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THE CATACOMBS OF ROME

> *——parti elette Di Roma, che son state cimitero Alla milizia che Pietro seguette.*
> ***PARADISO, c. ix.***

"Roma Sotterranea,"—the underground Rome of the dead,—the buried city of graves. Sacred is the dust of its narrow streets. Blessed were those who, having died for their faith, were laid to rest in its chambers. *In pace* is the epitaph that marks the places where they lie. *In pace* is the inscription which the imagination reads over the entrance to the Christian Catacombs.

Full as the upper city is of great and precious memories, it possesses none greater and more precious than those which belong to the city under ground. Republican Rome had no braver heroes than Christian Rome. The ground and motives of action

were changed, but the courage and devotion of earlier times did not surpass the courage and devotion of later days,—while a new spirit displayed itself in new and unexampled deeds, and a new and brighter glory shone from them over the world. But, unhappily, the stories of the early Christian centuries were taken possession of by a Church which has sought in them the means of enhancing her claims and increasing her power; mingling with them falsehoods and absurdities, cherishing the wildest and most unnatural traditions, inventing fictitious miracles, dogmatizing on false assertions, until reasonable and thoughtful religious men have turned away from the history of the first Christians in Rome with a sensation of disgust, and with despair at the apparently inextricable confusion of fact and fable concerning them.

But within a few years the period to which these stories belong has begun to be investigated with a new spirit, even at Rome itself, and in the bosom of the Roman Church. It was no unreasonable expectation, that, from a faithful and honest exploration of the catacombs, and examination of the inscriptions and works of art in them or derived from them, more light might be thrown upon the character, the faith, the feeling, and the life of the early Christians at Rome, than from any other source whatever. Results of unexpected interest have proved the justness of this expectation.

These results are chiefly due to the labors of two Romans, one a priest and the other a layman, the Padre Marchi, and the Cavaliere de Rossi, who have devoted themselves with the utmost

zeal and with great ability to the task of exploration. The present Pope, stimulated by the efforts of these scholars, established some years since a Commission of Sacred Archeology for the express purpose of forwarding the investigations in the catacombs; and the French government, soon after its military occupation of Rome, likewise established a commission for the purpose of conducting independent investigations in the same field.[1]

The Roman catacombs consist for the most part of a subterranean labyrinth of passages, cut through the soft volcanic

[1] In 1844, Padre Marchi published a series of numbers, seventeen in all, of a work entitled *Monumenti delle Arti Cristiane Primitive nella Metropol del Cristianesmo*. The numbers are in quarto, and illustrated by many carefully executed plates. The work was never completed; but it contains a vast amount of important information, chiefly the result of Padre Marchi's own inquiries. The Cavaliere de Rossi, still a young man, one of the most learned and accomplished scholars of Italy, is engaged at present in editing all the Christian inscriptions of the first six centuries. No part of this work has yet appeared. He is the highest living authority on any question regarding the catacombs. The work of the French Commission has been published at Paris in the most magnificent style, in six imperial folio volumes, under the title, *Catacombes de Rome*, etc., etc. *Par* LOUIS PERRET. *Ouvrage publié par Ordre et aux Frais du Gouvernement, sous la Direction d'une Commission composée de* MM. AMPERE, INGRES, MERIMÉE, VITET. It consists of four volumes of elaborate colored plates of architecture, mural paintings, and all works of art found in the catacombs, with one volume of inscriptions, reduced in fac-simile from the originals, and one volume of text. The work is of especial value as regards the first period of Christian Art. Its chief defect is the want of entire accuracy, in some instances, in its representations of the mural paintings,—some outlines effaced in the original being filled out in the copy, and some colors rendered too brightly. But notwithstanding this defect, it is of first importance in illustrating the hitherto very obscure history and character of early Christian Art.

rock of the Campagna, so narrow as rarely to admit of two persons walking abreast easily, but here and there on either side opening into chambers of varying size and form. The walls of the passages, through their whole extent, are lined with narrow excavations, one above another, large enough to admit of a body being placed in each; and where they remain in their original condition, these excavations are closed in front by tiles, or by a slab of marble cemented to the rock, and in most cases bearing an inscription. Nor is the labyrinth composed of passages upon a single level only; frequently there are several stories, connected with each other by sloping ways.

There is no single circumstance, in relation to the catacombs, of more striking and at first sight perplexing character than their vast extent. About twenty different catacombs are now known and are more or less open,—and a year is now hardly likely to pass without the discovery of a new one; for the original number of underground cemeteries, as ascertained from the early authorities, was nearly, if not quite, three times this number. It is but a very few years since the entrance to the famous catacomb of St. Callixtus, one of the most interesting of all, was found by the Cavaliere de Rossi; and it was only in the spring of 1855 that the buried church and catacomb of St. Alexander on the Nomentan Way were brought to light. Earthquakes, floods, and neglect have obliterated the openings of many of these ancient cemeteries,—and the hollow soil of the Campagna is full "of hidden graves, which men walk over without knowing where they are."

Each of the twelve great highways which ran from the gates of Rome was bordered on either side, at a short distance from the city wall, by the hidden Christian cemeteries. The only one of the catacombs of which even a partial survey has been made is that of St. Agnes, of a portion of which the Padre Marchi published a map in 1845. "It is calculated to contain about an eighth part of that cemetery. The greatest length of the portion thus measured is not more than seven hundred feet, and its greatest width about five hundred and fifty; nevertheless, if we measure all the streets that it contains, their united length scarcely falls short of two English miles. This would give fifteen or sixteen miles for all the streets in the cemetery of St. Agnes."[2] Taking this as a fair average of the size of the catacombs, for some are larger and some smaller, we must assign to the streets of graves already known a total length of about three hundred miles, with a probability that the unknown ones are at least of equal length. This conclusion appears startling, when one thinks of the close arrangement of the lines of graves along the walls of these

[2] The foregoing extract is taken from a book by the Rev. J. Spencer Northcote, called *The Roman Catacombs, or some Account of the Burial-Places of the Early Christians in Rome*: London, 1857. It is the best accessible manual in English,—the only one with any claims to accuracy, and which contains the results of recent investigations. Mr. Northcote is one of the learned band of converts from Oxford to Rome. A Protestant may question some of the conclusions in his book, but not its general fairness. Our own first introduction to the catacombs, in the winter of 1856, was under Mr. Northcote's guidance, and much of our knowledge of them was gained through him. Mr. Northcote estimates the total length of the catacombs at nine hundred miles; we cannot but think this too high.

passages. The height of the passages varies greatly, and with it the number of graves, one above another; but the Padre Marchi, who is competent authority, estimates the average number at ten, that is, five on each side, for every seven feet,—which would give a population of the dead, for the three hundred miles, of not less than two millions and a quarter. No one who has visited the catacombs can believe, surprising as this number may seem, that the Padre Marchi's calculation is an extravagant one as to the number of graves in a given space. We have ourselves counted eleven graves, one over another, on each side of the passage, and there is no space lost between the head of one grave and the foot of another. Everywhere there is economy of space,—the economy of men working on a hard material, difficult to be removed, and laboring in a confined space, with the need of haste.

This question of the number of the dead in the catacombs opens the way to many other curious questions. The length of time that the catacombs were used as burial-places; the probability of others, beside Christians, being buried in them; the number of Christians at Rome during the first two centuries, in comparison with the total number of the inhabitants of the city; and how far the public profession of Christianity was attended with peril in ordinary times at Rome, previously to the conversion of Constantine, so as to require secret and hasty burial of the dead;—these are points demanding solution, but of which we will take up only those relating immediately to the catacombs.

There can, of course, be no certainty with regard to the period when the first Christian catacomb was begun at Rome,—but it was probably within a few years after the first preaching of the Gospel there. The Christians would naturally desire to separate themselves in burial from the heathen, and to avoid everything having the semblance of pagan rites. And what mode of sepulture so natural for them to adopt, in the new and affecting circumstances of their lives, as that which was already familiar to them in the account of the burial of their Lord? They knew that he had been "wrapped in linen, and laid in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and a stone had been rolled unto the door of the sepulchre." They would be buried as he was. Moreover, there was a general and ardent expectation among them of the second coming of the Saviour; they believed it to be near at hand; and they believed also that then the dead would be called from their graves, clothed once more in their bodies, and that as Lazarus rose from the tomb at the voice of his Master, so in that awful day when judgment should be passed upon the earth their dead would rise at the call of the same beloved voice.

But there were, in all probability, other more direct, though not more powerful reasons, which led them to the choice of this mode of burial. We read that the Saviour was buried—at least, the phrase appears applicable to the whole account of his entombment … "as the manner of the Jews is to bury." The Jewish population at Rome in the early imperial times was very large. They clung, as Jews have clung wherever they have

been scattered, to the memories and to the customs of their country,—and that they retained their ancient mode of sepulture was curiously ascertained by Bosio, the first explorer of the catacombs. In the year 1602, he discovered a catacomb on what is called Monte Verde,—the southern extremity of the Janiculum, outside the walls of Rome, near to the Porta Portese. This gate is in the Transtiberine district, and in this quarter of Rome the Jews dwelt. The catacomb resembled in its general form and arrangements those which were of Christian origin;—but here no Christian emblem was found. On the contrary, the only emblems and articles that Bosio describes as having been seen were plainly of Jewish origin. The seven-branched candlestick was painted on the wall; the word "Synagogue" was read on a portion of a broken inscription and the whole catacomb had an air of meanness and poverty which was appropriate to the condition of the mass of the Jews at Rome. It seemed to be beyond doubt that it was a Jewish cemetery. In the course of years, through the changes in the external condition and the cultivation of Monte Verde, the access to this catacomb has been lost. Padre Marchi made ineffectual efforts a few years since to find an entrance to it, and Bosio's account still remains the only one that exists concerning it. Supposing the Jews to have followed this mode of interment at Rome, it would have been a strong motive for its adoption by the early Christians. The first converts in Rome, as St. Paul's Epistle shows, were, in great part, from among the Jews. The Gentile and the Jewish Christians made one community, and the Gentiles

adopted the manner of the Jews in placing their dead, "wrapped in linen cloths, in new tombs hewn out of the rock."

Believing, then, the catacombs to have been begun within a few years after the first preaching of Christianity in Rome, there is abundant evidence to prove that their construction was continued during the time when the Church was persecuted or simply tolerated, and that they were extended during a considerable time after Christianity became the established creed of the empire. Indeed, several catacombs now known were not begun until some time after Constantine's conversion.[3] They continued to be used as burial-places certainly as late as the sixth century. This use seems to have been given up at the time of the frequent desolation of the land around the walls of Rome by the incursions of barbarians, and the custom gradually discontinued was never resumed. The catacombs then fell into neglect, were lost sight of, and their very existence was almost forgotten. But during the first five hundred years of our era they were the burial-places of a smaller or greater portion of the citizens of Rome, —and as not a single church of that time remains, they are, and contain in themselves, the most important monuments that exist of the Christian history of Rome for all that long period.

It has been much the fashion during the last two centuries, among a certain class of critics hostile to the Roman Church, and sometimes hostile to Christianity, to endeavor to throw doubts

[3] For instance, about the middle of the fourth century, St. Julius, then Pope, is said to have begun three. See Marchi's *Monumenti delle Arti Cristiane*, p. 82.

on the fact of this immense amount of underground work having been accomplished by the Christians. It has been said that the catacombs were in part the work of the heathen, and that the Christians made use of excavations which they found ready to their hand. Such and other similar assertions have been put forward with great confidence; but there is one overwhelming and complete answer to all such doubts,—a visit to the catacombs themselves. No skepticism can stand against such arguments as are presented there. Every pathway is distinctly the work of Christian hands; the whole subterranean city is filled with a host of the Christian dead. But there are other convincing proofs of the character of their makers. These are of a curiously simple description, and are due chiefly to the investigations of late years. Nine tenths of the catacombs now known are cut through one of the volcanic rocks which abound in the neighborhood of Rome. Of the three chief varieties of volcanic rock that exist there, this is the only one which is of little use for purposes of art or trade. It could not have been quarried for profit. It would not have been quarried, therefore, by the Romans, except for the purposes of burial,—and the only inscriptions and other indications of the character of the occupants of these burial-places prove that they were Christian.[4] They are very different from the sepulchres

[4] The volcanic rocks are the *Tufa litoide*, very hard, and used for paving and other such purposes; difficult to be quarried, and unfit for graves on account of this difficulty. The *Tufi granulare*, a soft, friable, coarse-grained rock, easily cut,—fitted for excavation. It is in this that the catacombs are made. It is used for very few purposes in Rome. One may now and then see some coarse filling-up of walls done with it, or

of the great and rich families of Rome, who lined the Appian, the Nomentan, and Flaminian Ways with their tombs, even now magnificent in ruin; very different, too, from the *columbaria*, or pigeon-holes, in which the ashes of the less wealthy were packed away; and still more different from the sad undistinguished ditch that received the bodies of the poor:—

"Hoc miserae plebi stabat commune sepulcrum."

