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SOVEREIGNS AND SONS

The sudden death of Prince Albert caused profound regret, and the Royal Family of Britain had the sincere sympathies of the civilized world on that sad occasion. The Prince Consort was a man of brilliant talents, and those talents he had cultivated with true German thoroughness. His knowledge was extensive, various, and accurate. There was no affectation in his regard for literature, art, and science; for he felt toward them all as it was natural that an educated gentleman of decided abilities, and who had strongly pronounced intellectual tastes, should feel. Though he could not be said to hold any official position, his place in the British Empire was one of the highest that could be held by a person not born to the sceptre. His knowledge of affairs, and the confidence that was placed in him by the sovereign, made it

impossible that he should not be a man of much influence, no matter whether he was recognized by the Constitution or not. As the director of the education of the princes and princesses, his children, his character and ideas are likely to be felt hereafter, when those personages shall have become the occupants of high and responsible stations. The next English sovereign will be pretty much what he was made by his father; and it is no light thing to have had the formation of a mind that may be made to act, with more or less directness, on the condition of two hundred millions of people.

We know it is the custom to speak of the Government of England as if there were no other powerful institution in that Empire than the House of Commons; and that very arrogant gentleman, Mr. John Arthur Roebuck, has told us, in his usual style, that the crown is a word, and nothing more. "The crown!" exclaimed the member for Sheffield, in 1858,—"the crown! it is the House of Commons!" Theoretically Mr. Roebuek is right, and the British practice conforms to the theory, whenever the reigning prince is content to receive the theory, and to act upon it: but all must depend upon that prince's character; and should a British sovereign resolve to rule as well as to reign, he might give the House of Commons much trouble, in which the whole Empire would share. The House of Commons was never stronger than it was in the latter part of 1760. For more than seventy years it had been the first institution in the State, and for forty-six years the interest of the sovereign had been to maintain its supremacy.

The king was a cipher. Yet a new king had but to appear to change everything. George III. ascended the throne with the determination not to be the slave of any minister, himself the slave of Parliament; and from the day that he became king to the day that the decline of his faculties enforced his retirement, his personal power was everywhere felt, and his personal character everywhere impressed itself on the British world, and to no ordinary extent on other countries. George III. was not a great man, and it has been argued that his mind was never really sound; and yet of all men who then lived, and far more than either Washington or Napoleon, he gave direction and color and tone to all public events, and to not a little of private life, and much of his work will have everlasting endurance. He did not supersede the House of Commons, but he would not be the simple vizier of that many-headed sultan, which for the most part became his humble tool. Yet he was not a popular sovereign until he had long occupied the throne, and had perpetrated deeds that should have destroyed the greatest popularity that sovereign ever possessed. It was not until after the overthrow of the Fox-and-North Coalition that he found himself popular, and so he remained unto the end. The change that he wrought, and the power that he wielded in the State,—a power as arbitrary as that of Louis XV.,—were the fruits of his personal character, and that character was the consequence of the peculiar education which he had received.

Lord Brougham tells us that George III. "was impressed with a lofty feeling of his prerogative, and a firm determination to

maintain, perhaps extend it. At all events, he was resolved not to be a mere name or a cipher in public affairs; and whether from a sense of the obligations imposed upon him by his station, or from a desire to enjoy all its powers and privileges, he certainly, while his reason remained entire, but especially during the earlier period of his reign, interfered in the affairs of government more than any prince who ever sat upon the throne of this country since our monarchy was distinctly admitted to be a limited one, and its executive functions were distributed among responsible ministers. The correspondence which he carried on with his confidential servants during the ten most critical years of his life lies before us, and it proves that his attention was ever awake to all the occurrences of the government. Not a step was taken in foreign, colonial, or domestic affairs, that he did not form his opinion upon it, and exercise his influence over it. The instructions to ambassadors, the orders to governors, the movements of forces, down to the marching of a single battalion, in the districts of this country, the appointment to all offices in Church and State, not only the giving away of judgeships, bishoprics, regiments, but the subordinate promotions, lay and clerical,—all these form the topics of his letters; on all his opinion is pronounced decisively; in all his will is declared peremptorily. In one letter he decides the appointment of a Scotch puisne judge; in another the march of a troop from Buckinghamshire into Yorkshire; in a third the nomination to the Deanery of Westminster; in a fourth he says, that, 'if Adam,

the architect, succeeds Worsley at the Board of Works, he shall think Chambers ill used.' For the greater affairs of State it is well known how substantially he insisted upon being the king *de facto* as well as *de jure*. The American War, the long exclusion of the Liberal party, the French Revolution, the Catholic question, are all sad monuments of his real power."

This is a true picture of George III., and why it should be supposed that no descendant of that monarch will ever be able to make himself potently felt in the government of his Empire we are at a loss to understand. The exact part of that monarch would not be repeated, the world having changed so much as to render such repetition impossible; but the end at which George III. aimed, and which he largely accomplished for himself, that end being the vindication of the monarchical element in the British polity, might be undertaken by one of his great-grandsons with every reason to expect success. The means employed would have to be different from those which George III. made use of, but that would prove nothing against the project itself. The men who followed Cromwell to the Long Parliament and the men who followed Bonaparte into the Council of Five Hundred were differently clothed and armed, but the pikemen of the future Protector were engaged in the same kind of work that was afterward done by the grenadiers of the future Emperor. The one set of men had never heard of the bayonet, and the other set had faith in nothing but the bayonet, believing it to be as "holy" as M. Michelet asserts it to be. The pikemen were the most

pious of men, and could have eaten an Atheist with relish, after having roasted him. The grenadiers were Atheists, and cared no more for Christianity than for Mahometanism, their chief having testified his regard for the latter, and consequently his contempt for both, only the year before, in Egypt. Yet both detachments were successfully employed in doing the same thing, and that was the clearing away of what was regarded as legislative rubbish, in order that military monarchies might be erected on the cleared ground. In each instance there was the element of violence actively at work, and it makes no possible difference that the English Commons went out because they did not care to come to push of pike, and that the French Representatives departed rather than risk the consequence of a bayonet-charge. So if the Prince of Wales should see fit to tread in the footsteps of his great-grandfather, he would have very different instruments from those "king's friends" whose existence and actions were so fatal to ministers in the early part of those days when George III. was king.

It is a common remark, that the institutions of England have been so far reformed in a democratic direction, that no monarch could ever expect to become powerful in that country. We think the observation unphilosophical; and it is because the old aristocratical system of England received a heavy blow in 1832 that we believe a king of that country could make himself a ruler in fact as well as in theory. Between a king and an aristocracy there never can be anything like a sincere attachment, unless

the king be content to be recognized as the first member of the patrician order, to be *primus inter pares* in strict good faith, an agent of his class, but not the sovereign of his kingdom. Kings generally prefer new men to men of established position and old descent. They have a fondness for low-born favorites, who are not only cleverer than most aristocrats will condescend to be, but who recognize a chief in a monarch, and enable him to feel and to enjoy his superiority when in their company. The hostility that prevails between the peer and the *parvenu* is the most natural thing in the world, and is no more to be wondered at than that between the hare and the hound. In earlier times the peerage had the best of it, and could hang up the *parvenus* with wonderful despatch,—as witness the fate of Cochrane and his associates, favorites of the third James of Scotland, who swung in the wind over Lauder Bridge. In later times brains and intelligence tell in and on the world, and the peers, having no longer pit and gallows for the punishment of presumptuous plebeians who dare to get between them and the regal sunshine, must be content to see those plebeians basking in the royal rays, if they are not capable of outdoing them in those arts that ever have been found most useful in the advancement of the interest of courtiers. Hanging and heading have gone mostly out of date, or the peer would be in more danger than the upstart.

The Reform Bill has made it much easier for a king of Great Britain to become a ruler than it was for George III. to carry his point over the old aristocracy, for it has created a class of voters

who could be easily won over to the aid of a king engaged in a project that should not injure them, while its success should reduce the power of the aristocracy. The father of the Reform Bill made a strange mistake as to the character of that measure. "I hope," said the old Tory and Pittite, Lord Sidmouth, to him, "God will forgive you on account of this bill: I don't think I can." "Mark my words," was Earl Grey's answer,—"within two years you will find that we have become unpopular for having brought forward the most aristocratic measure that ever was proposed in Parliament." The great Whig statesman was but half right. The Whigs became unpopular within the time named, but it was for very different reasons from that assigned by Earl Grey in advance for their fall in the people's favor. The Reform Bill, instead of proving an aristocratic measure, has wellnigh rendered aristocratical government impossible in England; and as a democracy in that country is as much out of the question as a well-ordered monarchy is in America, a return to a true regal government would seem to be the only course left for England, if she desires to have a strong government. When the Duke of Wellington, seeing the breaking up of the old system because of the triumph of the Whig measure, asked the question, "How is the King's government to be carried on?" he meant, "How will it be possible to maintain the old aristocratical system of party-government?"

Since the grand organic change that was effected thirty years ago, there has been no strong and stable government in England.

Lord Grey went out of office because he could not keep his party together. The King, under the spurring of his wife, made an effort to play the part of his father in 1783, with Peel for Pitt, and was beaten. Peel was floored, and Lord Melbourne became Premier again; and though he held office six years, he never had a working majority in the Commons, nor a majority of any kind in the Peers. The largest majorities that he could command in the lower House would have been considered something like very weak support in the ante-Reform times, and would have caused the ministers of those times to resign themselves to resignation. When the Tories came back to power, in 1841, with about one hundred majority in the Commons, they thought they were secure for a decade at least; but in a few months they found they were not secure of even their own chief; and in five years they were compelled to abandon protection, and to consent to the death and burial of their own party, which was denied even the honor of embalmment, young Conservatism being nothing but old Toryism, and therefore it was beyond even the power of spices to prolong its decay. It had rotted of the potato-rot, and the League's powerful breath blew it over. The Whigs returned to office, but not to power, the Russell Government proving a most ridiculous concern, and living through only five years of rickety rule. A spasmodic Tory Government, that discarded Tory principles, endured for less than a year, not even the vigorous intellect of the Earl of Derby, seconded though it was by the genius of Disraeli, being sufficient to insure it a longer term of

existence. Then came the Aberdeen Ministry, a regular coalition concern, a no-party government, and necessarily so, because all parties but the extreme Tories were represented in it, and were engaged in neutralizing each other. How could there be a party government, or, indeed, for long a government of any kind, by a ministry in which were such men as Aberdeen and Russell, Palmerston and Grahame, Gladstone and Clarendon, all pigging together in the same truckle-bed, to use Mr. Burke's figure concerning the mixture that was called the Chatham Ministry? The coalition went to pieces on the Russian rock, having managed the war much worse than any American Administration ever mismanaged one. The Palmerston Government followed, and has existed ever since, deducting the fifteen months that the second Derby-Disraeli Ministry lasted; but the Palmerston Ministry has seldom had a majority in Parliament, and has lived, partly through the forbearance of its foes, partly through the support of men who are neither its friends nor its enemies, and partly through the personal popularity of its vigorous old chief, who is as lively at seventy-eight as he was at forty-five, when he was a Canningite. Ministries now maintain themselves because men do not know what might happen, if they were to be dismissed; and this has been the political state of England for more than a quarter of a century, with no indications of a change so long as the government shall remain purely Parliamentary in its character, Parliament meaning the House of Commons. There is no party in the United Kingdom capable of electing a

strong majority to the House of Commons, and hence a strong government is impossible so long as that body shall control the country. With the removal of Lord Palmerston something like anarchy might be expected, there being no man but him who is competent to keep the Commons in order without the aid of a predominating party. The tendency has been for some time to lean upon individuals, at the same time that the number of individuals possessed of influence of the requisite character has greatly diminished. Sir Robert Peel, had he lived, would have been all that Lord Palmerston is, and more, and would have been more acceptable to the middle class than is the Irish peer.

