VARIOUS

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THE PROCESSION OF THE FLOWERS

In Cuba there is a blossoming shrub whose multitudinous crimson flowers are so seductive to the humming-birds that they hover all day around it, buried in its blossoms until petal and wing seem one. At first upright, the gorgeous bells droop downward, and fall unwithered to the ground, and are thence called by the Creoles "Cupid's Tears." Frederika Bremer relates that daily she brought home handfuls of these blossoms to her chamber, and nightly they all disappeared. One morning she looked toward the wall of the apartment, and there, in a long crimson line, the delicate flowers went ascending one by one to the ceiling, and passed from sight. She found that each was borne laboriously onward by a little colorless ant much smaller than itself: the

bearer was invisible, but the lovely burdens festooned the wall with beauty.

To a watcher from the sky, the march of the flowers of any zone across the year would seem as beautiful as that West-Indian pageant. These frail creatures, rooted where they stand, a part of the "still life" of Nature, yet share her ceaseless motion. In the most sultry silence of summer noons, the vital current is coursing with desperate speed through the innumerable veins of every leaflet; and the apparent stillness, like the sleeping of a child's top, is in truth the very ecstasy of perfected motion.

Not in the tropics only, but even in England, whence most of our floral associations and traditions come, the march of the flowers is in an endless circle, and, unlike our experience, something is always in bloom. In the Northern United States, it is said, the active growth of most plants is condensed into ten weeks, while in the mother-country the full activity is maintained through sixteen. But even the English winter does not seem to be a winter, in the same sense as ours, appearing more like a chilly and comfortless autumn. There is no month in the year when some special plant does not bloom: the Coltsfoot there opens its fragrant flowers from December to February; the yellow-flowered Hellebore, and its cousin, the sacred Christmas Rose of Glastonbury, extend from January to March; and the Snowdrop and Primrose often come before the first of February. Something may be gained, much lost, by that perennial succession; those links, however slight, must make the floral period continuous

to the imagination; while our year gives a pause and an interval to its children, and after exhausted October has effloresced into Witch-Hazel, there is an absolute reserve of blossom, until the Alders wave again.

No symbol could so well represent Nature's first yielding in spring-time as this blossoming of the Alder, this drooping of the tresses of these tender things. Before the frost is gone, and while the newborn season is yet too weak to assert itself by actually uplifting anything, it can at least let fall these blossoms, one by one, till they wave defiance to the winter on a thousand boughs. How patiently they have waited! Men are perplexed with anxieties about their own immortality; but these catkins, which hang, almost full-formed, above the ice all winter, show no such solicitude, but when March wooes them they are ready. Once relaxing, their pollen is so prompt to fall that it sprinkles your hand as you gather them; then, for one day, they are the perfection of grace upon your table, and next day they are weary and emaciated, and their little contribution to the spring is done.

Then many eyes watch for the opening of the May-flower, day by day, and a few for the Hepatica. So marked and fantastic are the local preferences of all our plants, that, with miles of woods and meadows open to their choice, each selects only some few spots for its accustomed abodes, and some one among them all for its very earliest blossoming. There is always some single chosen nook, which you might almost cover with your handkerchief, where each flower seems to bloom earliest,

without variation, year by year. I know one such place for Hepatica a mile northeast,—another for May-flower two miles southwest; and each year the whimsical creature is in bloom on that little spot, when not another flower can be found open through the whole country round. Accidental as the choice may appear, it is undoubtedly based on laws more eternal than the stars; yet why all subtile influences conspire to bless that undistinguishable knoll no man can say. Another and similar puzzle offers itself in the distribution of the tints of flowers,—in these two species among the rest. There are certain localities, near by, where the Hepatica is all but white, and others where the May-flower is sumptuous in pink; yet it is not traceable to wet or dry, sun or shadow, and no agricultural chemistry can disclose the secret. Is it by some Darwinian law of selection that the white Hepatica has utterly overpowered the blue, in our Cascade Woods, for instance, while yet in the very midst of this pale plantation a single clump will sometimes bloom with all heaven on its petals? Why can one recognize the Plymouth May-flower, as soon as seen, by its wondrous depth of color? Does it blush with triumph to see how Nature has outwitted the Pilgrims, and even succeeded in preserving her deer like an English duke, still maintaining the deepest woods in Massachusetts precisely where those sturdy immigrants first began their clearings?

The Hepatica (called also Liverwort, Squirrel-Cup, or Blue Anemone) has been found in Worcester as early as March seventeenth, and in Danvers on March twelfth,—dates which

appear almost the extreme of credibility.

Our next wild-flower in this region is the Claytonia, or Spring-Beauty, which is common in the Middle States, but here found in only a few localities. It is the Indian *Miskodeed*, and was said to have been left behind when mighty Peboan, the Winter, was melted by the breath of Spring. It is an exquisitely delicate little creature, bears its blossoms in clusters, unlike most of the early species, and opens in gradual succession each white and pink-veined bell. It grows in moist places on the sunny edges of woods, and prolongs its shy career from about the tenth of April until almost the end of May.

A week farther into April, and the Bloodroot opens,—a name of guilt, and a type of innocence. This fresh and lovely thing appears to concentrate all its stains within its ensanguined root, that it may condense all purity in the peculiar whiteness of its petals. It emerges from the ground with each shy blossom wrapt in its own pale-green leaf, then doffs the cloak and spreads its long petals round a group of yellow stamens. The flower falls apart so easily that when in full bloom it will hardly bear transportation, but with a touch the stem stands naked, a bare gold-tipped sceptre amid drifts of snow. And the contradiction of its hues seems carried into its habits. One of the most shy of wild plants, easily banished from its locality by any invasion, it yet takes to the garden with unpardonable readiness, doubles its size, blossoms earlier, repudiates its love of water, and flaunts its great leaves in the unnatural confinement until it elbows out the

exotics. Its charm is gone, unless one find it in its native haunts, beside some cascade which streams over rocks that are dark with moisture, green with moss, and snowy with white bubbles. Each spray of dripping feather-moss exudes a tiny torrent of its own, or braided with some tiny neighbor, above the little water-fonts which sleep sunless in ever-verdant caves. Sometimes along these emerald canals there comes a sudden rush and hurry, as if some anxious housekeeper upon the hill above were afraid that things were not stirring fast enough,—and then again the waving and sinuous lines of water are quieted to a serener flow. The delicious red-thrush and the busy little yellow-throat are not yet come to this their summer haunt; but all day long the answering field-sparrows trill out their sweet, shy, accelerating lay.

In the same localities with the Bloodroot, though some days later, grows the Dog-Tooth Violet,—a name hopelessly inappropriate, but likely never to be changed. These hardy and prolific creatures have also many localities of their own; for, though they do not acquiesce in cultivation, like the sycophantic Bloodroot, yet they are hard to banish from their native haunts, but linger after the woods are cleared and the meadow drained. The bright flowers blaze back all the yellow light of noonday as the gay petals curl and spread themselves above their beds of mottled leaves; but it is always a disappointment to gather them, for indoors they miss the full ardor of the sunbeams, and are apt to go to sleep and nod expressionless from the stalk.

And almost on the same day with this bright apparition

one may greet a multitude of concurrent visitors, arriving so accurately together that it is almost a matter of accident which of the party shall first report himself. Perhaps the Dandelion should have the earliest place; indeed, I once found it in Brookline on the seventh of April. But it cannot ordinarily be expected before the twentieth, in Eastern Massachusetts, and rather later in the interior; while by the same date I have also found near Boston the Cowslip or Marsh-Marigold, the Spring-Saxifrage, the Anemones, the Violets, the Bellwort, the Houstonia, the Cinquefoil, and the Strawberry-blossom. Varying, of course, in different spots and years, the arrival of this coterie is yet nearly simultaneous, and they may all be expected hereabouts before May-day at the very latest. After all, in spite of the croakers, this festival could not have been much better-timed, the delicate blossoms which mark the period are usually in perfection on this day, and it is not long before they are past their prime.

Some early plants which have now almost disappeared from Eastern Massachusetts are still found near Worcester in the greatest abundance,—as the larger Yellow Violet, the Red Trillium, the Dwarf Ginseng, the Clintonia or Wild Lily-of-the-Valley, and the pretty fringed Polygala, which Miss Cooper christened "Gay-Wings." Others again are now rare in this vicinity, and growing rarer, though still abundant a hundred miles farther inland. In several bits of old swampy wood one may still find, usually close together, the Hobble-Bush and the Painted Trillium, the Mitella, or Bishop's-Cap, and the snowy Tiarella.

Others again have entirely vanished within ten years, and that in some cases without any adequate explanation. The dainty white Corydalis, profanely called "Dutchman's-Breeches," and the quaint woolly Ledum, or Labrador Tea, have disappeared within that time. The beautiful Linnaea is still found annually, but flowers no more; as is also the case, in all but one distant locality, with the once abundant Rhododendron. Nothing in Nature has for me a more fascinating interest than these secret movements of vegetation,—the sweet blind instinct with which flowers cling to old domains until absolutely compelled to forsake them. How touching is the fact, now well known, that salt-water plants still flower beside the Great Lakes, yet dreaming of the time when those waters were briny as the sea! Nothing in the demonstrations of Geology seems grander than the light lately thrown by Professor Gray, from the analogies between the flora of Japan and of North America, upon the successive epochs of heat which led the wandering flowers along the Arctic lands, and of cold which isolated them once more. Yet doubtless these humble movements of our local plants may be laying up results as important, and may hereafter supply evidence of earth's changes upon some smaller scale.

May expands to its prime of beauty; the summer birds come with the fruit-blossoms, the gardens are deluged with bloom and the air with melody, while in the woods the timid spring-flowers fold themselves away in silence and give place to a brighter splendor. On the margin of some quiet swamp a myriad

of bare twigs seem suddenly overspread with purple butterflies, and we know that the Rhodora is in bloom. Wordsworth never immortalized a flower more surely than Emerson this, and it needs no weaker words; there is nothing else in which the change from nakedness to beauty is so sudden, and when you bring home the great mass of blossoms they appear all ready to flutter away again from your hands and leave you disenchanted.

At the same time the beautiful Cornel-tree is in perfection; startling as a tree of the tropics, it flaunts its great flowers high up among the forest-branches, intermingling its long slender twigs with theirs, and garnishing them with alien blooms. It is very available for household decoration, with its four great creamy petals,—flowers they are not, but floral involucres,—each with a fantastic curl and stain at its tip, as if the fireflies had alighted on them and scorched them; and yet I like it best as it peers out in barbaric splendor from the delicate green of young Maples. And beneath it grows often its more abundant kinsman, the Dwarf Cornel, with the same four great petals enveloping its floral cluster, but lingering low upon the ground,—an herb whose blossoms mimic the statelier tree.

The same rich creamy hue and texture show themselves in the Wild Calla, which grows at this season in dark, sequestered water-courses, and sometimes well rivals, in all but size, that superb whiteness out of a land of darkness, the Ethiopic Calla of the conservatory. At this season, too, we seek another semi-aquatic rarity, whose homely name cannot deprive it of a certain

garden-like elegance, the Buckbean. This is one of the shy plants which yet grow in profusion within their own domain. I have found it of old in Cambridge, and then upon the pleasant shallows of the Artichoke, that loveliest tributary of the Merrimack, and I have never seen it where it occupied a patch more than a few yards square, while yet within that space the multitudinous spikes grow always tall and close, reminding one of hyacinths, when in perfection, but more delicate and beautiful. The only locality I know for it in this vicinity lies seven miles away, where a little inlet from the lower winding bays of Lake Quinsigamond goes stealing up among a farmer's hay-fields, and there, close beside the public road and in full of the farm-house, this rare creature fills the water. But to reach it we commonly row down the lake to a sheltered lagoon, separated from the main lake by a long island which is gradually forming itself like the coral isles, growing each year denser with alder thickets where the king-birds build; —there leave the boat among the lily-leaves, and take a lane which winds among the meadows and gives a fitting avenue for the pretty thing we seek. But it is not safe to vary many days from the twentieth of May, for the plant is not long in perfection, and is past its prime when the lower blossoms begin to wither on the stem.