It not unfrequently happens in the soil of the Campagna, that the vein of harder rock in which the catacombs are quarried assumes the soft and sandy character which belongs to it in a state of decomposition. The ancient Romans dug this sand as the modern Romans do; and it seems probable, from the fact that some of the catacombs open out into *arenaria*, or sandpits, as in the case of the famous one of St. Agnes, that the Christians, in time of persecution, when obliged to bury with secresy, may have chosen a locality near some disused sandpit, or near a sandpit belonging to one of their own number, for the easier concealment of their work, and for the safer removal of the quarried tufa. In such cases the tufa may have been broken down into the condition of sand for removal. In later times, as the catacombs were extended, the tufa dug out from one passage was carried into the old passages no longer used; and thus, as the catacomb extended in one direction, it was closed up in another, and the

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its square-cut blocks piled up as a fence. The third is the *Pura pozzolana*,—which is the *Tufa granulare* in a state of compact sand, yielding to the print of the heel, dug like sand, and used extensively in the unsurpassed mortar of the Roman buildings.

ancient graves were concealed. This is now one of the great impediments in the way of modern exploration; and the same process is being repeated at present; for the Church allows none of the earth or stone to be removed that has been hallowed as the resting-place of the martyrs, and thus, as one passage is now opened, another has to be closed. The archaeologists may rebel, but the priests have their way. The ancient filling up was, however, productive of one good result; it preserved some of the graves from the rifling to which most were exposed during the period of the desertion of the catacombs. Most of the graves which are now found with their tiled or marble front complete, and with the inscription of name or date upon them unbroken, are those which were thus secluded.

But there is still another curious fact bearing upon the Christian origin of the catacombs. They are in general situated on somewhat elevated land, and always on land protected from the overflow of the river, and from the drainage of the hills. The early traditions of the Church preserve the names of many Christians who gave land for the purpose,—a portion of their *vignas*, or their villas. The names of the women Priscilla, Cyriaca, and Lucina are honored with such remembrance, and are attached to three of the catacombs. Sometimes a piece of land was thus occupied which was surrounded by property belonging to those who were not Christian. This seems to have been the case, for instance, in regard to the cemetery of St. Callixtus; for (and this is one of the recent discoveries of the Cavaliere

de Rossi) the paths of this cemetery, crossing and recrossing in three, four, and five stages, are all limited to a definite and confined area,—and this area is not determined by the quality of the ground, but apparently by the limits of the field overhead. There can be no other probable explanation of this but that Christians would not extend their burial-place under land that was not in their possession. Many other facts, as we shall see in other connections, go to establish beyond the slightest doubt the Christian origin and occupation of the catacombs.

Descending from the level of the ground by a flight of steps into one of the narrow underground passages, one sees on either side, by the light of the taper with which he is provided, range upon range of tombs cut, as has been described, in the walls that border the pathway. Usually the arrangement is careful, but with an indiscriminate mingling of larger and smaller graves, as if they had been made one after another for young and old, according as they might be brought for burial. Now and then a system of regularity is introduced, as if the *fossor*, or digger, who was a recognized officer of the early Church, had had the leisure for preparing graves before they were needed. Here, there is a range of little graves for the youngest children, so that all infants should be laid together, then a range for older children, and then one for the grown up. Sometimes, instead of a grave suitable for a single body, the excavation is made deep enough into the rock to admit of two, three, or four bodies being placed side by side,—family graves. And sometimes, instead of the simple *loculus*, or

coffin-like excavation, there is an arch cut out of the tufa, and sunk back over the whole depth of the grave, the outer side of which is not cut away, so that, instead of being closed in front by a perpendicular slab of marble or by tiles, it is covered on the top by a horizontal slab. Such a grave is called an *arcosolium*, and its somewhat elaborate construction leads to the conclusion that it was rarely used in the earliest period of the catacombs[5]. The *arcosolia* are usually wide enough for more than one body; and it would seem, from inscriptions that have been found upon their covering-slabs, that they were not infrequently prepared during the lifetime of persons who had paid beforehand for their graves. It is not improbable that the expenses of some one or more of the cemeteries may have been borne by the richer members of the Christian community, for the sake of their poorer brothers in the faith. The example of Nicodemus was one that would be readily followed.

But beside the different forms of the graves, by which their general character was varied, there were often personal marks of affection and remembrance affixed to the narrow excavations, which give to the catacombs their most peculiar and touching

[5] There is one puzzling circumstance in the cemetery of S. Domitilla. *All* the graves in this cemetery are *arcosolia*, and yet the date of construction is early. The Cavaliere de Rossi suggests that the cemetery was begun at the expense of the Domitilla whose name it bears, the niece of Domitian, previously to her banishment; that her position enabled her to have it laid out from the beginning on a regular plan, and to introduce this more expensive and elaborate form of grave, which was continued for the sake of uniformity in the later excavations.

interest. The marble facing of the tomb is engraved with a simple name or date; or where tiles take the place of marble, the few words needed are scratched upon their hard surface. It is not too much to say that we know more of the common faith and feeling, of the sufferings and rejoicings of the Christians of the first two centuries from these inscriptions than from all other sources put together. In another paper we propose to treat more fully of them. As we walk along the dark passage, the eye is caught by the gleam of a little flake of glass fastened in the cement which once held the closing slab before the long since rifled grave. We stop to look at it. It is a broken bit from the bottom of a little jar (*ampulla*); but that little glass jar once held the drops of a martyr's blood, which had been carefully gathered up by those who learned from him how to die, and placed here as a precious memorial of his faith. The name of the martyr was perhaps never written on his grave; if it were ever there, it has been lost for centuries; but the little dulled bit of glass, as it catches the rays of the taper borne through the silent files of graves, sparkles and gleams with a light and glory not of this world. There are other graves in which martyrs have lain, where no such sign as this appears, but in its place the rude scratching of a palm-branch upon the rock or the plaster. It was the sign of victory, and he who lay within had conquered. The great rudeness in the drawing of the palm, often as if, while the mortar was still wet, the mason had made the lines upon it with his trowel, is a striking indication of the state of feeling at the time when the grave was made.

There was no pomp or parade; possibly the burial of him or of her who had died for the faith was in secret; those who carried the corpse of their beloved to the tomb were, perhaps, in this very act, preparing to follow his steps,—were, perhaps, preparing themselves for his fate. Their thoughts were with their Lord, and with his disciple who had just suffered for his sake,—with their Saviour who was coming so soon. What matter to put a name on the tomb? They could not forget where they had laid the torn and wearied limbs away. *In pace*, they would write upon the stone; a palm branch should be marked in the mortar, the sign of suffering and triumph. Their Lord would remember his servant. Was not his blood crying to God from the ground? And could they doubt that the Lord would also protect and avenge? In those first days there was little thought of relics to be carried away,—little thought of material suggestions to the dull imagination, and pricks to the failing memory. The eternal truths of their religion were too real to them; their faith was too sincere; their belief in the actual union of heaven and earth, and of the presence of God with them in the world, too absolute to allow them to feel the need of that lower order of incitements which are the resort of superstition, ignorance, and conventionalism in religion. In the earlier burials, no differences, save the ampulla and the palm, or some equally slight sign, distinguished the graves of the martyrs from those of other Christians.

It is not to be supposed that the normal state of the Christian community in Rome, during the first three centuries, was that of

suffering and alarm. A period of persecution was the exception to long courses of calm years. Undoubtedly, during most of the time, the faith was professed under restraint, and possibly with a sense of insecurity which rendered it attractive to ardent souls, and preserved something of its first sincerity. It must be remembered that the first Christian converts were mostly from among the poorer classes, and that, however we might have admired their virtues, we might yet have been offended by much that was coarse and unrefined in the external exhibitions of their religion. The same features which accompany the religious manifestations of the uncultivated in our own days, undoubtedly, with somewhat different aspect, presented themselves at Rome. The enthusiasms, the visions, the loud preaching and praying, the dull iteration and reiteration of inspired truth till all the inspiration is driven out, were all probably to be heard and witnessed in the early Christian days at Rome. Not all the converts were saints,—and none of them were such saints as the Catholic painters of the last three centuries have prostituted Art and debased Religion in producing. The real St. Cecilia stood in the beauty of holiness before the disciples at Rome far purer and lovelier than Raphael has painted her. Domenichino has outraged every feeling of devotion, every sense of truth, every sympathy for the true suffering of the women who were cruelly murdered for their faith, in his picture of the Martyrdom of St. Agnes. It is difficult to destroy the effect that has been produced upon one's own heart by these and innumerable other pictures of declining

Art,—pictures honored by the Roman Church of to-day,—and to bring up before one's imagination, in vivid, natural, and probable outline, the life and form of the converts, saints, and martyrs of the first centuries. If we could banish all remembrance of all the churches and all the pictures contained in them, built and painted, since the fourteenth century, we might hope to gain some better view of the Christians who lived above the catacombs, and were buried in them. It is from the catacombs that we must seek all that is left to enable us to construct the image that we desire.

On other graves beside those of the martyrs there are often found some little signs by which they could be easily recognized by the friends who might wish to visit them again. Sometimes there is the impression of a seal upon the mortar; sometimes a ring or coin is left fastened into it; often a *terra-cotta* lamp is set in the cement at the head of the grave. Touching, tender memorials of love and piety! Few are left now in the opened catacombs, but here and there one may be seen in its original place,—the visible sign of the sorrow and the faith of those who seventeen or eighteen centuries ago rested upon that support on which we rest to-day, and found it, in hardest trial, unfailing.

But the galleries of the catacombs are not wholly occupied with graves. Now and then they open on either side into chambers (*cubicula*) of small dimension and of various form, scooped out of the rock, and furnished with graves around their sides,—the burial-place arranged beforehand for some large family, or for certain persons buried with special honor. Other openings

in the rock are designed for chapels, in which the burial and other services of the Church were performed. These, too, are of various sizes and forms; the largest of them would hold but a small number of persons;[6] but not unfrequently two stand opposite each other on the passage-way, as if one were for the men and the other for the women who should be present at the services. Entering the chapel through a narrow door whose threshold is on a level with the path, we see at the opposite side a recess sunk in the rock, often semicircular, like the apsis of a church, and in this recess an *arcosolium*,—which served at the same time as the grave of a martyr and as the altar of the little chapel. It seems, indeed, as if in many cases the chapel had been formed not so much for the general purpose of holding religious service within the catacombs, as for that of celebrating worship over the remains of the martyr whose body had been transferred from its original grave to this new tomb. It was thus that the custom, still prevalent in the Roman Church, of requiring that some relics shall be contained within an altar before it is held to be consecrated, probably began. Perhaps it was with some reference to that portion of the Apocalypse in which St. John says, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on

[6] These chapels are generally about ten feet square. Some are larger, and a few smaller than this.

the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren that should be killed as they were should be fulfilled."[7] At any rate, these words must have dwelt in the memories of the Christians who came to worship God in the presence of the dead by whom they were surrounded in the catacombs. But they knelt before the altar-tombs, not as before altars consecrated with relics of saints, but as before altars dedicated to God and connected with the memory of their own honored and beloved dead, whom he had called from them into his holy presence.

