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Содержание

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A TALK ABOUT GUIDES

Talk about guides! Let Independence, Self-Conceit, and Go-ahead undervalue them, if they will; but I, Sola Fœmina, (for that is the name I go by,) of Ignorance, (the place I hail from,) casting up my unbalanced accounts, (with a view to settling,) find a large credit due to this class of individuals, which (though I have not the means to meet) I have no intention to repudiate.

Now and then, to be sure, I, S. F., have been reminded in my journeyings of poor dear E., whose lively spirit was so chafed by the exactions made upon his purse and his temper at the hands of this imperturbable race, that at last he turned, like a stag at bay, and vented all his wrath in the face of a startled old woman by the abrupt and emphatic query, "What'll you take to clear out?"

Still, dogmatic and prosing as they sometimes proved, my experience on the whole was favorable; and from the motherly old portress of the English church at Honeybourne, who fed me with bread and butter under her cottage-roof, and sent me away laden with garden-flowers and a blessing, to faithful Michel, who held me over the blue fissures of the glaciers that I might get a glimpse of their secret waterfalls, who gathered violets for me on the margin of the icy sea, and, when I had carelessly dropped them by the way, treasured up the faded things to restore them to me at nightfall,—from the aged woman, with her "Good bye till we meet in heaven," to the rough mountaineer, with his hearty hand-pressure and God-speed at parting, I would not willingly lose one link out of the chain of such fast friends which stretched along my way.

There is Warwick Castle,—a written history, no doubt, to scholars, a mine of wealth to antiquaries and architects; but how incomplete would my associations be with the spot, were you banished from the picture, my sturdy friend, fit type of the female retainers of the household of the King-Maker, who, stationed within the ivied approach to the castle, presided at the brazen porridge-pot, once holding food enough to satisfy ten score of men, now empty, save for the volume of sound which stuns the ear when you strike it with your ponderous iron bar! Can I ever forget the scene of laughter and riot, when you installed me within the capacious vessel, dubbed me "Countess Guy, of the Porridge-Pot," and, the rest of my party having been induced to accept the hospitalities of the place, and mount my triumphal car, declared your intention to light a fire beneath and have the finest stew in all England? The castle is a stern place, perhaps; but how can I ever think it grim, with such a jolly old flatterer as you stationed at its portal?

And here, in my blundering way, I have stumbled on the secret spring of my whole subject; so I may as well make a merit of confession, and acknowledge frankly that the trap in which these wary guides entangled my affections was generally neither more nor less than a net of silken flattery. Your good guide, your dear guide, your pet guide, whom Neighbor So-and-so, going abroad, must look up immediately on his arrival, this invaluable creature, depend upon it, is an arrant flatterer. He does not go out of his way for you; he does not tell it you to your face; but, somehow or other, (if he knows his vocation,) he makes you believe, that, of all the travellers he ever escorted, (and he has been a travellers' escort from his infancy,) you are the first, the only one, in whose behalf duty became a privilege.

Do you suppose I put faith in Michel, when, on my second Alpine excursion, this companion of the previous day's peril placed himself in close proximity to my mule, took the bridle with an air of satisfaction, and whispered with an insinuating smile, "I go with *you* to-day; see, there is another guide for Mademoiselle"? He was mistaken. It was my young friend whom he was, on this occasion, destined to escort over the mountain. He was as devoted to her as if she had been the apple of his eye. Whether I followed next in the file, brought up the rear, or was dashed over the precipice, I doubt if he looked behind him to discover. Was I fool enough, then, to trust his professions? I acknowledge the weakness. I was but a novice, he a practised courtier in the guise of a mountaineer. To make a clean breast of it, I even suspect that his self-gratulatory whisper is still ringing in my ear, for I find that Mademoiselle and I are rivals in our devotion to Michel.

And Ann Harris, of Honeybourne, widow, portress of the ancient village-church, surrounded by villagers' graves, approached by four foot-paths over four stiles, perfect model of all the churches in all the novels of English literature,—was it partiality for me, ancient matron, or an eye to a silver sixpence, which made you, and makes you still, the heroine of my day of romance? At any rate, I shall never cease to invoke a blessing on that immaculate railway-company which decoyed me from London into the heart of England, and, with a coolness unexampled in the new districts of Iowa, dropped me at the sweetest nook under the sun, there to wait three hours for the train which should have taken me at once to Stratford,—three golden hours, in which I might bask like a bee in a Honeybourne beyond my hopes.

Not that my Honeybourne was precisely the spot where the railway-train left me standing deserted and alone,—alone save for a Stratford furniture-dealer, who, unceremoniously set down in the midst of his new stock of tables and chairs, and with nothing else in sight but a platform, a shed, and me, looked at the last-mentioned object for sympathy, while he cursed the departing train and swore the usual oath of vengeance, namely, that he would never travel that road again.

He got red with passion and cursed the road; *I* stared round me and kept cool. Was I more philosophical than he? No, but there was this difference: he was bent on business, I on pleasure; he was in a hurry, I could afford to wait.

Three hours,—and only a platform, a shed, and an infuriated furniture-dealer to keep me company! This was the Honeybourne station, but not Honeybourne. I found a railway-official hard by, had my baggage stowed in the shed, crossed the platform, looked at my watch to make sure of the time, then struck out into the open country. Through shady lanes, over stiles, across the fields, on I went, in the direction pointed out to me by two laborers whom I met at starting. The sweet white may smiled at me from the hedges; the great sober eyes of the cattle at pasture reflected my sense of contentment; the nonchalant English sheep showed no signs of disturbance at my approach (unlike the American species, which invariably take to their heels); the children set to watch them lifted their heads from the long grass and looked lazily after me, never doubting my right to tread the well-worn foot-path with which every green field beguiled me on. I came out in the vegetable-garden of a rustic cottage, one of some dozen thatched-roofed dwellings, which, with the church and simple parsonage, constituted sweet Honeybourne. "Oh that it were the bourne from which no traveller returns!" was the thought of my heart, as, with a dreamy sense of longings fulfilled, I wandered through the miniature village, across it, around it, beyond it, and back to it again, as a bee saturated with sweets floats round the hive.

And now to my queen-bee, Ann Harris, aforesaid!

"All the way from Lunnon! Alone, and such a distance! Bless my heart!" cried the primitive Ann, with hands and eyes uplifted. "Come in and rest you, and have something to eat! I have bread and butter, sweet and good, and will boil the kettle and make you a cup of tea, if you say so."

I had already made the circuit of the church, strolled among the ancient gravestones, crossed the moss-covered bridge, threaded the paths beneath the hawthorn, had a vision of boundless beauty, drunk in the silence, and dreamed out my dream of solitude, independence, and the joy of being no

one but myself knew where. Could I do better than accept this invitation to enter the humble cottage, with the prospect of an admittance also to an old woman's heart? Did I win the latter? or did I only fancy it? Did the motherly creature believe me lost? or was her astonishment only feigned? Was she really, despite her poverty, ready to share her last crust with a stranger? or was the benignant glance which gave me in my loneliness the sense of adoption merely an eye to self-interest?

Dear old soul! One of us, at least, was simple-hearted and true,—either she in her innocent professions, or I in my silly credulity. I have faith that it was she. At all events, I do so cherish the memory of her kindness, that, so far from treasuring the notion of the silver sixpence, I hereby pledge myself, that, if ever the reminiscence I am penning should be worth half as much to me in gold as it is in memory, I will send Ann Harris at least one shining guinea, as a token how willingly I would go shares with her in something.

And the guinea would not come amiss, for Ann was poor; her clay-floored cottage boasted only its exquisite neatness, her furniture was of the humblest, her dress the cheapest. She was too old for hard work; her duties at the little church were light,—the profits, I fear, were lighter; for that visitors to the remote sanctuary were rare her reception of me was sufficient proof. As she guided me through the church, I asked her if it was well attended. She shook her head sadly, and, pointing in the direction of a neighboring village, answered,—

"Most of 'em go to chapel, yonder,—the more's the pity."