But should we miss this delicate adjustment of time, it is easy to console ourselves with bright armfuls of Lupine, which bounteously flowers for six weeks along our lake-side, ranging from the twenty-third of May to the sixth of July. The Lupine

is one of our most travelled plants; for, though never seen off the American continent, it stretches to the Pacific, and is found upon the Arctic coast. On these banks of Lake Quinsigamond it grows in great families, and should be gathered in masses and placed in a vase by itself; for it needs no relief from other flowers, its own soft leaves afford background enough, and though the white variety rarely occurs, yet the varying tints of blue upon the same stalk are a perpetual gratification to the eye. I know not why shaded blues should be so beautiful in flowers, and yet avoided as distasteful in ladies' fancy-work; but it is a mystery like that which repudiates blue-and-green from all well-regulated costumes, while Nature yet evidently prefers it to any other combination in her wardrobe.

Another constant ornament of the end of May is the large pink Lady's-Slipper, or Moccason-Flower, the "Cypripedium not due till to-morrow" which Emerson attributes to the note-book of Thoreau,—to-morrow, in these parts, meaning about the twentieth of May. It belongs to the family of Orchids, a high-bred race, fastidious in habits, sensitive as to abodes. Of the ten species named as rarest among American endogenous plants by Dr. Gray, in his valuable essay on the statistics of our Northern Flora, all but one are Orchids. And even an abundant species, like the present, retains the family traits in its person, and never loses its high-born air and its delicate veining. I know a grove where it can be gathered by the hundreds within a half-acre, and yet I never can divest myself of the feeling that each specimen

is a choice novelty. But the actual rarity occurs, at least in this region, when one finds the smaller and more beautiful Yellow Moccason-Flower,—*parviflorum*,—which accepts only our very choicest botanical locality, the "Rattlesnake Ledge" on Tatessit Hill,—and may, for aught I know, have been the very plant which Elsie Venner laid upon her school-mistress's desk.

June is an intermediate month between the spring and summer flowers. Of the more delicate early blossoms, the Dwarf Cornel, the Solomon's-Seal, and the Yellow Violet still linger in the woods, but rapidly make way for larger masses and more conspicuous hues. The meadows are gorgeous with Clover, Buttercups, and Wild Geranium; but Nature is a little chary for a week or two, maturing a more abundant show. Meanwhile one may afford to take some pains to search for another rarity, almost disappearing from this region,—the lovely Pink Azalea. It still grows plentifully in a few sequestered places, selecting woody swamps to hide itself; and certainly no shrub suggests, when found, more tropical associations. Those great, nodding, airy, fragrant clusters, tossing far above one's head their slender cups of honey, seem scarcely to belong to our sober zone, any more than the scarlet tanager which sometimes builds its nest beside them. They appear bright exotics, which have wandered into our woods, and seem too happy to feel any wish for exit. And just as they fade, their humbler sister in white begins to bloom, and carries on through the summer the same intoxicating fragrance.

But when June is at its height, the sculptured chalices of the

Mountain Laurel begin to unfold, and thenceforward, for more than a month, extends the reign of this our woodland queen. I know not why one should sigh after the blossoming gorges of the Himalaya, when our forests are all so crowded with this glowing magnificence,—rounding the tangled swamps into smoothness, lighting up the underwoods, overtopping the pastures, lining the rural lanes, and rearing its great pinkish masses till they meet overhead. The color ranges from the purest white to a perfect rose-pink, and there is an inexhaustible vegetable vigor about the whole thing, which puts to shame those tenderer shrubs that shrink before the progress of cultivation. There is the Rhododendron, for instance, a plant of the same natural family with the Laurel and the Azalea, and looking more robust and woody than either: it once grew in many localities in this region, and still lingers in a few, without consenting either to die or to blossom, and there is only one remote place from which any one now brings into our streets those large luxuriant flowers, waving white above the dark green leaves, and bearing "just a dream of sunset on their edges, and just a breath from the green sea in their hearts." But the Laurel, on the other hand, maintains its ground, imperturbable and almost impassable, on every hill-side, takes no hints, suspects no danger, and nothing but the most unmistakable onset from spade or axe can diminish its profusion. Gathering it on the most lavish scale seems only to serve as wholesome pruning; nor can I conceive that the Indians, who once ruled over this whole county from Wigwam Hill, could ever have found it

more inconveniently abundant than now. We have perhaps no single spot where it grows in such perfect picturesqueness as at "The Laurels," on the Merrimack, just above Newburyport,—a whole hill-side scooped out and the hollow piled solidly with flowers, the pines curving around it above, and the river encircling it below, on which your boat glides along, and you look up through glimmering arcades of bloom. But for the last half of June it monopolizes everything in the Worcester woods,—no one picks anything else; and it fades so slowly that I have found a perfect blossom on the last day of July.

At the same time with this royalty of the woods, the queen of the water ascends her throne, for a reign as undisputed and far more prolonged. The extremes of the Water-Lily in this vicinity, so far as I have known, are the eighteenth of June and the thirteenth of October,—a longer range than belongs to any other conspicuous wild-flower, unless we except the Dandelion and Houstonia. It is not only the most fascinating of all flowers to gather, but more available for decorative purposes than almost any other, if it can only be kept fresh. The best method for this purpose, I believe, is to cut the stalk very short before placing in the vase; then, at night, the lily will close and the stalk curl upward;—refresh them by changing the water, and in the morning the stalk will be straight and the flower open.

From this time forth Summer has it all her own way. After the first of July the yellow flowers begin to watch the yellow fireflies; Hawkweeds, Loosestrifes, Primroses bloom, and the

bushy Wild Indigo. The variety of hues increases; delicate purple Orchises bloom in their chosen haunts, and Wild Roses blush over hill and dale. On peat meadows the Adder's-Tongue Arethusa (now called *Pogonia*) flowers profusely, with a faint, delicious perfume,—and its more elegant cousin, the Calopogon, by its side. In this vicinity we miss the blue Harebell, the identical harebell of Ellen Douglas, which I remember waving its exquisite flowers along the banks of the Merrimack, and again at Brattleboro', below the cascade in the village, where it has climbed the precipitous sides of old buildings, and nods inaccessibly from their crevices, in that picturesque spot, looking down on the hurrying river. But with this exception, there is nothing wanting here of the flowers of early summer.

The more closely one studies Nature, the finer her adaptations grow. For instance, the change of seasons is analogous to a change of zones, and summer assimilates our vegetation to that of the tropics.

In those lands, Humboldt has remarked, one misses the beauty of wild-flowers in the grass, because the luxuriance of vegetation develops everything into shrubs. The form and color are beautiful, "but, being too high above the soil, they disturb that harmonious proportion which characterizes the plants of our European meadows. Nature has, in every zone, stamped on the landscape the peculiar type of beauty proper to the locality." But every midsummer reveals the same tendency. In early spring, when all is bare, and small objects are easily made prominent,

the wild-flowers are generally delicate. Later, when all verdure is profusely expanded, these miniature strokes would be lost, and Nature then practises landscape-gardening in large, lights up the copses with great masses of White Alder, makes the roadsides gay with Aster and Golden-Rod, and tops the tall coarse Meadow-Grass with nodding Lilies and tufted Spiraea. One instinctively follows these plain hints, and gathers bouquets sparingly in spring and exuberantly in summer.

The use of wild-flowers for decorative purposes merits a word in passing, for it is unquestionably a branch of high art in favored hands. It is true that we are bidden, on high authority, to love the wood-rose and leave it on its stalk; but against this may be set the saying of Bettine, that "all flowers which are broken become immortal in the sacrifice"; and certainly the secret harmonies of these fair creatures are so marked and delicate that we do not understand them till we try to group floral decorations for ourselves. The most successful artists will not, for instance, consent to put those together which do not grow together; Nature understands her business, and distributes her masses and backgrounds unerringly. Yonder soft and feathery Meadow-Sweet longs to be combined with Wild Roses: it yearns towards them in the field, and, after withering in the hand most readily, it revives in water as if to be with them in the vase. In the same way the White Spiraea serves as natural background for the Field-Lilies. These lilies, by the way, are the brightest adornment of our meadows during the short period of their perfection. We

have two species: one slender, erect, solitary, scarlet, looking up to heaven with all its blushes on; the other clustered, drooping, pale-yellow. I never saw the former in such profusion as last week, on the bare summit of Wachusett. The granite ribs have there a thin covering of crispest moss, spangled with the white starry blossoms of the Mountain Cinquefoil; and as I lay and watched the red lilies that waved their innumerable urns around me, it needed but little imagination to see a thousand altars, sending visible flames forever upward to the answering sun.

August comes: the Thistles are out, beloved of butterflies; deeper and deeper tints, more passionate intensities of color, prepare the way for the year's decline. A wealth of gorgeous Golden-Rod waves over all the hills, and enriches every bouquet one gathers; its bright colors command the eye, and it is graceful as an elm. Fitly arranged, it gives a bright relief to the superb beauty of the Cardinal-Flowers, the brilliant blue-purple of the Vervain, the pearl-white of the Life-Everlasting, the delicate lilac of the Monkey-Flower, the soft pink and white of the Spiraeas, —for the white yet lingers,—all surrounded by trailing wreaths of blossoming Clematis.

But the Cardinal-Flower is best seen by itself, and, indeed, needs the surroundings of its native haunts to display its fullest beauty. Its favorite abode is along the dank mossy stones of some black and winding brook, shaded with overarching bushes, and running one long stream of scarlet with these superb occupants. It seems amazing how anything so brilliant can mature in such a

darkness. When a ray of sunlight strays in upon it, the wondrous creature seems to hover on the stalk, ready to take flight, like some lost tropic bird. There is a spot whence I have in ten minutes brought away as many as I could hold in both arms, some bearing fifty blossoms on a single stalk; and I could not believe that there was such another mass of color in the world. Nothing cultivated is comparable to them; and, with all the talent lately lavished on wild-flower painting, I have never seen the peculiar sheen of these petals in the least degree delineated. It seems some new and separate tint, equally distinct from scarlet and from crimson, a splendor for which there is as yet no name, but only the reality.

It seems the signal of autumn, when September exhibits the first Barrel-Gentian by the roadside; and there is a pretty insect in the meadows—the Mourning-Cloak Moth it might be called—which gives coincident warning. The innumerable Asters mark this period with their varied and wide-spread beauty; the meadows are full of rose-colored Polygala, of the white spiral spikes of the Ladies'-Tresses, and of the fringed loveliness of the Gentian. This flower, always unique and beautiful, opening its delicate eyelashes every morning to the sunlight, closing them again each night, has also a thoughtful charm about it as the last of the year's especial darlings. It lingers long, each remaining blossom growing larger and more deep in color, as with many other flowers; and after it there is nothing for which to look forward, save the fantastic Witch-Hazel.

On the water, meanwhile, the last White Lilies are sinking

beneath the surface, the last gay Pickerel-Weed is gone, though the rootless plants of the delicate Bladder-Wort, spreading over acres of shallows, still impurple the wide, smooth surface. Harriet Prescott says that some souls are like the Water-Lilies, fixed, yet floating. But others are like this graceful purple blossom, floating unfixed, kept in place only by its fellows around it, until perhaps a breeze comes, and, breaking the accidental cohesion, sweeps them all away.

