleased heaven to afflict with the loss of one leg, and the pain, ixpinse, and inconvenience of a wooden one. Well – I *was* punished; covetousness had its reward; for, presently, the violet light got very pale, and then went out; and when I reached home, still holding in both hands all I had gathered up, and when I took it to the candle, it had turned into the red shell of a lobsky's head, and its two black eyes poked up at me with a long stare – and I may say, a strong smell too – enough to knock a poor body down."

Great applause, and no little laughter, followed the conclusion of old Peggy's story, but she did not join in the merriment. She said it was all very well for young people to laugh, but at her age she had enough to do to pray; and she had never said so many prayers, nor with so much fervency, as she had done since she received the blessed sight of the blue star on the dust-heap, and the chastising rod of the lobster's head at home.

Little Jem's turn now came; the poor lad was, however, so excited by the recollection of what his companions called "Jem's Ghost," that he was unable to describe it in any coherent language. To his imagination it had been a lovely vision – the one "bright consummate flower" of his life, which he treasured up as the most sacred image in his heart. He endeavored, in wild and hasty words, to set forth, how that he had been bred a chimney-sweep; that one Sunday afternoon he had left a set of companions, most on 'em sweeps, who were all playing at marbles in the church-yard, and he had wandered to the dust-heap, where he had fallen asleep; that he was awoke by a sweet voice in the air, which said something about some one having lost her way! – that he, being now wide awake, looked up, and saw with his own eyes a young angel, with fair hair and rosy cheeks, and large white wings at her shoulders, floating about like bright clouds, rise out of the dust! She had on a garment of shining crimson, which changed as he looked upon her to shining gold, then to purple and gold. She then exclaimed, with a joyful smile, "I see the right way!" and the next moment the angel was gone.

As the sun was just now very bright and warm for the time of the year, and shining full upon the dust-heap in its setting, one of the men endeavored to raise a laugh at the deformed lad, by asking him if he didn't expect to see just such another angel at this minute, who had lost her way in the field on the other side of the heap; but his jest failed. The earnestness and devout emotion of the boy to the vision of reality which his imagination, aided by the hues of sunset, had thus exalted, were too much for the gross spirit of banter, and the speaker shrank back into his dust-hovel, and affected to be very assiduous in his work as the day was drawing to a close.

Before the day's work was ended, however, little Jem again had a glimpse of the prize which had escaped him on the previous occasion. He instantly darted, hands and head foremost, into the mass of cinders and rubbish, and brought up a black mass of half-burnt parchment, entwined with vegetable refuse, from which he speedily disengaged an oval frame of gold, containing a miniature, still protected by its glass, but half covered with mildew from the damp. He was in ecstasies at the prize. Even the white cat-skins paled before it. In all probability some of the men would have taken it from, him "to try and find the owner," but for the presence and interference of his friends Peg Dotting and old Doubleyear, whose great age, even among the present company, gave them a certain position of respect and consideration. So all the rest now went their way, leaving the three to examine and speculate on the prize.

The dust-heaps are a wonderful compound of things. A banker's check for a considerable sum was found in one of them. It was on Herries and Farquhar, in 1847. But bankers' checks, or gold and silver articles, are the least valuable of their ingredients. Among other things, a variety of useful chemicals are extracted. Their chief value, however, is for the making of bricks. The fine cinder-dust and ashes are used in the clay of the bricks, both for the red and gray stacks. Ashes are also used as fuel between the layers of the clump of bricks, which could not be burned in that position without them. The ashes burn away, and keep the bricks open. Enormous quantities are used. In the brick-fields at Uxbridge, near the Drayton Station, one of the brickmakers alone will frequently contract for fifteen or sixteen thousand chaldron of this cinder-dust, in one order. Fine coke or coke-dust, affects the market at times as a rival; but fine coal, or coal-dust, never, because it would spoil the bricks.

As one of the heroes of our tale had been originally – before his promotion – a chimney-sweeper, it may be only appropriate to offer a passing word on the genial subject of soot. Without speculating on its origin and parentage, whether derived from the cooking of a Christmas dinner, or the production of the beautiful colors and odors of exotic plants in a conservatory, it can briefly be shown to possess many qualities both useful and ornamental. When soot is first collected, it is called "rough soot," which, being sifted, is then called "fine soot," and is sold to farmers for manuring and preserving wheat and turnips. This is more especially used in Herefordshire, Bedfordshire, Essex, &c. It is rather a costly article, being fivepence per bushel. One contractor sells annually as much as three thousand bushels; and he gives it as his opinion, that there must be at least one hundred and fifty times this quantity (four hundred and fifty thousand bushels per annum) sold in London. Farmer

Smutwise of Bradford, distinctly asserts that the price of the soot he uses on his land is returned to him in the straw, with improvement also to the grain. And we believe him. Lime is used to dilute soot when employed as a manure. Using it pure will keep off snails, slugs, and caterpillars, from peas and various other vegetables, as also from dahlias just shooting up, and other flowers; but we regret to add that we have sometimes known it kill, or burn up the things it was intended to preserve from unlawful eating. In short, it is by no means so safe to use for any purpose of garden manure, as fine cinders, and wood-ashes, which are good for almost any kind of produce, whether turnips or roses. Indeed, we should like to have one fourth or fifth part of our garden-beds composed of excellent stuff of this kind. From all that has been said, it will have become very intelligible why these dust-heaps are so valuable. Their worth, however, varies not only with their magnitude (the quality of all of them is much the same), but with the demand. About the year 1820, the Marylebone dust-heap produced between four thousand and five thousand pounds. In 1832, St. George's paid Mr. Stapleton five hundred pounds a year, not to leave the heap standing, but to carry it away. Of course he was only too glad to be paid highly for selling his dust.

But to return. The three friends having settled to their satisfaction the amount of money they should probably obtain by the sale of the golden miniature-frame, and finished the castles which they had built with it in the air, the frame was again enfolded in the sound part of the parchment, the rags and rottenness of the law were cast away, and up they rose to bend their steps homeward to the little hovel where Peggy lived, she having invited the others to tea that they might talk yet more fully over the wonderful good luck that had befallen them.

"Why, if there isn't a man's head in the canal!" suddenly cried little Jem. "Looky there! – isn't that a man's head? – Yes; it's a drowndedd man?"

"A drowndedd man, as I live!" ejaculated old Doubleyear.

"Let's get him out, and see!" cried Peggy. "Perhaps the poor soul's not quite gone."

Little Jem scuttled off to the edge of the canal, followed by the two old people. As soon as the body had floated nearer, Jem got down into the water, and stood breast-high, vainly measuring his distance with one arm out, to see if he could reach some part of the body as it was passing. As the attempt was evidently without a chance, old Doubleyear managed to get down into the water behind him, and holding him by one hand, the boy was thus enabled to make a plunge forward as the body was floating by. He succeeded in reaching it; but the jerk was too much for the weakness of his aged companion, who was pulled forward into the canal. A loud cry burst from both of them, which was yet more loudly echoed by Peggy on the bank. Doubleyear and the boy were now struggling almost in the middle of the canal with the body of the man swirling about between them. They would inevitably have been drowned, had not old Peggy caught up a long dust-rake that was close at hand – scrambled down up to her knees in the canal – clawed hold of the struggling group with the teeth of the rake, and fairly brought the whole to land. Jem was first up the bank, and helped up his two heroic companions; after which with no small difficulty, they contrived to haul the body of the stranger out of the water. Jem at once recognized in him the forlorn figure of the man who had passed by in the morning, looking so sadly into the canal, as he walked along.