She told me that she had no provision for the coming winter, and feared she must go to the Union. (It was not our own, then prosperous and unbroken, Union, to which she dreaded emigrating.) She merely meant the work-house; and as she spoke, her face wore a shadow that still clouds my recollections of Honeybourne. I do not know if her fears were realized,—if her cottage is forsaken,—if she dwells among paupers, or sleeps in the village church-yard; but I cannot think of her as lonely or poor or dead. Her saintly face told of blessed communion; I know that she was rich in faith and hope; and were I assured that her spirit had left the flesh, I should only picture her to myself standing erect at heaven's doorway, welcoming strangers with the same serenity with which she said to me at parting,—"I shall meet you *there*."

She offered me a farewell gift of flowers from her garden. It was a beautiful cottage-garden, and many of the flowers were brilliant and even rare, giving proof of careful, if not scientific culture. Still I hesitated. My hands were full of sweet may, red campion, and other native field-blossoms, which had introduced themselves to me anonymously. They were the children of the green sod which I had been treading so lightly on my way to the village; and, in the quiet of my ramble, they had seemed to me like whispers from Him who made them, and with whom I had never felt so utterly alone. I could not bear to see them displaced by Ann's garden-belles, tempting as the latter would have been at any other moment. She saw my indifference to her offer. I knew she saw it working in my face. I attempted to apologize for my preference, but she did not understand me; so I blurted out my thought, awkwardly enough, saying,—

"Yours are beautiful; but God made these, you know,—and—and—I like them best."

She looked down upon me gravely, pityingly, smiling, too, with a tenderness which was neither grave nor pitying. I have seen long-visioned people look with just that expression at the eyes of the short-sighted, on the latter's confessing their inability to detect an object at no great distance.

"*He made them all*," she said; and her words were an ascription of praise.

They come to me often now. They bid me look farther and see more. They tell me how *mine* and *thine* have no place in this world of *His*. False distinctions shrink away from the light of the old woman's clearer faith; I see how the ablest workers are but instruments in higher hands,—how science, culture, inspiration itself, are but gifts to be laid on His altar.

I need scarcely say that I at once found room for Ann's flowers in my hand, as for her lesson in my heart. Some of the former are pressed and laid away as a sacred memento, and something of the latter is treasured up among good seed sown by the way-side.

I would gladly have lingered longer in this little nook, into which I seemed to have been drifted by chance; but my time was up,—I had a mile or two to walk over the fields in the direction of the railway,—my friends were to meet me at Stratford. Should I miss the train this time, my philosophy might fail me as signally as that of the above-mentioned furniture-dealer failed him.

A few hours after I bade my old friend farewell, I was at my destination. Millions have shared my experiences at the tomb of the great poet. Everybody is familiar with William Shakspeare and Stratford-on-Avon, but I hug the thought that nobody but I knows anything about Ann Harris and Honeybourne.

I have dwelt upon an occasion in which the humble office of a guide resulted in companionship, friendship, instruction. A brief sojourn in Alpine regions has furnished me with a similar reminiscence.

We were setting forth for a day's ride across the Tête-Noire. Our party consisted of five, and we had two guides. Our baggage, which was for the most part light, was strapped on the backs of the mules behind the riders. One article, however, a square box of considerable proportions, proved refractory, and, veering from side to side, refused to maintain the even balance which, owing to the rough nature of the bridle-path, was essential to the safety of both mule and rider. We were obliged to halt again and again, that the box might be restrapped, always with doubtful success. Each time that we drew up in line for this purpose we were overtaken by a Swiss youth, who had perceived our dilemma, and who hoped, by following us up closely, to make a job out of it. There was but a limited knowledge of French among us, (the language in which the youth spoke,) still, by aid of his vehement gestures, he made us understand that he was ready, for a consideration, to accompany us on our toilsome journey, and carry the box on his back.

"Eight francs, Monsieur,—I will do it for eight francs!" But the box was righted, his services seemed superfluous, and we moved on, regardless of his beseeching looks.

A fresh delay soon ensued, the boy came panting up, and this time it was "Seven francs,"—nay, as we rode away from him, he frantically shouted, "Six!" His prospects seemed hopeless, but destiny and perseverance were on his side,—the box gave another alarming lurch,—the heated and almost discouraged youth made one last appeal,—

"Four francs, Monsieur! I will do it for four francs!" and the day was his.

He was not a regular guide, appointed by Government and furnished with a certificate, as is the law of the Alpine district for all who serve in this responsible capacity. We had engaged him simply as a porter. Still, the docile youth had no sooner strapped the box on his back than, seeing that I was the only lady unprovided with an attendant, he drew my mule's bridle through his arm, and quietly took me in charge.

No matter how charming a travelling-party you belong to, the moment they are all mounted and climbing a mountain, single file, you feel yourself a unit in creation. Everybody has turned his back upon you, and you have turned your back upon everybody. You are a solitary traveller. Are you aghast at your own situation on the steep slope of a mule's back, with a precipice above your head and your feet dangling over a gulf below? There is no help for it. Imagine yourself a sack of meal, if you can, and expect as little sympathy as would be accorded to that article. Are you moved to a keen sense of the ridiculous, as a curve in the road discloses the figures of your elongated party, unused to riding, and rendered the more grotesque by their mountain-equipment? A laugh unshared is no laugh at all, so you may as well smother it at once. Does the scenery through which you are passing awaken emotions of sublimity? It would be sacrilege to shout out your sentiments to the occupant of the next mule in such tones as a watchman would employ to cry, "Fire!" No,—if you are essentially a social creature, there is nothing for it but to bottle up your sensibilities and await the opportunity for an explosion when you reach your inn.

Something like this result occurred, I remember, on the evening of that very day, when Mademoiselle, who, under the charge of Michel, led the van, met me at the hotel at Martigny, at

which place she had of course arrived a little in advance. We were not usually more demonstrative in our manners than is customary among New-England women, but the moment I could alight we rushed into each other's embrace, regardless of a crowd of astonished porters and guides, mutually insisting, by way of apology, that it seemed as if we had not met for a year.

Having dwelt upon this peculiar isolation experienced by the Alpine traveller, it may be conjectured, that, when the boy, Auguste, drew my bridle through his arm, I felt very much as Robinson Crusoe did when he was joined by his man Friday. Auguste and I soon became friends. He was a large, round-faced, mild-eyed youth, who, the instant the excitement of securing his employment was past, subsided into a soft, even pace like that of a dog. Now and then, too, he looked up at the mule and me, precisely as a dog, accompanying his master, looks up to see if all is right.

I did not talk to him at first. His mere presence was satisfaction enough. After a while we grew more sociable. He spoke a French *patois*. So did I. His was peculiar to the province,—mine wholly original,—but both answered the purpose of communication, and so were satisfactory. He had the essential characteristic of his profession,—he was one of the oily-tongued tribe, simple as he seemed, and I the willing victim; for I am confident that I straightened in my saddle, and talked more glibly than ever in the language peculiar to myself, on the strength of his *naïve* surprise at learning the place of my nativity, and his polite exclamation, "*De l'Amèrique! O! j'avais cru que vous étiez de Paris*!"

The conversation you hold with your guide has this advantage,—you can suspend it at will. There are miles of travel, in crossing the Tête-Noire, when, if your most sympathizing friend walked beside you, the thought of both hearts would be, "Let all the earth keep silence!" and in the absence of such unspoken sympathy, the next best thing is the innocent gravity of an attendant hired for so many francs a day, and not presuming to speak unless spoken to.

But when these sublimer passages are passed, when the path skirts the edge of the valley, when the giant mountains have retired a little and you slacken the tense cord of emotion which for a while has held you spell-bound, it is a relief to loosen the tongue also, and reassure yourself with the sound of the human voice. Thus Auguste and I had frequent dialogues. He told me something of his past life, which I do not remember very well. I think its chief incident was his having been drafted for the army, and having served his term. Of his future, however, he spoke with an earnestness which has left its impression on my mind. He said that the next winter he meant to go to Paris and seek a service; and his perseverance in wringing employment out of us inclines me to think that he fulfilled his intention. Savoy, to which province he belonged, had just been annexed to France. A party of guides from Chamouni had the day before succeeded, with difficulty, in planting the imperial flag on the summit of Mont Blanc. Was it this which had awakened the ambition of the young Savoyard to share the spoils of the empire of which he had so suddenly become a member? Perhaps (I never thought of it before, but perhaps) he was already seeking means for his journey to the capital. Perhaps the price of his hard-won service was to be the nucleus of his savings. Have I, then, aided your purpose, Auguste? helped to transform you from a simple mountain-lad to a mere link in a chain of street-sweepers, an artful official of a third-rate billiard-saloon, or a roystering cab-driver with his perpetual entreaty for an extra fee in the form of "*Quelque chose à boire*"? My mind shrinks from the possibility, for I cannot bear to think of him as other than he then seemed,—a child of Nature and of the truth.