The season reluctantly yields its reign, and over the quiet autumnal landscape everywhere, even after the glory of the trees is past, there are tints and fascinations of minor beauty. Last October, for instance, in walking, I found myself on a little knoll, looking northward. Overhead was a bower of climbing Waxwork, with its yellowish pods scarce disclosing their scarlet berries,—a wild Grape-vine, with its fruit withered by the frost into still purple raisins,—and yellow Beech-leaves, detaching themselves with an effort audible to the ear. In the foreground were blue Raspberry-stems, yet bearing greenish leaves,—pale-yellow Witch-Hazel, almost leafless,—purple Viburnum-berries,—the silky cocoons of the Milkweed,—and, amid the underbrush, a few lingering Asters and Golden-Rods, Ferns still green, and Maidenhair bleached white. In the background were hazy hills, white Birches bare and snow-like, and a Maple half-way up a sheltered hill-side, one mass of canary-color, its fallen leaves making an apparent reflection on the earth at its foot,—and then a real reflection, fused into a glassy light intenser than

itself, upon the smooth, dark stream below.

The beautiful disrobing suggested the persistent and unconquerable delicacy of Nature, who shrinks from nakedness and is always seeking to veil her graceful boughs,—if not with leaves, then with feathery hoar-frost, ermined snow, or transparent icy armor.

But, after all, the fascination of summer lies not in any details, however perfect, but in the sense of total wealth which summer gives. Wholly to enjoy this, one must give one's self passively to it, and not expect to reproduce it in words. We strive to picture heaven, when we are barely at the threshold of the inconceivable beauty of earth. Perhaps the truant boy who simply bathes himself in the lake and then basks in the sunshine, dimly conscious of the exquisite loveliness around him, is wiser, because humbler, than is he who with presumptuous phrases tries to utter it. There are multitudes of moments when the atmosphere is so surcharged with luxury that every pore of the body becomes an ample gate for sensation to flow in, and one has simply to sit still and be filled. In after-years the memory of books seems barren or vanishing, compared with the immortal bequest of hours like these. Other sources of illumination seem cisterns only; these are fountains. They may not increase the mere quantity of available thought, but they impart to it a quality which is priceless. No man can measure what a single hour with Nature may have contributed to the moulding of his mind. The influence is self-renewing, and if for a long time it baffles expression by

reason of its fineness, so much the better in the end.

The soul is like a musical instrument: it is not enough that it be framed for the very most delicate vibration, but it must vibrate long and often before the fibres grow mellow to the finest waves of sympathy. I perceive that in the veery's carolling, the clover's scent, the glistening of the water, the waving wings of butterflies, the sunset tints, the floating clouds, there are attainable infinitely more subtile modulations of delight than I can yet reach the sensibility to discriminate, much less describe. If, in the simple process of writing, one could physically impart to this page the fragrance of this spray of azalea beside me, what a wonder would it seem!—and yet one ought to be able, by the mere use of language, to supply to every reader the total of that white, honeyed, trailing sweetness, which summer insects haunt and the Spirit of the Universe loves. The defect is not in language, but in men. There is no conceivable beauty of blossom so beautiful as words,—none so graceful, none so perfumed. It is possible to dream of combinations of syllables so delicious that all the dawning and decay of summer cannot rival their perfections, nor winter's stainless white and azure match their purity and their charm. To write them, were it possible, would be to take rank with Nature; nor is there any other method, even by music, for human art to reach so high.

* * * * *

ONE OF MY CLIENTS

After a practice in the legal profession of more than twenty years, I am persuaded that a more interesting volume could not be written than the revelations of a lawyer's office. The plots there discovered before they were matured,—the conspiracies there detected

"Ere they hail reached their last fatal periods,"—

the various devices of the Prince of Darkness,—the weapons with which he fought, and those by which he was overcome,—the curious phenomena of intense activity and love of gain,—the arts of the detective, and those by which he was eluded,—and the never-ending and ever-varying surprises and startling incidents,—would present such a panorama of human affairs as would outfly our fancy, and modify our unbelief in that much-abused doctrine of the depravity of our nature.

To illustrate, let me introduce to you "one of my clients," whom I will call Mr. Sidney, and with whom, perhaps, you may hereafter become better acquainted. His counterpart in personal appearance you may find in the thoroughfare at, any hour of the day. There is nothing about him to attract attention. He is nearly forty-five years of age, and weighs, perhaps, two hundred pounds. His face is florid and his hair sandy. His eyes are small, piercing, and gray. His motions are slow, and none are made without a purpose. Intellectually he is above the average, and his

perceptive faculties are well developed. The wrinkles in his lips are at right angles with his mouth, and a close observer might detect in his countenance self-reliance and tenacity of will and purpose. But with ordinary faculties much may be accomplished: in this sketch, let us see how much in two particulars.

His first entrance into my office was in the spring of 1853. He handed me a package of papers, saying, if I would name an hour for a professional consultation, he would be punctual. The time was agreed upon and he withdrew. On examination of his papers, I found that his letters of introduction were from several United States Senators, Judges of Supreme Courts, Cabinet Officers, and Governors, and one was from a Presidential candidate in the last election. Those directed specially to me were from a Senator and a Member of Congress, both of whom were lawyers and my personal friends, men in whose judgment I placed great confidence. They all spoke in the highest terms of Mr. Sidney's integrity, ability, and energy, and concluded by saying I might implicitly rely upon his judgment and be governed by his counsels.

What man of the masses can this one be, thus heralded by the authorities of the nation, and what his labor, so commended by the rulers? I glanced at him mentally again. Perhaps he is laboring for the endowment of some great literary or benevolent institution, for the building of a national monument. No. Perhaps he has some theory that thousands of facts must prove and illustrate; or it may be he is a voracious gatherer of statistics. The

last is the most probable; but the more I mused, the more the fire burned within me to know more of his mission.

I awaited impatiently his coming. It was on the stroke of the hour appointed. The object of that interview may not with propriety be stated, nor the results described; but it may be said that that hour was the most intensely exciting of any of my professional life, causing the blood to chill and boil alternately. The business was so peculiar, and connected with men so exalted in position, and conducted with such wonderful ability and tact, that now, years after, scarcely a day passes that my mind does not revert to those hours and do homage to those transcendent abilities by which it was conducted, till I sometimes think the possessor of them was an overmatch for Lucifer himself. My eyes were for the first time opened to the marvellous in his department of knowledge and art; and the region of impossibility was materially circumscribed, and the domain of the prince of the powers of the air extended *ad infinitum*. Into those regions it is not my present purpose to delve.

After a business acquaintance of several years with Mr. Sidney, I have learned that he was formerly a rich manufacturer, and that he was nearly ruined in fortune by the burning of several warehouses in which he had stored a large amount of merchandise that was uninsured. The owners of these store-houses were men of wealth, influence, and respectability. Alone of all the citizens, Mr. Sidney suspected that the block was intentionally set on fire to defraud the insurance-offices. Without

any aid or knowledge of other parties, he began an investigation, and ascertained that the buildings were insured far beyond their value. He also ascertained that insurance had been obtained on a far greater amount of merchandise than the stores could contain; and still further, that the goods insured, as being deposited there, were not so deposited at the time of the fire. He likewise procured a long array of facts tending to fix the burning upon the "merchant princes" who held the policies. To his mind, they were convincing. He therefore confronted these men, accused them of the arson, and demanded payment for his own loss. This was, of course, declined. Whereupon he gave them formal notice, that, if his demand were not liquidated within thirty days, never thereafter would an opportunity be afforded for a settlement. That the notice produced peculiar excitement was evident. *Yet the thirty days elapsed and his claim was not adjusted.*

From that hour, with a just appreciation of the enormity of the offence which he believed to have been committed, he consecrated his vast energies to the detection of crime. His whole soul was fired almost to frenzy with the greatness of his work, and he pursued it with a firmness of principle and fixedness of purpose that seemed almost madness, till he exposed to the world the most stupendous league of robbers ever dreamed of, extending into every State and Territory of the Union, and numbering, to his personal knowledge, over seven hundred men of influence and power, whose business as a copartnership was forgery, counterfeiting, burglary, arson, and any other crimes that

might afford rich pecuniary remuneration.

I will not now stop to describe the organization of this band, which is as perfect as that of any corporation; nor the enormous resources at its command, being computed by millions; nor the great respectability of its directors and State agents; nor the bloody oaths and forfeitures by which the members are bound together; nor the places of their annual meetings; nor a thousand other particulars, more startling than anything in fiction or history. Nor will I enumerate the great number of convictions of members of this gang for various offences through Mr. Sidney's efforts. Prosecuting no other parties than these,—thwarting them in those defences that had never before failed,—testifying in open court against the character of their witnesses, who appeared to be polished gentlemen, and enumerating the offences of which they had been guilty,—and harassing them by all legal and legitimate means, he gathered around him a storm that not one man in a thousand could have withstood for an hour. Eleven times was food analyzed that had been suspiciously set before him, and in each instance poison was detected in it; while in hundreds of instances he declined to receive from unknown hands presents about which hung similar suspicions. Numerous were the infernal-machines sent him, the explosion of some of which he escaped as if by miracle, and several exploded in his own dwelling. Without number were the anonymous letters he received, threatening his life, if he did not desist from prosecuting this band of robbers. Yet not for one

moment swerved from his purpose, he moved unharmed through ten thousand perils, till at last he fell a victim to the enemy that had so long been hunting his life. On no one has his mantle fallen.

His sole object in life seemed to be the breaking-up of this villanous gang of plunderers, and he pursued it with a genius and strength, a devotion, self-sacrifice, and true heroism, that are deserving of immortality.

Not long before his death, while one of the directors of this band was confined in prison at Mr. Sidney's instigation, awaiting a preliminary examination, he sent for Mr. Sidney and offered him one hundred thousand dollars, if he would desist from pursuing him alone. Mr. Sidney replied, that he had many times before been offered the like sum, if he would cease prosecuting the directors, and that the same reason which had inclined him to reject that proposition would compel him to refuse this. Whereupon the director offered, as an additional inducement, one-half of the money taken from the messenger of the Newport banks, while on his way to Providence to redeem their bills at the Merchants Bank, and also the mint where they had coined the composition that had passed current for years through all the banks and banking-houses of the country, and which stood every test that could be applied, without the destruction of the coin itself, which mint had cost its owners upwards of two hundred thousand dollars. All of which Mr. Sidney indignantly rejected. And it was not till the year after his death that the coin became known, when it was also reported and believed that a million

and a quarter of the same was locked up in the vaults of the—Government.

The United States Government sought Mr. Sidney's services, as appears of record. Those high in authority had decided on his employment, a fact which in less than six hours thereafter was known to the directors, and within that space of time five of them had arrived in Washington and paid over to their attorney the sum of thirty-five hundred dollars for some purpose,—the attorney being no less a personage than an honorable member of a supreme court. The service desired of Mr. Sidney he was willing to perform, on the condition that he should not be called upon to prosecute any other parties than those to whose conviction he had sworn to devote his life.

As a detective, Mr. Sidney was unequalled in this country. Vidocq may have been his superior in dissimulation, but in that alone. He certainly had not a tithe of Mr. Sidney's genius and strength of mind and moral power to discern the truth, though never so deeply hidden, and to expose it to the clear light of day.

"His blood and judgment were so well commingled,"

that his conclusions seemed akin to prophecy.

But it is not as a detective that Mr. Sidney is here presented. This slight sketch of this remarkable man is given, that the reader may more willingly believe that he possessed, among other wonderful powers, one that is not known ever to have been

attained to such a degree by any other individual, namely:—

The power of discerning, in a single specimen of handwriting, the character, the occupation, the habits, the temperament, the health, the age, the sex, the size, the nationality, the benevolence or the penuriousness, the boldness or the timidity, the morality or the immorality, the affectation or the hypocrisy, and often the intention of the writer.