The state of things that is thus presented, and which must become every year of a more pronounced character, is one that would be highly favorable to the exertions of a prince who should seek to make himself felt as the wielder of the sceptre, and who should exert himself to rise from the presidency of an aristocratical corporation, which is all that a British monarch now is, to the place of king of a great and free people. A prince with talent, and with a hold on the affection of his nominal subjects, might confer the blessing of strong government on Britain, and rule over the first of empires, instead of being a mere doge, or, as Napoleon coarsely had it, a pig to fatten at the public expense. The time would appear to be near at hand when England shall be the scene of a new struggle for power, with the aristocracy on the one side, and the sovereign and most of the people on the other. A nation like England cannot exist long with weakness organized

for its government, and there is nothing in the condition of Parliament or of parties that allows us to suppose that from them strength could proceed, any more than that grapes could be gathered from thorns or figs from thistles. A monarch who should effect the change indicated might be called a usurper, and certainly would be a revolutionist; but, as Mommsen says, "Any revolution or any usurpation is justified before the bar of history by exclusive ability to govern,"—and government is what most nations now stand most in need of. The reason why George III.'s conduct is generally condemned is, that he was a clumsy creature, and that he made a bad use of the power which he monopolized, or sought to monopolize, his whole course being unrelieved by a single trait of genius, or even of that tact which is the genius of small minds.

It has been charged upon the princes of the House of Hanover that they are given to quarrelling, and that between sovereign and heir-apparent there has never been good-will, while they have on several occasions disgusted the world by the vehemence of their hatred for each other. That George I. hated his heir is well known; and George II. hated his son Frederick with far more intensity than he himself had been hated by his own father. The Memoirs of Lord Hervey show the state of feeling that existed in the English royal family during the first third of the reign of George II., and the spectacle is hideous beyond parallel; and for many years longer, until Frederick's death, there was no abatement of paternal and filial hate. George III. was disgusted with his

eldest son's personal conduct and political principles, as well he might be; for while the father was a model of decorum, and a bitter Tory, the son was a profligate, and a Whig,—and the King probably found it harder to forgive the Whig than the profligate. The Prince cared no more for Whig principles than he did for his marriage-vows, but affected them as a means of annoying his father, whose Toryism was of proof. He, as a man, toasted the buff and blue, when that meant support of Washington and his associates, for the same reason that, as a boy, he had cheered for Wilkes and Liberty,—because it was the readiest way of annoying his father; but he ever deserted the Whigs when his aid and countenance could have been useful to them. George IV. had no child with whom to quarrel, but while Prince Regent he did his worst to make his daughter unhappy, as we find established in Miss Knight's Memoirs. The good-natured and kind-hearted William IV. had no legitimate children, but he was strongly attached to the Fitzclarences, who were borne to him by Mrs. Jordan. Indeed, monarchs have often been as full of love for their offspring born out of wedlock as of hate for their children born in that holy state. Being men, they must love something, and what so natural as that they should love their natural children, whose helpless condition appeals so strongly to all their better feelings, and who never can become their rivals?

Queen Victoria is the first sovereign of the House of Hanover who, having children, has not pained the world by quarrelling with them. A model sovereign, she has not allowed an infirmity

supposed to be peculiar to her illustrious House to control her clear and just mind, so that her career as a mother is as pleasing as her career as a sovereign is splendid. About the time of the death of Prince Albert, a leading British journal published some articles in which it was insinuated, not asserted, that there had been trouble in the Royal Family, and that that quarrelling between parent and child which had been so common in that family in former times was about to be exhibited again. It was even said that domestic peace was an impossibility in the House of Hanover, which was but an indorsement of Earl Granville's remark, in George II.'s reign. "This family," said that eccentric peer, "always has quarrelled, and always will quarrel, from generation to generation"; and he did not live to see the ill feeling that existed between George III. and his eldest son.

There is no reason for saying that the Hanover family is more quarrelsome than most other royal lines; and the domestic dissensions of great houses are more noted than those of lesser houses only because kings and nobles are so placed as to live in sight of the world. When a king falls out with his eldest son, the entertainment is one to which all men go as spectators, and historians consider it to be the first of their duties to give full details of that entertainment. Since the Hanoverians have reigned over the English, the world has been a writing and a reading world, and nothing has more interested writers and readers than the dissensions of sovereigns and their sons. If we extend our observation to those days when German sovereigns were

unthought of in England, we shall find that kings and princes did not always agree; and if we go farther, and scan the histories of other royal houses, we shall learn that it is not in Britain alone that the wearers of crowns have looked with aversion upon their heirs, and have had sons who have loved them so well and truly as to wish to witness their promotion to heavenly crowns. The Hanoverian monarchs of England, and their sons, have shared only the common lot of those who reign and those who wish to reign.

The Norman kings of England did not always live on good terms with their sons. William the Conqueror had a very quarrelsome family. His children quarrelled with one another, and the King quarrelled with his wife. The oldest son of William and Matilda was Robert, afterward Duke of Normandy,—and a very trying time this young man caused his father to have; while the mother favored the son, probably out of revenge for the beatings she had received, with fists and bridles, from her royal husband, who used to swear "By the Splendor of God!"—his favorite oath, and one that has as much merit as can belong to any piece of blasphemy,—that he never would be governed by a woman. The father and son went to war, and they actually met in battle, when the son ran the old gentleman through the arm with his lance, and dropped him out of the saddle with the utmost dexterity. This was the first time that the Conqueror was ever conquered, and perhaps it was not altogether without complacency that "the governor" saw what a clever fellow his

eldest son was with his tools. At the time of William's death Robert was on bad terms with him, and is believed to have been bearing arms against him. Henry I. lost his sons before he could well quarrel with them, the wreck of the White Ship causing the death of his heir-apparent, and also of his natural son Richard. He compensated for this omission by quarrelling with his daughter Matilda, and with her husband, Geoffrey of Anjou. He made war on his brother Robert, took from him the Duchy of Normandy, and shut him up for life; but the story, long believed, that he put out Robert's eyes, has been called in question by modern writers. King Stephen, who bought his breeches at so low a figure, had a falling-out with his son Eustace, when he and Henry Plantagenet sought to restore peace to England, and nothing but Eustace's death made a settlement possible. William Rufus, the Red King, who was the second of the Norman sovereigns of England, had no legitimate children, for he was never married. He was a jolly bachelor, and as such he has had the honor of having his history written by one of the ablest literary ladies of our time, Miss Agnes Strickland. He was the only king of England, who arrived at years of indiscretion, who did not marry. The other bachelor kings were Edward V. and Edward VI., whose united ages were short of thirty years. His character does not tend to make the single state of man respected. "Never did a ruler die less regretted than William Rufus," says Dr. Lappenberg, "although still young, being little above forty, not a usurper, and successful in his undertakings.

He was never married, and, besides the crafty and officious tools of his power, was surrounded only by a few Normans of quality, and harlots. In his last struggle with the clergy, the most shameless rapacity is especially prominent, and so glaring, that, notwithstanding some exaggerations and errors that may be pointed out in the Chronicles, he still appears in the same light. Effeminacy, drunkenness, gluttony, dissoluteness, and unnatural crimes were the distinguishing characteristics of his court. He was himself an example of incontinence." This is a nice character to travel with down the page of history. He quarrelled with his brothers, and with his uncle, and kept up the family character in an exceedingly satisfactory manner, considering that he was unmarried. The statement that he was slain by Walter Tirel, accidentally, in the New Forest, is now disregarded. Our theory of his death is, that he fell a victim to the ambition of his brother, Henry I., who succeeded him, and who certainly had good information as to his fall, and made good use of it, like a sensible fellow.

Of all the royal races of the Middle Ages, no one stands out more boldly on the historic page than the Plantagenets, who ruled over England from 1154 to 1485, the line of descent being frequently broken, and family quarrels constantly occurring. They were a bold and an able race, and if they had possessed a closer resemblance to the Hapsburgs, they would have become masters of Western Europe; but their quarrelsome disposition more than undid all that they could effect through the exercise

of their talents. On the female side they were descended from the Conqueror; and, as we have seen, the Conqueror's family was one in which sons rebelled against the fathers, and brother fought with brother. Matilda, daughter of Henry I., became the wife of Geoffrey, Count of Anjou, and from their union came Henry II., first of the royal Plantagenets. Now the Angevine Plantagenets were "a hard set," as we should say in these days. Dissensions were common enough in the family, and they descended to the offspring of Geoffrey and Matilda, being in fact intensified by the elevation of the House to a throne. Henry II. married Eleanora of Aquitaine, one of the greatest matches of those days, a marriage which has had great effect on modern history. The Aquitanian House was as little distinguished for the practice of the moral virtues as were the lines of Anjou and Normandy. One of the Countesses of Anjou was reported to be a demon, which probably meant only that her husband had caught a Tartar in marrying her; but the story was enough to satisfy the credulous people of those times, who, very naturally, considering their conduct, believed that the Devil was constant in his attention to their affairs. It was to this lady that Richard Cocur de Lion referred, when he said, speaking of the family contentions, "Is it to be wondered at, that, coming from such a source, we live ill with one another? What comes from the Devil must to the Devil return." With such an origin on his father's side, crossing the fierce character of his mother, Henry II. thought he could not do better than marry Eleanora, whose origin was almost as

bad as his own. Her grandfather had been a "fast man" in his youth and middle life, and it was not until he had got nigh to seventy that he began to think that it was time to repent. He had taken Eleanora's grandmother from her husband, and a pious priest had said to them, "Nothing good will be born to you," which prediction the event justified. The old gentleman resigned his rich dominions, supposed to be the best in Europe, to his grand-daughter, and she married Louis VII., King of France, and accompanied him in the crusade that he was so foolish as to take part in. She had women-warriors, who did their cause immense mischief; and unless she has been greatly scandalized, she made her husband fit for heaven in a manner approved neither by the law nor the gospel. The Provençal ladies had no prejudices against Saracens. After her return to Europe, she got herself divorced from Louis, and married Henry Plantagenet, who was much her junior, she having previously been the mistress of his father. It was a *mariage de convenance*, and, as is sometimes the case with such marriages, it turned out very inconveniently for both parties to it. It was not unfruitful, but all the fruit it produced was bad, and to the husband and father that fruit became the bitterest of bitter ashes. No romancer would have dared to bring about such a scries of unions as led to the creation of Plantagenet royalty, and to so much misery as well as greatness. There is no exaggeration in Michelet's lively picture of the Plantagenets. "In this family," he says, "it was a succession of bloody wars and treacherous treaties. Once, when King Henry had met his sons

in a conference, their soldiers drew upon him. This conduct was traditionary in the two Houses of Anjou and Normandy. More than once had the children of William the Conqueror and Henry II. pointed their swords against their father's breast. Fulk had placed his foot on the neck of his vanquished son. The jealous Eleanora, with the passion and vindictiveness of her Southern blood, encouraged her sons' disobedience, and trained them to parricide. These youths, in whose veins mingled the blood of so many different races,—Norman, Saxon, and Aquitanian,—seemed to entertain, over and above the violence of the Fulks of Anjou and the Williams of England, all the opposing hatreds and discords of those races. They never knew whether they were from the South or the North: they only knew that they hated one another, and their father worse than all. They could not trace back their ancestry, without finding, at each descent, or rape, or incest, or parricide." Henry II. quarrelled with all his sons, and they all did him all the mischief they could, under the advice and direction of their excellent mother, whom Henry imprisoned. A priest once sought to effect a reconciliation between Henry and his son Geoffrey. He went to the Prince with a crucifix in his hand, and entreated him not to imitate Absalom.