It is a fact well known to those who work in the vicinity of these great dust-heaps, that when the ashes have been warmed by the sun, cats and kittens that have been taken out of the canal and buried a few inches beneath the surface, have usually revived; and the same has often occurred in the case of men. Accordingly the three, without a moment's hesitation, dragged the body along to the dust-heap, where they made a deep trench, in which they placed it, covering it all over up to the neck.

"There now," ejaculated Peggy, sitting down with a long puff to recover her breath, "he'll lie very comfortable, whether or no."

"Couldn't lie better," said old Doubleyear, "even if he knew it."

The three now seated themselves close by, to await the result.

"I thought I'd a lost him," said Jem, "and myself too; and when I pulled Daddy in arter me, I guv us all three up for this world."

"Yes," said Doubleyear, "it must have gone queer with us if Peggy had not come in with the rake. How d'yee feel, old girl; for you've had a narrow escape too. I wonder we were not too heavy for you, and so pulled you in to go with us."

"The Lord be praised!" fervently ejaculated Peggy, pointing toward the pallid face that lay surrounded with ashes. A convulsive twitching passed over the features, the lips trembled, the ashes over the breast heaved, and a low moaning sound, which might have come from the bottom of the canal, was heard. Again the moaning sound, and then the eyes opened, but closed almost immediately. "Poor dear soul!" whispered Peggy, "how he suffers in surviving. Lift him up a little. Softly. Don't be afeared. We're only your good angels, like – only poor cinder-sifters – don'tee be afeared."

By various kindly attentions and manœuvres such as these poor people had been accustomed to practice on those who were taken out of the canal, the unfortunate gentleman was gradually brought to his senses. He gazed about him, as well he might – now looking in the anxious, though begrimed, faces of the three strange objects, all in their "weeds" and dust – and then up at the huge dust-heap, over which the moon was now slowly rising.

"Land of quiet Death!" murmured he, faintly, "or land of Life, as dark and still – I have passed from one into the other; but which of ye I am now in, seems doubtful to my senses."

"Here we are, poor gentleman," cried Peggy, "here we are, all friends about you. How did 'ee tumble into the canal?"

"The Earth, then, once more!" said the stranger, with a deep sigh. "I know where I am, now. I remember this great dark hill of ashes – like Death's kingdom, full of all sorts of strange things, and put to many uses."

"Where do you live?" asked old Doubleyear; "shall we try and take you home, sir?"

The stranger shook his head mournfully. All this time, little Jem had been assiduously employed in rubbing his feet and then his hands; in doing which the piece of dirty parchment, with the miniature-frame, dropped out of his breast-pocket. A good thought instantly struck Peggy.

"Run, Jemmy dear – run with that golden thing to Mr. Spikechin, the pawnbroker's – get something upon it directly, and buy some nice brandy – and some Godfrey's cordial – and a blanket, Jemmy – and call a coach, and get up outside on it, and make the coachee drive back here as fast as you can."

But before Jemmy could attend to this, Mr. Waterhouse, the stranger whose life they had preserved, raised himself on one elbow, and extended his hand to the miniature-frame. Directly he looked at it, he raised himself higher up – turned it about once or twice – then caught up the piece of parchment; and uttering an ejaculation, which no one could have distinguished either as of joy or of pain, sank back fainting.

In brief, this parchment was a portion of the title-deeds he had lost; and though it did not prove sufficient to enable him to recover his fortune, it brought his opponent to a composition, which gave him an annuity for life. Small as this was, he determined that these poor people, who had so generously saved his life at the risk of their own, should be sharers in it. Finding that what they most desired was to have a cottage in the neighborhood of the dust-heap, built large enough for all three to live together, and keep a cow, Mr. Waterhouse paid a visit to Manchester-square, where the owner of the property resided. He told his story, as far as was needful, and proposed to purchase the field in question.

The great dust-contractor was much amused, and his daughter – a very accomplished young lady – was extremely interested. So the matter was speedily arranged to the satisfaction and pleasure of all parties. The acquaintance, however, did not end here. Mr. Waterhouse renewed his visits very frequently, and finally made proposals for the young lady's hand, she having already expressed her hopes of a propitious answer from her father.

"Well, sir," said the latter, "you wish to marry my daughter, and she wishes to marry you. You are a gentleman and a scholar, but you have no money. My daughter is what you see, and she has no money. But I have; and therefore, as she likes you, and I like you, I'll make you both an offer. I will give my daughter twenty thousand pounds – or you shall have the dust-heap. Choose!"

Mr. Waterhouse was puzzled and amused, and referred the matter entirely to the young lady. But she was for having the money, and no trouble. She said the dust-heap might be worth much, but they did not understand the business. "Very well," said her father, laughing, "then there's the money."

This was the identical dust-heap, as we know from authentic information, which was subsequently sold for forty thousand pounds, and was exported to Russia to rebuild Moscow.

SKETCHES OF ENGLISH CHARACTER

BY WILLIAM HOWITT

THE OLD SQUIRE

The old squire, or, in other words, the squire of the old school, is the eldest born of John Bull; he is the "very moral of him;" as like him as pea to pea. He has a tolerable share of his good qualities; and as for his prejudices – oh, they are his meat and drink, and the very clothes he wears. He is made up of prejudices – he is covered all over with them. They are the staple of his dreams; they garnish his dishes, they spice his cup, they enter into his very prayers, and they make his will altogether. His oaks and elms in his park, and in his woods – they are sturdy timbers, in troth, and gnarled and knotted to some purpose, for they have stood for centuries; but what are they to the towering upshoots of his prejudices? Oh, they are mere wands! If he has not stood for centuries, his prejudices have; for they have come down from generation to generation with the family and the estate. They have ridden, to use another figure, like the Old Man of the Sea, on the shoulders of his ancestors, and have skipped from those of one ancestor to those of the next; and there they sit on his own most venerable, well-fed, comfortable, ancient, and gray-eyed prejudices, as familiar to their seat as the collar of his coat. He would take cold without them; to part with them would be the death of him. So! don't go too near – don't let us alarm them; for, in truth, they have had insults, and met with impertinences of late years, and have grown fretful and cantankerous in their old age. Nay, horrid radicals have not hesitated, in this wicked generation, to aim sundry deadly blows at them; and it has been all that the old squire has been able to do to protect them. Then —

> You need not rub them backwards like a cat,
> If you would see them spirt and sparkle up.

You have only to give one look at them, and they will appear to all in bristles and fury, like a nest of porcupines.