At the age of thirty-five, the genius of Mr. Sidney as a physiognomist, expert, and detective, remained wholly undeveloped. He was not aware, nor were his friends, of his wonderful powers of observation, dissection, and deduction. Nor had he taken his first lesson by being brought in contact with the rogues. How, then, did he acquire this almost miraculous power?

After he had ascertained the names of the directors and State agents of the band, he collected many hundred specimens of their handwriting. These he studied with that energy which was equalled only by his patience. In a surprisingly short time he first of all began to perceive the differences between a moral and an immoral signature. Afterwards he proceeded to study the occupation, age, habits, temperament, and all the other characteristics of the writers, and in this he was equally successful. If this be doubted by any, let him collect a number of signatures of Frenchmen, Englishmen, Germans, and Americans, or, what is still better, of Jews of all nations, and at least in the latter instance, with ordinary perceptive faculties, there will be no difficulty in determining the question

of nationality; a person with half an eye need never mistake the handwriting of a Jew. Many can detect pride and affectation, and most persons the sex, in handwriting, how much soever it may be disguised.

> "The bridegroom's letters stand in row above,
> Tapering, yet straight, like pine-trees in his grove;
> While free and fine the bride's appear below,
> As light and slender as her jasmines grow."

Why, then, should it be strange, if remarkable powers of observation, analysis, and patient and energetic study should accomplish much more? In this department the Government had afforded Mr. Sidney great facilities, till at last he would take the letters dropped during the night in the post-office of a great city, and as rapidly as a skilful cashier could detect a counterfeit in counting bank-bills, and with unerring certainty, he would throw out those suspiciously superscribed. "In each of these nine," he would say, "there is no letter, but money only. This parcel is from the W—Street office. These are directed to men that are not called by these names: they are fictitious, and assumed for iniquitous purposes. Those are from thieves to thieves, and hint at opportunities," and so on.

Travelling over the principal railways of the country without charge, entertained at hotels where compensation was declined, Mr. Sidney was in some instances induced to impart to his friends some of that knowledge which he took much pains to conceal,

believing that by so doing he should best serve the great purposes of his life. Whether he desired this remarkable power to be kept from the rogues, or whether he thought he should be too much annoyed by being called upon as an expert in handwriting in civil cases, or what his purpose was, is not known, and probably a large number of his intimate friends are not aware of his genius in this.

On one occasion he was in a Canadian city for the first time, and stopped at a principal hotel. When about to depart, he was surprised that his host declined compensation. The landlord then requested Mr. Sidney to give him the character of a man whose handwriting he produced. Mr. Sidney consented, and, having retired to the private office, gave the writer's age within a year, his nationality, being a native-born Frenchman, his height and size, being very short and fleshy, his temperament and occupation; and described him as a generous, high-toned, public-spirited man, of strong religious convictions and remarkable modesty: all of which the landlord pronounced to be entirely correct.

The hotel-register was then brought, and to nearly every name Mr. Sidney gave the marked character or peculiarity of the man. One was very nervous, another very tall and lean; this one was penurious, that one stubborn; this was a farmer, and that a clergyman; this name was written in a frolic; this was a genuine name, though not written by the man himself,—and that written by the man himself, but it was not his true name. Of the person

last specified the clerk desired a full description, and obtained it in nearly these words:—

"He, Sir, was not christened by that name. He could never have written it before he was thirty. He has assumed it within a year. The character is bad,—very bad. I judge he is a gambler by profession, and—something worse. He evidently is not confined to one department of rascality. He was born and educated in New England, is aged about thirty-nine, is about five feet ten in height, and is broad-shouldered and stout. His nerves are strong, and he is bold, hypocritical, and mean. He is just the kind of man to talk like a saint and act like a devil."

The little company raised their hands in holy horror.

"As to age, size, nerve, etc.," said the landlord, "you are entirely correct, but in his moral character you are much mistaken"; and the clerk laughed outright.

"Not mistaken at all," replied Mr. Sidney; "the immorality of the signature is the most perspicuous, and it is more than an even chance that he has graduated from a State's prison. At any rate, he will show his true character wherever he remains a year."

"But, my dear Sir, you are doing the greatest possible damage to your reputation; he is a boarder of mine, and"–

"You had better be rid of him," chimed in Mr. Sidney.

"Why, Mr. Sidney, he is the *clergyman* who has been preaching very acceptably at the – Church these two months!"

"Just as I told you," said Mr. Sidney; "he is a hypocrite and a rascal by profession. Will you allow me to demonstrate this?"

The landlord assented. A servant was called, and Mr. Sidney, having written on a card, sent it to the clergyman's room, with the request that he would come immediately to the office. It was delivered, and the landlord waited patiently for his Reverence.

"You think he will come?" asked Mr. Sidney.

The landlord replied affirmatively.

Mr. Sidney shook his head, and said,—"You will see."

A short time after, the servant was again ordered to make a reconnoissance, and reported that there was no response to his knocking, and that the door was locked on the inside. Whereupon Mr. Sidney expressed the hope that the religious society were responsible for the board, for he would never again lead that flock like a shepherd. It was subsequently ascertained that the parson had in a very irreverent manner slipped down the spout to the kitchen and jumped from there to the ground, and, what is "very remarkable," like the load of voters upset by Sam Weller into the canal, "was never heard of after."[1]

* * * * *

"Individual handwriting," says Lavater, "is inimitable. The more I compare the different handwritings which fall in my way, the more am I confirmed in the idea that they are so many expressions, so many emanations, of the character of the writer. Every country, every nation, every city has its peculiar handwriting." And the same might be said of painting; for, if one

[1] There is a curious story connected with this "clergyman," which may yet appear in the biography of Mr. S.

hundred painters copy the same figure, an artist will distinguish the copyist.

Some years since, a certain bank placed in my hands two promissory notes for large amounts, purporting to be signed by a Mr. Temple and indorsed by a Mr. Conway, and which both maker and indorser pronounced forgeries. Both notes were written on common white paper, and were purchased by the bank of a certain broker at a time when it was difficult to make loans by discount in the usual manner. Before the maturity of the notes, the broker, who was a Jew, had left for parts unknown. He left behind him no liabilities, unless he might be holden for the payment of the notes above specified, and several others signed and indorsed in the same manner in the hands of other parties. Several attempts had been made by professional experts to trace resemblances between the forgeries and the genuine handwriting of said Temple and Conway, as well as the broker, but all had reluctantly come to the conclusion that the signatures were as dissimilar as well could be. The cashier was exceedingly embarrassed by the fact that Mr. Conway was one of the directors of the bank, and he was presumed to have been so familiar with his signature as to be incapable of being deceived.

After a most diligent investigation and the expenditure of much time and money, and after skilful experts and detectives had given up in despair of ascertaining either the whereabouts of the Jew or anything further till he could be produced, the holders of this paper had settled down quietly in the belief that

the broker was the guilty party and that all further effort was useless. At this point of time, when all excitement had subsided, these notes came into my possession. I immediately telegraphed to Mr. Sidney, and it was with great joy that I received the reply that he was on his way. At three o'clock in the morning I met him at the railroad station. He complimented me by saying there was not another man living for whom he would have left the city of – on a similar message. I thanked him, and we walked to the office. Before arriving there, I had merely informed him that I desired his services in the investigation of a forgery that baffled our art. He demanded all the papers. I produced the forged notes, several genuine checks and letters of Mr. Temple and Mr. Conway, and several specimens of the handwriting of the broker.

Long as I live I can never forget the almost supernatural glow that came over his features. I could almost see the halo. No language can describe such a marked and rapid change of countenance. His whole soul seemed wrapt in a delightful vision. I cannot say how long this continued, as I was lost in admiration, as he was in contemplation. I spoke, but he seemed not to hear. At last his muscles relaxed, and he began to breathe as if greatly fatigued. He wiped the perspiration from his brow, and said, as if to himself,—

"Sure!"

I asked what was sure. A few minutes elapsed, and he said more loudly,—

"As sure as you are born,"—without seeming to have heard

my inquiry.

I proposed to state what could be proved, and the suspicions that were entertained of the cashier. He objected, and said,—

"I take my departure from these papers. Mr. Temple is aged thirty-eight, a large, well-built man, full six feet high, strongly nerved, bold, proud, and fearless. His mind is active, and in his day he has been professor in a college. He fares well and is fashionably dressed. I think he is not in any legitimate business. He is a German by birth, though he has been in this country several years. He is somewhat affected and immensely hypocritical. I think he is a gambler and dealer in counterfeit money. He certainly is not confined to one department of rascality. This is not the name by which he was christened, if indeed he was ever christened at all. He could not have written it in his youth, and must have assumed it within a year and a half." (Exact in every known particular.)

"Mr. Conway I at first thought an attorney-at-law, but he is not. I reckon he administers on estates, acts as guardian, and settles up the affairs of the unfortunate in trade as their assignee, in connection with his business of notary and note-shaver. He is aged fifty-six, was born and educated in New England, and is probably a native of this city. He is tall, lean, and bony. His nerves are not steady, and he is easily excited. He probably has the dyspepsia, but he would not lose the writing of a deed to be rid of it. The remarkable feature of his character is stinginess. His natural abilities being good and his mind strong, he must

therefore be a man of means, and I think it matters little to his conscience how he comes by his wealth. At the same time, he has considerable pride and caution, which, with his interest, keep him honest, as the world goes. If he were not an old bachelor, I should think better of his heart, and he would be less miserly.

"The Jew's signature is the most honest of the three. Timidity is the marked character of the man. He could not succeed in any department of roguery. It is physically, as well as mentally and morally, impossible for him to have had any connection with the forgery. He would be frightened out of his wits at the very suggestion of his complicity."

"And so, Mr. Sidney," said I, "you know all about these parties and the particulars of the forgery?"

"Nothing whatever," he replied, "save by these specimens of their handwriting. I never heard of the forgery, nor of these men, till this hour."

To which I replied,—

"I cannot believe that you can give such a perfectly accurate description of them (saving their moral characters, of which I know little) without other means of knowledge. It *must* have been that you knew Temple to be a German, Conway to be the most penurious old bachelor in town, and the broker the most timid. And *how*, in the name of all that is marvellous, *could* you have known Conway to be afflicted with dyspepsia?

"Then," answered Mr. Sidney, "you are not prepared to believe one other thing, more strange and paradoxical than all

the rest. Listen! These notes are forgeries both of the maker and the indorser. And who think you are the criminals?"

"The Jew?"

"No."

"The cashier?"

"No. But, as sure as you are born, these notes are in the handwriting of Temple and Conway, and the signatures are not only genuine, but they are forgeries also: for both had formed a well-matured and deliberate design of disputing them before placing them on the paper. And, Sir, from my notion of Conway's character and temperament, as expressed in his handwriting, I venture the assertion that I can make him own it, and pay the notes. He shall even faint away at my pleasure. Temple is another kind of man, and would never own it, were it ten times proved."

A meeting of the directors of the bank was to be holden at nine o'clock of the same morning. None of them knew Mr. Sidney, or were known by him. It was arranged that he should meet them, Mr. Conway included, and exhibit his skill, and if he should convince them of his power of divination, he should discuss the genuineness of the signatures of the supposed forgeries.

For several hours he was on trial before the board with a very large number of specimens of handwriting of men of mark, and he astonished them all beyond measure by giving the occupation, age, height, size, temperament, strength of nerve, nationality, morality, and other peculiarities of every one of the writers. His success was not partial, it was complete. There was not

simply a preponderance of evidence, it was beyond a doubt. The directors did not question the fact; but how was it done? Some thought mesmerism could account for it, and others thought it miraculous.