"What!" exclaimed the Prince, "would you have me renounce my birthright?"

"God forbid!" answered the holy man; "I wish you to do nothing to your own injury."

"You do not understand my words," said Geoffrey; "it is our

family fate not to love one another. 'T is our inheritance; and not one of us will ever forego it."

That must have been a pleasant family to marry into! When the King's eldest son, Henry, died, regretting his sins against his father, that father durst not visit him, fearing treachery; and the immediate occasion of the King's death was the discovery of the hostility of his son John, who, being the worst of his children, was, of course, the best-beloved of them all. The story was, that, when Richard entered the Abbey of Fontevraud, in which his father's body lay, the corpse bled profusely, which was held to indicate that the new king was his father's murderer. Richard was very penitent, as his elder brother Henry had been, on his death-bed. They were very sorrowful, were those Plantagenet princes, when they had been guilty of atrocious acts, and when it was too late for their repentance to have any practical effect.

Richard I. had no children, and so he could not get up a perfect family-quarrel, though he and his brother John were enemies. He died at forty-two, and but a few years after his marriage with Berengaria of Navarre, an English queen who never was in England. When on his death-bed, Richard was advised by the Bishop of Rouen to repent, and to separate himself from his children. "I have no children," the King answered. But the good priest told him that he had children, and that they were avarice, luxury, and pride. "True," said Richard, who was a humorist, —"and I leave my avarice to the Cistercians, my luxury to the Gray Friars, and my pride to the Templars." History has fewer

sharper sayings than this, every word of which told like a cloth-yard shaft sent against a naked bosom. Richard certainly never quarrelled with the children whom he thus left to his *friends*.

King John did not live long enough to illustrate the family character by fighting with his children. When he died, in 1216, his eldest son, Henry III., was but nine years old, and even a Plantagenet could not well fall out with a son of that immature age. However, John did his best to make his mark on his time. If he could not quarrel with his children, because of their tender years, he, with a sense of duty that cannot be too highly praised, devoted his venom to his wife. He was pleased to suspect her of being as regardless of marriage-vows as he had been himself, and so he hanged her supposed lover over her bed, with two others, who were suspected of being their accomplices. The Queen was imprisoned. On their being reconciled, he stinted her wardrobe, a refinement of cruelty that was aggravated by his monstrous expenditure on his own ugly person. Queen Isabella was very handsome, and perhaps John was of the opinion of some modern husbands, who think that dress extinguishes beauty as much as it inflames bills. Having no children to torment, John turned his disagreeable attentions to his nephew, Arthur, Duke of Brittany, who, according to modern ideas, was the lawful King of England. The end was the end of Arthur. How he was disposed of is not exactly known, but, judging from John's character and known actions, we incline to agree with those writers who say that the uncle slew the nephew with his own royal hand. He never could

deny himself an attainable luxury, and to him the murder of a youthful relative must have been a rich treat, and have created for him a new sensation, something like the new pleasure for which the Persian king offered a great reward. Besides, all uncles are notoriously bad, and seem, indeed, to have been made only for the misery of their nephews and nieces, of whose commands they are most reprehensibly negligent. We mean to write a book, one of these days, for the express purpose of showing what a mistake it was to allow any such relationship to exist, and tracing all the evil that ever has afflicted humanity to the innate wickedness of uncles, and requiring their extirpation. We err, then, on the safe side, in supposing that John despatched Arthur himself,—not to say, that, when you require that a delicate piece of work should be done, you must do it with your own hand, or you may be disappointed. John did the utmost that he could do to keep up the discredit of the family; for, when a man has no son to whip and to curse, he should not be severely censured for having done no more than to kill his nephew. Men of large and charitable minds will take all the circumstances of John's case into the account, and not allow their judgment of his conduct to be harsh. What better can a man do than his worst?

Henry III. appears to have managed to live without quarrelling with his children; but then he was a poor creature, and even was so unkingly, and so little like what a Plantagenet should have been, that he actually disliked war! He might with absolute propriety have worn the lowly broom-corn from which his

family-name was taken, while it was a sweeping satire on almost all others who bore it. His heir, Edward I., was a king of "high stomach," and as a prince he stood stoutly by his father in the baronial wars. He, too, though the father of sixteen children, dispensed with family dissensions, thus showing that "The more, the merrier," is a true saying. Edward II. came to grief from having a bad wife, Isabella of France, who made use of his son against him. That son was Edward III., who became king in his father's lifetime, and whose marriage with Philippa of Hainault is one of the best-known facts of history, not only because it was an uncommonly happy marriage, but that it had remarkable consequences. This royal couple got along very happily with their children; but the ambition of their fourth son, the Duke of Lancaster, troubled the last days of the King, and prepared the way for great woes in the next century. The King was governed by Lancaster, and the Black Prince, who was then in a dying state, was at the head of what would now be called the Opposition, as if he foresaw what evils his brother's ambition would be the means of bringing upon his son.

Richard II., son of the Black Prince, had no children, though he was twice married. He was dethroned, the rebels being headed by his cousin, Henry of Lancaster, who became Henry IV. Thus was brought about that change in the course of descent which John of Gaunt seems to have aimed at, but which he died just too soon to see effected. It was a violent change, and one which had its origin in a family quarrel, added to political dissatisfaction.

Had the revolutionist wished merely to set aside a bad king, they would have called the House of Mortimer to the throne, the chief member of that House being the next heir, as descended from the Duke of Clarence, elder brother of the Duke of Lancaster; but more was meant than a political revolution, and so the line of Clarence was passed over, and its right to the crown treated with neglect, to be brought forward in bloody fashion in after-days. In fact, the Englishmen who made Henry of Lancaster king prepared the way for that long and terrible struggle which took place in the fifteenth century, and which was, its consequences as well as its course considered, the greatest civil war that has ever afflicted Christendom. The movement that led to the elevation of Henry of Holingbroke to the throne, though not precisely a palace-revolution, resembles a revolution of that kind more than anything else with which it can be compared; and it was as emphatic a departure from the principle of hereditary right as can be found in history. So much was this the case, that liberals in polities mostly place their historical sympathies with the party of the Red Rose, for no other reason, that we have ever been able to see, than that the House of Lancaster's possession of the throne testified to the triumph of revolutionary principles; for that House was jealous of its power and cruel in the exercise of it, and was so far from being friendly to the people, that it derived its main support from the aristocracy, and was the ally of the Church in the harsh work of exterminating the Lollards. The House of York, on the other hand, while it had, to use modern

words, the legitimate right to the throne, was a popular House, and represented and embodied whatever there was then existing in politics that could be identified with the idea of progress.

The character of the troubles that existed between Henry IV. and his eldest son and successor, Shakspeare's Prince Hal, is involved in much obscurity. It used to be taken for granted that the poet's Prince was an historical character, but that is no longer the case,—Falstaff's royal associate being now regarded in the same light in which Falstaff himself is regarded. The one is a poetic creation, and so is the other. Prince Henry was neither a robber nor a rowdy, but from his early youth a much graver character than most men are in advanced life. He had great faults, but they were not such as are made to appear in the pages of the player. The hero of Agincourt was a mean fellow,—a tyrant, a persecutor, a false friend and a cruel enemy, and the wager of most unjust wars; but he was not the "fast" youth that he has been generally drawn. He had neither the good nor the bad qualities that belong to young gentlemen who do not live on terms with their papas. He was of a grave and sad temperament, and much more of a Puritan than a Cavalier. It is a little singular that Shakspeare should have given portraits so utterly false of the most unpopular of the kings of the York family, and of the most popular of the kings of the rival house,—of Richard III., that is, and of the fifth Henry of Lancaster. Neither portrait has any resemblance to the original, a point concerning which the poet probably never troubled himself, as his sole purpose

was to make good acting plays. Had it been necessary to that end to make Richard walk on three legs, or Henry on one leg, no doubt he would have done so,—just as Monk Lewis said he would have made Lady Angela blue, in his "Castle Spectre," if by such painting he could have made the play more effective. Prince Henry was a very precocious youth, and had the management of great affairs when he was but a child, and when it would have been better for his soul's and his body's health, had he been engaged in acting as an esquire of some good knight, and subjected to rigid discipline. The jealousy that his father felt was the natural consequence of the popularity of the Prince, who was young, and had highly distinguished himself in both field and council, was not a usurper, and was not held responsible for any of the unpopular acts done by the Government of his father. They were at variance not long before Henry IV.'s death, but little is known as to the nature of their quarrels. The crown scene, in which the Prince helps himself to the crown while his father is yet alive, is taken by Shakspeare from Monstrelet, who is supposed to have invented all that he narrates in order to weaken the claim of the English monarch to the French throne. If Henry IV., when dying, could declare that he had no right to the crown of England, on what could Henry V. base his claim to that of France?

Henry V. died before his only son, Henry VI., had completed his first year; and Henry VI. was early separated from his only son, Edward of Lancaster, the same who was slain while flying from the field of Tewkesbury, at the age of eighteen. There was,

therefore, no opportunity for quarrels between English kings and their sons for the sixty years that followed the death of Henry IV.; but there was much quarrelling, and some murdering, in the royal family, in those years,—brothers and other relatives being fierce rivals, even unto death, and zealous even unto slaying of one another. It would be hard to say of what crime those Plantagenets were not guilty.[1] Edward IV., with whom began the brief ascendency of the House of York, died at forty-one, after killing his brother of Clarence, his eldest son being but twelve years old. He had no opportunity to have troubles with his boys, and he loved women too well to fall out with his daughters, the eldest of whom was but just turned of seventeen. The history of Edward IV. is admirably calculated to furnish matter for a sermon on the visitation of the sins of parents on their children. He had talent enough to have made himself master of Western Europe, but he followed a life of debauchery, by which he was cut off in his prime, leaving a large number of young children to encounter the worst of fortunes. Both of his sons disappeared, whether murdered by Richard III. or Henry VII. no one can say; and his daughters had in part to depend upon that bastard

[1] It has been said of the Plantagenets that they "never shed the blood of a woman." This is nonsense, as we could, time and space permitting, show by the citation of numerous facts, but we shall here mention only one. King John had a noble woman shut up with her son, and starved to death. Perhaps that was not shedding her blood, but it was something worse. Before English statesmen and orators and writers take all the harlotry of Secessia under their kind care and championship, it would be well for them to read up their own country's history, and see how abominably women have been used in England for a thousand years, from queens to queans.

slip of the Red-Rose line, Henry VII., for the means to enable them to live as gentlewomen,—all but the eldest, whom Henry took to wife as a point of policy, which her father would have considered the greatest misfortune of all those that befell his offspring. Richard III's only legitimate son died a mere boy.