In the course of our day's journey we drew near a little village. I had been chatting with Auguste and felt in a loquacious mood, but paused as I found myself passing through the village,—in other words, sneaking round the corner of one shabby hut, and straight through the farm-yard of the next, and close by the windows of a third,—the three, and a few other stray buildings, constituting the hamlet. As it seemed an impertinence to follow such an intrusive, inquisitive little road at all, we could, of course, do no less than maintain a dumb propriety in the presence of the children and kitchen-utensils, but, as we left them behind and struck across an open field, my eye fell on one of those way-side shrines common in all Roman-Catholic districts. It was a miniature arch of plastered

or whitewashed stone, and contained, as nearly as I could judge from the glimpse I had in passing, two coarse dolls, intended to represent the Virgin and Child.

"What is that, Auguste?" I asked, with feigned ignorance.

"A place of worship," he answered; "the people come there to pray."

"But what do they come *there* for?" I continued.

"*God is there*," he answered, with emphasis, pointing at the same time to the gayly dressed puppets.

"No, He is not," I replied.

He turned round and looked at me defiantly. His mild face became that of a fanatic, and I actually quailed beneath his angry eye, as he retorted,—

"He *is* there."

My mistake flashed upon me, too, at the instant, and I hastened to explain myself in the simplest manner my poor French would allow, saying,—

"Oui, Auguste, Il est là, c'est vrai; mais Il est là aussi!"—and I pointed to the snow-capped mountains on my right,—*"et là!"*—and I waved my hand towards the deeply shadowed heights on the opposite side of the valley.

He caught my meaning as by an inspiration. His fierce frown melted instantly into an intelligent smile.

"Il est partout!" exclaimed the youth, with enthusiasm, his childlike, eager eyes seeking a response in mine.

I nodded in affirmation of the truth. It was enough. Catholic and Protestant had met on common ground,—we understood each other,—we were reconciled.

Has he carried his large faith with him into the great metropolis? and have I kept mine unshaken in spite of the storm that is raging in my native land? Armed in his simplicity only, he has gone to meet the gusts of temptation; and I have lived to see the Republic, which I believed inviolable as Mother Earth herself, tremble and totter, as one after another of her rotten pillars has fallen away. God grant that we may both, in this day of our peril, be able, as then, to realize that "*Il est partout*"!

During my short Alpine journey I held the office of paymaster for our party, my election being due not so much to proficiency in the queer dialect above alluded to as to courage in the use of it. It is always a pleasant office to disburse the funds, but was never more so than when, late at night, Michel and Auguste came to the hotel at Martigny to receive the reward of their day's toil. Michel had his full dues in money, and plenty of praise to boot; Auguste, evidently much to his surprise, a trifle more than his minimum price. Each of them then grasped my hand in his horny palm,—an unexpected salutation, but not a harsh one, for each hand had a heart in it, or I believed it had, which was all the same to me. They made the customary promise not to forget me, but credulity must stop somewhere, and at this point I must confess my easy faith gave out, and left me skeptical.

I have given the preference in order of narrative, as well as in memory, to guides who proved competent, willing, and true, who, if they seasoned the intercourse between us with a little encouragement to my self-esteem, had nothing in them obsequious or timeserving, and who set me a wholesome example of clear convictions and firmness in the maintenance of right. But not only are the virtues of the race whom I have chosen for a theme subjects of congratulation; even the uncertainties and misfits of these frequently rusty keys to the past excite a mirth that lightens the toil with which one rummages through the corridors of time. It would be treason to tell the name of that antique university-chapel where a certain wooden-headed verger was betrayed into the absurdest error; it would be personal to give the name of the waggish friend who made him his innocent butt; but the facts and the joke claim no disguise.

The solemn British beadle had been rehearsing the history of numerous sarcophagi and monuments, dwelling with mingled pathos and indignation upon the injuries which the chapel, its

railings, and its statues had sustained at the hands of that arch-destroyer and his soldiery who, in their zeal for the new Commonwealth, trampled brutally upon the records of past grandeur and royalty.

"He stabled his 'osses 'ere! yes, 'ere,—in this wery chapel! ugh!" was the wrathful exclamation of our guide; and as he pointed towards the tablets without corners and the effigies lacking noses or feet, there was a low muttering in his throat and a look at us intended to excite sympathetic ire on our part.

One only of our party responded to the look.

"Let me see,—Cromwell was a terrible Catholic, wasn't he?" gravely inquired our fellow-traveller, as if in this way, and this way only, could the sacrilege be accounted for,—one blue eye, as he spoke, full of sage earnestness, the other twinkling with fun.

The stolid face of our guide now became a study. He had no instructions for such an emergency as this. The question had made war with his poor wits. For a moment they staggered, felt themselves defeated, and were about to surrender. But, resolute Briton that he was, the old man soon rallied his forces. True servant both of Church and State, he saw that there was no consistent course for him but to consign the enemy of royalty and the contemner of sacred monuments to the abominable Scarlet Lady. He gave one appealing look at his interrogator, but the side of the face turned towards him was immovable. It gave no positive discouragement to an affirmative reply; it even feigned ignorance. Seeking enlightenment, and taking heart of faith, the verger assented in the words, "Y-e-e-e-s,—I be-e-e-lieve so!" Then, his courage rising as he felt himself committed to the fact, he continued, with emphasis and a dictatorial nodding of the head, "Yes,—yes, he *was*."

Many and laughable are the instances of such perplexity and mistake among the aged pieces of mechanism who have for years been sounding the same tune to generations of unquestioning ears, and who, not having an extra note in their gamut, can by no means bear to be played upon by strange hands. Age has its exemptions and immunities, however; might makes right, and one who has long been a dictator comes to be deemed an infallible authority. So they whine on, and are oftener believed than otherwise. As they constitute a class, and those whom I have to do with are chiefly the exceptions, I will forbear to dwell on stereotyped specimens, and turn to one so unlike the generality of her tribe, so utterly lawless, so completely at variance with all her surroundings, that I must beg leave to introduce her precisely as she introduced herself.

There is an old place in England (there may be many such, but I know there is one) which is consecrated to imagination, romance, and memory. Abandoned by its owners as a residence, it is nevertheless maintained in sufficient repair to prevent its walls from crumbling or its beauty of outline from being marred, and stands forth a living epic, written in stone and oak, and meriting a place among the classics of the land.

The favorite of tourists, artists, and antiquaries, it can well dispense with anything like an accurate description from a traveller who went thither, not to study, but to muse; so, putting in a plea, beforehand, for possible failures in observation and memory, I propose to myself nothing more than a re-indulgence of the reverie which took possession of me on my visit to Haddon Hall.

We had spent the middle hours of the day at Chatsworth, that palace and museum of modern art, and, with senses bewildered and eyes dazzled by the magnificence of a ducal residence unparalleled, perhaps, in the world for its wealth and culture, we had set off, in the latter part of the afternoon, to view its antipodes. The circumstances and the hour were not inappropriate. Sated with the most perfect display of luxury and taste which the present age can boast, and somewhat weary with the toil of sight-seeing, a six-mile drive, the gradual decline of the summer day, the shadows gathering over the landscape, all acted as a gentle narcotic, and were a fit preparative for our approach to that old, deserted homestead, the first glimpse of which set my fancy roaming, and carried me away into a world of dreams.

Hitherto I had been the contented occupant of an old yellow coach, and had been satisfied with the pace of two jaded post-horses. But, as I crossed the drawbridge and climbed the steep hill

which led to the principal gateway, I found myself mounted on rapid wings, and whirling through the centuries. Not that I was rushing on in advance of the age. No,—the wings flapped backwards, they careered disdainfully over and beyond the region of reality; as we flew, the present became merged in the past, the actual gave place to the ideal.