It is impossible to ascertain the date at which these chapels were first made; probably some time about the middle of the second century they became common. In many of the catacombs they are very numerous, and it is in them that the chief ornaments and decorations, and the paintings which give to the catacombs an especial value and importance in the history of Art, and which are among the most interesting illustrations of the state of religious feeling and belief in the early centuries, are found. Some of the chapels are known to be of comparatively late date, of the fourth and perhaps of the fifth century. In several even of earlier construction is found, in addition to the altar, a niche cut out in the rock, or a ledge projecting from it,

[7] Revelations, vi. 9-11. It seems probable that another custom of the Roman Church took its rise in the catacombs,—that of burning candles on the altar; a custom simple in its origin, now turned into a form of superstition, and often abused to the profit of priests.

which seems to have been intended to serve the place of the credence table, for holding the articles used in the service of the altar, and at a later period for receiving the elements before they were handed to the priest for consecration. The earliest services in the catacombs were undoubtedly those connected with the communion of the Lord's Supper. The mystery of the mass and the puzzles of transubstantiation had not yet been introduced among the believers; but all who had received baptism as followers of Christ, all save those who had fallen away into open and manifest sin, were admitted to partake of the Lord's Supper. Possibly upon some occasions these chapels may have been filled with the sounds of exhortation and lamentation. In the legends of the Roman Church we read of large numbers of Christians being buried alive, in time of persecution, in these underground chambers where they had assembled for worship and for counsel. But we are not aware of any proof of the truth of these stories having been discovered in recent times. This, and many other questionable points in the history and in the uses of the catacombs, may be solved by the investigations which are now proceeding; and it is fortunate for the interests, not only of truth, but of religion, that so learned and so honest-minded a man as the Cavaliere de Rossi should have the direction of these explorations.

Few of the chapels that are to be seen now in the catacombs are in their original condition. As time went on, and Christianity became a corrupt and imperial religion, the simple truths which

had sufficed for the first Christians were succeeded by doctrines less plain, but more adapted to touch cold and materialized imaginations, and to inflame dull hearts. The worship of saints began, and was promoted by the heads of the Church, who soon saw how it might be diverted to the purposes of personal and ecclesiastical aggrandizement. Consequently the martyrs were made into a hierarchy of saintly protectors of the strayed flock of Christ, and round their graves in the catacombs sprang up a harvest of tales, of visions, of miracles, and of superstitions. As the Church sank lower and lower, as the need of a heavenly advocate with God was more and more impressed upon the minds of the Christians of those days, the idea seems to have arisen that neighborhood of burial to the grave of some martyr might be an effectual way to secure the felicity of the soul. Consequently we find in these chapels that the later Christians, those perhaps of the fifth and sixth centuries, disregarding the original arrangements, and having lost all respect for the Art, and all reverence for the memorial pictures which made the walls precious, were often accustomed to cut out graves in the walls above and around the martyr's tomb, and as near as possible to it. The instances are numerous in which pictures of the highest interest have been thus ruthlessly defaced. No sacredness of subject could resist the force of the superstition; and we remember one instance where, in a picture of which the part that remains is of peculiar interest, the body of the Good Shepherd has been cut through for the grave of a child,—so that

only the feet and a part of the head of the figure remain.

There is little reason for supposing, as has frequently been done, that the catacombs, even in times of persecution, afforded shelter to any large body of the faithful. Single, specially obnoxious, or timid individuals, undoubtedly, from time to time, took refuge in them, and may have remained within them for a considerable period. Such at least is the story, which we see no reason to question, in regard to several of the early Popes. But no large number of persons could have existed within them. The closeness of the air would very soon have rendered life insupportable; and supposing any considerable number had collected near the outlet, where a supply of fresh air could have reached them, the difficulty of obtaining food and of concealing their place of retreat would have been in most instances insurmountable. The catacombs were always places for the few, not for the many; for the few who followed a body to the grave; for the few who dug the narrow, dark passages in which not many could work; for the few who came to supply the needs of some hunted and hidden friend; for the few who in better times assembled to join in the service commemorating the last supper of their Lord.

It is difficult, as we have said before, to clear away the obscuring fictions of the Roman Church from the entrance of the catacombs; but doing this so far as with our present knowledge may be done, we find ourselves entering upon paths that bring us into near connection and neighborhood with the

first followers of the founders of our faith at Rome. The reality which is given to the lives of the Christians of the first centuries by acquaintance with the memorials that they have left of themselves here quickens our feeling for them into one almost of personal sympathy. "Your obedience is come abroad unto all men," wrote St. Paul to the first Christians of Rome. The record of that obedience is in the catacombs. And in the vast labyrinth of obscure galleries one beholds and enters into the spirit of the first followers of the Apostle to the Gentiles.

[To be continued.]

THE NEST

MAY

When oaken woods with buds are pink,
  And new-come birds each morning sing,—
When fickle May on Summer's brink
  Pauses, and knows not which to fling,
Whether fresh bud and bloom again,
Or hoar-frost silvering hill and plain,—

Then from the honeysuckle gray
  The oriole with experienced quest
Twitches the fibrous bark away,
  The cordage of his hammock-nest,—
Cheering his labor with a note
Rich as the orange of his throat.

High o'er the loud and dusty road
  The soft gray cup in safety swings,
To brim ere August with its load
  Of downy breasts and throbbing wings,
O'er which the friendly elm-tree heaves
An emerald roof with sculptured eaves.

Below, the noisy World drags by
  In the old way, because it must,—
The bride with trouble in her eye,
  The mourner following hated dust:
Thy duty, winged flame of Spring,
Is but to love and fly and sing.

Oh, happy life, to soar and sway
  Above the life by mortals led,
Singing the merry months away,
  Master, not slave of daily bread,
And, when the Autumn comes, to flee
Wherever sunshine beckons thee!

PALINODE.—DECEMBER

Like some lorn abbey now, the wood
  Stands roofless in the bitter air;
In ruins on its floor is strewed
  The carven foliage quaint and rare,
And homeless winds complain along
The columned choir once thrilled with song.

And thou, dear nest, whence joy and praise
  The thankful oriole used to pour,
Swing'st empty while the north winds chase
  Their snowy swarms from Labrador:
But, loyal to the happy past,
I love thee still for what thou wast.

Ah, when the Summer graces flee
  From other nests more dear than thou,
And, where June crowded once, I see
  Only bare trunk and disleaved bough,
When springs of life that gleamed and gushed
Run chilled, and slower, and are hushed,—

I'll think, that, like the birds of Spring,
  Our good goes not without repair,
But only flies to soar and sing
  Far off in some diviner air,

Where we shall find it in the calms
Of that fair garden 'neath the palms.

* * * * *

EBEN JACKSON

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thine earthly task hast done.

The large tropical moon rose in full majesty over the Gulf of Mexico, that beneath it rolled a weltering surge of silver, which broke upon the level sand of the beach with a low, sullen roar, prophetic of storms to come. To-night a south wind was heavily blowing over Gulf and prairie, laden with salt odors of weed and grass, now and then crossed by a strain of such perfume as only tropic breezes know,—a breath of heavy, passionate sweetness from orange-groves and rose gardens, mixed with the miasmatic sighs of rank forests, and mile on mile of tangled cane-brake, where jewel-tinted snakes glitter and emit their own sickly-sweet odor, and the deep blue bells of luxuriant vines wave from their dusky censers steams of poisonous incense.

I endured the influence of all this as long as I dared, and then turned my pony's head from the beach, and, loitering through the city's hot streets, touched him into a gallop as the prairie opened before us, and followed the preternatural, colossal shadow of horse and man east by the moon across the dry dull grass and bitter yellow chamomile growth of the sand, till I stopped at

the office door of the Hospital, when, consigning my horse to a servant, I commenced my nightly round of the wards.

There were but few patients just now, for the fever had not yet made its appearance, and until within a week the unwontedly clear and cool atmosphere had done the work of the physician. Most of the sick were doing well enough without me; some few needed and received attention; and these disposed of, I betook myself to the last bed in one of the long wards, quite apart from the others, which was occupied by a sailor, a man originally from New England, whose hard life and continual exposure to all climates and weathers had at length resulted in slow tubercular consumption.

It was one of the rare cases of this disease not supervening upon an original strumous diathesis, and, had it been properly cared for in the beginning, might have been cured. Now there was no hope; but the case being a peculiar and interesting one, I kept a faithful record of its symptoms and progress for publication. Besides, I liked the man; rugged and hardy by nature, it was curious to see what strange effects a long, wasting, and painful disease produced upon him. At first he could not be persuaded to be quiet; the muscular energies were still unaffected, and, with continual hemorrhage from the lungs, he could not understand that work or exercise could hurt him. But as the disease gained ground, its characteristic languor unstrung his force; the hard and sinewy limbs became attenuated and relaxed; his breath labored; a hectic fever burnt in his veins like light flame every afternoon,

and subsided into chilly languor toward morning; profuse night-sweats increased the weakness; and as he grew feebler, offering of course less resistance to the febrile symptoms, they were exacerbated, till at times a slight delirium showed itself; and so, without haste or delay, he "made for port," as he said.

His name was Eben Jackson, and the homely appellation was no way belied by his aspect. He never could have been handsome, and now fifteen years of rough-and-tumble life had left their stains and scars on his weather-beaten visage, whose only notable features were the deep-set eyes retreating under shaggy brows, that looked one through and through with the keen glance of honest instinct; while a light tattooing of red and blue on either cheek-bone added an element of the grotesque to his homeliness. He was a natural and simple man, with whom conventionalities and the world's scale went for nothing, —without vanity as without guile.—But it is best to let him speak for himself. I found him that night very feverish, yet not wild at all.

"Hullo, Doctor!" said he, "I'm all afire! I've ben thinkin' about my old mother's humstead up to Simsbury, and the great big well to the back door; how I used to tilt that 'are sweep up, of a hot day, till the bucket went 'way down to the bottom and come up drippin' over,—such cold, clear water! I swear, I'd give all Madagascar for a drink on't!"

I called the nurse to bring me a small basket of oranges I had sent out in the morning, expressly for this patient, and squeezing

the juice from one of them on a little bit of ice, I held it to his lips, and he drank eagerly.

"That's better for you than water, Jackson," said I.

"I dunno but 'tis, Doctor; I dunno but 'tis; but there a'n't nothin' goes to the spot like that Simsbury water. You ha'n't never v'yaged to them parts, have ye?"

"Bless you, yes, man! I was born and brought up in Hartford, just over the mountain, and I've been to Simsbury, fishing, many a time."

"Good Lord! *You* don't never desert a feller, ef the ship *is* a-goin' down!" fervently ejaculated Eben, looking up as he did sometimes in his brief delirium, when he said the Lord's Prayer, and thought his mother held his folded hands; but this was no delirious aspiration. He went on:—

"You see, Doctor, I've had somethin' in the hold a good spell't I wanted to break bulk on, but I didn't know as I ever was goin' to see a shipmet agin; and now you've jined convoy jist in time, for Davy Jones's a'n't fur off. Are you calculatin' to go North afore long?"

"Yes, I mean to go next spring," said I.

Jackson began to fumble with weak and trembling hands about his throat, to undo his shirt-collar,—he would not let me help him,—and presently, flushed and panting from the effort, he drew out a length of delicate Panama chain fastened rudely together by a link of copper wire, and suspended on it a little old-fashioned ring of reddish gold, twisted of two wires, and holding

a very small dark garnet. Jackson looked at it as I have seen many a Catholic look at his reliquary in mortal sickness.

"Well," said he, "I've carried that 'are gimcrack nigh twenty long year round my old scrag, and when I'm sunk I want you to take it off, Doctor. Keep it safe till you go to Connecticut, and then some day take a tack over to Simsbury. Don't ye go through the Gap, but go 'long out on the turnpike over the mountain, and down t'other side to Avon, and so nor'ard till jist arter you git into Simsbury town you see an old red house 'longside o' the mountain, with a big ellum-tree afore the door, and a stone well to the side on't. Go 'long in and ask for Hetty Buel, and give her that 'are thing, and tell her where you got it, and that I ha'n't never forgot to wish her well allus, though I couldn't write to her."

There was Eben Jackson's romance! It piqued my curiosity. The poor fellow was wakeful and restless,—I knew he would not sleep, if I left him,—and I encouraged him to go on talking.

"I will, Jackson, I promise you. But wouldn't it be better for you to tell me something about where you have been all these long years? Your friends will like to know."

His eye brightened; he was like all the rest of us, pleased with any interest taken in him and his; he turned over on his pillow, and I lifted him into a half-sitting position.

"That's ship-shape, Doctor! I don't know but what I had oughter spin a yarn for you; I'm kinder on a watch to-night; and Hetty won't never know what I did do, if I don't send home the log 'long 'i' the cargo.

"Well, you see I was born in them parts, down to Canton, where father belonged; but mother was a Simsbury woman, and afore I was long-togged, father he moved onter the old humstead up to Simsbury, when gran'ther Peck died. Our farm was right 'longside o' Miss Buel's; you'll see't when you go there; but there a'n't nobody there now. Mother died afore I come away, and lies safe to the leeward o' Simsbury meetin'-house. Father he got a stroke a spell back, and he couldn't farm it; so he sold out and went West, to Parmely Larkum's, my sister's, to live. But I guess the house is there, and that old well.—How etarnal hot it's growin'! Doctor, give me a drink!