The Tudors fame to the English throne in 1485. There was no want of domestic quarrelling with them. Arthur, Henry VII.'s eldest son, died young, but left a widow, Catharine of Aragon, whom the King treated badly; and he appears to have been jealous of the Prince of Wales, afterward Henry VIII., but died too soon to allow of that jealousy's blooming into quarrels. According to some authorities, the Prince thought of seizing the crown, on the ground that it belonged to him in right of his mother, Elizabeth Plantagenet, who was unquestionably the legitimate heir. Henry VIII. himself, who would have made a splendid tyrant over a son who should have readied to man's estate,—an absolute model in that way to all after-sovereigns,—was denied by fortune an opportunity to round and perfect his character as a domestic despot. Only one of his legitimate sons lived even to boyhood, Edward VI., and Henry died when the heir-apparent was in his tenth year. Of his illegitimate son, the Duke of Richmond, Henry was extravagantly fond, and at one time thought of making him heir-apparent, which might have been done, for the English dread of a succession war was then at its height. Richmond died in his seventeenth year. Having no sons of a tormentable age, Henry made his daughters as unhappy as he

could make them by the harsh exercise of paternal authority, and bastardized them both, in order to clear the way to the throne for his son. Edward VI. died a bachelor, in his sixteenth year, so that we can say nothing of him as a parent; but he treated his sister Mary with much harshness, and exhibited on various occasions a disposition to have things his own way that would have delighted his father, provided it had been directed against anybody but that severe old gentleman himself. Mary I. was the best sovereign of her line, domestically considered; but then she had neither son nor daughter with whom to quarrel, and the difficulties she had with her half-sister, Elizabeth, like the differences between the Archangel Michael and the Fallen Angel, were purely political in their character. We do not think that she would have done much injustice, if she had made Elizabeth's Tower-dungeon the half-way house to the scaffold. But though political, the half-sisterly dissensions between these ladies serve to keep Mary I. within the rules of the royal houses to which she belonged. Mary, dying of the loss of Calais and the want of children, was succeeded by Elizabeth, who, being a maiden queen, had no issue with whom to make issue concerning things political or personal. But observe how basely she treated her relatives, those poor girls, the Greys, Catharine and Mary, sisters of poor Lady Jane, whose fair and clever head Mary I. had taken off. The barren Queen, too jealous to share her power with a husband, hated marriage with all "the sour malevolence of antiquated virginity," and was down upon the Lady Catharine and the Lady Mary because they

chose to become wives. Then she imprisoned her cousin, Mary Stuart, for nineteen years, and finally had her butchered under an approach to the forms of law, and in total violation of its spirit. She, too, kept within the royal rules, and made herself as great a pest as possible to her relatives.

The English throne passed to the House of Stuart in 1603, and, after a lapse of six-and-fifty years, England had a sovereign with sons and daughters, the first since the death of Henry VIII. at the beginning of 1547. There was little opportunity for family dissensions in the days of most of the Stuarts, as either political troubles of the most serious nature absorbed the attention of kings and princes, or the reigning monarchs had no legitimate children. The open quarrel between Charles I. and the Parliament began before his eldest son had completed his eleventh year; and after that quarrel had increased to war, and it was evident that the sword alone could decide the issue, the King parted with his son forever. They had no opportunity to become rivals, and to fall out. There is so much that can be said against Charles I. with truth, that it is pleasing—as are most novelties—to be able to mention something to his credit. Instead of being jealous of his son, or desiring to keep him in ignorance of affairs, he early determined to train him to business. According to Clarendon, he said that he wished to "unboy him." Therefore he conferred high military offices upon him before he had completed his fifteenth year; and sent him to the West of England, to be the nominal head of the Western Association. Charles II. had no legitimate

children, and so he could not have any quarrels with a Prince of Wales. He was fond of his numerous bastards, and, like an affectionate royal father, provided handsomely for them at the public-expense. What more could a father do, situated as that father was, and always in want of his people's money? Some of them were not his sons,—Monmouth, the best beloved of them all, being the son of Robert Sidney, a brother of the renowned Algernon, a fact that partially excuses the harsh conduct of James II. toward his nominal nephew. James II. had no legitimate son until the last year of his reign; but his two eldest daughters treated him far worse than any sovereign of the Hanoverian line was ever used by a son. They were most respectable women, and their deficiency in piety has worked well for the world; but it must ever be repugnant to humanity to regard the conduct of Mary and Anne with respect. No wonder that people called Mary the modern Tullia. Mary II. died young, and childless; and Queen Anne, though a most prolific wife, and but fifty-one at her death, survived all her children. Anne believed that her children's deaths were sent in punishment of her unfilial conduct; and she would have restored her nephew, the Pretender, to the British throne, but that the Jacobites were the silliest political creatures that ever triumphed in the how-not-to-do-it business, and could not even hold their mouths open for the rich and ripened fruit to drop into them.

The first of the English Stuarts, James I., is suspected of having allowed his jealousy of his eldest son, the renowned

Prince Henry, to carry him to the extent of child-murder. The Stuarts are called the Fated Line, and it is certain that none of their number, from Robert II.—who got the Scottish throne in virtue of his veins containing a portion of the blood of the Bruce, and so regalized the family, which, like the Bruces, was of Norman origin, and originally Fitzalan by name—to Charles Edward, and the Cardinal York, who died but yesterday, as it were, but had a wonderful run of bad luck. They had capital cards, but they knew not how to play them. With them, to play was to lose, and the most fortunate of their number were those kings who played as little as they could, such as James I. and Charles II. Those who lost the most were those who played the hardest, as Charles I. and his second son, James II. Yet the family was a clever one, with strong traits, both of character and talent, that ought to have made it the most successful of ruling races, and would have made it so, if its chiefs could have learned to march with the times. They had to contend, in Scotland, with one of the fiercest and most unprincipled aristocracies that ever tried the patience and traversed the purposes of monarchs who really aimed at the good government of their people; and the idiosyncrasy contracted during more than two centuries of Scottish rule clung to the family after it went to England, and found itself living under altogether a different state of things. What was virtue in Scotland became vice in England; and the ultra-monarchists, who came into existence not long after James I. succeeded to Elizabeth, helped to spoil the Stuarts. Both

James and his successor were dominated by Scotch traditions, and supposed that they were contending with men who had the same end in view that had been regarded by the Douglases, the Hamiltons, the Ruthvens, the Lindsays, and others of the old Scotch baronage. What helped to deceive them was this,—that their opponents in England, like the opponents of their ancestors in Scotland, were aristocrats; and they supposed, that, as aristocratical movements in their Northern kingdom had always been subversive of order and peace, the same kind of movements would produce similar results in their Southern kingdom. They could not understand that one aristocracy may differ much from another, and that, while in Scotland the interest of the people, or rather of the whole nation, required the exaltation of the kingly power, in England it was that exaltation which was most to be feared. Sufficient allowance has not been made for the Stuarts in this respect, little regard being paid to the effect of the family's long training at home, which had rendered hostility to the nobility second nature to it. Had the Stuarts been the supporters of liberal ideas in England, their conduct would have given the lie to every known principle of human action. As their distrust of aristocracy rendered them despotically disposed, because the Scotch aristocracy had been the most lawless of mankind, so did they become attached to the Church of England because of the tyranny they had seen displayed by the Church of Scotland, the most illiberal ecclesiastical body, in those times, that men had ever seen, borne with, or suffered from. James I.

and his grandson Charles II. had their whole conduct colored, and dyed in the wool, too, by their recollections of the odious treatment to which they had been subjected by a harsh and intolerant clergy. They had not the magnanimity to overlook, in the day of their power, what they had suffered in the day of their weakness.

James I. undoubtedly disliked his eldest son, and was jealous of him; but it is by no means clear that he killed him, or caused him to be killed. He used to say of him, "What! will he bury me alive?" He ordered that the court should not go into mourning for Henry, a circumstance that makes in his favor, as murderers are apt to affect all kinds of hypocrisy in regard to their victims, and to weep in weeds very copiously. Yet his conduct may have been a refinement of hypocrisy, and, though a coward in the common acceptation of the word, James had much of that peculiar kind of hardihood which enables its possessor to treat commonly received ideas with contempt. His conduct in "The Great Oyer of Poisoning" was most extraordinary, it must be allowed, and is not reconcilable with innocence; but it does not follow that the guilt which the great criminals in that business could have established as against James related only to the death of Henry. It bore harder upon the King than even that crime could have borne, and must have concerned his conduct in matters that are peculiarly shocking to the ears of Northern peoples, though Southern races have ears that are less delicate. It was in Somerset's power to explain James's conduct respecting some things that puzzled

his contemporaries, and which have continued to puzzle their descendants; but the explanation would have ruined the monarch in the estimation of even the most vicious portion of his subjects, and probably would have given an impetus to the growing power of the Puritans that might have led to their ascendency thirty years earlier than it came to pass in the reign of his son. James was capable of almost any crime or baseness; but in the matter of poisoning his eldest son he is entitled to the Scotch verdict of *Not Proven*.

Whether James killed his son or not, it is certain that the Prince's death was a matter of extreme importance. Henry was one of those characters who are capable of giving history a twist that shall last forever. He had a fondness for active life, was very partial to military pursuits, and was friendly to those opinions which the bigoted chiefs of Austria and Bavaria were soon to combine to suppress. Henry would have come to the throne in 1625, had he lived, and there seems no reason to doubt that he would have anticipated the part which Gustavus Adolphus played a few years later. He would have made himself the champion of Protestantism, and not the less readily because his sister, the Electress-Palatine and Winter-Queen of Bohemia, would have been benefited by his successes in war. Bohemia might have become the permanent possession of the Palatine, and Protestantism have maintained its hold on Southern Germany, had Henry lived and reigned, and had his conduct as a king justified the hopes and expectations that were created by his

conduct as a prince. The House of Austria would in that case have had a very different career from that which it has had since 1625, when Ferdinand II. was preparing so much evil for the future of Europe. Had Henry returned from Continental triumphs at the head of a great and an attached army, what could have prevented him from establishing arbitrary power in his insular dominions? His brother failed to make himself absolute, because he had no army, and was personally unpopular; but Henry would have had an army, and one, too, that would have stood high in English estimation, because of what it had done for the English name and the Protestant religion in Germany,—and Henry himself would have been popular, as a successful military man is sure to be in any country. Pym and Hampden would have found him a very different man to deal with from his foolish brother, who had all the love of despotism that man can have, but little of that kind of ability which enables a sovereign to reign despotically. Charles I. had no military capacity or taste, or he would have taken part in the Thirty Years' War, and in that way, and through the assistance of his army, have accomplished his domestic purpose. His tyranny was of a hard, iron character, unrelieved by a single ray of glory, but aggravated by much disgrace from the ill working of his foreign policy; so that it was well calculated to create the resistance which it encountered, and by which it was shivered to pieces. Henry would have gone to work in a different way, and, like Cromwell, would have given England glory, while taking from her freedom. There is nothing that the wearer of a

crown cannot do, provided that crown is encircled with laurel. But the Stuarts seldom produced a man of military talent, which was a fortunate thing for their subjects, who would have lost their right to boast of their Constitutional polity, had Charles I. or James II. been a good soldier. We Americans, too, would have had a very different sort of annals to write, if the Stuarts, who have given so many names to American places, had known how to use that sword which they were so fond of handling.