I am approaching a feudal fortress. The deep moat, the turreted walls, the old gray towers, the lattice of my lady's bower, the sentry pacing the battlements, the warder stationed at the gate, the severe exterior of the grim pile, the smoking hospitality that reigns within,—I recognize them all. Much that I have taken on faith from my childhood has already been realized since I touched English shores,—why not this? I climb the steep slope leading to the principal entrance, and knock at the gate. Hark! is not that the sound of an answering horn? Is not that distant rattling the clash of armor on the stones? Do I not hear the voice of the stout baron mustering his retainers to bid me welcome? If so, they are a long time about it,—for I have knocked once, twice, three times, and there is no admittance. It is a severe process, too; for, though the original gate, which may have been an iron portcullis for aught I know, has given place to rough boards, the latter are not particularly tender of my knuckles, and, though romance is romance, pain is a fact. So I fold my airy wings for the present, and look about me for a big stone to pound with. It is of no use. The old castle is deaf and dumb. It neither hears nor answers. I creep along the edge of a steep bank, pry round a corner of the building, gaze up at the high Gothic windows, but see nothing like a practicable approach, and turn back, discouraged. We take counsel together, I and my party, and at length condescend to the belief that our best hope of obtaining an entrance lies in a modern farm-house, at the foot of the eminence on which the fortress stands. The farm-house is beyond the hail of our voices, but our coachman, who is stationed there with his post-chaise, a witness of our embarrassment, makes an encouraging sign. That the farm-house bears some relation to the manor-house is suggested also by the fact that its garden boasts a yew-tree cut into the form of a peacock, and the book of heraldry says that the crest of the noble Earls of Rutland, who occupied the hall for centuries, includes, among its other belongings, "a peacock, in pride, proper."

At last, just as our impatience had reached the verge of indignation, a little figure emerged from the shadow of the farm-house, and sauntered towards us. She was a pretty child, a true daughter of the Saxon race, fair-haired, blue-eyed, and sunny-complexioned. She was the pink of neatness, too, and it was evident that the time we had spent in waiting had been passed by her at her toilet, for the folds were still fresh in her snowy apron, and her golden hair glistened smoothly within the bars of a net,—that unfailing net, sure emblem of British female nationality. Her dainty little hat was trimmed with white ribbons, which streamed behind her in the breeze, and, altogether, she was as complete a picture as one would wish to see of youth, health, and self-complacency.

The nonchalance with which she approached us was a thing I have never seen equalled. The independence of American children is proverbial; but democratic institutions never produced anything more saucily self-reliant than this little Briton. Without looking at us, or deigning any apology for the great gate,—which, it seems, is a mere barricade, not made to be opened,—she unlocked a side-postern, a rude door, consisting of two or three rough boards, and made a motion for us to enter. As we trod the time-worn pavement of the outer court, and gained an open quadrangle round which various apartments were grouped, imagination once more took possession of me, and I found myself peopling the place with its original inmates.

"Oh, how old and story-like!" I exclaimed to my companions. "Can you not imagine knights on horseback prancing over these stones, and alighting at the great hall-door beyond?"

"Horses never came up here!" was the interruption which my suggestion met from our practical little guide. "Horses couldn't climb those stairs," she added, somewhat scornfully; and I then observed that I had unconsciously ascended a rough, angular stairway, passable only to foot-passengers.

Knights on foot, then, my fancy at once substituted; and as the child, now commencing her duties as show-woman, pointed out the servants' offices, it was no difficult matter to picture the

baron's retainers lazily grouped around the stone walls of the low cells, for such the apartments were, polishing their master's armor, or bousing over jugs of ale, while handsome pages loitered about the court-yard, waiting the summons of their lord, or the sound of their lady's silver whistle. Fancy was an indispensable attendant in making the circuit of the apartments, which surrounded at least three sides of this outer quadrangle. Without her aid, they were simply remarkable for their similarity, their vacancy, their unfitness for any modern purpose save that of sheep-pens or lumber-rooms. Destitute of windows, so that the sun and air found admittance only through the doorway, without fireplaces, boarded floors, or plastered walls, they presented simply so many square feet of space walled in by stone and mortar. But Fancy had the power to enliven, furnish, people them. She suggested that their very number was an indication of sociability, excitement, noise, and mirth. Here, as in all feudal dwellings, the vast disproportion between the space allotted to the dependents and that reserved for the lord of the manor pointed to the time when each castle was a walled city, each baronial hall the home of a crowd of petty retainers. In that long-ago, what multitudes of voices had stirred the silence of the court-yard! The bare walls of the apartments then were hung with breast-plate, spear, and cross-bow,—trophies of war and the chase furnished decorations suited to the taste of the occupants, and the hides of slaughtered beasts carpeted the cold floor. Stirring tales of love and warfare gathered little knots of listeners; wandering minstrels sought hospitality, and repaid it in songs and rhymes; the beef and the bowl went round; my lord's jester made his privileged way into every circle in turn, and cracked his jokes at everybody's expense; and pretty Bess, my lady's maid, peeped in at the open door, just in time to join in the laugh against her lover.

But Fancy only whispered, and another little attendant, whose name was Fact, spoke out, and interrupted her.

"Would you like to see the family-plate?" asked our guide, with the air of one who felt she had really nothing worth showing, but was bound to fulfil her task; and, entering one of the stone-walled apartments, she pointed out a few enormous pewter platters, much dimmed by time and neglect, leaning against the wall.

What visions of Christmas feasts and wassails these relics might have awakened in me, had I been left to gaze on them undisturbed, it is impossible to say; but my mind was not permitted to follow its own bent.

"There's nicer ones down at the house, all brightened up," said the child, with simplicity, and looking disdain at the heirlooms she was displaying.

The estimate put by the little girl upon the comparative value of old pewter dishes was suggestive. Whether the farm-house had robbed the castle, or the castle the farm-house, became at once an open question, and romance died in doubt.

There could be no doubt, however, as to the genuineness of the rude old dining-hall to which we were conducted next. The clumsy oaken table still occupied the raised end of the apartment, where the baron feasted his principal guests. The carved and panelled gallery whence his minstrels cheered the banquet still stood firm on its massive pillars, and the great stags'-antlers which surmounted it told of his skill as a sportsman. What giant logs might once have burned in the wide fireplaces, what sounds of revelry have gone up to the bare rafters! Our guide's tongue went glibly as she pointed out these familiar objects, and in the kitchen, buttery, and wine-vault, which were situated conveniently near to the dining-hall, she seemed equally at home. It was easy to recognize in the great stone chimneys, with their heavy hooks and cross-bars, symptoms of banquets for which bullocks were roasted whole and sheep and calves slain by the dozen; but we needed her practised lips to suggest the uses of the huge stone chopping-blocks, the deeply sunk troughs, the narrow gutters that crossed the stone pavement, all illustrative of the primitive days when butcher and cook wrought simultaneously, and this contracted cellar served at once for slaughter-house and kitchen. Her little airy figure was in strange contrast with these gloomy passages, these stones that had reeked with blood and smoke. She glided before us into the mysterious depths of the storehouse and ale-vault, as the new moon glides

among damp, black clouds; as she directed our attention to the oaken cupboards for bread and cheese, the stone benches that once supported long rows of casks, the little wicket in the doorway, through which the butler doled out provisions to a waiting crowd of poor, she might well have been likened to a freshly trimmed lamp, lighting up the dark, mysterious past.

Freshly trimmed she unquestionably was, and by careful hands, but not a voluntary light; for, the moment her explanations were finished, or our curiosity satisfied, she sank into an indifference of speech and attitude which proved her distaste to a place and a task utterly foreign to her nature. Evidently, the hall which we had come so far to see, and were so eager to explore, was at once the most familiar object of her life and her most utter aversion. She had been drilled into a mechanical knowledge of its history, but the place itself was to her what an old grammar or spelling-book is to the unwilling pupil,—a thing to be learned by rote, to be abused, contemned, escaped from. As we finished our exploration of the lower floor, she probably breathed a sigh of relief, feeling that the first chapter of her task was concluded.