"Well, as I was tellin', I lived there next to Miss Buel's, and Hetty'n' I went to deestrict-school together, up to the cross-roads. We used to hev' ovens in the sand together, and roast apples an' ears of corn in 'em; and we used to build cubby-houses, and fix 'em out with broken chiny and posies. I swan 't makes me feel curus when I think what children du contrive to get pleased, and likewise riled about! One day I rec'lect Hetty'd stepped onto my biggest clam-shell and broke it, and I up and hit her a switch right across her pretty lips. Now you'd 'a' thought she would cry and run, for she wasn't bigger than a baby, much; but she jest come up and put her little fat arms round my neck, and says,—

"'I'm so sorry, Eben!'

"And that's Hetty Buel! I declare I was beat, and I hav'n't never got over bein' beat about that. So we growed up together, always out in the woods between schools, huntin' checker-berries, and

young winter-greens, and prince's piney, and huckleberries, and saxifrax, and birch, and all them woodsy things that children hanker arter; and by-'n'-by we got to goin' to the 'Cademy; and when Hetty was seventeen she went in to Hartford to her Aunt Smith's for a spell, to do chores, and get a little Seminary larnin', and I went to work on the farm; and when she come home, two year arter, she was growed to be a young woman, and though I was five year older'n her, I was as sheepish a land-lubber as ever got stuck a-goin' to the mast-head, whenever I sighted her.

"She wasn't very much for looks neither; she had black eyes, and she was pretty behaved; but she wasn't no gret for beauty, anyhow, only I thought the world of her, and so did her old grandmother;—for her mother died when she wa'n't but two year old, and she lived to old Miss Buel's 'cause her father had married agin away down to Jersey.

"Arter a spell I got over bein' so mighty sheepish about Hetty; her ways was too kindly for me to keep on that tack. We took to goin' to singin'-school together; then I always come home from quiltin'-parties and conference-meetin's with her, because 'twas handy, bein' right next door; and so it come about that I begun to think of settlin' down for life, and that was the start of all my troubles. I couldn't take the home farm; for 'twas such poor land, father could only jest make a live out on't for him and me. Most of it was pastur', gravelly land, full of mullens and stones; the rest was principally woodsy,—not hickory, nor oak neither, but hemlock and white birches, that a'n't of no account

for timber nor firing, 'longside of the other trees. There was a little strip of a medder-lot, and an orchard up on the mountain, where we used to make redstreak cider that beat the Dutch; but we hadn't pastur' land enough to keep more'n two cows, and altogether I knew 'twasn't any use to think of bringin' a family on to't. So I wrote to Parmely's husband, out West, to know about Government lands, and what I could do ef I was to move out there and take an allotment; and gettin' an answer every way favorable, I posted over to Miss Buel's one night arter milkin' to tell Hetty. She was settin' on the south door-step, braidin' palm-leaf; and her grandmother was knittin' in her old chair, a little back by the window. Sometimes, a-lyin' here on my back, with my head full o' sounds, and the hot wind and the salt sea-smell a-comin' in through the winders, and the poor fellers groanin' overhead, I get clear away back to that night, so cool and sweet; the air full of treely smells, dead leaves like, and white-blows in the ma'sh below; and wood-robins singin' clear fine whistles in the woods; and the big sweet-brier by the winder all a-flowered out; and the drippin' little beads of dew on the clover-heads; and the tinklin' sound of the mill-dam down to Squire Turner's mill.

"I set down by Hetty; and the old woman bein' as deaf as a post, it was as good as if I'd been there alone. So I mustered up my courage, that was sinkin' down to my boots, and told Hetty my plans, and asked her to go along. She never said nothin' for a minute; she flushed all up as red as a rose, and I see her little fingers was shakin', and her eye-winkers shiny and wet; but she

spoke presently, and said,—

"'I can't, Eben!'

"I was shot betwixt wind and water then, I tell you, Doctor! 'Twa'n't much to be said, but I've allers noticed afloat that real dangersome squalls comes on still; there's a dumb kind of a time in the air, the storm seems to be waitin' and holdin' its breath, and then a little low whisper of wind,—a cat's paw we call't,—and then you get it real 'arnest. I'd rather she'd have taken on, and cried, and scolded, than have said so still, 'I can't, Eben.'

"'Why not, Hetty?' says I.

"'I ought not to leave grandmother,' said she.

"I declare, I hadn't thought o' that! Miss Buel was a real infirm woman without kith nor kin, exceptin' Hetty; for Jason Buel he'd died down to Jersey long before; and she hadn't means. Hetty nigh about kept 'em both since Miss Buel had grown too rheumatic to make cheese and see to the hens and cows, as she used to. They didn't keep any men-folks now, nor but one cow; Hetty milked her, and drove her to pastur', and fed the chickens, and braided hats, and did chores. The farm was all sold off; 'twas poor land, and didn't fetch much; but what there was went to keep 'em in vittles and firin'. I guess Hetty 'arnt most of what they lived on, arter all.

"'Well,' says I, after a spell of thinkin', 'can't she go along too, Hetty?'

"'Oh, no, Eben! she's too old; she never could get there, and she never could live there. She says very often she wouldn't leave

Simsbury for gold untold; she was born here, and she's bound to die here. I know she wouldn't go.'

"'Ask her, Hetty!'

"'No, it wouldn't be any use; it would only fret her always to think I staid at home for her, and you know she can't do without me.'

"'No more can't I,' says I. 'Do you love her the best, Hetty?'

"I was kinder sorry I'd said that; for she grew real white, and I could see by her throat she was chokin' to keep down somethin'. Finally she said,—

"'That isn't for me to say, Eben. If it was right for me to go with you, I should be glad to; but you know I can't leave grandmother.'

"Well, Doctor, I couldn't say no more. I got up to go. Hetty put down her work and walked to the big ellum by the gate with me. I was most too full to speak, but I catched her up and kissed her soft little tremblin' lips, and her pretty eyes, and then I set off for home as if I was goin' to be hanged.

"Young folks is obstreperous, Doctor. I've been a long spell away from Hetty, and I don't know as I should take on so now. That night I never slept. I lay kickin' and tumblin' all night, and before mornin' I'd resolved to quit Simsbury, and go seek my fortin' beyond seas, hopin' to come back to Hetty, arter all, with riches to take care on her right there in the old place. You'd 'a' thought I might have had some kind of feelin' for my old father, after seein' Hetty's faithful ways; but I was a man and she was a woman, and I take it them is two different kind o' craft. Men

is allers for themselves first, an' Devil take the hindmost; but women lives in other folks's lives, and ache, and work, and endure all sorts of stress o' weather afore they'll quit the ship that's got crew and passengers aboard.

"I never said nothin' to father,—I couldn't 'a' stood no jawin',—but I made up my kit, an' next night slung it over my shoulder, and tramped off. I couldn't have gone without biddin' Hetty goodbye; so I stopped there, and told her what I was up to, and charged her to tell father.

"She tried her best to keep me to home, but I was sot in my way; so when she found that out, she run up stairs an' got a little Bible, and made me promise I'd read it sometimes, and then she pulled that 'are little ring off her finger and give it to me to keep.

"'Eben,' says she, 'I wish you well always, and I sha'n't never forget you!'

"And then she put up her face to me, as innocent as a baby, to kiss me goodbye. I see she choked up when I said the word, though, and I said, kinder laughin',—

"'I hope you'll get a better husband than me, Hetty!'

"I swear! she give me a look like the judgment-day, and stoopin' down she pressed her lips onto that ring, and says she, 'That is my weddin'-ring, Eben!' and goes into the house as still and white as a ghost; and I never see her again, nor never shall.—Oh, Doctor! give me a drink!"

I lifted the poor fellow, fevered and gasping, to an easier position, and wet his hot lips with fresh orange-juice.

"Stop, now, Jackson!" said I, "you are tired."

"No, I a'n't, Doctor! No, I a'n't! I'm bound to finish now. But Lord deliver us! look there! one of the Devil's own imps, I b'lieve!"

I looked on the little deal stand where I had set the candle, and there stood one of the quaint, evil-looking insects that infest the island, a praying Mantis. Raised up against the candle, with its fore-legs in the attitude of supplication that gives it the name, its long green body relieved on the white stearin, it was eyeing Jackson, with its head turned first on one side and then on the other, in the most elvish and preternatural way. Presently it moved upward, stuck one of its fore-legs cautiously into the flame, burnt it of course and drew it back, eyed it, first from one angle, then from another, with deliberate investigation, and at length conveyed the injured member to its mouth and sucked it steadily, resuming its stare of blank scrutiny at my patient, who did not at all fancy the interest taken in him.

I could not help laughing at the strange manoeuvres of the creature, familiar as I was with them.

"It is only one of our Texan bugs, Jackson," said I; "it is harmless enough."

"It's got a pesky look, though, Doctor! I thought I'd seen enough curus creturs in the Marquesas, but that beats all!"

Seeing the insect really irritated and annoyed him, I put it out of the window, and turned the blinds closely to prevent its reëntrance, and he went on with his story.

"So I tramped it to Hartford that night, got a lodgin' with a first cousin I had there, worked my passage to Boston in a coaster, and after hangin' about Long Wharf day in and day out for a week, I was driv' to ship myself aboard of a whaler, the Lowisy Miles, Twist, cap'en; and I writ from there to Hetty, so't she could know my bearin's so fur, and tell my father.

"It would take a week, Doctor, to tell you what a rough-an'-tumble time I had on that 'are whaler. There's a feller's writ a book about v'yagin' afore the mast that'll give ye an idee on't; he had an eddication so't he could set it off, and I fell foul of his book down to Valparaiso more'n a year back, and I swear I wanted to shake hands with him. I heerd he was gone ashore somewheres down to Boston, and hed cast anchor for good. But I tell you he's a brick, and what he said's gospel truth. I thought I'd got to hell afore my time when we see blue water. I didn't have no peace exceptin' times when I was to the top, lookin' out for spouters; then I'd get nigh about into the clouds that was allers a-hangin' down close to the sea mornin' and night, all kinds of colors, red an' purple an' white; and 'stead of thinkin' o' whales, I'd get my head full o' Simsbury, and get a precious knock with the butt end of a handspike when I come down, 'cause I'd never sighted a whale till arter they see'd it on deck.

"We was bound to the South Seas after sperm whales, but we was eight months gettin' there, and we took sech as we could find on the way. The cap'en he scooted round into one port an' another arter his own business,—down to Caraccas, into Rio;

and when we'd rounded the Horn and was nigh about dead of cold an' short rations, and hadn't killed but three whales, we put into Valparaiso to get vittled, and there I laid hold o' this little trinket of a chain, and spliced Hetty's ring on to't, lest I should be stranded somewheres and get rid of it onawares.

"We cruised about in them seas a good year or more, with poor luck, and the cap'en growin' more and more outrageous continually. Them waters aren't like the Gulf, Doctor,—nor like the Northern Ocean, nohow; there a'n't no choppin' seas there, but a great, long, everlasting lazy swell, that goes rollin' and fallin' away like the toll of a big bell, in endless blue rollers; and the trades blow through the sails like singin', as warm and soft as if they blowed right out o' sunshiny gardens; and the sky's as blue as summer all the time, only jest round the dip on't there's allers a hull fleet o' hazy round-topped clouds, so thin you can see the moon rise through 'em; and the waves go ripplin' off the cut-water as peaceful as a mill-pond, day and night. Squalls is sca'ce some times o' the year; but when there is one, I tell you a feller hears thunder! The clouds settle right down onto the mast-head, black and thick, like the settlin's of an ink-bottle; the lightnin' hisses an' cuts fore and aft; and corposants come flightin' down onto the boom or the top, gret balls o' light; and the wind roars louder than the seas; and the rain comes down in spouts,—it don't fall fur enough to drop; you'd think heaven and earth was come together, with hell betwixt 'em;—and then it'll all clear up as quiet and calm as a Simsbury Sunday; and you wouldn't know

it could be squally, if 'twan't for the sail that you hadn't had a chance to furl was drove to ribbons, and here an' there a stout spar snapped like a cornstalk, or the bulwarks stove by a heavy sea. There's queer things to be heerd, too, in them parts: cries to wind'ard like a drowndin' man, and you can't never find him; noises right under the keel; bells ringin' off the land like, when you a'n't within five hundred miles of shore; and curus hails out o' ghost-ships that sails agin' wind an' tide.—Strange! strange! I declare for't! seems as though I heerd my old mother a-singin' Mear now!"