The old squire, like his father, is a sincere lover and a most hearty hater. What does he love? Oh, he loves the country – 'tis the only country on the earth that is worth calling a country; and he loves the constitution. But don't ask him what it is, unless you want to test the hardness of his walking-stick; it is the constitution, the finest thing in the world, and all the better for being, like the Athanasian creed, a mystery. Of what use is it that the mob should understand it? It is our glorious constitution – that is enough. Are you not contented to feel how good it is, without going to peer into its very entrails, and perhaps ruin it, like an ignorant fellow putting his hand into the works of a clock? Are you not contented to let the sun shine on you? Do you want to go up and see what it is made of? Well, then, it is the constitution – the finest thing in the world; and, good as the country is, it would be good for nothing without it, no more than a hare would without stuffing, or a lantern without a candle, or the church without the steeple or the ring of bells. Well, he loves the constitution, as he ought to do; for has it not done well for him and his forefathers? And has it not kept the mob in their places, spite of the French Revolution? And taken care of the National Debt? And has it not taught us all to "fear God and honor the king;" and given the family estate to him, the church to his brother Ned, and put Fred and George into the army and navy? Could there possibly be a better constitution, if the Whigs could but let it alone with their Reform Bills? And, therefore, as he most reasonably loves the dear, old, mysterious, and benevolent constitution to distraction, and places it in the region of his veneration somewhere in the seventh heaven itself, so he hates every body and thing that hates it.

He hates Frenchmen because he loves his country, and thinks we are dreadfully degenerated that we do not nowadays find some cause, as the wisdom of our ancestors did, to pick a quarrel with them, and give them a good drubbing. Is not all our glory made up of beating the French and the Dutch? And what is to become of history, and the army and the fleet, if we go on this way? He does not stop to consider that the army, at least, thrives as well with peace as war; that it continues to

increase; that it eats, drinks, and sleeps as well, and dresses better, and lives a great deal more easily and comfortably in peace than in war. But, then, what is to become of history, and the drubbing of the French? Who may, however, possibly die of “envy and admiration of our glorious constitution.”

The old squire loves the laws of England; that is, all the laws that ever were passed by kings, lords, and commons, especially if they have been passed some twenty years, and he has had to administer them. The poor-law and the game-law, the impressment act, the law of primogeniture, the law of capital punishments; all kind of private acts for the inclosure of commons; turnpike acts, stamp acts, and acts of all sorts; he loves and venerates them all, for they are part and parcel of the statute law of England. As a matter of course, he hates most religiously all offenders against such acts. The poor are a very good sort of people; nay, he has a thorough and hereditary liking for the poor, and they have sundry doles and messes of soup from the Hall, as they had in his father’s time, so long as they go to church, and don’t happen to be asleep there when he is awake himself; and don’t come upon the parish, or send bastards there; so long as they take off their hats with all due reverence, and open gates when they see him coming. But if they presume to go to the Methodists’ meeting, or to a Radical club, or complain of the price of bread, which is a grievous sin against the agricultural interest; or to poach, which is all crimes in one – if they fall into any of these sins, oh, then, they are poor devils indeed! Then does the worthy old squire hate all the brood of them most righteously; for what are they but Atheists, Jacobins, Revolutionists, Chartists, rogues and vagabonds? With what a frown he scowls on them as he meets them in one of the narrow old lanes, returning from some camp meeting or other; how he expects every dark night to hear of ricks being burnt, or pheasants shot. How does he tremble for the safety of the country while they are at large; and with what satisfaction does he grant a warrant to bring them before him; and, as a matter of course, how joyfully, spite of all pleas and protestations of innocence, does he commit them to the treadmill, or the county jail, for trial at the quarter sessions.

He has a particular affection for the quarter sessions, for there he, and his brethren all put together, make, he thinks, a tolerable representation of majesty; and thence he has the satisfaction of seeing all the poachers transported beyond the seas. The county jail and the house of correction are particular pets of his. He admires even their architecture, and prides himself especially on the size and massiveness of the prison. He used to extend his fondness even to the stocks; but the treadmill, almost the only modern thing which has wrought such a miracle, has superseded it in his affections, and the ancient stocks now stand deserted, and half lost in a bed of nettles; but he still looks with a gracious eye on the parish pound, and returns the pinder’s touch of his hat with a marked attention, looking upon him as one of the most venerable appendages of antique institutions.

Of course the old squire loves the church. Why, it is ancient, and that is enough of itself; but, beside that, all the wisdom of his ancestors belonged to it. His great-great-uncle was a bishop; his wife’s grandfather was a dean; he has the presentation of the living, which is now in the hands of his brother Ned; and he has himself all the great tithes which, in the days of popery, belonged to it. He loves it all the better, because he thinks that the upstart dissenters want to pull it down; and he hates all upstarts. And what! Is it not the church of the queen, and the ministers, and all the nobility, and of all the old families? It is the only religion for a gentleman, and, therefore, it is his religion. Would the dissenting minister hob-nob with him as comfortably over the after-dinner bottle as Ned does, and play a rubber as comfortably with him, and let him swear a comfortable oath now and then? ’Tis not to be supposed. Besides, of what family is this dissenting minister? Where does he spring from? At what university did he graduate? ’Twon’t do for the old squire. No! the clerk, the sexton, and the very churchwardens of the time being, partake, in his eye, of the time-tried sanctity of the good old church, and are bound up in the bundle of his affections.

These are a few of the old squire’s likings and antipathies, which are just as much part of himself, as the entail is of his inheritance. But we shall see yet more of them when we come to see more of him and his abode. The old squire is turned of threescore, and every thing is old about him.

He lives in an old house in the midst of an old park, which has a very old wall, end gates so old, that though they are made of oak as hard as iron, they begin to stoop in the shoulders, like the old gentleman himself and the carpenter, who is an old man too, and has been watching them forty years in hopes of their tumbling, and gives them a good lusty bang after him every time he passes through, swears they must have been made in the days of King Canute. The squire has an old coach drawn by two and occasionally by four old fat horses, and driven by a jolly old coachman, in which his old lady and his old maiden sister ride; for he seldom gets into it himself, thinking it a thing fit only for women and children, preferring infinitely the back of Jack, his old roadster.

If you went to dine with him, you would find him just as you would have found his father; not a thing has been changed since his days. There is the great entrance hall, with its cold stone floor, and its fine tall-backed chairs, and an old walnut cabinet; and on the walls a quantity of stags' horns, with caps and riding-whips hung on them; and the pictures of his ancestors, in their antiquated dresses, and slender, tarnished, antiquated frames. In his drawing-room you will find none of your new grand pianos and fashionable couches and ottomans; but an old spinet and a fiddle, another set of those long-legged, tall-backed chairs, two or three little settees, a good massy table, and a fine large carved mantle-piece, with bright steel dogs instead of a modern stove, and logs of oak burning, if it be cold. At table, all his plate is of the most ancient make, and he drinks toasts and healths in tankards of ale that is strong enough to make a horse reel, but which he continually avows is as mild as mother's milk, and wouldn't hurt an infant. He has an old rosy butler, and loves very old venison, which fills the whole house with its perfume while roasting; and an old double-Gloucester cheese, full of jumpers and mites; and after it a bottle of old port, at which he is often joined by the parson, and always by a queer, quiet sort of a tall, thin man, in a seedy black coat, and with a crimson face, bearing testimony to the efficacy of the squire's port and "mother's milk."