But a second and more difficult was yet to follow,—for we now ascended a staircase of uncemented blocks of stone, crossed a passage, and found ourselves in a long gallery or hall, the finest and best-preserved room in the castle, the state-apartment and ball-room of the lords of the manor. Our admiration at once broke forth in words of surprise and delight. The architecture of this room was of much more recent date than that portion of the building which we had already visited. It was Elizabethan in its style, and one of the finest specimens of the period. It was floored and wainscoted with oak; its frieze richly carved and adorned with boars' heads, thistles, and roses; its ceiling, also of oak, beautifully panelled and ornamented. There was a great square recess in the middle of the gallery, and along one side of it a row of bow-windows, through whose diamond panes a fine view was afforded of the quaint old garden and balconies below. Here, doubtless, knights and dames of the olden time had danced, coquetted, quarrelled, and been reconciled. Within those deep embrasures courtiers in ruffs and plumes had sued for ladies' favors, and plotted deep intrigues of state. What stories these walls could tell, had they but tongues to speak! What dreams did their very silence conjure up!

Led by a more erratic spirit than that even of our child-guide, I am afraid I lent an inattentive ear to her accurate statement of the length, breadth, and height of the gallery in which we stood, the precise date of its erection, the noble owners of the various coats-of-arms carved above the doorway; for I remember only that she seemed confident and well-informed, and recited her lesson faithfully so long as she was suffered to follow the beaten track. How impossible it was to extract anything beyond that from her we soon had proof.

She ushered us next into my lord's parlor, which nearly adjoined the gallery. This room was hung with arras, retained a few articles of ancient furniture, had one or two pictures hanging on its walls, and presented, altogether, a more habitable look than any other portion of the castle. Our little maid had got on well with her description of this room, had pointed out the portrait of Prince Arthur, once a resident at the hall, had introduced that of Will Somers, my lord's jester, as glibly as if Will were a playmate of her own, had deciphered for us the excellent moral precept carved in old English beneath the royal arms, "Drede God and honour the King," and was proceeding rapidly with an array of measurements and dates, when I unluckily interrupted her,—I think it was to ask some question about the tapestry. She looked at me reproachfully, indignantly,—just as a child reciting the multiplication-table before the School-Committee would look, if tripped up between the numbers, or as a boy, taken advantage of in play, might cry, "No fair!" She did not condescend to answer me, perhaps she could not, but paused a moment, reflected, went deliberately back in her recital, repeated the last few dates and phrases by way of gaining an impetus, and then went on without faltering to the end of her prescribed narration.

Poor child! She had my sympathy, and has still. What a grudge she must owe us tourists, even the tamest and most submissive of us, for whom she is thus compelled to tax her unwilling memory!

But if her spirits were damped, her good-humor threatened, it was for a minute only. Upon completing our rapid survey of my lord's parlor, and looking round for the guide who should conduct us farther, she had become invisible. So we moved on without her, and commenced exploring a narrow passage with a certain sense of bewilderment at its loneliness, and the doubt whither it might lead, when, suddenly, we were startled by a merry laugh, which seemed to ring through the air directly above our heads. Was it a mocking spirit that haunted the place? or one of the old figures on the tapestry, started into life? We looked up, and there, on a rough platform of pine boards, projecting from the wall, stood our Fenella. She was leaning over the shoulder of an artist-boy, who, seated at his easel, was copying one of the Gorgon-heads that stood out on the faded tapestry. She had dismissed us wholly from her thoughts, and, giving play to her native fun and coquetry, was taunting the youth with the slowness of his labors and the little progress he had made since she last inspected his work. No wonder that she laughed at the taste of the boy or his employer. Graver heads than hers might question the motive which had set the painter such a model. Imagination suggested that some elfin godmother must have prescribed the task as a condition of her future favor. At all events, the malicious sprite now acting as overseer felt a sense of triumph in this captive boy, perched against the wall, and condemned, like herself, to reproduce the past and bring out in fresh colors the staring eyes and mummied cheeks which would otherwise soon be lost to memory. She certainly made the most of her opportunity to taunt and tease him, for there was time for a laugh and a word of raillery only, to which he seemed too shamefaced to respond, before she was at our side again, gravely announcing, "My lady's chamber!"—and as we looked around the apartment, whose furniture and decorations imparted to it a superior air of neatness and refinement to that observable elsewhere, she pointed out to us a private doorway, conducting to a flight of steps, and affording an exit by which "my lady" had easy access to the court-yard, and thence to the chapel where she performed her devotions.

"And what are the rooms opposite?" we asked, pointing to a long row of windows on the second floor, on the opposite side of the quadrangle to that of which we had now completed the inspection.

"Those rooms are never shown," was the mysterious answer.

"But you will show them to *us*" (spoken coaxingly).

She shook her head, and sealed her lips, with an expression of determination.

"What is in them?"

"Oh, nothing in particular."

"Then we might see them."

No encouragement, but, on the contrary, a resolute negative.

A bribe was held out,—for, by this time, the child's air of mystery and reserve had suggested a closet like that of Bluebeard, a chamber of torture, or, at least, the proofs of some family-secret.

We might as well have offered a two-shilling bribe to the Iron Duke himself. The miniature castle-keeper was so firm and so non-committal that she disarmed us of all our ingenuity, defeated all our tactics, and we gave up the point. I have since learned that this quarter of the mansion consists of a labyrinth of rooms, shut up because devoid of interest, and containing only some old lumber. To have conducted us through them would have been to disobey orders, and, worse still, establish a precedent, from which the child might well shrink. It would have doubled her arduous round of duty. It was policy, no less than loyalty, which had inspired her.

So, too, when we came to inspect the chapel. She mounted an old oak chest in the rear of the little sanctuary, just beneath the solitary window, whose quaint patterns in stained glass pointed to centuries long past. Seated comfortably on this elevation, she rehearsed the history and described the architecture of the most primitive place of worship I ever saw,—or, if she left her post to point out some minuter detail, she returned to it as jealously as a watch-dog to some spot which he is specially appointed to guard. When our curiosity was otherwise satisfied,—when we had even ascended to the rude confessional, which was a mere excavation in the soft stone of the wall,—when we had put our hands in the hollow, not unlike a swallow's nest in a mud-bank, once the receptacle for holy water,

—when we had descended the stony pathway, for it was so worn as scarcely to merit the name of staircase,—when, standing once more on the chapel-pavement, with minds excited by the thought of those monkish days when priestcraft ruled the land,—our eyes naturally fell on the old oak chest. What further revelation might not this disclose! What sacred relics, what curious church-plate, what vellum manuscript, might not be hidden beneath this heavy lid! Would she rise and let us see?

No,—she maintained her seat and her reserve with as much rigidity as on the former occasion. Unconvinced by this experience, our imaginations still ran riot. They shadowed forth every possible beauty and horror which such a giant chest might contain. The story even of "The Bride of the Mistletoe-Bough" might be verified, if we could but get a peep. At last we prevailed. The child was persuaded to dismount, we lifted the cover, and the chest was empty,—literally empty.

Once more the plain fact of the present had swept away the cobwebs of the past, the real had banished the ideal. While the child of to-day sought only a comfortable rest from weariness, we had been seeking myths. She looked on as indignant as a dethroned queen. We turned away a little mortified, and a good deal disappointed.

But the Fenella of the castle was not so very tired, after all. True, she was tired of the old manor-house, tired of us, tired of her own dull routine of duty; but there was a well-spring of freshness in her yet. She moved languidly, to be sure, as she now led the way to the tower, the only portion of the castle yet unvisited. Following her, we ascended, first, to a bare upper room, a sort of anteroom, from which the ascent to the tower commenced. It presented a solid inclosure of stone, except on the western side, where it was dimly lighted through one or two slits in the masonry. Turning my eyes in this direction, I saw our little guide leaning against the stone framework of one of these chinks in the wall. The beams of western sunlight came slanting in at precisely the angle of her figure as she leaned back in infantile repose; her white ribbons, her snowy apron, her golden hair caught and held the sunshine, and the ray of light which relieved the gloom of the gray old vault seemed to emanate from the child.