The first experiment was this. Each director wrote on a piece of paper the names of all the board. Eleven lists were handed him, and he specified the writer of each by the manner in which he wrote his own name. He then asked them to write their own or any other name, with as much disguise as they pleased, and as many as pleased writing on the same piece of paper; and in every instance he named the writer.

As an example of the other experiments, take this one. The superscription of a letter was shown him. He began immediately: —

"A clergyman, without doubt, who reads his sermons, and is a little short-sighted. He is aged sixty-one, is six feet high, weighs about one hundred and seventy, is lean, bony, obstinate, irritable, economical, frank, and without a particle of hypocrisy or conceit. He is naturally miserly, and bestows charity only from a sense of duty. His mind is methodical and strong, and he is not a genius or an interesting preacher. If he has decided upon any doctrine or construction of Scripture, it would be as impossible to change him as to make him over again."

The company began to laugh, when one of them said,—

"Come, come, Mr. Sidney, you are disclosing altogether too much of my father-in-law."

And now the supposed forged notes were handed him. He gave the characteristics of the signatures very nearly as he had before done in the office, but more particularly and minutely. He analyzed the handwriting,—showed the points of resemblance, where before none could be discerned,—showed that the writing, interpreted by itself, was intended to be disguised,—explained the difference between the different parts of the notes,—pointed out where the writer was firm in his purpose, and his nerves well braced, and where his fears overcame his resolution,—where he had paused to recover his courage, and for a considerable time,—where he had changed his pen, and how the forgery was continued through several days,—what parts were done by Temple, and what by Conway,—

> "Till all the interim
> Between the acting of the dreadful thing
> And the first motion"

was brought so vividly and truthfully to mind that Mr. Conway fell to the floor as if dead. The cashier, relieved from a pressure that had for weary months been grinding his very soul, burst into tears. A scene of strange excitement ensued, during which Mr. Conway muttered incoherent sentences in condemnation of Temple and then of himself,—now with penitence, and then with rage. Recovering his composure, he suggested the Jew as the guilty party. Mr. Sidney then dissected the handwriting of the Jew, and demonstrated that there was as great a difference

between his chirography and a New-Englander's as between the English and the Chinese characters,—showed how the Jew must have been exceedingly timid, and stated the probability that he had left the city not because he had taken any part in the forgery, but because he had been frightened away. Then turning to Conway, he gave him a lecture such as no mortal before ever gave or received. The agony of Conway's mind so distorted his body as made it painful in the extreme to all beholders. "His inmost soul seemed stung as by the bite of a serpent." When at last Mr. Sidney turned and took from his valise a small steel safe, which Conway recognized as his own, "the terrors of hell got hold of him," and his anguish was indescribably horrible. The little safe had been by some unknown and unaccountable process taken from a larger one in Conway's office, and was unopened. Neither Mr. Sidney nor the directors have ever seen its contents; but in consideration that it should not be opened, Mr. Conway confessed his crime in the very form of Mr. Sidney's description, paid the notes before leaving the bank, and *remains a director to this day*. As is often the case, the greater criminal goes unwhipped of justice.

* * * * *

Mr. Sidney, besides the faculty I have described, had acquired another, less wonderful perhaps, but still quite remarkable, and which was of incalculable assistance to him in the prosecution of his Herculean labor. He was a most rare physiognomist. And by physiognomy is here intended, not simply the art of

discerning the character of the mind by the features of the face, but also the art of discovering the qualities of the mind by the conformation of the body,—and still further, (although it may not be a legitimate use of the word,) the power of distinguishing the character, mental and moral, the capacity, occupation, and all the distinctive qualities of a person by his figure, action, dress, deportment, and the like: for Sterne said well, that "the wise man takes his hat from the peg very differently from a fool."

The ancient Egyptians acquired the greatest skill in this science; and Tacitus affirms, not without reason, that their keen perception and acute observation, essential in communicating their ideas in hieroglyphics, contributed largely to their success. Certainly, few better proofs of the existence of the science have been furnished than that given by the Egyptian physiognomist at Athens in the days of Plato. Zopyrus pronounced the face of Socrates to be that of a libertine. The physiognomist being derided by the disciples of the great philosopher, Socrates reproved them, saying that Zopyrus had spoken well, for in his younger days such indeed had been the truth, and that he had overcome the proclivities of his nature by philosophy and the severest discipline.

Pliny affirms that Apelles could trace the likeness of men so accurately that a physiognomist could discover the ruling passion to which they were subject. Dante's characters, in his view of Purgatory, are drawn with accurate reference to the principles of physiognomy; and Shakspeare and Sterne, particularly the

latter, were clever in the art; while Kempf and Zimmermann, in their profession, are said seldom to have erred as physiognomists. Surely it is a higher authority and more practical, which saith, "A wicked man walketh with a froward mouth; he speaketh with his feet; he teacheth with his fingers.—A man is known by his look, and a wise man by the air of his countenance." And yet again, "The wickedness of a woman changeth her face."

If it be true, as Sultzer declares, that there is not a living creature that is not more or less skilled in physiognomy as a necessary condition of its existence, surely *man*, with all his parts fitly joined together, should be the most expert; and there are circumstances and conditions, as well as qualities of mind and body, which will conduct him more surely along the pathway of his research, and direct him onward towards the goal of perfection. Consider, then, the characteristics of Mr. Sidney, the circumstances by which he was surrounded, and the school in which he was taught, in order to determine if there were in him the elements of success.

Chiefest among the essential qualities is to be named his astonishing strength of nerve. No danger could agitate him, however imminent or sudden. No power could deprive him of his imperturbable coolness and courage. Perils seemed to render his mind more clear and his self-reliance more firm. (And yet I have heard him say, that there was among the band of criminals before mentioned one woman of greater strength of mind and nervous power than any person he had ever seen, whom alone of all

created beings, whether man or devil, he dreaded to encounter.) Had not Mr. Sidney been thus potently armed, he must, without doubt or question, have become almost a monomaniac; for, secondly, he was for years enraged almost to madness that his entire estate had been swept from his grasp, as he believed, by the torch of the incendiary; and he was to the last degree exasperated, and with a just indignation, that the merchant-princes who he supposed had occasioned his impoverishment yet walked abroad with the confidence of the community, and were still trusted by many a good man as the very salt of the city. Nevertheless, Mr. Sidney, solitary and alone, had arraigned them before a criminal tribunal. He was therefore driven to his own resources, and there was no place in his nature, or in the nature of things, for the first retrograde step. All his vast energies were thenceforth consecrated to, and concentrated in, the detection of crime. And from the time that he was refused payment for his loss, so far as my observation extended, he seemed to have been governed by no other purpose in life than the extermination of that great gang of robbers which he subsequently discovered. Add to these incentives and capacities his extraordinary perceptive faculties and power of analytical observation, together with his wonderful patience, and it must be granted that he was qualified to discover in any incident connected with his pursuits more of its component parts than all other beholders, and had greater opportunities than almost any other man by which to be informed *how* it is that "the heart of a man changeth his countenance."

If I remember rightly, it was some two years after our acquaintance commenced that I became aware of Mr. Sidney's proficiency as a physiognomist, and it was then communicated, not so much by his choice as by a necessity, for the accomplishment of one of his purposes.

The object of Mr. Sidney's visit to the city of P–, at that time, was nothing less difficult than the discovery and identification of an individual of whom no other knowledge or description had been obtained than what could be extracted from the inspection, in another city, of a single specimen of his handwriting in the superscription of a letter. So much from so little. Within three days thereafter, with no other instrumentalities than what were suggested by Mr. Sidney's expertness in deciphering character in handwriting and his proficiency as a physiognomist, the result was reached and the object happily attained. In the prosecution of the enterprise, it was important, if not essential, that I should believe that the data were sufficient by which to arrive at a correct conclusion, and that I should confide in Mr. Sidney's skill in order that there might be hearty coöperation.

My office was so situated, that from its windows could most advantageously be observed, and for a considerable distance, the vast throng that ebbed and flowed, hour after hour, through the great thoroughfares of the city. For the greater part of three consecutive days I sat by Mr. Sidney's side, watching the changing crowd through the half-opened shutters, listening incredulously, at first, to the practical application of his science to

the unsuspecting individuals below, till my derision was changed to admiration, and I was thoroughly convinced of his power. As my friends of both sexes passed under the ordeal, it was intensely bewitching. Hour after hour would he give, with rapidity and correctness, the occupation and peculiarity of character and condition of almost every individual who passed. This was not occasional, but continuous. The marked men were not singled out, but all were included. He was a stranger, and yet better acquainted with the people than any of our citizens. And this was the manner of his speaking:—

"That physician has a better opinion of himself than the people have of him: he is superficial, and makes up in effrontery what he lacks in qualification. The gambler yonder, with a toothpick in his mouth, has of late succeeded in his tricks. The affairs of this kind-hearted grocer are troubling him. Were we within a yard of that round-shouldered man from the country, we should smell leather; for he works on his bench, and is unmarried. Here comes an atheist who is a joker and stubborn as a mule. There goes a man of no business at all: very probably it is the best occupation he is fitted for, as he has no concentrativeness. The schoolmistress crossing the street is an accomplished teacher, is very sympathetic, and has great love of approbation. That lawyer is a bachelor, and distrusts his own strength. This merchant should give up the use of tobacco, and pay his notes before dinner, else he will become a dyspeptic. Here comes a man of wealth who despises the common people and is miserly and

hypocritical; and next to him is a scamp. I think it is Burke who says, 'When the gnawing worm is within, the impression of the ravage it makes is visible on the outside, which appears quite disfigured by it': and in that young man the light that was within him has become darkness, and 'how great is that darkness!'"

Of some qualities of mind he would occasionally decline to speak until he could see the features in play, as in conversation. Some occupations he failed to discover, if the arms were folded, or the hands in the pockets, or the body not in motion. It is not my purpose to specify any of the rules by which he was governed, though they differed materially from those of Lavater, Redfield, and others, nor the facts from which he drew his conclusions, but simply to give results.

I selected from the crowd acquaintances of marked character and standing, and obtained accurate descriptions of them. Of one he said, "He is a good merchant, and has done and is doing a large business. He carries his business home with him at night, as he should not. He has been wealthy, and is now reduced in circumstances. His disaster weighs heavily upon him. He has a high sense of honor, a keen conscience, and is a meek, religious man. He has great goodness of nature, is very modest and retiring, has more ability than he supposes, and is a man of family and very fond of his children."

Another he accurately described thus: "He is a mechanic, of a good mind, who has succeeded so well that I doubt if he is in active business. Certainly he does not labor. He is

very independent and radical,—can be impudent, if occasion requires,—gives others all their rights, and pertinaciously insists upon his own." Here the mechanic took his hands from his pocket. "Hold! I said he was a mechanic. He is not,—he is a house-painter."

I desired to be informed by what indications he judged him to be a painter. He replied, that he so judged from the general appearance and motions, and that it was difficult to specify. I insisted, and he remarked that "the easy roll of his wrists was indicative."

After obtaining similar correct descriptions of men well known to me, I spied one whom I did not know, and who was dressed peculiarly. I inquired his occupation, and Mr. Sidney, without turning a glance towards me, and still gazing through the half-opened shutters, replied, "Yes! you never saw him before, yourself. He is a stranger in town, as is evident from the fact of his being dressed in his best suit, and by the manner of his taking observations. Besides, there is no opportunity in these parts for him to follow his trade. He is a glass-blower. You may perceive he is a little deaf, and the curvature of his motions also indicates his occupation."