This man is always to be seen about, and has been these twenty years. He goes with the squire a-coursing and shooting, and into the woods with him. He carries his shot-belt and powder-flask, and gives him out his chargings and his copper caps. He is as often seen about the steward's house; and he comes in and out of the squire's just as he pleases, always seating himself in a particular chair near the fire, and pinches the ears of the dogs, and gives the cat, now and then, a pinch of snuff as she lies sleeping in a chair; and when the squire's old lady says, "How *can* you do so, Mr. Wagstaff?" he only gives a quiet, chuckling laugh, and says, "Oh, they like it, madam; they like it, you may depend." That is the longest speech he ever makes, for he seldom does more than say "yes" and "no" to what is said to him, and still oftener gives only a quiet smile and a soft of little nasal "hum." The squire has a vast affection for him, and always walks up to the little chamber which is allotted to him, once a week, to see that the maid does not neglect it; though at table he cuts many a sharp joke upon Wagstaff, to which Wagstaff only returns a smile and a shake of the head, which is more full of meaning to the squire than a long speech. Such is the old squire's constant companion.

But we have not yet done with the squire's antiquities. He has an old woodman, an old shepherd, an old justice's clerk, and almost all his farmers are old. He seems to have an antipathy to almost every thing that is not old. Young men are his aversion; they are such coxcombs, he says, nowadays. The only exception is a young woman. He always was a great admirer of the fair sex; though we are not going to rake up the floating stories of the neighborhood about the gallantries of his youth; but his lady, who is justly considered to have been as fine a woman as ever stepped in shoe-leather, is a striking proof of his judgment in women. Never, however, does his face relax into such pleasantness of smiles and humorous twinkles of the eye, as when he is in company with young ladies. He is full of sly compliments and knowing hints about their lovers, and is universally reckoned among them "a dear old gentleman."

When he meets a blooming country damsel crossing the park, or as he rides along a lane, he is sure to stop and have a word with her. "Aha, Mary! I know you, there! I can tell you by your mother's eyes and lips that you've stole away from her. Ay, you're a pretty slut enough, but I remember your

mother. Gad! I don't know whether you are entitled to carry her slippers after her! But never mind, you're handsome enough; and I reckon you're going to be married directly. Well, well, I won't make you blush; so, good-by, Mary, good-by! Father and mother are both hearty – eh?"

The routine of the old squire's life may be summed up in a sentence: hearing cases and granting warrants and licenses, and making out commitments as justice; going through the woods to look after the growth, and trimming, and felling of his trees; going out with his keeper to reconnoitre the state of his covers and preserves; attending quarter sessions; dining occasionally with the judge on circuit; attending the county ball and the races; hunting and shooting, dining and singing a catch or glee with Wagstaff and the parson over his port. He has a large, dingy room, surrounded with dingy folios, and other books in vellum bindings, which he calls his library. Here he sits as justice; and here he receives his farmers on rent-days, and a wonderful effect it has on their imaginations; for who can think otherwise than that the squire must be a prodigious scholar, seeing all that array of big books? And, in fact, the old squire is a great reader in his own line. He reads the *Times* daily; and he reads Gwillim's "Heraldry," the "History of the Landed Gentry," Rapin's "History of England," and all the works of Fielding, Richardson, and Sterne, whom he declares to be the greatest writers England ever produced, or ever will produce.

But the old squire is not without his troubles. In his serious judgment all the world is degenerating. The nation is running headlong to ruin. "Lord, how different it was in my time!" is his constant exclamation. The world is now completely turned topsy-turvy. Here is the Reform Bill, the New Poor-law, which though it does make sharp work among the rogues and vagabonds, yet has sorely shorn the authority of magistrates. Here are the New Game-laws, Repeal of the Corn-laws, and the Navigation-laws; new books, all trash and nonsense; and these harum-scarum railroads, cutting up the country and making it dangerous to be riding out any where. "Just," says he, "as a sober gentleman is riding quietly by the side of his wood, bang! goes that 'hell-in-harness,' a steam-engine, past. Up goes the horse, down goes the rider to a souse in the ditch, and a broken collar bone."

Then all the world is now running all over the continent, learning all sorts of Frenchified airs and fashions and notions, and beggaring themselves into the bargain. He never set foot on the d – d, beggarly, frog-eating Continent – not he! It was thought enough to live at home, and eat good roast beef, and sing "God save the King," in his time; but now a man is looked upon as a mere clown who has not run so far round the world that he can seldom ever find his way back again to his estate, but stops short in London, where all the extravagance and nonsense in creation are concentrated, to help our mad gentry out of their wits and their money together. The old squire groans here in earnest; for his daughter, who has married Sir Benjamin Spankitt, and his son Tom, who has married the Lady Babara Ridemdown, are as mad as the rest of them.

Of Tom, the young squire, we shall take a more complete view anon. But there is another of the old squire's troubles yet to be noticed, and that is in the shape of an upstart. One of the worst features of the times is the growth and spread of upstarts. Old families going down, as well as old customs, and new people, who are nobody, taking their places. Old estates bought up – not by the old gentry, who are scattering their money in London, and among all the grinning monsieurs, mynheers, and signores, on the frogified continent, but by the soap-boilers and sugar-bakers of London. The country gentry, he avers, have been fools enough to spend their money in London, and now the people they have spent it among are coming and buying up all the estates about them. Ask him, as you ride out with him by the side of some great wood or venerable park, "What old family lives there?" "Old family!" he exclaims, with an air of angry astonishment; "old family! Where do you see old families nowadays? That is Sir Peter Post, the great horse-racer, who was a stable-boy not twenty years ago; and that great brick house on the hill there is the seat of one of the great Bearrings, who have made money enough among the bulls and bears to buy up the estates of half the fools hereabout. But that is nothing; I can assure you, men are living in halls and abbeys in these parts, who began their lives in butchers' shops and cobblers' stalls."

It might, however, be tolerated that merchants and lawyers, stock-jobbers, and even sugar-bakers and soap-boilers, should buy up the old houses; but the most grievous nuisance, and perpetual thorn in the old squire's side, is Abel Grundy, the son of an old wheelwright, who, by dint of his father's saving and his own sharpness, has grown into a man of substance under the squire's own nose. Abel began by buying odds and ends of lands and scattered cottages, which did not attract the squire's notice; till at length, a farm being to be sold, which the squire meant to have, and did not fear any opponent, Abel Grundy bid for it, and bought it, striking the old steward actually dumb with astonishment; and then it was found that all the scattered lots which Grundy had been buying up, lay on one side or other of this farm, and made a most imposing whole. To make bad worse, Grundy, instead of taking off his hat when he met the old squire, began now to lift up his own head very high; built a grand house on the land plump opposite to the squire's hall-gates; has brought a grand wife – a rich citizen's daughter; set up a smart carriage; and as the old squire is riding out on his old horse Jack, with his groom behind him, on a roan pony with a whitish mane and tail, the said groom having his master's great coat strapped to his back, as he always has on such occasions, drives past with a dash and a cool impudence that are most astonishing.

The only comfort that the old squire has in the case is talking of the fellow's low origin. "Only to think," says he, "that this fellow's father hadn't even wood enough to make a wheel-barrow till my family helped him; and I have seen this scoundrel himself scraping manure in the high roads, before he went to the village school in the morning, with his toes peeping out of his shoes, and his shirt hanging like a rabbit's tail out of his ragged trowsers; and now the puppy talks of 'my carriage,' and 'my footman,' and says that 'he and *his lady purpose* to spend the winter in *the* town,' meaning London!"