The royal families of England did by no means monopolize the share of domestic dissensions set apart for kings. The House of Stuart, even before it ascended the English throne, and when it reigned over only poor, but stout Scotland, was anything but famous for the love of its fathers for their sons, or for its sons' love for their fathers; and dissensions were common in the royal family. Robert III., second king of the line, had great grief with his eldest son, the Duke of Rothsay; and the King's brother, the Duke of Albany, did much to increase the evil that had been caused by the loose life of the heir-apparent. The end was, that Rothsay was imprisoned, and then murdered by his uncle. Scott has used the details of this court-tragedy in his "Fair Maid of Perth," one of the best of his later novels, most of the incidents in which are strictly historical. James I. was murdered while he was yet young, and James II. lost his life at twenty-nine; but James III. lost both throne and life in a war that was waged against him in the name of his son, who became king in consequence of his father's defeat and death. When James IV. fell at Flodden,

because he fought like a brave fool, and not like a skilful general, he left a son who was not three years old; and that son, James V., when he died, left a daughter, the hapless Mary Stuart, who was but a week old. There was not much room for quarrelling in either of these cases. Mary Stuart's son, then an infant, was made the head of the party that dethroned his mother, and forced her into that long exile that terminated in her murder by Elizabeth of England. Mary's quarrels with her husband, Darnley, were of so bitter a character as to create the belief that she caused him to be murdered,—a belief that is as common now as it was in the sixteenth century, though the Marian Controversy has been going on for wellnigh three hundred years, and it has been distinctly proved by a host of clever writers and skilful logicians that it was impossible for her to have had any thing to do with that summary act of divorce.

Several of the sovereigns of Continental Europe have had great troubles with their children, and these children have often had very disobedient fathers. In France, the Dauphin, afterward Louis XI., could not always keep on good terms with his father, Charles VII., who has the reputation of having restored the French monarchy, after the English had all but subverted it, Charles at one time being derisively called King of Bourges. Nothing annoyed Louis so much as being compelled to run away before the army which his father was leading against him. He would, he declared, have stayed and fought, but that he had not even half so many men as composed the royal force. He

would have killed his father as readily as he killed his brother in after-days,—if he did kill his brother, of which there is some doubt, of which he should have the benefit. As was but natural, he was jealous of his son, though he died when that prince was thirteen. Owing to various causes, however, there have been fewer quarrels between French kings and their eldest sons than between English kings and their eldest sons. Few French monarchs have been succeeded by their sons during the last three hundred years,—but two, in fact, namely, Louis XIII., who followed his father, Henry IV., and Louis XIV., who succeeded to Louis XIII., his father. It is two hundred and twenty years since a father was succeeded by a son in France,—a circumstance that Napoleon III. should lay to heart, and not be too sure that the Prince Imperial is to become Napoleon IV. There seems to be something fatal about the French purple, which has a strange tendency to spread itself, and to settle upon shoulders that could not have counted upon experiencing its weight and its warmth. Sometimes it is hung up for the time, and becomes dusty, while republicans take a turn at governing, though seldom with success. There were troubles in the families of Louis XIV., who was too heartless, selfish, and unfeeling not to be that worst kind of king, the domestic tyrant. He tyrannized over even his mistresses.

Philip II., the greatest monarch of modern times,—perhaps the greatest of all time, the extent and diversity of his dominions considered, and the ability of the races over which he ruled taken into the account,—was under the painful necessity of putting

his eldest son, Don Carlos, in close confinement, from which he never came forth until he was brought out feet foremost, the presumption being that he had been put to death by his father's orders. Carlos has been made a hero of romance, but a more worthless character never lived. On his death-bed Philip II. was compelled to see how little his son Philip, who succeeded him, cared for his feelings and wishes. Peter the Great put to death his son Alexis; and Frederick William I. of Prussia came very near taking the life of that son of his who afterward became Frederick the Great.

Jealousy is so common a feeling in Oriental royal houses, that it is hardly allowable to quote anything from their history; but we may be permitted to allude to the effect of one instance of paternal hate in the Ottoman family at the time of its utmost greatness. Solyman the Magnificent was jealous of his eldest son, Mustapha, who is represented by all writers on the Turkish history of those times as a remarkably superior man, and who, had he lived, would have been a mighty foe to Christendom. This son the Sultan caused to be put to death, and there are few incidents of a more tragical cast than those which accompanied Mustapha's murder. They might be turned to great use by an historical romancer, who would find matters all made to his hand. The effect of this murder was to substitute for the succession that miserable drunkard, Selim II., who was utterly unable to lead the Turks in those wars that were absolutely essential to their existence as a dominant people. "With him," says Ranke,

"begins the series of those inactive Sultans, in whose dubious character we may trace one main cause of the decay of the Ottoman fortunes." Solyman's hatred of his able son was a good thing for Christendom; for, if Mustapha had lived, and become Sultan, the War of Cyprus—that contest in which occurred the Battle of Lepanto—might have Lad a different termination, and the Osmanlis have been successful invaders of both Spain and Italy. It was a most fortunate circumstance for Europe, that, while it was engaged in carrying on civil wars and wars of religion, the Turks should have had for their chiefs men incapable of carrying on that work of war and conquest through which alone it was possible for those Mussulmans to maintain their position in Europe; and that they were thus favored was owing to the causeless jealousy felt by Sultan Solyman for the son who most resembled himself: and Solyman was the greatest of his line, which some say ended with him.

UNDER THE PEAR-TREE

IN TWO PARTS

PART I

CHAPTER I

One Sunday morning, long ago, a girl stood in her bed-room, lingeringly occupied with the last touches of her toilet.

A string of beads, made of pure gold and as large as peas, lay before her. They had been her mother's,—given to her when the distracted state of American currency made a wedding-present of the precious metal as welcome as it was valuable. Three several times, under circumstances of great pecuniary urgency, had the beads sufficed, one by one, to restore the family to comfort,—to pay the expenses of a journey, to buy seed-grain, and to make out the payment of a yoke of oxen. Afterwards, when peace and plenty came to be housemates in the land, the gold beads were redeemed, and the necklace, dearer than ever, encircled the neck of the only daughter.

The only daughter took them up, and clasped them round her throat with a decisive snap. But the crowning graces remained in the shape of two other ornaments that lay in a small China box. It had a head on the cover, beautifully painted, of some queen, —perhaps of the Empress Josephine, the girl thought. The hat had great ostrich-feathers, that seemed proper to royalty, and it was a pretty face.

In the box lay a pin and ring. On the back of the pin was braided hair, and letters curiously intertwined. The young girl slipped the ring on her own finger once more, and smiled. Then she took it off, with a sigh that had no pain in it, and looked at the name engraved inside,—DORCAS FOX.

Whoever saw this name in the town records would naturally image to himself the town tailoress or nurse, or somebody's single sister who had been wise too long,—somebody tall, a little bent, and bony,—somebody weather-beaten and determined—looking, with a sharp, shrewd glance of a gray eye that said you could not possibly get the better of her and so need not try,—somebody who goes out unattended and fearless at night; for, as she very properly observes, "Who'd want to speak to *me*?"

This might have described the original owner of the pin and ring, who had died years before, and left the ornaments for her namesake and niece, when she was too young to remember or care for her, but not the niece herself. She was young, blooming, twenty-two, and the belle of the country-village where she dwelt.

The bed-room where the girl stood and meditated, after her fashion, was six feet by ten in dimensions, and the oval mirror before which she stood was six inches by ten. It was a genuine relic of the Mayflower, and had been brought over, together with the great chest in the entry, by the grand-grand-grandmother of all the Foxes. If anybody were disposed to be skeptical on this point, Colonel Fox had only to point to the iron clamp at the end, by which it had been confined to the deck; that would have

produced conviction, if he had declared it came out of the Ark. This was a queer-looking little mirror, in which the young Dorcas saw her round face reflected: framed in black oak, delicately carved, and cut on the edge with a slant that gave the plate an appearance of being an inch thick.

Sixty years ago there were not many mirrors in country-towns in New England; and in Colonel Fox's house this and one more sufficed for the family-reflections. In the "square room," a modern long looking-glass, framed in mahogany, and surmounted by the American emblem of triumph, was the astonishment of the neighbors,—and in Walton those were many, though the population was small.

Dorcas looked wistfully and wishingly at the oval pin; but with no more notion of what she was looking at than the child who gazes into the heavens on a winter night. When she looked into the oval mirror, no dream of the centuries through which it had received on its surface fair and suffering faces, grave, noble, self-sacrificing men, and scenes of trial deep and agonizing,—no dream of the past disturbed the serene unconsciousness of her gaze. She looked at the large pearls that formed the long oval pin, and at the exquisite allegorical painting, which, in the quaint fashion of the time of its execution, was colored with the "ground hair" of the beloved; so materializing sentiment, and, as it were, getting as near as possible to the very heart's blood. Yet the old gold, the elaborate execution of the quaint classical device, and the fanciful arrangement of the braided

hair interwoven with twisted gold letters, all told no tales to the observer, whose unwakened nature, indeed, asked no questions.

The little room, so small that in these days a College of Physicians would at once condemn it, as a cradle of disease and death, had nevertheless for twenty years been the nightly abode of as perfect a piece of health as the country produced. Whatever might be wanting in height and space was amply made up in inevitable and involuntary ventilation. Health walked in at the wide cracks around the little window-frame, peeped about in all directions with the snow-flakes in winter and the ready breezes in summer, and settled itself permanently on the fresh cheeks and lips of the light sleeper and early riser.

Beside the white-covered cot there stood a straight-backed, list-seated oaken chair, a mahogany chest of drawers that reached from floor to ceiling, and a little three-legged light-stand. Everything was covered with white, and the room was fragrant with the lavender and dried rose-leaves with which every drawer was scrupulously perfumed. There was no toilet-table, for Dorcas had use neither for perfumes nor ointment. No Kalydors and no Glycerines came within the category of her healthful experience. Alert and graceful, she neither burnt her fingers nor cut her hands, and had need therefore of no soothing salves or sirups; and as she did not totter in scrimped shoes or tight laces, and so did not fall and break her bones, she had no need even of that modern necessity in all well-regulated families, "Prepared Glue." There was no medicine-chest in Colonel Fox's house. Healthy,

occupied, active, and wise—but not too wise—was Dorcas Fox.

It is no proof that Dorcas was a beauty, that she looked often in the little mirror. Ugliness is quite as anxious as beauty on that point, and is even oftener found gazing with sad solicitude at itself, if haply there may be found some mollifying or mitigating circumstance, either in outline or expression. But Dorcas's face pleased herself and everybody else.

A certain freedom and ease, the result partly of a symmetrical form, and partly of conscious good-looks, gave the grace of movement to Dorcas which attracted all eyes. Almost every one has a sense of harmony, and old and young loved to watch the musical motion of Dorcas Fox, whatever she might be doing, —whether she queened it at the "Thanksgiving Ball," and from heel-and-toe, pigeon-wing, or mazy double-shuffle, evolved the finest and subtlest intricacies of muscle, or whether, on the Sabbath, walking behind her parents to meeting, she married the movement to the solemnity of the day, and, as it were, walked in long metre.

She always was in Hallelujah metre to the Blacks, Whites, Grays, Greens, and Browns that color so largely every New-England community; and the youths who were wont to form the crowd that invariably settled at the corner of the meeting-house waited only till Dorcas Fox went up the "broad-oil" to express open-mouthed admiration. After her fashion, she was as much wondered at as the Duchess of Hamilton in her time, and with much more reason, since Dorcas was composed of real roses and

lilies.