Whether this description was correct or not I failed to ascertain.

Mr. Sidney contended that any man of ordinary perceptive faculties need never mistake a gambler, as the marks on the tribe were as distinct as the complexion of the Ethiopian,—that, of

honest callings, dealers in cattle could be most easily discovered,—that immorality indicated its kind invariably in the muscles of the face,—that sympathetic qualities, love and the desire of being loved, taste and refinement,—were among the most perspicuous in the outline of the face.

A man of very gentlemanly appearance was approaching, whom Mr. Sidney pronounced a gambler, and also engaged in some other branch of iniquity. His appearance was so remarkably good that I doubted. He turned the corner, and immediately Mr. Sidney hastened to the street and soon returned, saying he had ascertained his history: that he was in the counterfeiting department,—that his conscience affected his nerves, and consequently his motions,—that he was a stranger in town, and was restless and disquieted,—that he would not remain many hours here, as he had an enterprise on hand, and was about it. I remarked, that, as the contrary never could be proved, he was perfectly safe in his prophecy, when Mr. Sidney rose from his chair, and, approaching me, slowly said, with great energy,—

"I will follow that man till it *is* proved."

The next day but one, I received a note from Mr. Sidney, simply saying, "I am on his track." He followed the supposed counterfeiter to Philadelphia, where he ascertained that he had passed five-dollar bills of the – bank of Connecticut. Mr. Sidney obtained the bills the gambler had passed to compare with the genuine. Failing, however, to find any of the same denomination, he presented the supposed counterfeits to a broker skilled in

detecting bad bills, and was surprised to be informed that they were genuine. At Baltimore, he repeated the inquiry at the counter of a well-known banker relative to other similar bills, and received the same response. So again in Washington, Pittsburg, Chicago, and several other cities whither he had followed the suspected man, and invariably the reply of the cashier would be, "We will exchange our bills for them, Sir." In some Western cities he was offered a premium on the bills he had collected. At St. Louis he obtained a known genuine bill of the bank in question, and in company with a broker proceeded to examine the two with a microscope. The broker pronounced the supposed counterfeits to be genuine. In the mean time the gambler had left the city. Two days after, Mr. Sidney had overtaken him. So great were his excitement and vexation that he could scarcely eat or sleep. In a fit of desperation, without law and against law, he pounced upon the suspected man and put him in irons. He beat a parley. It was granted, and the two went to the gambler's apartments in company. In a conversation of several hours, Mr. Sidney extracted from him the most valuable information relating to the gang he was so pertinaciously prosecuting, and received into his possession forty-seven thousand dollars in counterfeits of the aforesaid bank, some of which I now have in my possession, and which have been pronounced genuine by our most skilful experts.

* * * * *

It would be gratifying to all lovers of science to be informed that the practical knowledge acquired by Mr. Sidney had been

preserved, and that at least the elementary principles of the arts in which he became so nearly perfect had been definitely explained and recorded. I am not aware, however, that such is the fact, but am persuaded that his uniform policy of concealment has deprived the world of much that would have been exceedingly entertaining and instructive. That this knowledge has not been preserved is owing mainly to the fact that he considered it of little importance, except as a means for the accomplishment of his purposes, and that those purposes would be most effectually achieved by his withholding from the common gaze the instrumentality by which they were to be attained. That he intended at some future period to make some communication to the public I am well assured, and some materials were collected by him with this view; but the hot pursuit of the great idea that he never for an hour lost sight of would not allow sufficient rest from his labors, and he deferred the publication to those riper years of experience and acquirement from which he could survey his whole past career.

It may be comforting for all rogues to know that he left behind him no note of that vast amount of statistical knowledge which he possessed, whether appertaining to crimes or criminals in general or in particular, or more especially to the band of robbers,—and that with him perished all knowledge of this organization as such, and the names of all the parties therewith connected. They also have the consolation, if there be any, of knowing that he was sent prematurely to his grave by a subtle poison, administered

by unknown hands and in an unknown manner and moment, and that he died in the firm faith of immortality.

THE CUMBERLAND

At anchor in Hampton Roads we lay,
On board of the Cumberland sloop-of-war;
And at times from the fortress across the bay
The alarum of drums swept past,
Or a bugle-blast
From the camp on the shore.

Then far away to the South uprose
A little feather of snow-white smoke,
And we knew that the iron ship of our foes
Was steadily steering its course
To try the force
Of our ribs of oak.

Down upon us heavily runs,
Silent and sullen, the floating fort;
Then comes a puff of smoke from her guns,
And leaps the terrible death,
With fiery breath,
From each open port.

We are not idle, but send her straight
Defiance back in a full broadside!
As hail rebounds from a roof of slate,

Rebounds our heavier hail
From each iron scale
Of the monster's hide.

"Strike your flag!" the rebel cries,
In his arrogant old plantation strain.
"Never!" our gallant Morris replies;
"It is better to sink than to yield!"
And the whole air pealed
With the cheers of our men.

Then, like a kraken huge and black,
She crushed our ribs in her iron grasp!
Down went the Cumberland all a wrack,
With a sudden shudder of death,
And the cannon's breath
For her dying gasp.

Next morn, as the sun rose over the bay,
Still floated our flag at the mainmast-head.
Lord, how beautiful was thy day!
Every waft of the air
Was a whisper of prayer,
Or a dirge for the dead.

Ho! brave hearts that went down in the seas!
Ye are at peace in the troubled stream.
Ho! brave land! with hearts like these,
Thy flag, that is rent in twain,

Shall be one again,
And without a seam!

THE FOSSIL MAN

The greater part must be content to be as though they had not been: to be found in the register of God, not in the records of men. The number of the dead long exceedeth all that shall live. The Night of Time far surpasseth the Day, and who knoweth the Equinox?—Sir THOMAS BROWNE.

What a mysterious and subtile pleasure there is in groping back through the early twilight of human history! The mind thirsts and longs so to know the Beginning: who and what manner of men those were who laid the first foundations of all that is now upon the earth: of what intellectual power, of what degree of civilization, of what race and country. We wonder how the fathers of mankind lived, what habitations they dwelt in, what instruments or tools they employed, what crops they tilled, what garments they wore. We catch eagerly at any traces that may remain of their faiths and beliefs and superstitions; and we fancy, as we gain a clearer insight into them, that we are approaching more nearly to the mysterious Source of all life in the soul. The germ, to our limited comprehension, seems nearer the Creator than the perfected growth. Then the great problem of *Origin* forever attracts us on,—the multitudinous and intricate questions relating to "the ordained becoming of beings": how the Creating Power has worked, whether through an almost endless chain of gradual and advantageous changes, or by some sudden and

miraculous *ictus*, placing at once a completed body on the earth, as an abode and instrument for a developed soul,—all these remote and difficult questions lead us on. And yet the search for human origins, or the earliest historic and scientific evidences of man on the earth, is but a groping in the dark.

We turn to the Hebrew and the inspired records; but we soon discover, that, though containing a picture, unequalled for simplicity and dignity, of the earliest experiences of the present family of man, they are by no means a monument or relic of the most remote period, but belong to a comparatively modern date, and that the question of *Time* is not at all directly treated in them.

We visit the region where poetry and myth and tradition have placed a most ancient civilization,—the Black-Land, or Land of the Nile: we search its royal sepulchres, its manifold history written in funereal records, in kingly genealogies, in inscriptions, and in the thousand relics preserved of domestic life, whether in picture, sculpture, or the embalmed remains of the dead; and we find ourselves thrown back to a date far beyond any received date of history, and still we have before us a ripened civilization, an art which could not belong to the childhood of a race, a language which (so far as we can judge) must have needed centuries for its development, and the divisions of human races, whose formation from the original pair our philosophy teaches us must have required immense and unknown spaces of time,—all as distinct as they are at the present day.

We traverse the regions to which both the comparison of

languages and the Biblical records assign the original birthplace of mankind,—the country of the Euphrates and the plateau of Eastern Asia. Buried kingdoms are revealed to us; the shadowy outlines of magnificent cities appear which flourished and fell before recorded human history, and of which even Herodotus never heard; Art and Science are unfolded, reaching far back into the past; the signs of luxury and splendor are uncovered from the ruin of ages: but, remote as is the date of these Turanian and Semitic empires, almost equalling that of the Flood in the ordinary system of chronology, they cannot be near the origin of things, and a long process of development must have passed ere they reached the maturity in which they are revealed to us.

The Chinese records give us an antiquity and an acknowledged date before the time of Abraham, (if we follow the received chronology,) and even then their language must have been, as it is now, distinct and solidified, betraying to the scholar no certain affinity to any other family of language. The Indian history, so long boasted of for its immense antiquity, is without doubt the most modern of the ancient records, and offers no certain date beyond 1800 B.C.

In Europe, the earliest evidences of man disclosed by our investigations are even more vague and shadowy. Probably, without antedating in time these historical records of Asia, they reach back to a more primitive and barbarous era. The earliest history of Europe is not studied from inscription or manuscript or even monument; it is not, like the Asiatic, a conscious work of

a people leaving a memorial of itself to a future age. It is rather, like the geological history, an unconscious, gradual deposit left by the remains of extinct and unknown races in the soil of the fields or under the sediment of the waters. The earliest European barbarian, as he burned his canoe from a log, or fabricated his necklace from a bone, or worked out his knife from a flint, was in reality writing a history of his race for distant days. We can follow him now in his wanderings through the rivers and lakes and on the edges of the forests; we open his simple mounds of burial, and study his barbarian tools and ornaments; we discover that he knew nothing of metals, and that bone and flint and amber and coal were his materials; we trace out his remarkable defences and huts built on piles in the various lakes of Europe, where the simple savage could escape the few gigantic "fossil" animals which even then survived, and roved through the forests of Prussia and France, or the still more terrible human enemies who were continually pouring into Germany, Denmark, and Switzerland from the Asiatic plains. We find that the early savage of Switzerland and Sweden was not entirely ignorant of the care of animals, and that he had fabricated some rude pottery. Of what race he was, or when he appeared amid the forests of Northern Europe, no one can confidently say. Collecting the various indications from the superstitions, language, and habits of this barbarian people, and comparing them with like peculiarities of the most ancient races now existing in Europe, we can frame a very plausible hypothesis that these early savages

belonged to that great family of which the Finns and Laps, and possibly the Basques, are scattered members. Their skulls, also, are analogous in form to those of the Finnish race. This age the archaeologists have denominated the "Stone Age" of European antiquity.

Following this is what has been called by them the "Bronze Age." Another, more powerful, and more cultivated race or collection of peoples inundates Scandinavia, Germany, Switzerland, and other districts. They make war against and destroy the early barbarians; they burn their water-huts, and force them to the mountains, or to the most northern portions of the continent. This new race has a taste for objects of beauty. They work copper and bronze; they make use of beautiful vases of earthenware and ornaments of the precious metals; but they have yet no knowledge of iron or steel. Their dead are burned instead of being buried, as was done by the preceding races. They are evidently more warlike and more advanced than the Finnish barbarians. Of their race or family it is difficult to say anything trustworthy. Their skulls belong to the "long-skulled" races, and would ally them to the Kelts. Antiquaries have called their remains "Keltic remains."

Still another age in this ancient history is the "Iron Age," when the tribes of Europe used iron weapons and implements, and had advanced from the nomadic condition to that of cultivators of the ground, though still gaining most of their livelihood from fishing and hunting. This period no doubt approached the

period of historical annals, and the iron men may have been the earliest Teutons of the North,—our own forefathers; but of their race or mixture of races we have no certain evidence, and can only make approximate hypotheses,—the division of "ages" by archaeologists, it should be remembered, being not in any way a fixed division of races, but only indicating the probability of different races at those different early periods. What was the date of these ages cannot at all be determined; the earlier are long before any recorded European annals, but there is no reason to believe that they approach in antiquity the Asiatic records and remains.