One of our party addressed some question to her regarding the probable design of the empty room in which we stood; but there was no answer,—not even a responsive glance. Her eyes were fixed upon the stone roof. She looked spell-bound. Before we could follow the direction of her steady gaze, we were startled by the flapping of wings overhead, and, still more, by the sudden rushing forward of the child with a loud cry of "Shoo! shoo!" and with her hands stretched eagerly into the air. Our presence had disturbed a swallow, which had found its way in through one of the slits, and, perhaps, built a nest in some crevice of the wall. The girl's languor was instantaneously dispelled by the discovery and the excitement of pursuit. Here, now, was congenial sport. Hopeless as was the attempt to catch the bird, the joy of frightening it was sure; and our guide sprang wildly from side to side of the building, uttering exciting exclamations, and making vain passes at the little creature, which flew round high above her head, now and then settling in some secure "coigne of vantage." In these intervals we endeavored to catch the attention of the mischievous fowler, but her task had ended with this tower-room, she had done with us, she had found an unexpected source of sport, and was not to be deterred from an enjoyment which she probably thought well-earned. With one eye following the least motion of the bird, she informed us, at last, in reply to repeated inquiries, that there was nothing to be told about the room we were in,—that it merely led to the tower,—we could go up into the tower, if we wished.

She must go with us and show us the way.

"No," was the cool reply. She never went into the tower; she never went any farther than this.

Glancing at the dilapidated state of the stairs leading to the successive stones of the tower, we were almost tempted to believe that her instinct of self-preservation had reached its climax here,—that we might break our necks, if we liked,—she preferred not to run the risk. Resolved to satisfy our suspicions, we pressed the point, and, after many inquiries and waiting a considerable time upon the motions of the child and her new plaything, we got the brief and somewhat scornful explanation,—

"What if some other party should come while I was away?"

"We part here, then?"

She nodded in assent, received the fee for her services without acknowledgment, and saw us depart on our breakneck expedition with an indifference equalled only by the nonchalance with which she had admitted us on our arrival. The moment our backs were turned, she resumed her play.

After exploring the successive stories of the tower in safety, we descended by way of the anteroom, but the bird and its pursuer had both of them flown. We passed through a door she had previously pointed out, and gained the garden as surreptitiously as did Dorothy Vernon, of old, when, according to the tradition, she escaped through this same doorway on the night of her sister's nuptials, and eloped with her lover, Mr. (afterwards Sir John) Manners, who had long been haunting the neighboring forest as an outlaw. We strolled through the ancient garden, all ivied and moss-grown, admired the stone balustrade, which, time-stained and mouldy, is still the student's favorite bit of architecture, and at last made our way back to the farm-house,—I am sure I do not remember how, for we were as deficient in a guide as on our first attempt at entrance. Whether another party arrived while we were in the tower, and were engrossing her attention,—whether she was engaged in the more agreeable office of coquetting with the young artist, or was still chasing the swallow from room to room of the manor-house, I do not know. We saw her no more. She had barely condescended to let us in, and now left us to find our way out as we could.

She cared nothing at all for us. All the interest we had manifested in her (and it was considerable) had failed to awaken any emotion. We were a stereotyped feature of the old hall; and the old hall, though she had sprung from its root, and her life had been nourished by its strength, was no part of herself,—was her antipathy. Still I never think of the mansion, with all the romantic associations which cluster around it, but the image of this child comes to break my reverie, as she did on the day when it was first indulged.

So we go to visit some royal oak, and bring away, as a memento, the daisy which blooms at its foot; so we stand, as the reward of toil and fatigue, upon an Alpine glacier, and the trophy and pledge of our visit are the forget-me-not that grew on its margin. Thus youth and beauty ever press on the footsteps of old age, and youth and beauty bear away the palm.

My faith in legendary lore is confirmed, when I call to mind the Gothic fortress, with its strong defences against the enemy, its rude suggestions of centuries of hospitality, its tower-lattices, whence generation after generation of high-born maids waved signals to knightly lovers, its stairways, worn slippery with the tread of heavy-mailed warriors, its chapel-vault, where chivalrous lord and noble dame have turned to dust. But there is a faith more precious than the faith in old song and legend; and the golden-haired child, who flourishes so fresh and fair amidst all this ruin and decay, stands forth to my mind as an emblem of that power which renovates earth and defies time. Had she been a pattern child, had her instructors (whoever they were) succeeded in moulding her into a mere machine, she might not so vividly have roused my interest; but there was something in her saucy independence, her wayward freaks, her coquettish airs, her fiery chase after the swallow, which—breaking in, as they did, upon the docility with which she otherwise went through her round of duty—revivified the desolation of the old hall with a sudden outburst of humanity. Everywhere else the fountain of life seemed to have died out, but here it gushed forth a living stream.

We gaze down the centuries and see in them ignorance, error, warning, and ruin at last. What hope for the race, then, if this were all? But it is not all. The child's foot treading lightly over the graves is the type of the *time-is* triumphing over the *time-was*. Full of faults and imperfections, she is still the daughter of Hope and Opportunity. She has the past for her teacher, and the door of knowledge, repentance, and faith stands open before her. Thus childhood is the rainbow of God's providence, and the brightest feature of His covenant with men.

Silence, desolation, and decay have set their seal upon old Haddon Hall, but chance has set a child over them all, and the lesson her simple presence teaches is worth more to me than all the Idyls of the King.

And thus it is that I treasure up the memory of her among my catalogue of guides; and so she did more for me than she promised, when she undertook to lend me her light through the old Hall.

If there are any who can live without thus borrowing, then let them disparage guides. For the rest, the best guide is Humility. We have all so many dark paths to tread from the cradle to the grave, that we need to lay hold on all the helps we can. Groping blindly down the avenues of Time, who is there that does not long to grasp some friendly hand, or follow in the track of some traveller familiar with the way?

For me, Experience is a staff on which I am glad to lean, Simplicity is an unfailing leader where Learning might go astray. Trust is a lamp that burns through the darkest night; and sometimes, when strong men are weak and wise men foolish, strength and wisdom are given unto babes, and he whom the counsels of the elders cannot save may walk the narrowest path in safety with his hand in the hand of a little child.

God grant me guides, then, to my journey's end! God guide us all, whether we will or no! guide the nations, and make for them a way through the dust, the turmoil, and the strife which Time has heaped in their path, to the freshness and promise of the new birth! guide each poor yearning soul through the darkness and doubt that overshadow it, as it journeys on to the clear light of immortal day!

THE KALIF OF BALDACCA

Into the city of Kambalu,
By the road that leadeth to Ispahan,
At the head of his dusty caravan,
Laden with treasure from realms afar,
Baldacca and Kelat and Kandahar,
Rode the great captain Alaù.

The Khan from his palace-window gazed:
He saw in the thronging street beneath,
In the light of the setting sun, that blazed
Through the clouds of dust by the caravan raised,
The flash of harness and jewelled sheath,
And the shining scimitars of the guard,
And the weary camels that bared their teeth,
As they passed and passed through the gates unbarred
Into the shade of the palace-yard.

Thus into the city of Kambalu
Rode the great captain Alaù;
And he stood before the Khan, and said,—
"The enemies of my lord are dead;
All the Kalifs of all the West
Bow and obey his least behest;
The plains are dark with the mulberry-trees,
The weavers are busy in Samarcand,
The miners are sifting the golden sand,
The divers are plunging for pearls in the seas,
And peace and plenty are in the land.

"Only Baldacca's Kalif alone
Rose in rebellion against thy throne:
His treasures are at thy palace-door,
With the swords and the shawls and the jewels he wore;
His body is dust o'er the Desert blown.

"A mile outside of Baldacca's gate
I left my forces to lie in wait,
Concealed by forests and hillocks of sand,
And forward dashed with a handful of men
To lure the old tiger from his den
Into the ambush I had planned.
Ere we reached the town the alarm was spread,
For we heard the sound of gongs from within;
With clash of cymbals and warlike din
The gates swung wide; we turned and fled,

And the garrison sallied forth and pursued,
With the gray old Kalif at their head,
And above them the banner of Mahomed:
Thus we snared them all, and the town was subdued.