I saw Jackson was getting excited, so I gave him a little soothing draught and walked away to give the nurse some orders. But he made me promise to return and hear the story out; so, after half an hour's investigation of the wards, I came back and found him composed enough to permit his resuming where he had left off.

"Howsomever, Doctor, there wa'n't no smooth sailin' nor fair weather with the cap'en; 'twas always squally in his latitude, and I begun to get mutinous and think of desartin'. About eighteen months arter we sot sail from Valparaiso, I hadn't done somethin' I'd been ordered, or I'd done it wrong, and Cap'en Twist come on deck, ragin' and roarin', with a handspike in his fist, and let fly at my head. I see what was comin', and put my arm up to fend it off; and gettin' the blow on my fore-arm, it got broke acrost as quick as a wink, and I dropped. So they picked me up, and havin' a mate aboard who knew some doctorin', I was spliced and

bound up, and put under hatches on the sick-list. I tell you I was dog-tired them days, lyin' in my berth, hearin' the rats and mice scuttle round the bulkheads and skitter over the floor. I couldn't do nothin', and finally I bethought myself of Hetty's Bible and contrived to get it out o' my chist,—and when I could get a bit of a glim I'd read it. I'm a master-hand to remember things, and what I read over and over in that 'are dog-hole of cabin never got clean out of my head, no, nor never will; and when the Lord above calls all hands on deck to pass muster, ef I'm ship-shape afore him, it'll be because I follered his signals and l'arnt 'em out of that 'are log. But I didn't foller 'em then, nor not for a plaguy long cruise yet!

"One day, as I laid there readin' by the light of a bit of tallow dip the mate gave me, who should stick his head into the hole he called a cabin, but old Twist! He'd got an idee I was shammin'; and when he saw me with a book, he cussed, and swore, and raved, and finally hauled it out o' my hand and flung it up through the hatchway clean and clear overboard.

"I tell ye, Doctor, if I'd 'a' had a sound arm, he'd 'a' gone after it; but I had to take it out in ratin' at him, and that night my mind was made up; I was bound to desart at the first land. And it come about that a fortnight after my arm had jined, and I could haul shrouds agin, we sighted the Marquesas, and bein' near about out o' water, the cap'en laid his course for the nearest land, and by daybreak of the second day we lay to in a small harbor, on the south side of an island where ships wa'n't very prompt to

go commonly. But old Twist didn't care for cannibals nor wild beasts, when they stood in his way; and there wasn't but half a cask of water aboard, and that a hog wouldn't 'a' drank, only for the name on't. So we pulled ashore after some, and findin' a spring near by, was takin' it out, hand over hand, as fast as we could bale it up, when all of a sudden the mate see a bunch of feathers over a little bush near by, and yelled out to run for our lives, the savages was come.

"Now I had made up my mind to run away from the ship that very day, and all the while I'd been baling the water up I had been tryin' to lay my course so as to get quit of the boat's crew, and be off; but natur' is stronger than a man thinks. When I heerd the mate sing out, and see the men begin to run, I turned and run too, full speed, down to the shore; but my foot caught in some root or hole, I fell flat down, and hittin' my head ag'inst a stone near by, I lay; good as dead; and when I come to, the boat was gone, and the ship makin' all sail out of harbor, and a crew of wild Indian women were a-lookin' at me as I've seen a set of Simsbury women-folks look at a baboon in a caravan; but they treated me better!

"Findin' I was helpless, for I'd sprained my ankle in the fall, four of 'em picked me up, and carried me away to a hut, and tended me like a baby; and when the men, who'd come over to that side of the island 'long with 'em, and gone a-fishin', come back, I was safe enough; for women are women all the world over, soft-hearted, kindly creturs, that like anything that's in trouble,

'specially if they can give it a lift out on't. So I was nursed, and fed, and finally taken over the ridge of rocks that run acrost the island to their town of bamboo huts; and now begun to look about me, for here I was, stranded, as one may say, out o' sight o' land.

"Ships didn't never touch there, I knew by their ways, their wonderin' and takin' sights at me. As for Cap'en Twist, he wouldn't come back for his own father, unless he was short o' hands for whalin'. I was in for life, no doubt on't; and I'd better look at the fair-weather side of the thing. The island was as pretty a bit of land as ever lay betwixt sea and sky; full of tall cocoa-nut palms, with broad, feathery tops, and bunches of brown nuts; bananas hung in yellow clumps ready to drop off at a touch; and big bread-fruit trees stood about everywhere, lookin' as though a punkin-vine had climbed up into 'em and hung half-ripe punkins off of every bough; beside lots of other trees that the natives set great store by, and live on the fruit of 'em; and flyin' through all, such pretty birds as you never see except in them parts; but one brown thrasher'd beat the whole on 'em singin'; fact is, they run to feathers; they don't sing none.

"It was as sightly a country as ever Adam and Eve had to themselves; but it wa'n't home. Howsomever, after a while the savages took to me mightily. I was allers handy with tools, and by good luck I'd come off with two jack-knives and a loose awl in my jacket-pocket, so I could beat 'em all at whittlin'; and I made figgers on their bows an' pipe-stems, of things they never see, —roosters, and horses, Miss Buel's old sleigh, and the Albany

stage, driver'n' all, and our yoke of oxen a-ploughin',—till nothin' would serve them but I should have a house o' my own, and be married to their king's daughter; so I did.

"Well, Doctor, you kinder wonder I forgot Hetty Buel. I didn't forget her, but I knew she wa'n't to be had anyhow; I thought I was in for life; and Wailua was the prettiest little craft that ever you set eyes on, as straight as a spar, and as kindly as a Christian; and besides, I had to, or I'd have been killed, and broiled, and eaten, whether or no! And then in that 'are latitude it a'n't just the way 'tis here; you don't work; you get easy, and lazy, and sleepy; somethin' in the air kind of hushes you up; it makes you sweat to think, and you're too hazy to, if it didn't; and you don't care for nothing much but food and drink. I hadn't no spunk left; so I married her after their fashion, and I liked her well enough; and she was my wife, after all.

"I tell ye, Doctor, it goes a gret way with men-folks to think anything's their'n, and nobody else's. But when I married her, I took the chain with Hetty Buel's ring off my neck, and put 'em in a shell, and buried the shell under my doorway. I couldn't have Wailua touch that.

"So there I lived fifteen long year, as it might be, in a kind of a curus dream, doin' nothin' much, only that when I got to know the tongue them savages spoke, little by little I got pretty much the steerin' o' the hull crew, till by-'n'-by some of 'em got jealous, and plotted and planned to kill me, because the king, Wailua's father, was gettin' old, and they thought I wanted to be king when

he died, and they couldn't stan' that no way.

"Somehow or other Wailua got word of what was goin' on, and one night she woke me out of sleep an' told me I must run for't, and she would hide me safe till things took a turn. So I scratched up the shell with Hetty's ring in't, and afore morning I was over t'other side of the island, in a kind of a cave overlookin' the sea, near by to a grove of bananas and mammee apples, and not fur from the harbor where I'd landed; and safe enough, for nobody but Wailua knew the way to't.

"Well, the sixth day I sot in the porthole of that cave I see a sail in the offing. I declare, I thought I should 'a' choked! I catched off my tappa cloth and h'isted it on a pole, but the ship kep' on stiddy out to sea. My heart beat up to my eyes, but I held on ag'inst hope, and I declare I prayed; words come to me that I hadn't said since I was a boy to Simsbury, and the Lord he heerd; for, as true as the compass, that ship lay to, tacked, put in for the island, and afore night I was aboard of the Lysander, a Salem whaler, with my mouth full of grog and ship-biscuit, and my body in civilized toggery. I own I felt queer to go away so and leave Wailua; but I knew 'twas gettin' her out of danger, for the old king was just a-goin' to die, and if ever I'd have gone back, we should both have been murdered. Besides, we didn't always agree; she had to walk straighter than her wild natur' agreed with, because she was my wife; and we hadn't no children to hold us together; and I couldn't 'a' taken her aboard of the whaler, if she'd wanted to go. I guess it was best; anyhow, so it was.

"But this wasn't to be the end of my v'yagin'. The Lysander foundered just off Valparaiso; and though all hands was saved in the boats, when we got to port there wasn't no craft there bound any nearer homeward than an English merchant-ship, for Liverpool, by way of Madeira. So I worked a passage to Funchal, and there I got aboard of a Southampton steamer, bound for Cuba, that put in for coal. But when I come to Havana I was nigh about tuckered out; for goin' round the Horn in the Lemon, — that 'are English ship,—I'd ben on duty in all sorts o' weather; and I'd lived lazy and warm so long I expect it was too tough for me, and I was pestered with a hard cough, and spit blood, so't I was laid up a long spell in the hospital at Havana. And there I kep' a-thinkin' over Hetty's Bible, and I b'lieve I studied that 'are chart till I found out the way to port, and made up my log all square for the owner; for I knowed well enough where I was bound; but I did hanker to get home to Simsbury afore shovin' off.

"Well, finally, there come into the harbor a Mystic ship that was a-goin' down the Gulf for a New York owner. I'd known Seth Crane, the cap'en of her, away back in old Simsbury times. He was an Avon boy; and when I sighted that vessel's name, as I was crawlin' along the quay one day, and, seein' she was Connecticut-built, boarded her, and see Seth, I was old fool enough to cry right out,—I was so shaky. And Seth he was about as scart as ef he'd seen the dead, havin' heerd up to Avon, fifteen year ago nearly, that the Lowisy Miles had been run down off the Sandwich Islands by a British man-of-war, and all hands lost,

exceptin' one o' the boys. However, he come to his bearin's after a while, and told me about our folks, and how't Hetty Buel wasn't married, but keepin' deestrict school, and her old grandmother alive yet.

"Well, I kinder heartened up, and agreed to take passage with Seth.—Good Lord, Doctor! what's that?"

A peculiar and oppressive stillness had settled down on everything in and out of the hospital while Jackson was going on with his story. I noticed it only as the hush of a tropic midnight; but as he spoke, I heard—apparently out on the prairie—a heavy jarring sound like repeated blows, drawing nearer and nearer the building.

Jackson sprung upright on his pillows, the hectic passed from either gaunt and sallow cheek, leaving the red and blue tattoo marks visible in most ghastly distinctness, while the sweat poured in drops down his hollow temples.

The noise drew still nearer. All the patients in the ward awoke and quitted their beds, hastily. The noise was at hand,—blows of great violence and power; and a certain malign rapidity shook the walls from one end of the hospital to the other,—blow upon blow, like the fierce attacks of a catapult, only with no like result. The nurse, a German Catholic, fell on his knees and told his beads, glancing over his shoulder in undisguised horror; the patients cowered together, groaning and praying; and I could hear the stir and confusion in the ward below. In less than a minute's space the singular sound passed through the house, and in hollow, jarring

echoes died out toward the bay.

I looked at Eben;—his jaw had fallen; his hands were rigid and locked together; his eyes were rolled upward, fixed and glassy; a stream of scarlet blood trickled over his gray beard from the corner of his mouth;—he was dead! As I laid him back on the pillow and turned to restore some quiet to the ward, a Norther came sweeping down the Gulf like a rush of mad spirits; tore up the white crests of the sea and flung them on the beach in thundering surf; burst through the heavy fog that had trailed upon the moon's track and smothered the island in its soft pestilent brooding; and in one mighty pouring out of cold pure ether changed earth and sky from torrid to temperate zone.

Vainly did I endeavor to calm the terror of my patients, excited still more by the elemental uproar without; vainly did I harangue them, in the plainest terms to which science is reducible, on atmospheric vibrations, acoustics, reverberations, and volcanic agencies; they insisted on some supernatural power having produced the recent fearful sounds. Neither common nor uncommon sense could prevail with them; and when they discovered, by the appearance of the extra nurse I had sent for, to perform the last offices for Jackson, that he was dead, a renewed and irrepressible horror attacked them, and it was broad day before composure or stillness was regained in any part of the building except my own rooms, to which I betook myself as soon as possible, and slept till sunrise, too soundly for any mystical visitation whatever to have disturbed my rest.