Such, until recently, were the historic and scientific evidences with regard to the antiquity of man. His most venerable records, his most ancient dates of historic chronology were but of yesterday, when compared with the age of existing species of plants and animals, or with the opening of the present geologic era. Every new scientific investigation seemed, from its negative evidence, to render more improbable the existence of the "fossil man." It is true that in various parts of the world, during the past few years, human bones have been discovered in connection with the bones of the fossil mammalia; but they were generally found in caves or in lime-deposits, where they might have been dropped or swept in by currents of water, or inserted in more modern periods, and yet covered with the same deposit as the more ancient relics. Geologists have uniformly reasoned on the *a priori* improbability of these being fossil bones, and have

somewhat strained the evidence—as some distinguished *savans*[2] now believe—against the theory of a great human antiquity.

And yet the "negative evidence" against the existence of the fossil man was open to many doubts. The records of geology are notoriously imperfect. We probably read but a few leaves of a mighty library of volumes. Moreover, the last ages preceding the present period were witnesses of a series of changes and slowly acting agencies of destruction, from which man may have in general escaped. We have reason to believe that during long periods of time the land was gradually elevated and subject to oscillations, so that the courses of rivers and the beds of lakes were disturbed, and even the bottom of the ocean was raised. The results were the inundation of some countries, and the pouring of great currents of water over others, wearing down the hills and depositing in the course of ages the regular layers of gravel, sand, and marl, which now cover so large a part of Europe. This was still further followed by a period in which the temperature of the earth was lowered, and ice and glaciers had perhaps a part in forming the present surface of the northern hemisphere. During the first period, which may be called the "Quaternary Period,"[3] the mighty animals lived whose bones are now found in

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[2] Pictet.

[3] We should bear in mind that the Quaternary or Diluvian Period, however ancient in point of time, has no clearly distinguishing line of separation from the present period. The great difference lies in the extinction of certain species of animals, which lived then, whose destruction may be due both to gradual changes of climate and to man. —PICTET.

caverns, or under the slowly deposited sediment of the waters, or preserved in bog,—the mammoth, and rhinoceros, and elk, and bear, and elephant, as well as many others of extinct species.

We may suppose, that, if man did exist during these convulsions and inundations, his superior intelligence would enable him to escape the fate of the animals that were submerged, —or that, if his few burial-places were invaded by the waters, his remains are now completely covered by marine deposits under the ocean. If, however, in his barbarian condition, he had fashioned implements of any hard material, and especially if, as do the savages of the present family of man, he had accidentally deposited them, or had buried them with the dead in mighty mounds, the invading waters might well sweep them together from their place and deposit them almost in mass, in situations where the eddies should leave their gravel and sand.[4]

Such seems in reality to have been the case; though in regard to so important a fact in the history of the world much caution must be exercised in accepting the evidence. We will state briefly the proofs, as they now appear, of the existence of a race of human beings on this earth in an immense antiquity.

[4] Sir C. Lyell, in his remarks before the British Association in 1859, said upon the discovery alluded to here: "I am reminded of a large Indian mound which I saw in St. Simon's Island in Georgia,—a mound ten acres in area, and having an average height of five feet, chiefly composed of cast-away oyster-shells, throughout which arrow-heads, stone axes, and Indian pottery were dispersed. If the neighboring river, the Altamalia, or the sea which is at hand, should invade, sweep away, and stratify the contents of this mound, it might produce a very analogous accumulation of human implements, unmixed, perhaps, with human bones."—*Athenaeum*, September 21, 1859.

A French gentleman, M. Boucher de Perthes, has for thirty-four years been devoting his time and his fortune, with rare perseverance, to the investigation of certain antiquities in the later geological deposits in the North of France. His first work, "Les Antiquités Celtiques and Antédiluviennes," published in 1847, was received with much incredulity and opposition; a second, under the same title, in 1857, met with a scarce better reception, and it was with the greatest difficulty that he could induce even the *savans* of his own country to look at the mass of evidence he had collected on this subject.

He made the extraordinary claim to have discovered a great quantity of rough implements of flint, fashioned by art, in the undisturbed beds of clay, gravel, and sand, known as *drift*, near Abbeville and Amiens. These beds vary in thickness from ten to twenty feet, and cover the chalk hills in the vicinity; in portions of them, upon the hills, often in company with the flints, are discovered numerous bones of the extinct mammalia, such as the mammoth, the fossil rhinoceros, tiger, bear, hyena, stag, ox, horse, and others.

The flint implements are found in the lowest beds of gravel, just above the chalk, while above them are sands with delicate fresh-water shells and beds of brick-earth,—all this, be it remembered, on table-lands two hundred feet above the level of the sea, in a country whose level and face have remained unaltered during any historical period with which we are acquainted. "It must have required," says Sir Charles Lyell, "a

long period for the wearing down of the chalk which supplied the broken flints (stones) for the formation of so much gravel at various heights, sometimes one hundred feet above the level of the Somme, for the deposition of fine sediment, including entire shells, both terrestrial and aquatic, and also for the denudation which the entire mass of stratified drift has undergone, portions having been swept away, so that what remains of it often terminates abruptly in old river-cliffs, besides being covered by a newer unstratified drift. To explain these changes, I should infer considerable oscillations in the level of the land in that part of France, slow movements of upheaval and subsidence, deranging, but not wholly displacing the course of ancient rivers."

The President of the British Association, in his opening speech at the meeting of 1860, affirms the immense antiquity of these flint implements, and remarks:—"At Menchecourt, in the suburbs of Abbeville, a nearly entire skeleton of the Siberian rhinoceros is said to have been taken out about forty years ago,—a fact affording an answer to the question often raised, as to whether the bones of the extinct mammalia could have been washed out of an older alluvium into a newer one, and so redeposited and mingled with the relics of human workmanship. Far-fetched as was this hypothesis, I am informed that it would not, if granted, have seriously shaken the proof of the high antiquity of human productions; for that proof is independent of organic evidence or fossil remains, and is based on physical data. As was stated to us last year by Sir Charles Lyell, we should

still have to allow time for great denudation of the chalk, and the removal from place to place, and the spreading out over the length and breadth of a large valley, of heaps of chalk-flints in beds from ten to fifteen feet in thickness, covered by loam and sands of equal thickness, these last often tranquilly deposited,—all of which operations would require the supposition of a great lapse of time."

An independent proof of the age of these gravel-beds and the associated loam, containing fossil remains, is derived by the same authority from the large deposits of peat in the valley of the Somme, which contain not only monuments of the Roman, but also those of an older, stone period, the Finnic period; yet, says Lord Wrottesley, "distinguished geologists are of opinion that the growth of all the vegetable matter, and even the original scooping out of the hollows containing it, are events long posterior in date to the gravel with flint-implements,—nay, posterior even to the formation of the uppermost of the layers of loam with fresh-water shells overlaying the gravel."

The number of the flint implements is computed at above fourteen hundred in an area of fourteen miles in length and half a mile in breadth. They are of the rudest nature, as if formed by a people in the most degraded state of barbarism. Some are mere flakes of flint, apparently used for knives or arrow-heads; some are pointed and with hollowed bases, as if for spear-heads, varying from four to nine inches in length; some are almond-shaped, with a cutting edge, from two to nine inches in

length. Others again are fashioned into coarse representations of animals, such as the whale, saurian, boar, eagle, fish, and even the human profile; others have representations of foliage upon them; others are either drilled with holes or are cut with reference to natural holes, so as to serve as stones for slings, or for amulets, or for ornaments. The edges in many cases seem formed by a great number of small artificial tips or blows, and do not at all resemble edges made by a great natural fracture. Very few are found with polished surfaces like the modern remains in flint; and the whole workmanship differs from that of flint arrow-heads in other parts of Europe, as well as from the later Finnish (or so-called Keltic) remains, discovered in such quantities in France. The only relics that have been found resembling them are, according to Mr. Worsaae, some flint arrow-heads and spear-points discovered at great depths in the bogs of Denmark. A few bone knives and necklaces of bone have been met with in these deposits, but thus far no human bones. The people who fabricated these instruments seemed to be a hunting and fishing people, living in some such condition as the present savages of Australia.

These discoveries of M. de Perthes have at length aroused the attention of English men of science, and during 1859 a number of eminent gentlemen—among them Sir Charles Lyell, Mr. Prestwich, Dr. Falconer, and others—visited M. Perthes's collection, and saw the flints *in situ*. Several of them have avowed their conviction of the genuineness and antiquity of these relics. Sir Charles Lyell has given a guarded sanction to the belief that

they present one strong proof of a remote human antiquity.

The objections that would naturally be made to this evidence are, that the flints are purely natural formations, and not works of man,—that the deposit is alluvial and modern, rather than of the ancient drift,—or that these implements had been dropped into crevices, or sunk from above, in later periods.

The testimony of disinterested observers seems to be sufficient as to the human contrivance manifest in these flints; and the concurrence of various scientific men hardly leaves room for doubt that these deposits are of great antiquity, preceding the time in which the surface of France took its present form, and dating back to what is called the Post-Pliocene Period. Their horizontal position, and the great depth at which the hatchets are found, together with their number, and the peculiar incrustation and discoloration of each one, as well as their being in company with the bones of the extinct mammalia, make it improbable that they could have been dropped into fissures or sunk there in modern times.[5] In regard to the absence of human bones, it

[5] An article in Blackwood, (October, 1860,) which is understood to be from the pen of Professor H.D. Rogers, admits entirely that the flints are of human workmanship, and that it is impossible for them to have dropped through fissures, as, according to the writer's observation of the deposits, it would be impossible even for a mole to penetrate them, so close are they. Professor Rogers takes the ground that human antiquity is not proven from these relics, for two reasons:—First, because the indications in the deposits inclosing the flints point clearly to a "turbulent diluvial action," and therefore it is possible for a violent incursion of the ocean to have taken place in the historic period, and to have mixed up the more recent works of man with the previously buried bones or relics of a pre-historic period; and secondly, because the different geological

should be remembered that no bones are easily preserved, unless they are buried in sediment or in bog; and furthermore, that the extent of the researches in these formations is very small indeed. Besides, the country where above all we should expect the most of human remains in the drift-deposits, as being probably the most ancient abode of man,—Asia,—has been the least explored for such purposes. Still this is without doubt the weak point in the evidence, as proving human antiquity.

The chain of evidence in regard to this important question seems to be filled out by a recent discovery of M. Edouard Lartet in Aurignac, in the South of France, on the head-waters of the Garonne. As we have just observed, the weak point in M. de Perthes's discoveries was the absence of human bones in the deposits investigated, though this might have been accounted for by the withdrawal of human beings from the floods of the period. M. Lartet's investigations have fortunately been conducted in a spot which was above the reach of the ordinary inundations of the Drift Period, and whither human beings might have fled for refuge, or where they might have lived securely during long spaces of time.

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deposits do not necessarily prove time, but only succession,—two schools of geology interpreting all similar phenomena differently, as relating to the time required.The last position would be admitted by few scientific geologists at the present day, as the evidence for time, though inferential from the deposits known to us, is held generally to be conclusive. On the first point, Professor Rogers has the weight of authority against him: all the great masters of the science, who have examined the formation and the deposits of the surrounding country, denying that there is any evidence of an incursion of the ocean of such a nature, during the historic period.