"As in at the gate we rode, behold,
A tower that was called the Tower of Gold!
For there the Kalif had hidden his wealth,
Heaped and hoarded and piled on high,
Like sacks of wheat in a granary;
And there the old miser crept by stealth
To feel of the gold that gave him health,
To gaze and gloat with his hungry eye
On jewels that gleamed like a glow-worm's spark,
Or the eyes of a panther in the dark.

"I said to the Kalif,—'Thou art old,
Thou hast no need of so much gold.
Thou shouldst not have heaped and hidden it here,
Till the breath of battle was hot and near,
But have sown through the land these useless hoards
To spring into shining blades of swords,
And keep thine honor sweet and clear.
These grains of gold are not grains of wheat;
These bars of silver thou canst not eat;
These jewels and pearls and precious stones
Cannot cure the aches in thy bones,
Nor keep the feet of Death one hour
From climbing the stairways of thy tower!'

"Then into this dungeon I locked the drone,
And left him to feed there all alone
In the honey-cells of his golden hive:
Never a prayer, nor a cry, nor a groan
Was heard from those massive walls of stone,
Nor again was the Kalif seen alive!

"When at last we unlocked the door,
We found him dead upon the floor;
The rings had dropped from his withered hands,
His teeth were like bones in the Desert sands;
Still clutching his treasures he had died;
And as he lay there, he appeared
A statue of gold with a silver beard,
His arms outstretched as if crucified."

This is the story, strange and true,
That the great captain Alaù
Told to his brother the Tartar Khan,

When he rode that day into Kambalu
By the road that leadeth to Ispahan.

LIFE ON THE SEA ISLANDS

PART II

A few days before Christmas, we were delighted at receiving a beautiful Christmas Hymn from Whittier, written by request, especially for our children. They learned it very easily, and enjoyed singing it. We showed them the writer's picture, and told them he was a very good friend of theirs, who felt the deepest interest in them, and had written this hymn expressly for them to sing,—which made them very proud and happy. Early Christmas morning, we were wakened by the people knocking at the doors and windows, and shouting, "Merry Christmas!" After distributing some little presents among them, we went to the church, which had been decorated with holly, pine, cassena, mistletoe, and the hanging moss, and had a very Christmas-like look. The children of our school assembled there, and we gave them the nice, comfortable clothing, and the picture-books, which had been kindly sent by some Philadelphia ladies. There were at least a hundred and fifty children present. It was very pleasant to see their happy, expectant little faces. To them, it was a wonderful Christmas-Day, —such as they had never dreamed of before. There was cheerful sunshine without, lighting up the beautiful moss-drapery of the oaks, and looking in joyously through the open windows; and there were bright faces and glad hearts within. The long, dark night of the Past, with all its sorrows and its fears, was forgotten; and for the Future,—the eyes of these freed children see no clouds in it. It is full of sunlight, they think, and they trust in it, perfectly.

After the distribution of the gifts, the children were addressed by some of the gentlemen present. They then sang Whittier's Hymn, the "John Brown" song, and several of their own hymns, among them a very singular one, commencing,—

"I wonder where my mudder gone;
  Sing, O graveyard!
Graveyard ought to know me;
  Ring, Jerusalem!
Grass grow in de graveyard;
  Sing, O graveyard!
Graveyard ought to know me;
  Ring, Jerusalem!"

They improvise many more words as they sing. It is one of the strangest, most mournful things I ever heard. It is impossible to give any idea of the deep pathos of the refrain,—

"Sing, O graveyard!"

In this, and many other hymns, the words seem to have but little meaning; but the tones,—a whole lifetime of despairing sadness is concentrated in them. They sing, also, "Jehovyah, Hallelujah," which we like particularly:—

"De foxes hab holes,
An' de birdies hab nes',
But de Son ob Man he hab not where
To lay de weary head.

Chorus.

"Jehovyah, Hallelujah! De Lord He will purvide!
Jehovyah, Hallelujah! De Lord He will purvide!"

They repeat the words many times. "De foxes hab holes," and the succeeding lines, are sung in the most touching, mournful tones; and then the chorus—"Jehovyah, Hallelujah"—swells forth triumphantly, in glad contrast.

Christmas night, the children came in and had several grand shouts. They were too happy to keep still.

"Oh, Miss, all I want to do is to sing and shout!" said our little pet, Amaretta. And sing and shout she did, to her heart's content.

She read nicely, and was very fond of books. The tiniest children are delighted to get a book in their hands. Many of them already know their letters. The parents are eager to have them learn. They sometimes said to me,—

"Do, Miss, let de chil'en learn eberyting dey can. *We* nebber hab no chance to learn nuttin', but we wants de chil'en to learn."

They are willing to make many sacrifices that their children may attend school. One old woman, who had a large family of children and grandchildren, came regularly to school in the winter, and took her seat among the little ones. She was at least sixty years old. Another woman—who had one of the best faces I ever saw—came daily, and brought her baby in her arms. It happened to be one of the best babies in the world, a perfect little "model of deportment," and allowed its mother to pursue her studies without interruption.

While taking charge of the store, one day, one of the men who came in told me a story which interested me much. He was a carpenter, living on this island, and just before the capture of Port Royal had been taken by his master to the mainland,—"the Main," as the people call it,—to assist in building some houses which were to shelter the families of the Rebels in case the "Yankees" should come. The master afterward sent him back to the island, providing him with a pass, to bring away a boat and some of the people. On his arrival he found that the Union troops were in possession, and determined to remain here with his family instead of returning to his master. Some of his fellow-servants, who had been left on "the Main," hearing that the Federal troops had come, resolved to make their escape to the islands. They found a boat of their master's, out of which a piece six feet square had been cut. In the night they went to the boat, which had been sunk in a creek near the house, measured the hole, and, after several nights' work in the woods, made a piece large enough to fit in. They then mended and sank it again, as they had found it. The next night five of them embarked. They had a perilous journey, often passing quite near the enemy's boats. They travelled at night, and in the day ran close up to the shore out of sight. Sometimes they could hear the hounds, which had been sent in pursuit of them, baying in the woods. Their provisions gave out, and they were nearly exhausted. At last they succeeded in passing all the enemy's boats, and reached one of our gun-boats in safety. They were taken on board and kindly cared for, and then sent to this island, where their families, who had no hope of ever seeing them again, welcomed them with great rejoicing.

We were also told the story of two girls, one about ten, the other fifteen, who, having been taken by their master up into the country, on the mainland, at the time of the capture of the islands, determined to try to escape to their parents, who had been left on this island. They stole away at night, and travelled through woods and swamps for two days, without eating. Sometimes their strength gave out, and they would sink down, thinking they could go no farther; but they had brave little hearts, and got up again and struggled on, till at last they reached Port-Royal Ferry, in a state of utter exhaustion. They were seen there by a boat-load of people who were also making their escape. The boat was too full to take them in; but the people, on reaching this island, told the children's father of their

whereabouts, and he immediately took a boat, and hastened to the ferry. The poor little creatures were almost wild with joy when they saw him. When they were brought to their mother, she fell down "jes' as if she was dead,"—so our informant expressed it,—overpowered with joy on beholding the "lost who were found."

New-Year's-Day—Emancipation-Day—was a glorious one to us. The morning was quite cold, the coldest we had experienced; but we were determined to go to the celebration at Camp Saxton, —the camp of the First Regiment South-Carolina Volunteers,—whither the General and Colonel Higginson had bidden us, on this, "the greatest day in the nation's history." We enjoyed perfectly the exciting scene on board the Flora. There was an eager, wondering crowd of the freed people in their holiday-attire, with the gayest of head-handkerchiefs, the whitest of aprons, and the happiest of faces. The band was playing, the flags streaming, everybody talking merrily and feeling strangely happy. The sun shone brightly, the very waves seemed to partake of the universal gayety, and danced and sparkled more joyously than ever before. Long before we reached Camp Saxton we could see the beautiful grove, and the ruins of the old Huguenot fort near it. Some companies of the First Regiment were drawn up in line under the trees, near the landing, to receive us. A fine, soldierly-looking set of men; their brilliant dress against the trees (they were then wearing red pantaloons) invested them with a semi-barbaric splendor. It was my good fortune to find among the officers an old friend,— and what it was to meet a friend from the North, in our isolated Southern life, no one can imagine who has not experienced the pleasure. Letters were an unspeakable luxury,—we hungered for them, we could never get enough; but to meet old friends,—that was "too much, too much," as the people here say, when they are very much in earnest. Our friend took us over the camp, and showed us all the arrangements. Everything looked clean and comfortable, much neater, we were told, than in most of the white camps. An officer told us that he had never seen a regiment in which the men were so honest. "In many other camps," said he, "the colonel and the rest of us would find it necessary to place a guard before our tents. We never do it here. They are left entirely unguarded. Yet nothing has ever been touched." We were glad to know that. It is a remarkable fact, when we consider that these men have all their lives been *slaves*; and we know what the teachings of Slavery are.