On Sunday, though the Puritanic doctrine prevailed, as far as doctrine can, of not speaking week-day thoughts, or having them, if they would keep away, yet inevitably, among the younger portion of the flock, the day of "meeting" was one of more than religious importance; and many lads and lasses who were never attracted by Father Boardman's eloquent sedatives still made it a point to be regular in their attendance at meeting twice on every Sunday. From far and near came open one-horse wagons, piled high with weekly shaven and dressed humanity,—young and old with solemn and demure faces, with brown-ribboned queues, and garments of domestic making. Fresh, strong, tall girls of five feet ten, dressed in straw bonnets of their own handiwork, and sometimes with scarlet cardinals lightly flung over their shoulders, sprang over the wagon-thills to the ground. Now and then the more remote dwellers came on horseback, each Jack with his Gill on a pillion behind, and holding him with a proper and dignified embrace.

Hard-handed youths, with bright, determined faces,—men nursed in blockhouses, born in forts,—men who had raised their corn when the loaded gun went every step with the hoe and the plough,—such men, of whom the Revolution had been made, who could say nothing, and do everything, stood in a crowd around the meeting-house door. There was some excitement in meeting each other, though there was very little, if anything, to say. There was time enough in those days. Progress wasn't in such

a hurry as now. Inventions came calmly along, once in a man's life, and not, as now, each heel-trodden by that of his neighbor, tripping up and passing it, in the speed of the breathless race.

The sun itself seemed to shine with a calmer and silenter radiance over the broad, leisurely land.

Time enough, bless you! and the Sunday, any way, is *so* long!

This Sunday morning, at ten o'clock, Dorcas has already been up and dressed six hours. Everything having the remotest connection with domestic duties has been finished and laid aside long ago, and she has devoted the last two hours to solitary meditations, mostly of the kind already mentioned.

In the great oven, since last night, has lain the Sunday supper of baked pork-and-beans, Indian-pudding, and brown bread, all the better the longer they bake, and all unfailing in their character of excellence. In the square room, in the green arm-chair, sits the Colonel, fast asleep.

Four hours ago, he fumed and fretted about barn and cow-house, breakfasted, and had family-prayers. Since then, he has donned his Sabbath array, both mental and bodily. Mentally, having dismissed the cares of the week, he has strictly united himself with his body, and gone to sleep. Bodily, he appears in a suit of hemlock-dyed, with Matherman buttons, knee- and shoe-buckles of silver. His gray hair is neatly composed in a queue, his full cheeks rest on his portly chest, and the outward visibly harmonizes with the inward man. He sleeps soundly now, purposing faithfully to keep awake during the three-and-twenty

heads of the minister's discourse. If he finds it too much for him, he means to stand, as he often does. Sometimes he partakes freely of the aromatic stimulants carried by his wife and daughter as bouquets. The southernwood wakes him, and the green seeds of the caraway get him well along through the sermon.

Mrs. Fox steps softly in, rustling in the same black taffeta she always wears, and the same black silk bonnet,—worn just fifty-two days in a year, and carefully pinned and boxed away for all the other three hundred and thirteen.

As fashions did not come to Walton oftener than once in ten years, it followed that apparel among the young people wore very much the expression of individual taste, while among the elders it was wont to assume the cast now irreverently designated by "fossil remains." And, really, it did not much matter. Whatever our country-grandmothers were admired and esteemed for, be sure it was not dress.

As the clock pointed to half-past ten, the door opened quickly, and Dorcas stood on the threshold, like a summer breeze that has stopped one moment its fluttering, and hovers fresh, sweet, and sunny in the morning air. The breath of her presence, if indeed it were not association, roused old Colonel Fox from his sleep. He glanced at her, took the ready arm of his wife, looked again at the clock, and passed out over the flat door-stone with his cocked hat and cane, as became an invalid soldier and a gentleman. Behind them, hymn-book in hand and with downcast eyes, walked Dorcas. Not a word passed between the parents and

their only daughter. On Sunday, people were not to think their own thoughts. And familiarity between parents and children, never allowed even on week-days, would have been unpardonable unfitness on the Sabbath.

They reached the church-door just as the minister, with his white wig shedding powder on his venerable back, passed up the broad-aisle. A perfectly decorous throng of the loiterers followed, and the pews rapidly filled. The Colonel and his wife, being persons of consequence, took their way with suitable dignity and deliberation. In the three who turned, about half-way up the broad-aisle, into a square pew, a physiognomist would have seen at one glance the characteristic features of each mind. In the Colonel, choleric, fresh, and warm-hearted, a good lover, and not very good hater. In his wife, "a chronicler of small-beer," with a perfectly negative expression. One might guess she did no harm, and fear she did no good,—that she saved the hire of an upper servant,—that she was an inveterate sewer and cleaner, and would leave the world in time with an epitaph.

On the third figure and face the physiognomist might dwell longer,—but that rather because youth, hope, and inexperience had refused to make any of the life-marks that tell stories in faces. There was abundant room for imagination and prophecy.

A figure not too tall, but full of wavy lines,—two dark-blue eyes, whose full under-lids gave an expression of arch sweetness to the glance,—a delicate complexion of roses and lilies, as suggestive of fading as of blossoming,—features small, and not at

all of the Greek pattern,—and the rather large head and slightly developed bust, typical of American rural beauty.

To this summary of youthful charms would be at once added the grace of motion before spoken of, which made Dorcas Fox a favorite with all the young men in Walton, and which gave her a reputation of beauty which in strictness she did not deserve. A little habitual ill-health, and the glamour is gone, with the roses and lilies and the music of motion. In our climate of fierce extremes, both field- and garden-flowers speedily wilt and chill. Dorcas herself had been a thousand times told she was the very picture of her mother at her age. And just to look now at Mrs. Colonel Fox!

A tall young man stood on the doorsteps of the meeting-house, as Dorcas went demurely behind her parents in at the open door. He looked at her with a quick, inquiring glance from his keen Yankee eyes, which she answered with an almost imperceptible nod of her graceful head. She dropped her eyes, and passed on. This young man was Henry Mowers, and he owned the Mowers farm. He was a very good, sensible fellow, and had "kept company," as the country-phrase is, with Dorcas Fox for the last few weeks, having, indeed, had his eye on her ever since the New-Year's sleigh-ride and ball.

After Dorcas had reached her seat in the pew, and adjusted her spotless Sunday chintz and the ribbon that confined her jaunty gypsy-hat over her sunny hair, she raised her eyes carelessly to a pew in a side-aisle. The Dorrs generally occupied it alone; but

sometimes Swan Day, when he wasn't in the choir, sat there too.

Swan Day, or, as he might better have been called, Night Raven, kept the country-store in Walton. One naturally thought of afternoon rather than morning at seeing his olive complexion, dark eyes, and thick-clustering black curls. Such romance as was to be had in Walton, without the aid of a circulating library, certainly gathered about Swan Day. An orphan, born of a Creole mother and a British sergeant, he had been left early to his own resources. He had found them sufficient thus far, in a cordial neighborhood like Walton, when industry and temperance were cardinal virtues not carried to excess; and he was rather a favorite among the young women.

The peculiar languor and richness of his complexion,—the dark eyes, soft as an Indian girl's,—the mouth, melting and red as the grapes where under a tropical sun his foreign mother had lain, and, gathering them ripe, had dropped them lazily into his baby mouth: these were new and strange features in the Saxon community where he had accidentally been left on the death of his father, who was shot at Saratoga. The mother lingered awhile, and then dropped away, leaving Swan to thrive in the bracing air in which she had shivered to death.

Many Sundays before this, Swan had looked at Colonel Fox's pew, and, looking, loved.

Dorcas looked occasionally.

All the time, while the minister preached, she twiddled her caraway-stems, sometimes biting a seed in two very

softly between her little teeth, and keeping, on the whole, an appearance of exemplary devoutness. When Father Boardman reached "sixthly," she raised her eyes, and saw Henry Mowers looking straight at her. Then she dropped her eyelids at once, sniffed delicately at her bouquet of southernwood, and, gaining strength from its pungency, applied herself to staring once more at the great pine pulpit, where, like a very old sparrow on the house-top, Father Boardman denounced and anathematized at leisure all who did not think as he did. By degrees, all the eyes in Dorcas's neighborhood that had been any length of time in the world were dozing and closing with the full leave of the spirit. Finally, when Father Boardman entered on the "improvement," Dorcas, who had not heard a word, looked again in the direction of the Dorr pew. Henry Mowers had succumbed to Morpheus half an hour before. Still there flamed on the deep, bewitching eyes of Day; and as all the rest in her neighborhood had gone to sleep, and the young girl had really nothing specially to keep herself awake with, she looked up, too, and then down, and then rosily, and timidly, and consciously, and then at him once more. By that time she blushed again, and a smile was just beginning to wake from its sleep in the corner of her mouth, when a rush, a rising, and a general clatter and banging of pew-seats announced the blessed news of suspended instruction.

In the fashion of sixty years ago, the congregation waited reverently, until the pastor walked down the broad-aisle and out at the door, before a soul stirred. Then the men followed, and last

of all the women. In the crowd, there were frequent opportunities for whispered words, all the sweeter for the stealing; and in the crowd, after he had seen Henry Mowers jump into the wagon and drive off his three sisters half a mile to their home, and after seeing Jenny Post ride off on a pillion behind her old brother, as in the gone-by days when wide roads and wagons were not, Swan sauntered carelessly towards Dorcas, and said, in a tone too low for her parents to hear, but very distinctly,—

"I must see you to-morrow night."

"I can't," was the murmured reply.

"For the last time, Dorcas! come down to the old pear-tree to-morrow, before sunset," he whispered, imploringly.

He was wise to turn suddenly away before her parents could hear him, touching on secular subjects, and before she could herself get up any new objection. Her objections, truly, were very faint and few, and, being tossed about awhile, finally settled out of sight. Henry would, she knew, come to his weekly wooing as soon as the setting sun proclaimed the Sabbath-day over. After that time she was safe. She could slip down the orchard to the pear-tree, and hear what was the important word, and what Swan meant by "the last."

Eight or ten persons, who lived at a distance from "meeting," were in the habit of partaking the hospitality of Colonel Fox, of a Sunday, as the hour's intermission gave them no opportunity to return to their distant homes. After the Puritan fashion, unlike enough to the present, families were restricted on Sunday to

two meals, and those were provided with a Jewish regard to the fourth commandment. All labor was scrupulously anticipated or postponed, but such hospitality as consisted with the strict observance of the Sabbath was at the service of their friends.

On coming in at the door of the square room, with its sanded floor, its old desk, its spare bed in the corner, and its cherry table with wavy outlines, which had belonged to Colonel Fox's mother, Dorcas found the cloth already laid, and the bonnets and cardinals of half a dozen old friends on the bed.

In five minutes, early apples, old cider, and a plate of raised doughnuts, flanked by plates of mince- and apple-pie, rewarded the patience and piety of the company. Colonel Fox, solemnly, and as if he were quite accustomed to it, poured from a jug into large tumblers that held at least a pint, dropped three large lumps of loaf-sugar, filled the glass with water, grated some nutmeg on the top, and bade his guests refresh themselves with toddy, unless they preferred flip: if they did, they had only to say so: the poker was hot.