Some ten years since, in Aurignac, (Haute Garonne,) in the *Arrondissement* of St. Gaudens, near the Pyrenees, a cavern was discovered in the nummulitic rock. It had been concealed by a heap of fragments of rock and vegetable soil, gradually detached and accumulated, probably by atmospheric agency. In it were found the human remains, it was estimated, of seventeen individuals, which were afterwards buried formally by the order of the mayor of Aurignac. Along with the bones were discovered the teeth of mammals, both carnivora and herbivora; also certain small perforated corals, such as were used by many ancient peoples as beads, and similar to those gathered in the deposits of Abbeville. The cave had apparently served as a place of sacrifice and of burial. In 1860 M. Lartet visited the spot. In the layer of loose earth at the bottom of the cave he found flint implements, worked portions of a reindeer's horn, mammal bones, and human bones in a remarkable state of preservation. In a lower layer of charcoal and ashes, indicating the presence of man and some ancient fireplace or hearth, the bones of the animals were scratched and indented as though by implements employed to remove the flesh; almost every bone was broken, as if to extract the marrow, as is done by many modern tribes of savages. The same peculiarity is noticed in the bones discovered among the "water-huts" of the Danish lakes.

In this deposit M. Lartet picked up many human implements, such as bone knives, flattened circular stones supposed to have been used for sharpening flint knives, perforated sling-stones,

many arrow-heads and spear-heads, flint knives, a bodkin made of a roebuck's horn, various implements of reindeers' horn, and teeth beads, from the teeth of the great fossil bear (*Ursus spelaeus*). Remains were also found of nine different species of carnivora, such as the fossil bear, the hyena, cat, wolf, fox, and others, and of twelve of herbivora, such as the fossil elephant, the rhinoceros, the great stag, (*Cervus elephas*,) the European bison, (aurochs,) horse, and others. The most common were the aurochs, the reindeer, and the fox. How savages, armed only with flint implements, could have captured these gigantic animals, is somewhat mysterious; but, as M. Lartet suggests, they may have snared many of them, or have overwhelmed single monsters with innumerable arrows and spears, as Livingstone describes the slaying of the elephant by the negroes at the present day.

With reference to the mode in which these remains were brought to this place, M. Lartet remarks,—"The fragmentary condition of the bones of certain animals, the mode in which they are broken, the marks of the teeth of the hyena on bones, necessarily broken in their recent condition, even the distribution of the bones and their significant consecration, lead to the conclusion that the presence of these animals and the deposit of all these remains are due solely to human agency. Neither the inclination of the ground nor the surrounding hydrographical conditions allow us to suppose that the remains could have been brought where they are found by natural causes."

The conclusion, then, in palaeontology, which would be drawn

from these facts is, that man must have existed in Europe at the same time with the fossil elephant and rhinoceros, the gigantic hyena, the aurochs, and the elk, and even the cave-bear. This latter animal is thought by many to have disappeared in the very opening of the Post-Pliocene Period; so that this cave would —judging from the remains of that animal—have been *prior* to the long period of inundations in which the drift-deposits of Abbeville and Amiens were made. The drift which fills the valleys of the Pyrenees has not, it is evident, touched this elevated spot in Aurignac.

In chronology, all that is proved by these discoveries of M. Lartet is that the fossil animals mentioned above and man were contemporaries on the earth. The age of each must be determined inferentially by comparing the age of strata in which these animals are usually found with the age in which the most ancient traces of man are discovered,—such as the deposits already described in the North of France.

Similar discoveries on a smaller scale are recorded by Mr. Prestwich in Suffolk, England, and in Devonshire. We are informed also by Sir C. Lyell of a recent important discovery near Troyes, France. In the Grotto d'Arcès, a human jaw-bone and teeth have been found imbedded with *Elephas primigenius*, *Ursus spelaeus*, *Hyaena spelaea*, and other extinct animals, under layers of stalagmite. Professor Pictet, the celebrated geologist, who also gives his adhesion to these discoveries of M. de Perthes, states that the cave-evidence has by no means been sufficiently

valued by geologists, and that there are caverns in Belgium where the existence of human remains cannot be satisfactorily explained on the theory of a modern introduction of them. The President of the British Association (Lord Wrottesley) also states that in the cave of Brixham, Devonshire, and in another near Palermo, in Sicily, flint implements were observed by Dr. Falconer, in such a manner as to lead him to infer that man must have coexisted with several lost species of quadrupeds.

Professor Owen, in his "Palaeontology," (1861,) appears to put faith in the genuineness and antiquity of these flint relics. He also states that similar flint weapons have been found by Mr. John Frere, F.R.S., in Suffolk, in a bed of flint gravel, sixteen feet below the surface, of the same geological age as that in the valley of the Somme.

The conclusion from these discoveries—the most important scientific discoveries, relating to human history, of modern times—is, that ages ago, in the period of the extinct mammoth and the fossil bear, perhaps before the Channel separated England from France, a race of barbarian human beings lived on the soil of Europe, capable of fabricating rough implements. The evidence has been carefully weighed by impartial and experienced men, and thus far it seems complete.

The mind is lost in astonishment, in looking back at such a vast antiquity of human beings. A tribe of men in existence tens of thousands of years before any of the received dates of Creation! savages who hunted, with their flint-headed arrows,

the gigantic elk of Ireland and the buffalo of Germany, or who fled from the savage tiger of France, or who trapped the immense clumsy mammoth of Northern Europe. Who were they? we ask ourselves in wonder. Was there with man, as with other forms of animal life, a long and gradual progression from the lowest condition to a higher, till at length the world was made ready for a more developed human being, and the Creator placed the first of the present family of man upon the earth? Were those European barbarians of the Drift Period a primeval race, destroyed before the creation of our own race, and lower and more barbarian than the lowest of the present inhabitants of the world? or, as seems more probable, were these mysterious beings—the hunters of the mammoth and the aurochs—the earliest progenitors of our own family, the childish fathers of the human race?

The subject hardly yet admits of an exact and scientific answer. We can merely here suggest the probability of a vast antiquity to human beings, and of the existence of the FOSSIL or PRE-ADAMITIC MAN.

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LIFE IN THE OPEN AIR

BY THE AUTHOR OF "CECIL DREEME" AND "JOHN BRENT."

KATAHDIN AND THE PENOBSCOT.

CHAPTER X

RIPOGENUS.

Ripogenus is a tarn, a lovely oval tarn, within a rim of forest and hill; and there behold, *O gioja!* at its eastern end, stooping forward and filling the sphere, was Katahdin, large and alone.

But we must hasten, for day wanes, and we must see and sketch this cloudless summit from *terra firma*. A mile and half-way down the lake, we landed at the foot of a grassy hill-side, where once had been a lumberman's station and hay-farm. It was abandoned now, and lonely in that deeper sense in which widowhood is lonelier than celibacy, a home deserted lonelier than a desert. Tumble-down was the never-painted house; ditto its three barns. But, besides a camp, there were two things to be had here,—one certain, one possible, probable even. The view, that was an inevitable certainty; Iglesias would bag that as his share of the plunder of Ripogenus. For my bagging, bears, perchance, awaited. The trappers had seen a bear near the barns. Cancut, in his previous visit, had seen a disappearance of bear.

No sooner had the birch's bow touched lightly upon the shore than we seized our respective weapons,—Iglesias his peaceful and creative sketch-book, I my warlike and destructive gun,—and dashed up the hill-side.

I made for the barns to catch Bruin napping or lolling in the old hay. I entertain a *vendetta* toward the ursine family. I had a *duello*, pistol against claw, with one of them in the mountains of Oregon, and have nothing to show to point the moral and adorn the tale. My antagonist of that hand-to-hand fight received two shots, and then dodged into cover and was lost in the twilight. Soon or late in my life, I hoped that I should avenge this evasion. Ripogenus would, perhaps, give what the Nachchese Pass had taken away.

Vain hope! I was not to be an ursicide. I begin to fear that I shall slay no other than my proper personal bearishness. I did my duty for another result at Ripogenus. I bolted audaciously into every barn. I made incursions into the woods around. I found the mark of the beast, not the beast. He had not long ago decamped, and was now, perhaps, sucking the meditative paw hard-by in an arbor of his bear-garden.

After a vain hunt, I gave up Beast and turned to Beauty. I looked about me, seeing much.

Foremost I saw a fellow-man, my comrade, fondled by breeze and brightness, and whispered to by all sweet sounds. I saw Iglesias below me, on the slope, sketching. He was preserving the scene at its *bel momento*. I repented more bitterly of my

momentary falseness to Beauty while I saw him so constant.

Furthermore, I saw a landscape of vigorous simplicity, easy to comprehend. By mellow sunset the grass slope of the old farm seemed no longer tanned and rusty, but ripened. The oval lake was blue and calm, and that is already much to say; shadows of the western hills were growing over it, but flight after flight of illumined cloud soared above, to console the sky and the water for the coming of night. Northward, a forest darkled, whose glades of brightness I could not see. Eastward, the bank mounted abruptly to a bare fire-swept table-land, whereon a few dead trees stood, parched and ghostly skeletons draped with rags of moss.

Furthermost and topmost, I saw Katahdin twenty miles away, a giant undwarfed by any rival. The remainder landscape was only minor and judiciously accessory. The hills were low before it, the lake lowly, and upright above lake and hill lifted the mountain pyramid. Isolate greatness tells. There were no underling mounts about this mountain-in-chief. And now on its shoulders and crest sunset shone, glowing. Warm violet followed the glow, soothing away the harshness of granite lines. Luminous violet dwelt upon the peak, while below the clinging forests were purple in sheltered gorges, where they could climb nearer the summit, loved of light, and lower down gloomed green and sombre in the shadow.

Meanwhile, as I looked, the quivering violet rose higher and higher, and at last floated away like a disengaged flame. A smouldering blue dwelt upon the peak. Ashy-gray overcame the

blue. As dusk thickened and stars trembled into sight, the gray grew luminous. Katahdin's mighty presence seemed to absorb such dreamy glimmers as float in limpid night-airs: a faint glory, a twilight of its own, clothed it. King of the daylit-world, it became queen of the dimmer realms of night, and like a woman-queen it did not disdain to stoop and study its loveliness in the polished lake, and stooping thus it overhung the earth, a shadowy creature of gleam and gloom, an eternized cloud.

I sat staring and straying in sweet reverie, until the scene before me was dim as metaphysics. Suddenly a flame flashed up in the void. It grew and steadied, and dark objects became visible about it. In the loneliness—for Iglesias had disappeared—I allowed myself a moment's luxury of superstition. Were these the Cyclops of Katahdin? Possibly. Were they Trolls forging diabolic enginery, or Gypsies of Yankeedom? I will see,—and went tumbling down the hill-side.

As I entered the circle about the cooking-fire of drift-wood by the lake, Iglesias said,—

"The beef-steak and the mutton-chops will do for breakfast; now, then, with your bear!"

"Haw, haw!" guffawed Cancut; and the sound, taking the lake at a stride, found echoes everywhere, till he grew silent and peered suspiciously into the dark.

"There's more bears raound 'n yer kin shake a stick at," said one of the muskrateers. "I wouldn't ricommend yer to stir 'em up naow, haowlin' like that."

"I meant it for laffin'," said Cancut, humbly.

"Ef yer call that 'ere larfin', couldn't yer cry a little to kind er slick daown the bears?" said the trapper.

Iglesias now invited us to *chocolat à la crème*, made with the boon of the ex-bar-keeper. I suppose I may say, without flattery, that this tipple was marvellous. What a pity Nature spoiled a cook by making the muddler of that chocolate a painter of grandeurs! When Fine Art is in a man's nature, it must exude, as pitch leaks from a pine-tree. Our muskrat-hunters partook injudiciously of this unaccustomed dainty, and were visited with indescribable Nemesis. They had never been acclimated to chocolate, as had Iglesias and I, by sipping it under the shade of the mimosa and the palm.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.