Wagstaff laughs at the squire's little criticism on Abel Grundy, and shakes his head; but he can not shake the chagrin out of the old gentleman's heart. Abel Grundy's upstart greatness will be the death of the old squire.

THE YOUNG SQUIRE

By smiling fortune blessed
With large demesnes, hereditary wealth.

Somerville.

The Old Squire and the Young Squire are the antipodes of each other. They are representatives of two entirely different states of society in this country; the one, but the vestige of that which has been; the other, the full and perfect image of that which is. The old squires are like the last fading and shriveled leaves of autumn that yet hang on the tree. A few more days will pass; age will send one of his nipping nights, and down they will twirl, and be swept away into the oblivious hiding-places of death, to be seen no more. But the young squire is one of the full-blown blossoms of another summer. He is flaunting in the sunshine of a state of wealth and luxury, which we, as our fathers in their days did, fancy can by no possibility be carried many degrees farther, and yet we see it every day making some new and extraordinary advance.

It is obvious that there are many intervening stages of society, among our country gentry, between the old squire and the young, as there are intermediate degrees of age. The old squires are those of the completely last generation, who have outlived their contemporaries, and have made a dead halt on the ground of their old habits, sympathies, and opinions, and are resolved to quit none of them for what they call the follies and new-fangled notions of a younger, and, of course, more degenerate race. They are continually crying, "Oh, it never was so in my day!" They point to tea, and stoves in churches, and the universal use of umbrellas, parasols, cork-soled shoes, warming-

pans, and carriages, as incontestible proofs of the rapidly-increasing effeminacy of mankind. But between these old veterans and their children, there are the men of the middle ages, who have, more or less, become corrupted with modern ways and indulgences; have, more or less, introduced modern furniture, modern hours, modern education, and tastes, and books; and have, more or less, fallen into the modern custom of spending a certain part of the year in London. With these we have nothing whatever to do. The old squire is the landmark of the ancient state of things, and his son Tom is the epitome of the new; all between is a mere transition and evanescent condition.

Tom Chesselton was duly sent by his father to Eton as a boy, where he became a most accomplished scholar in cricket, boxing, horses, and dogs, and made the acquaintance of several lords, who taught him the way of letting his father's money slip easily through his fingers without burning them, and engrafted him besides with a fine stock of truly aristocratic tastes, which will last him his whole life. From Eton he was duly transferred to Oxford, where he wore his gown and trencher-cap with a peculiar grace, and gave a classic finish to his taste in horses, in driving, and in ladies. Having completed his education with great *éclat*, he was destined by his father to a few years' soldiership in the militia, as being devoid of all danger, and moreover, giving opportunities for seeing a great deal of the good old substantial families in different parts of the kingdom. But Tom turned up his nose, or rather his handsome upper lip, with a most consummate scorn at so groveling a proposal, and assured his father that nothing but a commission in the Guards, where several of his noble friends were doing distinguished honor to their country, by the display of their fine figures, would suit him. The old gentleman shrugged his shoulders and was silent, thinking that the six thousand pounds purchase-money would be quite as well at fifteen per cent. in turnpike shares a little longer. But Tom, luckily, was not doomed to rusticate long in melancholy under his patrimonial oaks: his mother's brother, an old bachelor of immense wealth, died just in time, leaving Tom's sister, Lady Spankitt, thirty thousand pounds in the funds; and Tom, as heir-at-law, his great Irish estates. Tom, on the very first vacancy, bought into the Guards, and was soon marked out by the ladies as one of the most *distingué* officers that ever wore a uniform. In truth, Tom was a very handsome fellow; that he owed to his parents, who, in their day, were as noble-looking a couple as ever danced at a county-ball, or graced the balcony of a race-stand.

Tom soon married; but he did not throw himself away sentimentally on a mere face; he achieved the hand of the sister of one of his old college chums, and now brother-officer – the Lady Barbara Ridemdown. An earl's daughter was something in the world's eye; but such an earl's daughter as Lady Barbara, was the height of Tom's ambition. She was equally celebrated for her wit, her beauty, and her large fortune. Tom had won her from amid the very blaze of popularity and the most splendid offers. Their united fortunes enabled them to live in the highest style. Lady Barbara's rank and connections demanded it, and the spirit of our young squire required it as much. Tom Chesselton disdained to be a whit behind any of his friends, however wealthy or high titled. His tastes were purely aristocratic; with him, dress, equipage, and amusements, were matters of science. He knew, both from a proud instinct and from study, what was precisely the true *ton* in every article of dress or equipage, and the exact etiquette in every situation. But Lady Barbara panted to visit the Continent, where she had already spent some years, and which presented so many attractions to her elegant tastes. Tom had elegant tastes, too, in his way; and to the Continent they went. The old squire never set his foot on even the coast of Calais: when he has seen it from Dover, he has only wished that he could have a few hundred tons of gunpowder, and blow it into the air; but Tom and Lady Barbara have lived on the Continent for years.

This was a bitter pill for the old squire. When Tom purchased his commission in the Guards, and when he opened a house like a palace, on his wedding with Lady Barbara, the old gentleman felt proud of his son's figure, and proud of his connections. "Ah," said he, "Tom's a lad of spirit; he'll sow his wild oats, and come to his senses presently." But when he fairly embarked for France, with a troop of servants, and a suite of carriages, like a nobleman, then did the old fellow fairly curse and swear, and

call him all the unnatural and petticoat-pinioned fools in his vocabulary, and prophesy his bringing his ninepence to a groat. Tom and Lady Barbara, however, upheld the honor of England all over the Continent. In Paris, at the baths of Germany, at Vienna, Florence, Venice, Rome, Naples – every where, they were distinguished by their fine persons, their fine equipage, their exquisite tastes, and their splendid entertainments. They were courted and caressed by all the distinguished, both of their own countrymen and of foreigners. Tom's horses and equipage were the admiration of the natives. He drove, he rode, he yachted, to universal admiration; and, meantime, his lady visited all the galleries and works of art, and received in her house all the learned and the literary of all countries. There, you always found artists, poets, travelers, critics, *dilettanti*, and connoisseurs, of all nations and creeds.

They have again honored their country with their presence; and who so much the fashion as they? They are, of course, *au fait* in every matter of taste and fashion; on all questions of foreign life, manners, and opinions, their judgment is the law. Their town-house is in Eaton-square; and what a house is that! What a paradise of fairy splendor! what a mine of wealth, in the most superb furniture, in books in all languages, paintings, statuary, and precious fragments of the antique, collected out of every classical city and country. If you see a most exquisitely tasteful carriage, with a most fascinatingly beautiful lady in it, in the park, amid all the brilliant concourse of the ring, you may be sure you see the celebrated Lady Barbara Chesselton; and you can not fail to recognize Tom Chesselton the moment you clap eyes on him, by his distinguished figure, and the splendid creature on which he is mounted – to say nothing of the perfection of his groom, and the steed which he also bestrides. Tom never crosses the back of a horse of less value than a thousand pounds; and if you want to know really what horses are, you must go down to his villa at Wimbledon, if you are not lucky enough to catch a sight of him proceeding to a levee, or driving his four-in-hand to Ascot or Epsom. All Piccadilly has been seen to stand, lost in silent admiration, as he has driven his splendid britchzka along it, with his perfection of a little tiger by his side; and such cattle as never besides were seen in even harness of such richness and elegance. Nay, some scores of ambitious young whips became sick of their envy of his superb gauntlet driving-gloves.