They all ate and drank, and by that time the bell rang again; and then they all went again. And if they heard Father Boardman at all, it was with utterly composed minds, when he told them it was their duty to be contented, even should their condemnation be eternally decreed, since it must, of course, be for the good of the whole, and for the glory of God. Hopkinsianism was in fashion then, and the minds of men in many parts of the country had accepted the logic of its founder, negatived as it

was, in its practical application, by the sweetness of his Christian benevolence and his large humanity. Then the toddy helped them to swallow many doctrines that in our cold-water days are sharply and defiantly contested. The head is much clearer; whether hearts are better is doubtful.

After supper, and while yet the sun lingered smilingly over the Great Meadows and on the hills, behind which he sank, Dorcas, who had meanwhile adorned herself with Aunt Dorcas's bequest, broke the long silence, by whispering so low that her father's sleep should not be disturbed,—

"Mother, do you set much by this pin?"

"Of course I do, child! 'T was your Aunt Dorcas's," said Mrs. Fox, "your father's own sister."

"Yes, I know it, mother; but how did she come by it?"

All these years, and this was the first time Dorcas had asked the question! She colored a little, too, as if some secret thought or story were busy about her heart, as she looked at the ring.

"Well,—it was a man she 'xpected to 'a' bed. They was to 'a' ben merried, an' he was to 'a' gi'n up v'yagin'. But he was cast away, an' she never heerd nothin' about neither him nor the ship. He was waitin' to git means, an' he did, privateerin' an' so; but I 'xpect he was drownded," concluded Mrs. Fox, in a suitably plaintive tone.

And that was Aunt Dorcas's story.

CHAPTER II

If anybody is curious to know why there should be mystery or secrecy connected with Swan Day's meeting with Dorcas, or why they should meet under a pear-tree, instead of her father's roof-tree, in a rational way, it might be a sufficient answer, that there never was and never will be anything direct and straightforward about Cupid or his doings. But the real and more important reason was, that Colonel Fox did not like Swan, and had said, in so many words, that "he wouldn't have Swan Day a-hangin' round, no *how*!—that he was a poor kind of a shote,—that he wished both him and his clutter well out o' town,—and that he needn't think to make swans out of his geese, no *time*!"

In the first and last sentence, Colonel Fox indicated the ground of his dislike to the handsome young store-keeper, and his dread that Swan's eyes would somehow interfere with his own cherished plans of a union between the Fox and Mower farms. Whatever Colonel Fox determined on was done or to be done. He had anticipated the French proverb; and the "impossibility" made not the slightest difference. Therefore Dorcas had no notion of disobedience in her head, permanently. She solaced herself by the occasional luxury of departure from set rules, and she intended to depart in that way to-morrow,—for just five minutes,—just to hear what that foolish fellow wanted of her; and what could it be? and why was it the last time?—would he give her up?

Dorcas pondered the matter while the sun still crowned the heights, and glanced at her sleeping father in silence. Why should Colonel Fox dislike Swan so very much because he was a Britisher? All that was done with, long ago, and why not be peaceable? Just then her father drew the breath sharply between his teeth, as if in pain. It was the old wound, that had never been healed since the Battle of Bennington. He had lain on the ground, —Dorcas had often heard him tell the tale,—and had striven to slake his deathly thirst with the blood that he scooped up in the hollow of his hand from the ground about him. So terrible was the carnage where he lay. "A d–d Britisher had shot him, —another had driven his horse over him, and afterwards, while he lay half-dead, had tried to rob him!" Would he ever forget it? He would have continued, on the contrary, to fire and hack till the present day, but for the wound in his knee, which had disabled him for life, long before a peace was patched up with the mother-country. So he had retired to Walton, and before Continental money had depreciated more than half had bought acres by the thousand, and become generalissimo of flocks and herds. Through the admiration of his townsmen for his wounds, he rapidly and easily attained the rank of Colonel, without the discomfort of fighting for it; and from his excellent sense and the executive ability induced by military habits, became, in turn, justice of the peace, deacon of the church, town-clerk, and manager-general of Walton.

Nobody—that is to say, nobody in the family—spoke, when

Colonel Fox was in the house, unless first spoken to,—not even Dorcas. Such were the domestic tactics of the last century, and Colonel Fox held fast to old notions.

The social ones were far more liberal,—so very liberal, indeed, so very free and easy, in the rural districts especially, that only a knowledge of the primitive conditions under which such manners grew up could possibly reconcile with them any impressions of purity and discretion. In hearing of manners, therefore, it is always necessary to remember that the children of country Puritans are and were wholly different *in the grain* from Paris or London society of the same period,—as different, for example, as the Goddess of Reason from our first mother, though at first glance one might think those two similar. New-England parents had the utmost confidence in their daughters, and almost no restraint was laid on social intercourse. Their personal dignity and propriety wore presupposed, as matters of course. Religion and virtue needed only to point, not to restrain.

The Colonel, on his part, took little heed of Dorcas's movements in the way of balls and sleigh-rides. Content that her face showed health and enjoyment, he never thought or cared what passed in her mind. If only the hay-crop proved abundant, and the Davis lot yielded well,—if neither wheat got the blight, nor sheep the rot,—if it were better to buy Buckhorn for milk, or sell the Calico-Trotter,—these thoughts so filled his soul that there was very little room to let in any nonsense about Dorcas, only "to have Swan Day shet up before he begins," for, as he often

said, "he wouldn't give the snap of his thumb for as many Swan Days as could stand between this and Jerusalem!"

She had met him twice before, and both times rather accidentally, as she supposed, under the pear-tree,—both times, when she went to the well for water. He had drawn the water, and had talked some with his tongue, but more, far more, with his eyes of Oriental depth and fascination. Dorcas thought and meant no harm in meeting Swan. Even if her nature had been more wakened and conscious,—even if she had had either the habit or the power of analyzing her own sensations,—even if she had seen her soul from without, as she certainly did not within,—she would have recoiled from the thought of deliberate coquetry.

In the nature even of a coquette there is not necessarily either cruelty or hardness. It cannot be a fine nature, and must be deficient in the tact which appreciates the feelings of another, and the sympathy that shrinks from injuring them. It may be called selfishness, which is another term for thoughtlessness or want of consideration or perception, but it is not deliberate selfishness. This last is often found with fine perceptions and intuitive tact. It is rather a natural obtuseness, a want of thought on the subject. Such persons remember and connect their own sensations with the object, thinking little or nothing of the feelings they may themselves excite by the heedlessness of their manner.

If Dorcas had once thought of the value of the hearts she played with, and as it were tossed from hand to hand,—if she had even weighed one against another, she might have had some

sorrow in grieving either. But having no standard of delicacy and tenderness in her own nature by which to judge theirs, Dorcas cannot be accused of intentional injustice, which is generally understood by coquetry. On the contrary, if she had been able to express her emotions,—

"How happy could I be with either!"

would have done so. Dorcas was very young in experience.

In those days of freedom there was no such word as "engaged"; least of all, did the parties concerned violate all their own notions of decorum by "announcing an engagement." The lists were free to all to enter, and the bravest won the day. After weeks and months of shy "company-keeping," it was "expected it would be a match" by the keen-sighted or deeply interested. Sometimes the dissolution of an engagement was mentioned as "a shame! after keeping company so many years, and she had got all her quilts made and everything!" But best of all was for the parties to be married outright, by a justice of the peace, without a word of public warning, and then to enjoy the pleasure of outwitting the neighbors, and coming down like a thunderclap on a social sunshine unsuspicious of banns, which had been published on some three literally public days, but when nobody was hearing. That was something worth doing, and very much worth remembering!

The sun set. The Sabbath was done. The Colonel heaved a sigh of relief. The Colonel's wife took her knitting-work; and the Colonel's daughter looked up with a shy smile at Henry Mowers

fastening his horse by the corn-barn. It was time Sunday was over, indeed! Such a long supper! but it must end sometime! —and then prayers, and then Dorcas had amused herself with Bel and the Dragon and Tobit awhile. All would not do, and the family had been obliged to resort to the sweet restorer for the last ten minutes. Now they could think their own thoughts in peace, and talk of what interested them,—cattle, people, and the like. Poor Dorcas! what with Father Boardman's preaching, and the Westminster Catechism, she associated religion with all that was dull and inexplicable, though she did not doubt it was good in case of dying. In the Nature and life that surrounded her she had not seen God, but a refuge from Him. In the crimson floods of sunshine, in the brilliant moonrise, or the pulsating stars of a winter night, she found a sort of guilty relief from the dulness of what she supposed was Revelation. But she never thought of questioning or doubting any teachings, in the pulpit or out. A woman cannot, like a man, fight a subject down. Her intellect shrinks from being tossed and pierced on the pricks of doctrine. She is gentle and cowardly. She sets the matter aside, and is contented to wait till she dies to find out. But the men in Walton were all theologians, and sharp at polemics. In the bar-room the spirit of liberty throve, which was crushed in the pulpit. In that small New-England town, where, like a great white sheep, Father Boardman now led his docile flock to the fold, whoever looked long enough would see many new folds and many new shepherds. Every shape of religious thinking will have its exponent, and the

widest liberty be claimed and enjoyed. Though he slept through Father Boardman's sermons, it is doubtful if Henry Mowers did not in his dreams lay the corner-stone of the new meeting-house on the hill.

Monday, and the hurly-burly of washing over. Dorcas had nearly finished her "stent" on the little wheel. As she sat by the open door, diligently trotting her foot, and softly pulling the last flax from her distaff, her glance went hastily and often towards the setting sun. She could see beyond the sloping orchard, no longer loaded with fruit, the Great Meadows, extending along the banks of the Connecticut. She could see on the eastern side great white mountains, that went modestly by the name of hills, and that came in after-years to draw pilgrims from the ends of the earth. They were white-capped and solemn-looking, and girdled by majestic forests; while the Green Mountains, that lay along the horizon, not so high as "the Hills," were crowned with verdure to the very top, and flaming with autumn dyes. As far as the eye reached, beyond the immediate view rose an immense solitude of forest that had lasted through centuries.

Dorcas's eyes rested and roamed alternately over these massive natural features. She felt dimly in her heart the effect of the solemn aspect of these great wastes,—these sublime possibilities, concealed and waiting for the energy of man to discover them. A melancholy, sweet and soft, composed partly of the effect of the view, and partly of the languor of the Indian-summer weather, diffused itself over her. She accused herself of

various sins,—of levity, vanity, and not knowing her own mind. Soon, however, feeling her unskilfulness to steer, she abandoned the bark, and left it to drift. She must see Swan Day.

"And as to Henry!"—here Dorcas set back the little wheel,—"and as to Henry!"—and here Dorcas threw her apron over her face,—"why, what harm is there? I'm only going to see what he wants."

Under the apron rippled and rushed a thousand warm blushes, that contradicted every word Dorcas said to herself. They made her remember how, only the evening before, Henry had said words to her, which, although she pretended not to understand him, had made her heart beat proudly and tenderly; and how she had thought whoever was chosen to be Henry's wife would be a happy woman! How many times had he said, as they stood parting on the stoop, how sorry he was to go, and she, like Juliet, had whispered, 't was "not yet day"! Yes, of course Henry Mowers would be her husband, and she would tell Swan Day so, if—if–But then, perhaps, there was no such nonsense in Swan's head, after all.