The next day, in spite of the brief influence of the Norther, the first case of yellow fever showed itself in the hospital; before night seven had sickened, and one, already reduced by chronic disease, died. I had hoped to bury Jackson decently, in the cemetery of the city, where his vexed mortality might rest in peace under the oleanders and china-trees, shut in by the hedge of Cherokee roses that guards the enclosure from the prairie, a living wall of glassy green, strewn with ivory-white buds and blossoms, fair and pure; but on applying for a burial-spot, the city authorities, panic-stricken cowards that they were, denied me the privilege even of a prairie grave, outside the cemetery hedge, for the poor fellow. In vain did I represent that he had died of lingering disease, and that nowise contagious; nothing moved them. It was enough that there was yellow fever in the ward where he died. I was forthwith strictly ordered to have all the dead from the hospital buried on the sand-flats at the east end of the island.

What a place that is it is scarcely possible to describe. Wide and dreary levels of sand, some four or five feet lower than the town, and flooded by high tides; the only vegetation a scanty, dingy gray, brittle, crackling growth,—bitter sandworts and the like; over and through which the abominable tawny sand-crabs are constantly executing diabolic waltzes on the tips of their eight legs, vanishing into the ground like imps as you approach; curlews start from behind the loose drifts of sand and float away with heartbroken cries seaward; little sandpipers twitter plaintively, running through the weeds; and great, sulky, gray

cranes droop their motionless heads over the still salt pools along the shore.

To this blank desolation I was forced to carry poor Jackson's body, with that of the fever-patient, just at sunset. As the Dutchman who officiated as hearse, sexton, bearer, and procession, stuck his spade into the ground, and withdrew it full of crumbling shells and fine sand, the hole it left filled with bitter black ooze. There, sunk in the ooze, covered with the shifting sand, bewailed by the wild cries of sea-birds, noteless and alone, I left Eben Jackson, and returned to the mass of pestilence and wretchedness within the hospital walls.

In the spring I reached home safely. None but the resident on a Southern sand-bank can fully appreciate the verdure and bloom of the North. The great elms of my native town were full of tender buds, like a clinging mist in their graceful branches; earlier trees were decked with little leaves, deep-creased, and silvery with down; the wide river in a fluent track of metallic lustre weltered through green meadows that on either hand stretched far and wide; the rolling land beyond was spread out in pastures, where the cattle luxuriated after the winter's stalling; and on many a slope and plain the patient farmer turned up his heavy sods and clay, to moulder in sun and air for seed-time and harvest; and the beautiful valley that met the horizon on the north and south rolled away eastward and westward to a low blue range of hills, that guarded it with granite walls and bristling spears of hemlock and pine.

This is not my story; and if it were, I do not know that I should detail my home-coming. It is enough to say, that I came after a five years' absence, and found all that I had left nearly as I had left it;—how few can say as much!

Various duties and some business arrangements kept me at work for six or seven weeks, and it was June before I could fulfil my promise to Eben Jackson. I took the venerable old horse and chaise that had carried my father on his rounds for years, and made the best of my way out toward Simsbury. I was alone, of course; even Cousin Lizzy, charming as five years had made the little girl of thirteen whom I had left behind on quitting home, was not invited to share my drive; there was something too serious in the errand to endure the presence of a gay young lady. But I was not lonely; the drive up Talcott Mountain, under the rude portcullis of the toll-gate, through fragrant woods, by trickling brooks, past huge boulders that scarce a wild vine dare cling to, with its feeble, delicate tendrils, is all exquisite, and full of living repose; and turning to descend the mountain, just where a brook drops headlong with clattering leap into a steep black ravine, and comes out over a tiny green meadow, sliding past great granite rocks, and bending the grass-blades to a shining track, you see suddenly at your feet the beautiful mountain valley of the Farmington river, trending away in hill after hill,—rough granite ledges crowned with cedar and pine,—deep ravines full of heaped rocks,—and here and there the formal white rows of a manufacturing village, where Kühleborn is captured and

forced to turn water-wheels, and Undine picks cotton or grinds hardware, dammed into utility.

Into this valley I plunged, and inquiring my way of many a prim farmer's wife and white-headed school-boy, I edged my way northward under the mountain side, and just before noon found myself beneath the "great ellum," where, nearly twenty years ago, Eben Jackson and Hetty Buel had said good-bye.

I tied my horse to the fence and walked up the worn footpath to the door. Apparently no one was at home. Under this impression I knocked vehemently, by way of making sure; and a weak, cracked voice at length answered, "Come in!" There, by the window, perhaps the same where she sat so long before, crouched in an old chair covered with calico, her bent fingers striving with mechanical motion to knit a coarse stocking, sat old Mrs. Buel. Age had worn to the extreme of attenuation a face that must always have been hard-featured, and a few locks of snow-white hair, straying from under the bandanna handkerchief of bright red and orange that was tied over her cap and under her chin, added to the old-world expression of her whole figure. She was very deaf; scarcely could I make her comprehend that I wanted to see her grand-daughter; at last she understood, and asked me to sit down till Hetty should come from school; and before long, a tall, thin figure opened the gate and came slowly up the path.

I had a good opportunity to observe the constant, dutiful, self-denying Yankee girl,—girl no longer, now that twenty years

of unrewarded patience had lined her face with unmistakable graving. But I could not agree with Eben's statement that she was not pretty; she must have been so in her youth; even now there was beauty in her deep-set and heavily fringed dark eyes, soft, tender, and serious, and in the noble and pensive Greek outline of the brow and nose; her upper lip and chin were too long to agree well with her little classic head, but they gave a certain just and pure expression to the whole face, and to the large thin-lipped mouth, flexible yet firm in its lines. It is true, her hair was neither abundant, nor wanting in gleaming threads of gray; her skin was freckled, sallow, and devoid of varying tint or freshness; her figure angular and spare; her hands red with hard work; and her air at once sad and shy;—still, Hetty Buel was a very lovely woman in my eyes, though I doubt if Lizzy would have thought so.

I hardly knew how to approach the painful errand I had come on, and with true masculine awkwardness I cut the matter short by drawing out from my pocket-book the Panama chain and ring, and placing them in her hands. Well as I thought I knew the New England character, I was not prepared for so quiet a reception of this token as she gave it. With a steady hand she untwisted the wire fastening of the chain, slipped the ring off, and, bending her head, placed it reverently on the ring-finger of her left hand;—brief, but potent ceremony; and over without preface or comment, but over for all time.

Still holding the chain, she offered me a chair, and sat down

herself,—a little paler, a little more grave, than on entering.

"Will you tell me how and where he died, Sir?" said she,—evidently having long considered the fact in her heart as a fact; probably having heard Seth Crane's story of the Louisa Miles's loss.

I detailed my patient's tale as briefly and sympathetically as I knew how. The episode of Wailua caused a little flushing of lip and cheek, a little twisting of the ring, as if it were not to be worn, after all; but as I told of his sacred care of the trinket for its giver's sake, and the not unwilling forsaking of that island wife, the restless motion passed away, and she listened quietly to the end; only once lifting her left hand to her lips, and resting her head on it for a moment, as I detailed the circumstances of his death, after supplying what was wanting in his own story, from the time of his taking passage in Crane's ship, to their touching at the island, expressly to leave him in the Hospital, when a violent hemorrhage had disabled him from further voyaging.

I was about to tell her I had seen him decently buried,—of course omitting descriptions of the how and where,—when the grandmother, who had been watching us with the impatient querulousness of age, hobbled across the room to ask "what that 'are man was a-talkin' about."

Briefly and calmly, in the key long use had suited to her infirmity, Hetty detailed the chief points of my story.

"Dew tell!" exclaimed the old woman; "Eben Jackson a'n't dead on dry land, is he? Left means, eh?"

I walked away to the door, biting my lip. Hetty, for once, reddened to the brow; but replaced her charge in the chair and followed me to the gate.

"Good day, Sir," said she, offering me her hand,—and then slightly hesitating,—"Grandmother is very old. I thank you, Sir! I thank you kindly!"

As she turned and went toward the house, I saw the glitter of the Panama chain about her thin and sallow throat, and, by the motion of her hands, that she was retwisting the same wire fastening that Eben Jackson had manufactured for it.

Five years after, last June, I went to Simsbury with a gay picnic party.

This time Lizzy was with me; indeed, she generally is now.

I detached myself from the rest, after we were fairly arranged for the day, and wandered away alone to "Miss Buel's."

The house was closed, the path grassy, a sweetbrier bush had blown across the door, and was gay with blossoms; all was still, dusty, desolate. I could not be satisfied with this. The meeting-house was as near as any neighbor's, and the graveyard would ask me no curious questions; I entered it doubting; but there, "on the leeward side," near to the grave of "Bethia Jackson, wife of John Eben Jackson," were two new stones, one dated but a year later than the other, recording the deaths of "Temperance Buel, aged 96," and "Hester Buel, aged 44."

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AMOURS DE VOYAGE

[Continued.]

II

Is it illusion? or does there a spirit from perfecter ages,
Here, even yet, amid loss, change, and corruption, abide?
Does there a spirit we know not, though seek, though we find,
comprehend not,
Here to entice and confuse, tempt and evade us, abide?
Lives in the exquisite grace of the column disjointed and single,
Haunts the rude masses of brick garlanded gayly with vine,
E'en in the turret fantastic surviving that springs from the ruin,
E'en in the people itself? Is it illusion or not?
Is it illusion or not that attracteth the pilgrim Transalpine,
Brings him a dullard and dunce hither to pry and to stare?
Is it illusion or not that allures the barbarian stranger,
Brings him with gold to the shrine, brings him in arms to the gate?

I.—CLAUDE TO EUSTACE

What do the people say, and what does the government do?—you
Ask, and I know not at all. Yet fortune will favor your hopes; and
I, who avoided it all, am fated, it seems, to describe it.
I, who nor meddle nor make in politics,—I, who sincerely
Put not my trust in leagues nor any suffrage by ballot,
Never predicted Parisian millenniums, never beheld a
New Jerusalem coming down dressed like a bride out of heaven
Right on the Place de la Concorde,—I, ne'ertheless, let me say it,
Could in my soul of souls, this day, with the Gaul at the gates, shed
One true tear for thee, thou poor little Roman republic!

France, it is foully done! and you, my stupid old England,—
You, who a twelvemonth ago said nations must choose for themselves, you
Could not, of course, interfere,—you, now, when a nation has chosen—
Pardon this folly! *The Times* will, of course, have announced the
occasion,

Told you the news of to-day; and although it was slightly in error
When it proclaimed as a fact the Apollo was sold to a Yankee,
You may believe when it tells you the French are at Civita Vecchia.

II.—CLAUDE TO EUSTACE

"Dulce" it is, and *"decorum"* no doubt, for the country to fall,—to
Offer one's blood an oblation to Freedom, and die for the Cause; yet
Still, individual culture is also something, and no man
Finds quite distinct the assurance that he of all others is called on,
Or would be justified, even, in taking away from the world that
Precious creature, himself. Nature sent him here to abide here;
Else why sent him at all? Nature wants him still, it is likely.
On the whole, we are meant to look after ourselves; it is certain
Each has to eat for himself, digest for himself, and in general
Care for his own dear life, and see to his own preservation;
Nature's intentions, in most things uncertain, in this most plain and

decisive:
These, on the whole, I conjecture the Romans will follow, and I shall.

So we cling to the rocks like limpets; Ocean may bluster,
Over and under and round us; we open our shells to imbibe our
Nourishment, close them again, and are safe, fulfilling the purpose
Nature intended,—a wise one, of course, and a noble, we doubt not.
Sweet it may be and decorous, perhaps, for the country to die; but,
On the whole, we conclude the Romans won't do it, and I shan't.

III.—CLAUDE TO EUSTACE

Will they fight? They say so. And will the French? I can hardly,
Hardly think so; and yet—He is come, they say, to Palo,
He is passed from Monterone, at Santa Severa
He hath laid up his guns. But the Virgin, the Daughter of Roma,
She hath despised thee and laughed thee to scorn,—the Daughter of Tiber
She hath shaken her head and built barricades against thee!

Will they fight? I believe it. Alas, 'tis ephemeral folly,
Vain and ephemeral folly, of course, compared with pictures,
Statues, and antique gems,—indeed: and yet indeed too,
Yet methought, in broad day did I dream,—tell it not in St. James's,
Whisper it not in thy courts, O Christ Church!—yet did I, waking,
Dream of a cadence that sings, *Si tombent nos jeunes héros, la*
Terre en produit de nouveaux contre vous tous prêts à se battre;
Dreamt of great indignations and angers transcendental,
Dreamt of a sword at my side and a battle-horse underneath me.

IV.—CLAUDE TO EUSTACE

Now supposing the French or the Neapolitan soldier
Should by some evil chance come exploring the Maison Serny,
(Where the family English are all to assemble for safety,)
Am I prepared to lay down my life for the British female?
Really, who knows? One has bowed and talked, till, little by little,
All the natural heat has escaped of the chivalrous spirit.