But, in fact, in Tom's case, as in all others, you have only to know his companions to know him; and who are they but Chesterfield, Conyngham, D'Orsay, Eglintoun, my Lord Waterford, and men of similar figure and reputation. To say that he is well known to all the principal frequenters of the Carlton Club; that his carriages are of the most perfect make ever turned out by Windsor; that his harness is only from Shipley's; and that Stultz has the honor of gracing his person with his habiliments; is to say that our young squire is one of the most perfect men of fashion in England. Lady Barbara and himself have a common ground of elegance of taste, and knowledge of the first principles of genuine aristocratic life; but they have very different pursuits, arising from the difference of their genius, and they follow them with the utmost mutual approbation.

Lady Barbara is at once the worshiped beauty, the woman of fashion, and of literature. No one has turned so many heads, by the loveliness of her person, and the bewitching fascination of her manners, as Lady Barbara. She is a wit, a poetess, a connoisseur in art; and what can be so dangerously delightful as all these characters in a fashionable beauty, and a woman, moreover, of such rank and wealth? She does the honors of her house to the mutual friends and noble connections of her husband and herself with a perpetual grace; but she has, besides, her evenings for the reception of her literary and artistic acquaintance and admirers. And who, of all the throng of authors, artists, critics, journalists, connoisseurs, and amateurs, who flock there are not her admirers? Lady Barbara Chesselton writes travels, novels, novellets, philosophical reflections, poems, and almost every species of thing which ever has been written – such is the universality of her knowledge, experience, and genius: and who does not hasten to be the first to pour out in reviews, magazines, daily and hebdomadal journals, the earliest and most fervid words of homage and admiration? Lady Barbara edits an annual, and is a contributor to the "Keepsake;" and in her kindness, she is sure to find out all the nice young men about the press; to encourage them by her smile, and to raise them, by her

fascinating conversation and her brilliant saloons, above those depressing influences of a too sensitive modesty, which so weighs on the genius of the youth of this age; so that she sends them away, all heart and soul, in the service of herself and literature, which are the same thing; and away they go, extemporizing praises on her ladyship, and spreading them through leaves of all sizes, to the wondering eyes of readers all the world over. Publishers run with their unsalable manuscripts, and beg Lady Barbara to have the goodness to put her name on the title, knowing by golden experience that one stroke of her pen, like the point of a galvanic wire, will turn all the dullness of the dead mass into flame. Lady Barbara is not barbarous enough to refuse so simple and complimentary a request; nay, her benevolence extends on every hand. Distressed authors, male and female, who have not her rank, and, therefore, most clearly not her genius, beg her to take their literary bantlings under her wing; and with a heart, as full of generous sympathies as her pen is of magic, she writes but her name on the title as an "Open Sesame!" and lo! the dead become alive; her genius permeates the whole volume, which that moment puts forth wings of popularity, and flies into every bookseller's shop and every circulating library in the kingdom.

Such is the life of glory and Christian benevolence which Lady Barbara daily leads, making authors, critics, and publishers all happy together, by the overflowing radiance of her indefatigable and inexhaustible genius, though she sometimes slyly laughs to herself, and says, "What a thing is a title! if it were not for that, would all these people come to me?" While Tom, who is member of parliament for the little borough of Dearish, most patriotically discharges his duty by pairing off – visits the classic grounds of Ascot, Epsom, Newmarket, or Goodwood, or traverses the moors of Scotland and Ireland in pursuit of grouse. But once a year they indulge their filial virtues in a visit to the old squire. The old squire, we are sorry to say, has grown of late years queer and snappish, and does not look on this visit quite as gratefully as he should. "If they would but come," he says, "in a quiet way, as I used to ride over and see my father in his time, why I should be right glad to see them; but, here they come, like the first regiment of an invading army, and God help those who are old, and want to be quiet!"

The old gentleman, moreover, is continually haranguing about Tom's folly and extravagance. It is his perpetual topic to his wife, and wife's maiden sister, and Wagstaff. Wagstaff only shakes his head, and says, "Young blood! young blood!" but Mrs. Chesselton and the maiden sister say, "Oh! Mr. Chesselton, you don't consider: Tom has great connections, and he is obliged to keep a certain establishment. Things are different now to what they were in our time. Tom is universally allowed to be a very fine man, and Lady Barbara is a very fine woman, and a prodigious clever woman! and you ought to be proud of them, Chesselton." At which the old gentleman breaks out, if he be a little elevated over his wine:

When the Duke of Leeds shall married be
To a fine young lady of high quality,
How happy will that gentlewoman be
In his grace of Leeds good company!

She shall have all that's fine and fair,
And the best of silk and satin to wear;
And ride in a coach to take the air,
And have a house in St. James's-square.

Lady Barbara always professes great affection and reverence for the old gentleman, and sends him many merry and kind compliments and messages; and sends him, moreover, her new books as soon as they are out, most magnificently bound; but all won't do. He only says, "If she'd please me, she'd give up that cursed opera-box. Why, the rent of that thing – only to sit in and hear Italian

women squealing and squalling, and to see impudent, outlandish baggages kicking up their heels higher than any decent heads ought to be – the rent, I say, would maintain a parish rector, or keep half-a-dozen parish schools a-going." As for her books, that all the world besides are in raptures about, the old squire turns them over as a dog would a hot dumpling; says nothing but a Bible ought to be so extravagantly bound; and professes that "the matter may all be very fine, but he can make neither head nor tail of it." Yet, whenever Lady Barbara is with him, she is sure to talk and smile herself in about half an hour into his high favor; and he begins to run about to show her this and that, and calls out every now and then, "Let Lady Barbara see this, and go to look at that." She can do any thing with him, except get him to London. "London!" he exclaims; "no; get me to Bedlam at once! What has a rusty old fellow, like me, to do at London? If I could find again the jolly set that used to meet, thirty years ago, at the Star and Garter, Pall Mall, it might do; but London isn't what London used to be. It's too fine by half for a country squire, and would drive me distracted in twenty-four hours, with its everlasting noise and nonsense."

But the old squire does get pretty well distracted with the annual visit. Down come driving the young squire and Lady Barbara, with a train of carriages like a fleet of men-of-war, leading the way with their traveling-coach and four horses. Up they twirl to the door of old hall. The old bell rings a thundering peal through the house. Doors fly open – out come servants – down come the young guests from their carriages; and while embraces and salutations are going on in the drawing-room, the hall is fast filling with packages upon packages; servants are running to and fro along the passages; grooms and carriages are moving off to the stables without; there is lifting and grunting at portmanteaus and imperials, as they are borne up-stairs; while ladies' maids and nursemaids are crying out, "Oh, take care of that trunk!" "Mind that ban'-box!" "Oh, gracious! that is my lady's dressing-case; it will be down, and be totally ruined!" Dogs are barking; children crying, or romping about, and the whole house in the most blessed state of bustle and confusion.