Why could not the gypsy be satisfied with her almost angelic happiness? But no. She shivered a little as the sun went down, and exchanged her working-dress of petticoat and short-gown for something warmer.

Because Cely Temple was cutting apples and pumpkins, and stringing them across the kitchen and pantry to dry, and because black Dinah was making the "bean-porridge" for supper, it came

to pass that the daughter of the house was called on to lay the table. Dorcas bit her lip, as she hastily did the duty, and postponed the pleasure.

The laboring-season is nearly over, the eight hired men reduced to two, and the family-table is spread in the kitchen. How is the table spread for supper in the house of Colonel Fox, one of the richest farmers in Walton?

This is the way.

Dorcas brushes a scrap from the long table, scoured as white as snow, but puts no linen on it. On the buttery-shelves, a set of pewter rivals silver in brightness, but Dorcas does not touch them. She places a brown rye-and-Indian loaf, of the size of a half-peck, in the centre of the table,—a pan of milk, with the cream stirred in,—brown earthen bowls, with bright pewter spoons by the dozen,—a delicious cheese, whole, and the table is ready. When Dinah appears, with her bright Madras turban, and says she is ready to dish the "bean-porridge, nine days old," Dorcas tells her she is going down beyond the cider-mill, to bring up the yarn, and, throwing a handkerchief over her head, is out of sight before Dinah has finished blowing the tin horn that summons to supper.

In five minutes, she was beyond the cider-mill, beyond the well, and standing under the old pear-tree. Behind her, hiding her from the house, is the corn-barn, stuffed and laden with the heavy harvest of maize and wheat, and the cider-mill, where twenty bushels of apples lie uncrushed on the ground, ready for

the morrow's fate. A long row of barrels already filled from the foaming vat stand ready to be taken to the Colonel's own cellar, for the Colonel's own drinking, and as far as one can see in one direction is the Colonel's own land. The heiress of all would still be sought for herself.

Dorcas stood in the departing light, and leaned against the pear-tree. Not yet come? A flush went up to her forehead, as, dropping her handkerchief, she raised her hand to her eyes and glanced hastily about her. Her chestnut curls were fastened with a blue ribbon on the side of her head, and the floating ends fell on her shoulder.

This was the one departure from the severe simplicity of her dress, for neither bright-hued calicoes nor muslins found their way to Walton. Once in a long while, a print, at five times the present prices, was introduced into the social circles of Walton by an occasional peddler, or possibly by the adventurous spirit of Swan Day. But these were rare instances.

Flannel of domestic manufacture, pressed till you could almost see your face in it, stood instead of the French woollen fabric of modern days. It left the jimp little waist as round and definite as the eye could ask, while the full flow of the skirt exposed the neat foot, deftly incased in stout Jefferson shoes. A plaited lawn, technically termed a "modesty-piece," was folded over the bosom, and concealed all but the upper part of the throat. Above that rose a face full of delicacy and healthy sweetness. Eyes full of sparkles, and dimples all about

the cheeks, chin, and rather large mouth. Youth, and the radiance of a happy, unconscious nature, of the capabilities or possibilities of which she was as ignorant as the robin on the branch above her, whose evening song had just closed, and who has just shut his coquettish eyes.

A minute more, and Swan sprang over the stone wall, and with three steps was standing by her. He stood still and looked at her, drawing deep breaths of haste and agitation.

Dorcas spoke first.

"You wanted to see me. What is the matter?"

"Nothing,—but—you know I've got home."

"Why, yes, that is clear," answered Dorcas, mischievously, and entirely easy herself, now that she saw Swan's cheeks aflame, and his voice choking so he could not speak.

"We might as well go towards the house, if that is all," added she, gathering in her hand some skeins of yarn that had been spread out to whiten.

Swan caught the yarn and threw it away with an impatient jerk. Then he took both of Dorcas's hands in his, holding them with a fierce grasp that made her almost scream.

"You know I can't go near the house."

"Yes, I know," said Dorcas, half frightened at his manner. "When did you get back from Boston?"

"Saturday night. And I am going again to-morrow. And then —Dorcas—I shall stay."

"Stay?"

"Stay,—till you tell me to come back, maybe!"

"Why, where are you going, Swan?"

"To China, Dorcas."

"I want to know!" exclaimed she.

"Just it,—and no two ways about it. Sold out to Sawtell. Now you have it, Dorcas!"

This curt and abrupt dialogue needed no more words. The rest was made out fully by the bright color on each face, the sparkling interest on the bent brow of Dorcas, and the deep, mellow voice, full of tenderness and hope, mixed with stern decision, on the part of Swan Day.

No wonder Dorcas's eyes had a glamour over them as she listened and looked. What did she see? A slight, erect figure, with Napoleonic features, animated with admiration and sensibility; emotion glorifying the rich, deep eyes, and making them look in the twilight like stars; and over all, the indefinable ease that comes from knowledge of the world, however small that world may be.

Swan had little gift of language. The foregoing short dialogue is a specimen of his ability in that way. But looks are a refinement on speech, and say what words never can say.

"You see, Dorcas, I'm going out for the Perkinses with Orrin Tileston. We each put in five hundred, and have our share of the profits."

"But to China! that's right under our feet! You'll never come back!" murmured the girl.

"Do you ever want I should? Dorcas, if I come back rich, shall you be glad? It will be all for you,—dear!" the last word low and timidly.

The mist went over her eyes again. A vision of Solomon in all his glory swept across her. Even to Walton had spread rumors of the immense fortunes acquired in the China and India trade, and the gold of Cathay seemed to shimmer over the form before her, so strong, so able to contend with, and compel, if need were, Fortune.

As to Swan, he looked over the river of Time that separated him from love and happiness, and saw his idol and ideal standing on the farther bank, dressed in purple and fine linen, with jewels of his own adorning. Like Bunyan's "shining ones," she seemed to him far lifted out of the range of ordinary thought and expression, into the regions of inspired song. Now that he was really going to the East, the image of Dorcas in his heart took on itself, with a graceful readiness, the gold of Ophir, the pomps of Palmyra, and the shining glories of Zion. He longed to "crown her with rose-buds, to fill her with costly wine and ointments,"—to pour over her the measureless bounty of his love, from the cornucopia of Fortune.

"Dorcas," said he,—and his words showed how inadequately thoughts can be represented,—"Dorcas, I know your father thinks nothing at all of me now; *but*, supposing I come back in two years, with—with—say five thousand dollars!—then, Dorcas!"

The bright, soft eyes looked pleadingly at her.

Truly, in those days of simplicity and scant earnings, five thousand dollars did seem likely to be an overwhelming temptation to the owner of the Fox farm.

"But,—Swan!" said the blushing girl, releasing herself from his grasp, and stepping back.

"Yes, Dorcas!—yes!—once!—only once!"

He came between her and the image of Henry Mowers; he was going away; she might never see him again. A vague sentiment, composed of pleasure, pity, admiration, and ambition, but having the semblance only of timidity in her rosy face and downcast eyes, made her yield her shrinking form, for one moment, to his trembling and passionate caress, and the next, she ran as swiftly as a deer to the house.

Swan's eyes followed her. With his feet, he dared not. His bounding heart half-choked him with pleasant pain. All be had not said,—all he had meant to say to Dorcas, of his well-laid plans, his good-luck, his hopes,—all he had meant to entreat of her constancy, for in the infrequent communications between the two countries there was no hope of a correspondence,—all he had meant to say to her of his fervent love, of his anguish at separation, of the joy of reunion, and that his love would leave him only with his life,—if he could only have told her! But then he never would or could have put it all into words, if Dorcas had stayed with him under the pear-tree till the next morning.

He thought of the Colonel's pride, and how it would come

down, at the sight of Swan Day returning to Walton with five thousand dollars in his coat-pocket, and mounted, perhaps, on an elephant! If he had held a foremost social position in Walton, even while selling tape and mop-sticks, molasses and rum, at the country-store, what might not be the impression on the public mind at seeing the glittering plumage of this "bird let loose from Eastern skies, when hastening fondly home"? There was much balm for wounded pride to be gathered in this Oriental project.

Swan collected his energies and his clothes, finished his remaining last words and duties, and took his seat with the mail-carrier, who had the only public conveyance at that period from the town of Walton to the town of Boston. His parents were dead; his immediate relatives were scattered already in different States; and he left Walton with his heart full of one image, that of Dorcas Fox.

CHAPTER III

"They du say Swan Day's gun off for good!" said Cely Temple, as she returned from the store, with a Dutch-oven in her hand, which she had purchased,—"an' to th' East Injees!"

"I want to know!" rejoined Mrs. Fox.

"I know some'll be sorry!" continued Cely, while Dorcas diligently stirred a five-pail kettle of apple-sauce, that hung stewing over the low fire.

Mrs. Fox looked up quickly at her daughter, but Dorcas

continued quietly stirring, and without turning round.

"Mahala Dorr, I guess," said she.

"Wall, M'hala'll be, an' so'll others," answered Cely, prudently. "But I expect likely Swan'll do well, ef he don't die. They say the atemuspere is pison there!—especially for dark-complected folks."

To this hopeful remark Mrs. Fox rejoined, that "old Miss Day come herself from a warm country, and 't was likely her son would settle there for good, and enjoy his health there better than what he would here."

"He'll look out well for Number One, anyhow!" said Cely, lifting the lid of the Dutch-oven from the fire.

Dorcas shot an angry glance at the apple-sauce.

Nothing further passed on the subject, and Dorcas somehow felt, as she stirred, as if Swan were already a long, long way off,—as if the ship had sailed, and would stay sailed, like an enchanted ship, hovering on the horizon, and never come near enough for the passengers to be distinguished,—or else, maybe, go up into the clouds, and rest there with all its masts and spars distinct against the rose-mist, as she had read of once in a book of travels,—or, perhaps, even be inverted, and stand there on its head, as it were, always: but everything must be upside down, of course, in China. Already the thought of Swan Day had mingled with the mists of the past. The outline became indefinite, and softened into a golden splendor, that belonged no more to her, but was essentially of another hemisphere. He had by this time cut

loose from home and country. Whether a hundred, or a hundred thousand miles, it mattered not. Since she could not grasp the idea, the distance was as good as infinite to her.

This, you see, is not exactly coquetry. But events drifted her.

When supper was over, and Dinah had gone to sleep, and Cely to visit the neighbors, as usual, Dorcas shyly approached the subject which occupied her thoughts, by getting the little box of jewelry, and looking at it. Her mother called her from the kitchen, out of which the bed-room opened.

"Does mother want me?" asked Dorcas, turning round, with the box in her hand.

"No, no matter," answered the mother; and, possibly with an intuitive feeling of what was in her daughter's thought, she went into the bed-room, and looked with her at the pin and ring of Aunt Dorcas.

"Was it—was it a long time, mother,—I mean, before he came back?" said Dorcas.

"Who? Captain Waterhouse? Bless you! they was as good as merried for ten year, an' he was goin' all the time, an' then, jest at the last minute, to be 'racked! It's 'most always so, when people goes to sea," added she, in a plaintive tone.

Dorcas meditated; she looked wistfully at her mother.

"It's a pretty pin,—dreadful pretty round the edge."

"Yes, 't is! I expect likely them's di'mon's. 'T was made over in foreign parts. He was goin' to bring his picter, too, from there. But he's lost and gone! Your Aunt Dorcas never had no more

suitors after that, and she kind o' gin in, and never had no sperits."

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.