Oh, one conformed, of course; but one doesn't die for good manners,
Stab or shoot, or be shot, by way of a graceful attention.
No, if it should be at all, it should be on the barricades there;
Should I incarnadine ever this inky pacifical finger,
Sooner far should it be for this vapor of Italy's freedom,
Sooner far by the side of the damned and dirty plebeians.

Ah, for a child in the street I could strike; for the full-blown lady—
Somehow, Eustace, alas, I have not felt the vocation.
Yet these people of course will expect, as of course, my protection,
Vernon in radiant arms stand forth for the lovely Georgina,
And to appear, I suppose, were but common civility. Yes, and
Truly I do not desire they should either be killed or offended.

Oh, and of course you will say, "When the time comes, you will be ready."
Ah, but before it comes, am I to presume it will be so?
What I cannot feel now, am I to suppose that I shall feel?
Am I not free to attend for the ripe and indubious instinct?
Am I forbidden to wait for the clear and lawful perception?
Is it the calling of man to surrender his knowledge and insight,
For the mere venture of what may, perhaps, be the virtuous action?
Must we, walking o'er earth, discerning a little, and hoping

Some plain visible task shall yet for our hands be assigned us,—
Must we abandon the future for fear of omitting the present,
Quit our own fireside hopes at the alien call of a neighbor,
To the mere possible shadow of Deity offer the victim?
And is all this, my friend, but a weak and ignoble repining,
Wholly unworthy the head or the heart of Your Own Correspondent?

V.—CLAUDE TO EUSTACE

Yes, we are fighting at last, it appears. This morning, as usual,
Murray, as usual, in hand, I enter the Caffè Nuovo;
Seating myself with a sense as it were of a change in the weather,
Not understanding, however, but thinking mostly of Murray,
And, for to-day is their day, of the Campidoglio Marbles,
Caffè-latte! I call to the waiter,—and *Non c' è latte*,
This is the answer he makes me, and this the sign of a battle.
So I sit; and truly they seem to think any one else more
Worthy than me of attention. I wait for my milkless *nero*,
Free to observe undistracted all sorts and sizes of persons,
Blending civilian and soldier in strangest costume, coming in, and
Gulping in hottest haste, still standing, their coffee,—withdrawing

Eagerly, jangling a sword on the steps, or jogging a musket
Slung to the shoulder behind. They are fewer, moreover, than usual,
Much, and silenter far; and so I begin to imagine
Something is really afloat. Ere I leave, the Caffè is empty,
Empty too the streets, in all its length the Corso
Empty, and empty I see to my right and left the Condotti.

Twelve o'clock, on the Pincian Hill, with lots of English,
Germans, Americans, French,—the Frenchmen, too, are protected.
So we stand in the sun, but afraid of a probable shower;
So we stand and stare, and see, to the left of St. Peter's,
Smoke, from the cannon, white,—but that is at intervals only,—
Black, from a burning house, we suppose, by the Cavalleggieri;
And we believe we discern some lines of men descending
Down through the vineyard-slopes, and catch a bayonet gleaming.
Every ten minutes, however,—in this there is no misconception,—
Comes a great white puff from behind Michel Angelo's dome, and
After a space the report of a real big gun,—not the Frenchman's?—
That must be doing some work. And so we watch and conjecture.

Shortly, an Englishman comes, who says he has been to St. Peter's,
Seen the Piazza and troops, but that is all he can tell us;
So we watch and sit, and, indeed, it begins to be tiresome.—
All this smoke is outside; when it has come to the inside,
It will be time, perhaps, to descend and retreat to our houses.

Half-past one, or two. The report of small arms frequent,
Sharp and savage indeed; that cannot all be for nothing:
So we watch and wonder; but guessing is tiresome, very.
Weary of wondering, watching, and guessing, and gossipping idly,
Down I go, and pass through the quiet streets with the knots of
National Guards patrolling and flags hanging out at the windows,
English, American, Danish,—and, after offering to help an
Irish family moving *en masse* to the Maison Serny,
After endeavoring idly to minister balm to the trembling
Quinquagenarian fears of two lone British spinsters,
Go to make sure of my dinner before the enemy enter.
But by this there are signs of stragglers returning; and voices
Talk, though you don't believe it, of guns and prisoners taken;
And on the walls you read the first bulletin of the morning.
—
This is all that I saw, and all I know of the battle.

VI.—CLAUDE TO EUSTACE

Victory! Victory!—Yes! ah, yes, thou republican Zion,
Truly the kings of the earth are gathered and gone by together;
Doubtless they marvelled to witness such things, were astonished,
and so forth.
Victory! Victory! Victory!—Ah, but it is, believe me,
Easier, easier far, to intone the chant of the martyr
Than to indite any paean of any victory. Death may
Sometimes be noble; but life, at the best, will appear an illusion,
While the great pain is upon us, it is great; when it is over,
Why, it is over. The smoke of the sacrifice rises to heaven,
Of a sweet savor, no doubt, to somebody; but on the altar,
Lo, there is nothing remaining but ashes and dirt and ill odor.

So it stands, you perceive; the labial muscles, that swelled with
Vehement evolution of yesterday Marseillaises,
Articulations sublime of defiance and scorning, to-day col-
Lapse and languidly mumble, while men and women and papers
Scream and re-scream to each other the chorus of Victory. Well, but
I am thankful they fought, and glad that the Frenchmen were

beaten.

VII.—CLAUDE TO EUSTACE

So I have seen a man killed! An experience that, among others!
Yes, I suppose I have; although I can hardly be certain,
And in a court of justice could never declare I had seen it.
But a man was killed, I am told, in a place where I saw
Something; a man was killed, I am told, and I saw something.

I was returning home from St. Peter's; Murray, as usual,
Under my arm, I remember; had crossed the St. Angelo bridge; and
Moving towards the Condotti, had got to the first barricade, when
Gradually, thinking still of St. Peter's, I became conscious
Of a sensation of movement opposing me,—tendency this way
(Such as one fancies may be in a stream when the wave of the tide is
Coming and not yet come,—a sort of poise and retention);
So I turned, and, before I turned, caught sight of stragglers
Heading a crowd, it is plain, that is coming behind that corner.
Looking up, I see windows filled with heads; the Piazza,
Into which you remember the Ponte St. Angelo enters,

Since I passed, has thickened with curious groups; and now the
Crowd is coming, has turned, has crossed that last barricade, is
Here at my side. In the middle they drag at something. What is it?
Ha! bare swords in the air, held up! There seem to be voices
Pleading and hands putting back; official, perhaps; but the swords are
Many, and bare in the air,—in the air! They descend! They are smiting,
Hewing, chopping! At what? In the air once more upstretched! And
Is it blood that's on them? Yes, certainly blood! Of whom, then?
Over whom is the cry of this furor of exultation?

While they are skipping and screaming, and dancing their caps on the
points of
Swords and bayonets, I to the outskirts back, and ask a
Mercantile-seeming bystander, "What is it?" and he, looking always
That way, makes me answer, "A Priest, who was trying to fly to
The Neapolitan army,"—and thus explains the proceeding.

You didn't see the dead man? No;—I began to be doubtful;
I was in black myself, and didn't know what mightn't happen;

—
But a National Guard close by me, outside of the hubbub,
Broke his sword with slashing a broad hat covered with dust,
—and
Passing away from the place with Murray under my arm, and
Stooping, I saw through the legs of the people the legs of a body.

You are the first, do you know, to whom I have mentioned the matter.
Whom should I tell it to, else?—these girls?—the Heavens forbid it!—
Quidnuncs at Monaldini's?—idlers upon the Pincian?

If I rightly remember, it happened on that afternoon when
Word of the nearer approach of a new Neapolitan army
First was spread. I began to bethink me of Paris Septembers,
Thought I could fancy the look of the old 'Ninety-two. On that evening,
Three or four, or, it may be, five, of these people were slaughtered.
Some declare they had, one of them, fired on a sentinel; others
Say they were only escaping; a Priest, it is currently stated,
Stabbed a National Guard on the very Piazza Colonna:
History, Rumor of Rumors, I leave it to thee to determine!

But I am thankful to say the government seems to have strength to

Put it down; it has vanished, at least; the place is now peaceful.

Through the Trastevere walking last night, at nine of the clock, I

Found no sort of disorder; I crossed by the Island-bridges,
So by the narrow streets to the Ponte Rotto, and onwards
Thence, by the Temple of Vesta, away to the great Coliseum,
Which at the full of the moon is an object worthy a visit.

VIII.—GEORGINA TREVELLYN TO LOUISA –

Only think, dearest Louisa, what fearful scenes we have witnessed!—

* * * * *

George has just seen Garibaldi, dressed up in a long white cloak, on

Horseback, riding by, with his mounted negro behind him:
This is a man, you know, who came from America with him,
Out of the woods, I suppose, and uses a *lasso* in fighting,
Which is, I don't quite know, but a sort of noose, I imagine;
This he throws on the heads of the enemy's men in a battle,
Pulls them into his reach, and then most cruelly kills them:

Mary does not believe, but we heard it from an Italian.

Mary allows she was wrong about Mr. Claude *being selfish*;
He was *most* useful and kind on the terrible thirtieth of April.

Do not write here any more; we are starting directly for Florence:
We should be off to-morrow, if only Papa could get horses;
All have been seized everywhere for the use of this dreadful Mazzini.

P.S.

Mary has seen thus far.—I am really so angry, Louisa,—
Quite out of patience, my dearest! What can the man be intending?
I am quite tired; and Mary, who might bring him to in a moment,
Lets him go on as he likes, and neither will help nor dismiss him.

IX.—CLAUDE TO EUSTACE

It is most curious to see what a power a few calm words (in
Merely a brief proclamation) appear to possess on the people.
Order is perfect, and peace; the city is utterly tranquil;

And one cannot conceive that this easy and *nonchalant* crowd, that
Flows like a quiet stream through street and market-place, entering
Shady recesses and bays of church, *osteria* and *caffè*,
Could in a moment be changed to a flood as of molten lava,
Boil into deadly wrath and wild homicidal delusion.

Ah, 'tis an excellent race,—and even in old degradation,
Under a rule that enforces to flattery, lying, and cheating,
E'en under Pope and Priest, a nice and natural people.
Oh, could they but be allowed this chance of redemption! —but clearly
That is not likely to be. Meantime, notwithstanding all journals,
Honor for once to the tongue and the pen of the eloquent writer!
Honor to speech! and all honor to thee, thou noble Mazzini!

X.—CLAUDE TO EUSTACE

I am in love, meantime, you think; no doubt, you would think so.
I am in love, you say; with those letters, of course, you would say so.

I am in love, you declare. I think not so; yet I grant you

It is a pleasure, indeed, to converse with this girl. Oh, rare gift,
Rare felicity, this! she can talk in a rational way, can
Speak upon subjects that really are matters of mind and of thinking,
Yet in perfection retain her simplicity; never, one moment,
Never, however you urge it, however you tempt her, consents to
Step from ideas and fancies and loving sensations to those vain
Conscious understandings that vex the minds of man-kind.
No, though she talk, it is music; her fingers desert not the keys; 'tis
Song, though you hear in her song the articulate vocables sounded,
Syllabled singly and sweetly the words of melodious meaning.

XI.—CLAUDE TO EUSTACE

Ah, let me look, let me watch, let me wait, unbiased, unprompted!
Bid me not venture on aught that could alter or end what is present!
Say not, Time flies, and occasion, that never returns, is departing!
Drive me not out, ye ill angels with fiery swords, from my

Eden,
Waiting, and watching, and looking! Let love be its own inspiration!
Shall not a voice, if a voice there must be, from the airs that environ,
Yea, from the conscious heavens, without our knowledge or effort,
Break into audible words? Let love be its own inspiration!

XII.—CLAUDE TO EUSTACE

Wherefore and how I am certain, I hardly can tell; but it is so.
She doesn't like me, Eustace; I think she never will like me.
Is it my fault, as it is my misfortune, my ways are not her ways?
Is it my fault, that my habits and modes are dissimilar wholly?
'Tis not her fault, 'tis her nature, her virtue, to misapprehend them:
'Tis not her fault, 'tis her beautiful nature, not even to know me.
Hopeless it seems,—yet I cannot, hopeless, determine to leave it:
She goes,—therefore I go; she moves,—I move, not to lose her.