For a week the hurly-burly continues; in pour all the great people to see Tom and Lady Barbara. There are shootings in the mornings, and great dinner parties in the evenings. Tom and my lady have sent down before them plenty of hampers of such wines as the old squire neither keeps nor drinks, and they have brought their plate along with them; and the old house itself is astonished at the odors of champagne, claret, and hook, that pervade, and at the glitter of gold and silver in it. The old man is full of attention and politeness, both to his guests and to their guests; but he is half worried with the children, and t'other half worried with so many fine folks; and muddled with drinking things that he is not used to, and with late hours. Wagstaff has fled – as he always does on such occasions – to a farm-house on the verge of the estate. The hall, and the parsonage, and even the gardener's house, are all full of beds for guests, and servants, and grooms. Presently, the old gentleman, in his morning rides, sees some of the young bucks shooting the pheasants in his home-park, where he never allows them to be disturbed, and comes home in a fume, to hear that the house is turned upside-down by the host of scarlet-breeched and powdered livery-servants, and that they have turned all the maids' heads with sweethearting. But, at length, the day of departure arrives, and all sweep away as suddenly and rapidly as they came; and the old squire sends off for Wagstaff, and blesses his stars that what he calls "the annual hurricane," is over.

But what a change will there be when the old squire is dead! Already have Tom and Lady Barbara walked over the ground, and planned it. That horrid fright of an old house, as they call it, will be swept as clean away as if it had not stood there five hundred years. A grand Elizabethean pile is already decreed to succeed it. The fashionable architect will come driving down in his smart Brougham, with all his plans and papers. A host of mechanics will come speedily after him, by coach or by wagon: booths will be seen rising all around the old place, which will vanish away, and its superb successor rise where it stood, like a magical vision. Already are ponderous cases lying loaded, in London, with massive mantle-pieces of the finest Italian marble, marble busts, and heads of old Greek and Roman heroes, genuine burial-urns from Herculaneum and Pompeii, and vessels of terra-

cotta, gloriously-sculptured vases, and even columns of verde antique – all from classic Italy – to adorn the walls of this same noble new house.

But, meantime, spite of the large income of Tom and Lady Barbara, the old squire has strange suspicions of mortgages, and dealings with Jews. He has actually inklings of horrid post-obits; and groans as he looks on his old oaks, as he rides through his woods and parks, foreseeing their overthrow; nay, he fancies he sees the land-agent among his quiet old farmers, like a wild-cat in a rabbit warren, startling them out of their long dream of ease and safety, with news of doubled rents, and notices to quit, to make way for threshing-machines, winnowing-machines, corn-crushers, patent ploughs, scufflers, scarifiers, and young men of more enterprise. And, sure enough, such will be the order of the day the moment the estate falls to the young squire. —*Country Year Book.*

[From Hogg's Instructor.]

PRESENCE OF MIND – A FRAGMENT

BY THOMAS DE QUINCEY

The Roman *formula* for summoning an earnest concentration of the faculties upon any object whatever, that happened to be critically urgent, was *Hoc age*, "Mind *this*!" or, in other words, do not mind *that—non illud age*. The antithetic formula was "*aliud* agere," to mind something alien, or remote from the interest then clamoring for attention. Our modern military orders of "*Attention!*" and "*Eyes strait!*" were both included in the "*Hoc age*." In the stern peremptoriness of this Roman formula we read a picturesque expression of the Roman character both as to its strength and its weakness – of the energy which brooked no faltering or delay (for beyond all other races the Roman was *natus rebus agendis*) – and also of the morbid craving for action, which was intolerant of any thing but the intensely practical.

In modern times, it is we of the Anglo-Saxon blood, that is, the British and the Americans of the United States, who inherit the Roman temperament with its vices and its fearful advantages of power. In the ancient Roman these vices appeared more barbarously conspicuous. We, the countrymen of Lord Bacon and Sir Isaac Newton, and at one time the leaders of austere thinking, can not be supposed to shrink from the speculative through any native incapacity for sounding its depths. But the Roman had a real inaptitude for the speculative: to *him* nothing was real that was not practical. He had no metaphysics; he wanted the metaphysical instinct. There was no school of *native* Roman philosophy: the Roman was merely an eclectic or *dilettanti* picking up the crumbs which fell from Grecian tables; and even mathematics was so repulsive in its sublimer aspects to the Roman mind, that the very word mathematics had in Rome collapsed into another name for the dotages of astrology. The mathematician was a mere variety of expression for the wizard or the conjurer.

From this unfavorable aspect of the Roman intellect it is but justice that we should turn away to contemplate those situations in which that same intellect showed itself preternaturally strong. To face a sudden danger by a corresponding weight of sudden counsel or sudden evasion —*that* was a privilege essentially lodged in the Roman mind. But in every nation some minds much more than others are representative of the national type: they are normal minds, reflecting, as in a focus, the characteristics of the race. Thus Louis XIV. has been held to be the idealized expression of the French character; and among the Romans there can not be a doubt that the first Cæsar offers in a rare perfection the revelation of that peculiar grandeur which belonged to the children of Romulus.

What *was* that grandeur? We do not need, in this place, to attempt its analysis. One feature will suffice for our purpose. The late celebrated John Foster, in his essay on decision of character, among the accidents of life which might serve to strengthen the natural tendencies to such a character, or to promote its development, rightly insists on *desertion*. To find itself in solitude, and still more to find itself thrown upon that state of abandonment by sudden treachery, crushes the feeble mind, but rouses a terrific reaction of haughty self-assertion in that order of spirits which matches and measures itself against difficulty and danger. There is something corresponding to this case of human treachery in the sudden caprices of fortune. A danger, offering itself unexpectedly in some momentary change of blind external agencies, assumes to the feelings the character of a perfidy accomplished by mysterious powers, and calls forth something of the same resentment, and in a gladiatorial intellect something of the same spontaneous resistance. A sword that breaks in the very crisis of a duel, a horse killed by a flash of lightning in the moment of collision with the enemy, a bridge carried away by an avalanche at the instant of a commencing retreat, affect the feelings like dramatic incidents emanating from a human will. This man they confound and paralyze, that man they rouse into resistance, as by a

personal provocation and insult. And if it happens that these opposite effects show themselves in cases wearing a national importance, they raise what would else have been a mere casualty into the tragic or the epic grandeur of a fatality. The superb character, for instance, of Cæsar's intellect throws a colossal shadow as of predestination over the most trivial incidents of his career. On the morning of Pharsalia, every man who reads a record of that mighty event feels[4] by a secret instinct that an earthquake is approaching which must determine the final distribution of the ground, and the relations among the whole family of man through a thousand generations. Precisely the inverse case is realized in some modern sections of history, where the feebleness or the inertia of the presiding intellect communicates a character of triviality to events that otherwise are of paramount historical importance. In Cæsar's case, simply through the perfection of his preparations arrayed against all conceivable contingencies, there is an impression left as of some incarnate Providence, vailed in a human form, ranging through the ranks of the legions; while, on the contrary, in the modern cases to which we allude, a mission, seemingly authorized by inspiration, is suddenly quenched, like a torch falling into water, by the careless character of the superintending intellect. Neither case is without its appropriate interest. The spectacle of a vast historical dependency, pre-organized by an intellect of unusual grandeur, wears the grace of congruity and reciprocal proportion. And on the other hand, a series of mighty events contingent upon the motion this way or that of a frivolous hand, or suspended on the breath of caprice, suggests the wild and fantastic disproportions of ordinary life, when the mighty masquerade moves on forever through successions of the gay and the solemn – of the petty and the majestic.