XIII.—CLAUDE TO EUSTACE

Oh, 'tisn't manly, of course, 'tisn't manly, this method of wooing;
'Tisn't the way very likely to win. For the woman, they tell you,
Ever prefers the audacious, the wilful, the vehement hero;
She has no heart for the timid, the sensitive soul; and for knowledge,—
Knowledge, O ye gods!—when did they appreciate knowledge?
Wherefore should they, either? I am sure I do not desire it.

Ah, and I feel too, Eustace, she cares not a tittle about me!
(Care about me, indeed! and do I really expect it?)
But my manner offends; my ways are wholly repugnant;
Every word that I utter estranges, hurts, and repels her;
Every moment of bliss that I gain, in her exquisite presence,
Slowly, surely, withdraws her, removes her, and severs her from me.
Not that I care very much!—any way, I escape from the boy's own
Folly, to which I am prone, of loving where it is easy.
Yet, after all, my Eustace, I know but little about it.
All I can say for myself, for present alike and for past, is,
Mary Trevellyn, Eustace, is certainly worth your acquaintance.

You couldn't come, I suppose, as far as Florence, to see her?

XIV.—GEORGINA TREVELLYN TO LOUISA –

* * * To-morrow we're starting for Florence,
Truly rejoiced, you may guess, to escape from republican terrors;
Sir. C. and Papa to escort us; we by *vettura*
Through Siena, and Georgy to follow and join us by Leghorn.
Then–Ah, what shall I say, my dearest? I tremble in thinking!
You will imagine my feelings,—the blending of hope and of sorrow!
How can I bear to abandon Papa and Mamma and my sisters?
Dearest Louisa, indeed it is very alarming; but trust me
Ever, whatever may change, to remain your loving Georgina.

P.S. BY MARY TREVELLYN.

* * * "Do I like Mr. Claude any better?"
I am to tell you,—and, "Pray, is it Susan or I that attract him?"
This he never has told, but Georgina could certainly ask him.

All I can say for myself is, alas! that he rather repels me.
There! I think him agreeable, but also a little repulsive.
So be content, dear Louisa; for one satisfactory marriage
Surely will do in one year for the family you would establish,
Neither Susan nor I shall afford you the joy of a second.

P.S. BY GEORGINA TREVELLYN.

Mr. Claude, you must know, is behaving a little bit better;
He and Papa are great friends; but he really is too *shilly-shally*,—
So unlike George! Yet I hope that the matter is going on fairly.
I shall, however, get George, before he goes, to say something.
Dearest Louisa, how delightful, to bring young people together!

* * * * *

Is it to Florence we follow, or are we to tarry yet longer,
E'en amid clamor of arms, here in the city of old,
Seeking from clamor of arms in the Past and the Arts to be hidden,
Vainly 'mid Arts and the Past seeking our life to forget?
Ah, fair shadow, scarce seen, go forth! for anon he shall

follow,—

He that beheld thee, anon, whither thou leadest, must go! Go, and the wise, loving Muse, she also will follow and find thee!

She, should she linger in Rome, were not dissevered from thee!

[To be continued.]

A WELSH MUSICAL FESTIVAL

I had been knocking about London, as the phrase goes, for more months than I choose to mention, when, my purse presenting unmistakable symptoms of a coming state of collapse, I began seriously to look about me for the means of replenishing it. Luckily, I had not to wait long for an opportunity. One morning, as I sat in the box of a coffee-room in Holborn, running my eye over the advertisement columns of the "Times," I met with one which promised novelty, at least; I had had too much experience in such matters to anticipate from it any very great *pecuniary* compensation. The said advertisement was to the effect, that a gentleman who combined literary tastes with business habits was required to edit a paper published in a town in South Wales; and it went on to state, that application, personally or by letter, might be made to the proprietor of the said journal at M–.

That I possessed some taste for literature I was well enough assured; but as for my "business habits," perhaps the least said about them, the better. This condition of candidateship, however, I quietly shirked, while counting over my few remaining coins, scarcely more than sufficient, after paying my landlady, to defray my expenses to M–, some one hundred and sixty miles distant. Determining, then, to assume a commercial virtue, though I had it not, I quitted the metropolis, and in due time reached the land

of leeks, with a light heart, and seven and sixpence sterling in my pocket.

A queer little Welsh town was M–, with an androgynous population,—or so it seemed to me, who had never before beheld women wearing men's hats and coats, and men with head-coverings and other articles of apparel of a very ambiguous description. It chanced to be market-day when I arrived, so that I had a capital opportunity of observing the population for whose edification my "literary tastes" were, I hoped, to be called into requisition. But at the very outset a tremendous difficulty stared me in the face. Nine out of every ten of the people I met or passed spoke in a language that to me was as unintelligibly mysterious as the cuneiform characters on Mr. Layard's Nineveh sculptures. It was a hard, harsh, guttural dialect, which even those who were to the manner born seemed to jerk out painfully and spasmodically from their lingual organs. This was especially obvious during a bargain, where an excited market-man was endeavoring to pass off a tough old gander as a tender young goose, to some equally excited customer. It was dissonant enough to *my* ear, but I fancy it would have driven a sensitive Italian to distraction. After listening to the horrible jargon for some time, I could easily believe the story which poor William Maginn used to tell with such unction, of the origin of the Welsh language. It was to this effect.—When the Tower of Babel was being built, the workmen all spoke one tongue. Just at the very instant when the "confusion" occurred, a mason, trowel in hand, called for a brick. This his assistant

was so long in handing to him, that he incontinently flew into a towering passion, and discharged from the said trowel a quantity of mortar, which entered the other's windpipe just as he was stammering out an excuse. The air, rushing through the poultice-like mixture, caused a spluttering and gurgling, which, blending with the half-formed words, became that language ever since known as Welsh.—I think it my duty to advise the reader never to tell this anecdote to any descendants of Cadwallader, who are peculiarly sensitive on the subject, and so hot-blooded, that it is not at all unlikely the injudicious story-teller might be deprived of any future opportunity of insulting the Ap-Shenkins, the Ap-Joneses, and the race of very irascible Taffys in general.

I had, however, little time to study either language or character; so, after a plain dinner at the Merlin's Head, the chief inn of the place, I set out for the purpose of seeing the newspaper proprietor. Fortified by a letter of introduction and some testimonials, I entered his shop,—he was a bookseller and stationer,—and inquired for Mr. F–.

"That's my name," said a red-faced man behind the counter. I handed him the introductory note, he glanced at it and then at me, thrust it into his waistcoat pocket, and, as soon as he had served the customer with whom he was engaged, led the way into a little room adjoining the place of business.

Mr. F– owned the newspaper; but, as he never ventured in a literary way beyond reading proofs of advertisements, he was compelled to employ an editor to do the leaders, select from the

exchanges, prepare the local news, and get up the reporting. He was, however, a practical printer, and, in the main, a good fellow. After looking at my testimonials and asking a few questions, my services were accepted, and I was duly installed as editor of the "M– Beacon," a small, but rather influential county sheet. I ought to observe, that, as it circulated chiefly in places where English was generally spoken, my ignorance of Welsh was of but little importance, especially as the foreman of the printing-office was a Cambrian, who could correct any errors I might make in Taffy's orthography, which, prodigal as it is of consonants and penurious of vowels, and, as it regards pronunciation, embarrassing to the last degree, might drive Elihu Burritt back to his smithy in an agony of despair.

Thus assisted, I got on tolerably well, though at first I made some awful mistakes in the names of places mentioned by witnesses in courts of justice and elsewhere. For instance, at the assizes, a man swore that he resided at a place which he pronounced Monothosluin, and so I spelt it in my report. "Cot pless me, Sur!—sure inteed, and you have not spelt hur right," remarked Mr. Morgan, the foreman; and for my edification he set it up thus,—*Mynyddysllwyn*. I almost turned my tongue into a corkscrew, trying to speak the word as he did, and I fairly gave up in despair. After that, I made it a rule, when I did not know how to spell some unpronounceable word, to huddle a number of consonants together in most admired disorder, and I was then usually nearer correctness than if I had orthographized by ear.

I had been installed in the editorial chair some six months when Mr. F– informed me it was necessary I should visit Abergavenny, a town some twenty-five miles distant, for the purpose of reporting the proceedings at the CYMREIGGDDYON.

"And what the deuse is that?" I inquired.

I learned that it was a Triennial Musical Festival, so called,—at which all the musical talent of Wales would be present; in short, that it was a very grand occasion indeed, would be patronized by the aristocracy of the Principality, and full reports of each of the three days' proceedings were absolutely necessary.

Here again the Welsh difficulty started up; but as the Cymreiggddyon would be quite a novelty, I determined to trust to Chance and Circumstance,—two allies of mine who have gallantly aided me in many a tough battle of literary life.

Remembering the words of Goldsmith,—"The young noble who is whirled through Europe in his chariot sees society at a peculiar elevation, and draws conclusions widely different from him who makes the grand tour on foot," I determined to make my way to Abergavenny either by means of my own legs or through the chance aid of those of a Welsh pony. So, one bright morning, with stick in hand, knapsack on shoulder, and a wandering artist for a companion, I started for the iron district, as that part of Wales is termed. Wildly romantic were the roads we traversed; and after having threaded many a glen, leaped frequent torrents, ascended and descended mountains with impossible names, and

plodded wearily across dreary moors, glad enough were we to observe, in the less thinly scattered cottages, indications of a town.

The clouds had been gathering ominously during the latter half of our long day of travel,—and as the sun set blood-red behind a heavy bank of vapor, it cast lurid reflections on large bodies of dense mist, which sailed heavily athwart the crests of the mountains, with low, ragged, trailing edges, that were too surely the precursors of a storm. Just before the orb finally disappeared, its slant rays streamed through some dark purple bars on the horizon's verge, and for an instant tinged the opposite distant mountains with strange supernatural hues. The Blorenge and the Sugar Loaf glowed like huge carbuncles, while the pale green light which bathed their bases gleamed faintly like a setting of aqua-marina. My artist companion incontinently fell into professional raptures, and raved of "effect," and "Turner," and "Ruskin," heedless of my advice that he had better hasten onward, lest night should overtake us in that wild region, where sheep-tracks, scarcely visible even by daylight, were our sole guides. At length, however, I managed to start him, and on we stalked, the decreasing twilight and the distant reverberations of thunder among the mountains hastening our steps, until they became almost a trot.

But soon the trot declined once more into a walk, and a slow one too,—for we entered a gloomy pass or gorge, whose rocky walls on either side effectually excluded what little light

yet lingered in the sky. Cautiously picking our way, we slowly travelled on, until at length we became sensible of a faint red flush in the narrow strip of sky overhead. It seemed as though the sun had just wheeled back to give a forgotten message to some starry-night-watcher,—or so my companion intimated. But, unfortunately for his theory, the dull red glare above us, which every moment deepened in intensity, was evidently the reflection of earthly, not heavenly fire. I had seen too many conflagrations to doubt that for an instant. Presently a dull, confused sound fell on our ears, and at a sudden turn round an angle of our mountain road we stood speechless as we gazed on a spectacle which Milton might have conceived and Martin painted.

> "Far other light than that of day there shone
> Upon the wanderers entering Padalon,"

murmured the artist, as he gazed on the strange scene. And strange indeed was it to our startled eyes. We stood on the end and summit of a mountain spur, some two thousand feet above the valley, or rather basin, below, from the centre of which burst forth a thousand fires, whose dull roar—dulled by distance—was like "the noise of the sea on an iron-bound shore." The extent of space covered by those strange, fierce fires must have amounted to many acres,—in fact, did so, as we afterwards ascertained,—and the effect produced by them may be partially imagined when

it is remembered that these flames were of all hues, from rich ruby-red, to the pale lurid light of burning sulphur. Fancy all the gems of Aladdin's Palace or Sinbad's Valley in fierce flashing combustion, immensely magnified, and you may form some faint idea of the scene in that Welsh valley.

Stretching out, like spokes of a gigantic wheel, from their fiery centre, were huge embankments, like those of Titanic railways, whose summits and sides, especially towards their extremities, glowed in patches with all the hues of the rainbow. As I gazed wonderingly on one of these,—a real mountain of light, far surpassing the Koh-i-Noor,—I observed a dark figure gliding along its summit, pushing something before it, like a black imp conveying an unfortunate soul from one part of Tophet to another. At the extremity of the ridge the imp stopped, and suddenly there shot down the steep, not a tortured ghost, but a shower of radiant gems even more brilliant than those to which I have already referred.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.