Cæsar's cast of character owed its impressiveness to the combination which it offered of moral grandeur and monumental immobility, such as we see in Marius, with the dazzling intellectual versatility found in the Gracchi, in Sylla, in Catiline, in Antony. The comprehension and the absolute perfection of his prescience did not escape the eye of Lucan, who describes him as – "Nil actum reputans, si quid superesset agendum." A fine lambent gleam of his character escapes also in that magnificent fraction of a line, where he is described as one incapable of learning the style and sentiments suited to a private interest – "Indocilis privata loqui."

There has been a disposition manifested among modern writers to disturb the traditional characters of Cæsar and his chief antagonist. Audaciously to disparage Cæsar, and without a shadow of any new historic grounds to exalt his feeble competitor, has been adopted as the best chance for filling up the mighty gulf between them. Lord Brougham, for instance, on occasion of a dinner given by the Cinque Ports at Dover to the Duke of Wellington, vainly attempted to raise our countryman by unfounded and romantic depreciations of Cæsar. He alleged that Cæsar had contended only with barbarians. Now, *that* happens to be the literal truth as regards Pompey. The victories on which his early reputation was built were won from semi-barbarians – luxurious, it is true, but also effeminate in a degree never suspected at Rome until the next generation. The slight but summary contest of Cæsar with Pharnaces, the son of Mithridates, dissipated at once the cloud of ignorance in which Rome had been involved on this subject by the vast distance and the total want of familiarity with Oriental habits. But Cæsar's chief antagonists, those whom Lord Brougham specially indicated, viz., the Gauls, were *not* barbarians. As a military people, they were in a stage of civilization next to that of the Romans. They were quite as much *aguerris*, hardened and seasoned to war, as the children of Rome. In certain military habits they were even superior. For purposes of war four races were then pre-eminent in Europe – viz., the Romans, the Macedonians, certain select tribes among the mixed population of the Spanish peninsula, and finally the Gauls. These were all open to the recruiting parties of Cæsar; and among them all he had deliberately assigned his preference to the Gauls. The famous legion,

[4] "Feels by a secret instinct;" – A sentiment of this nature is finely expressed by Lucan in the passage beginning, "Advenisse diem," &c. The circumstance by which Lucan chiefly defeats the grandeur and simplicities of the truth, is, the monstrous numerical exaggeration of the combatants and the killed at Pharsalia.

who carried the *Alauda* (the lark) upon their helmets, was raised in Gaul from Cæsar's private funds. They composed a select and favored division in his army, and, together with the famous tenth legion, constituted a third part of his forces – a third numerically on the day of battle, but virtually a half. Even the rest of Cæsar's army had been for so long a space recruited in the Gauls, Transalpine as well as Cisalpine, that at Pharsalia the bulk of his forces is known to have been Gaulish. There were more reasons than one for concealing that fact. The policy of Cæsar was, to conceal it not less from Rome than from the army itself. But the truth became known at last to all wary observers. Lord Brougham's objection to the quality of Cæsar's enemies falls away at once when it is collated with the deliberate composition of Cæsar's own army. Besides that, Cæsar's enemies were *not* in any exclusive sense Gauls. The German tribes, the Spanish, the Helvetian, the Illyrian, Africans of every race, and Moors; the islanders of the Mediterranean, and the mixed populations of Asia, had all been faced by Cæsar. And if it is alleged that the forces of Pompey, however superior in numbers, were at Pharsalia largely composed of an Asiatic rabble, the answer is – that precisely of such a rabble were the hostile armies composed from which he had won his laurels. False and windy reputations are sown thickly in history; but never was there a reputation more thoroughly histrionic than that of Pompey. The late Dr. Arnold of Rugby, among a million of other crotchets, did (it is true) make a pet of Pompey; and he was encouraged in this caprice (which had for its origin the doctor's *political*[5] animosity to Cæsar) by one military critic, viz., Sir William Napier. This distinguished soldier conveyed messages to Dr. Arnold, warning him against the popular notion, that Pompey was a poor strategist. Now, had there been any Roman state-paper office, which Sir William could be supposed to have searched and weighed against the statements of surviving history, we might, in deference to Sir William's great experience and talents, have consented to a rehearing of the case. Unfortunately, no new materials have been discovered; nor is it alleged that the old ones are capable of being thrown into new combinations, so as to reverse or to suspend the old adjudications. The judgment of history stands; and among the records which it involves, none is more striking than this – that, while Cæsar and Pompey were equally assaulted by sudden surprises, the first invariably met the sudden danger (sudden but never unlooked-for) by counter resources of evasion. He showed a new front, as often as his situation exposed a new peril. At Pharsalia, where the cavalry of Pompey was far superior to his own, he anticipated and was in full readiness for the particular manœuvre by which it was attempted to make this superiority available against himself. By a new formation of his troops he foiled the attack, and caused it to recoil upon the enemy. Had Pompey then no rejoinder ready for meeting this reply? No. His one arrow being shot, his quiver was exhausted. Without an effort at parrying any longer, the mighty game was surrendered as desperate. "Check to the king!" was heard in silent submission; and no further stratagem was invoked even in silent prayer, but the stratagem of flight. Yet Cæsar himself, objects a celebrated doctor (viz., Bishop Warburton), was reduced by his own rashness at Alexandria to a condition of peril and embarrassment not less alarming than the condition of Pompey at Pharsalia. How far this surprise might be reconcilable with Cæsar's military credit, is a question yet undecided; but this at least is certain, that he was equal to the occasion; and, if the surprise was all but fatal, the

[5] It is very evident that Dr. Arnold could not have understood the position of politics in Rome, when he allowed himself to make a favorite of Pompey. The doctor hated aristocrats as he hated the gates of Erebus. Now Pompey was not only the leader of a most selfish aristocracy, but also their tool. Secondly, as if this were not bad enough, that section of the aristocracy to which he had dedicated his services was an odious oligarchy; and to this oligarchy, again, though nominally its head, he was in effect the most submissive of tools. Cæsar, on the other hand, if a democrat in the sense of working by democratic agencies, was bending all his efforts to the reconstruction of a new, purer, and enlarged aristocracy, no longer reduced to the necessity of buying and selling the people in mere self-defense. The everlasting war of bribery, operating upon universal poverty, the internal disease of Roman society, would have been redressed by Cæsar's measures, and *was* redressed according to the degree in which those measures were really brought into action. New judicatures were wanted, new judicial laws, a new aristocracy, by slow degrees a new people, and the right of suffrage exercised within new restrictions – all these things were needed for the cleansing of Rome; and that Cæsar would have accomplished this labor of Hercules was the true cause of his death. The scoundrels of the oligarchy felt their doom to be approaching. It was the just remark of Napoleon, that Brutus (but still more, we may say, Cicero), though falsely accredited as a patriot, was, in fact, the most exclusive and the most selfish of aristocrats.

evasion was all but miraculous. Many were the sudden surprises which Cæsar had to face before and after this – on the shores of Britain, at Marseilles, at Munda, at Thapsus – from all of which he issued triumphantly, failing only as to that final one from which he had in pure nobility of heart announced his determination to shelter himself under no precautions.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.