The celebration took place in the beautiful grove of live-oaks adjoining the camp. It was the largest grove we had seen. I wish it were possible to describe fitly the scene which met our eyes as we sat upon the stand, and looked down on the crowd before us. There were the black soldiers in their blue coats and scarlet pantaloons, the officers of this and other regiments in their handsome uniforms, and crowds of lookers-on,—men, women, and children, of every complexion, grouped in various attitudes under the moss-hung trees. The faces of all wore a happy, interested look. The exercises commenced with a prayer by the chaplain of the regiment. An ode, written for the occasion by Professor Zachos, was read by him, and then sung. Colonel Higginson then introduced Dr. Brisbane, who read the President's Proclamation, which was enthusiastically cheered. Rev. Mr. French presented to the Colonel two very elegant flags, a gift to the regiment from the Church of the Puritans, accompanying them by an appropriate and enthusiastic speech. At its conclusion, before Colonel Higginson could reply, and while he still stood holding the flags in his hand, some of the colored people, of their own accord, commenced singing, "My Country, 'tis of thee." It was a touching and beautiful incident, and sent a thrill through all our hearts. The Colonel was deeply moved by it. He said that that reply was far more effective than any speech he could make. But he did make one of those stirring speeches which are "half battles." All hearts swelled with emotion as we listened to his glorious words,—"stirring the soul like the sound of a trumpet."

His soldiers are warmly attached to him, and he evidently feels towards them all as if they were his children. The people speak of him as "the officer who never leaves his regiment for pleasure," but devotes himself, with all his rich gifts of mind and heart, to their interests. It is not strange that his judicious kindness, ready sympathy, and rare fascination of manner should attach them to him strongly. He is one's ideal of an officer. There is in him much of the grand, knightly spirit of the

olden time,—scorn of all that is mean and ignoble, pity for the weak, chivalrous devotion to the cause of the oppressed.

General Saxton spoke also, and was received with great enthusiasm. Throughout the morning, repeated cheers were given for him by the regiment, and joined in heartily by all the people. They know him to be one of the best and noblest men in the world. His Proclamation for Emancipation-Day we thought, if possible, even more beautiful than the Thanksgiving Proclamation.

At the close of Colonel Higginson's speech he presented the flags to the color-bearers, Sergeant Rivers and Sergeant Sutton, with an earnest charge, to which they made appropriate replies. We were particularly pleased with Robert Sutton, who is a man of great natural intelligence, and whose remarks were simple, eloquent, and forcible.

Mrs. Gage also uttered some earnest words; and then the regiment sang "John Brown" with much spirit. After the meeting we saw the dress-parade, a brilliant and beautiful sight. An officer told us that the men went through the drill remarkably well,—that the ease and rapidity with which they learned the movements were wonderful. To us it seemed strange as a miracle,—this black regiment, the first mustered into the service of the United States, doing itself honor in the sight of the officers of other regiments, many of whom, doubtless, "came to scoff." The men afterwards had a great feast, ten oxen having been roasted whole for their especial benefit.

We went to the landing, intending to take the next boat for Beaufort; but finding it very much crowded, waited for another. It was the softest, loveliest moonlight; we seated ourselves on the ruined wall of the old fort; and when the boat had got a short distance from the shore the band in it commenced playing "Sweet Home." The moonlight on the water, the perfect stillness around, the wildness and solitude of the ruins, all seemed to give new pathos to that ever dear and beautiful old song. It came very near to all of us,—strangers in that strange Southern land. After a while we retired to one of the tents,—for the night-air, as usual, grew dangerously damp,—and, sitting around the bright wood-fire, enjoyed the brilliant and entertaining conversation. Very unwilling were we to go home; for, besides the attractive society, we knew that the soldiers were to have grand shouts and a general jubilee that night. But the Flora was coming, and we were obliged to say a reluctant farewell to Camp Saxton and the hospitable dwellers therein, and hasten to the landing. We promenaded the deck of the steamer, sang patriotic songs, and agreed that moonlight and water had never looked so beautiful as on that night. At Beaufort we took the row-boat for St. Helena; and the boatmen, as they rowed, sang some of their sweetest, wildest hymns. It was a fitting close to such a day. Our hearts were filled with an exceeding great gladness; for, although the Government had left much undone, we knew that Freedom was surely born in our land that day. It seemed too glorious a good to realize, —this beginning of the great work we had so longed and prayed for.

L. and I had one day an interesting visit to a plantation about six miles from ours. The house is beautifully situated in the midst of noble pine-trees, on the banks of a large creek. The place was owned by a very wealthy Rebel family, and is one of the pleasantest and healthiest on the island. The vicinity of the pines makes it quite healthy. There were a hundred and fifty people on it,—one hundred of whom had come from Edisto Island at the time of its evacuation by our troops. There were not houses enough to accommodate them, and they had to take shelter in barns, out-houses, or any other place they could find. They afterwards built rude dwellings for themselves, which did not, however, afford them much protection in bad weather. The superintendent told us that they were well-behaved and industrious. One old woman interested us greatly. Her name was Daphne; she was probably more than a hundred years old; had had fifty grandchildren, sixty-five great-grandchildren, and three great-great-grandchildren. Entirely blind, she yet seemed very cheerful and happy. She told us that she was brought with her parents from Africa at the time of the Revolution. A bright, happy old face was hers, and she retained her faculties remarkably well. Fifteen of the people had escaped from the mainland in the previous spring. They were pursued, and one of them was overtaken by his master in the swamps. A fierce grapple ensued,—the master on horseback, the man on foot. The

former drew a pistol and shot his slave through the arm, shattering it dreadfully. Still, the heroic man fought desperately, and at last succeeded in unhorsing his master, and beating him until he was senseless. He then made his escape, and joined the rest of the party.

One of the most interesting sights we saw was a baptism among the people. On one Sunday there were a hundred and fifty baptized in the creek near the church. They looked very picturesque in their white aprons and bright frocks and handkerchiefs. As they marched in procession down to the river's edge, and during the ceremony, the spectators, with whom the banks were crowded, sang glad, triumphant songs. The freed people on this island are all Baptists.

We were much disappointed in the Southern climate. We found it much colder than we had expected,—quite cold enough for as thick winter clothing as one would wear at the North. The houses, heated only by open fires, were never comfortably warm. In the floor of our sitting-room there was a large crack through which we could see the ground beneath; and through this and the crevices of the numerous doors and windows the wind came chillingly. The church in which we taught school was particularly damp and cold. There was no chimney, and we could have no fire at all. Near the close of the winter a stove came for us, but it could not be made to draw; we were nearly suffocated with smoke, and gave it up in despair. We got so thoroughly chilled and benumbed within, that for several days we had school out-of-doors, where it was much warmer. Our school-room was a pleasant one,—for ceiling the blue sky above, for walls the grand old oaks with their beautiful moss-drapery,—but the dampness of the ground made it unsafe for us to continue the experiment.

At a later period, during a few days' visit to some friends living on the Milne Plantation, then the head-quarters of the First South-Carolina, which was on picket-duty at Port-Royal Ferry, we had an opportunity of seeing something of Port-Royal Island. We had pleasant rides through the pine barrens. Indeed, riding on horseback was our chief recreation at the South, and we enjoyed it thoroughly. The "Secesh" horses, though small, poor, and mean-looking, when compared with ours, are generally excellent for the saddle, well-trained and very easy. I remember particularly one ride that we had while on Port-Royal Island. We visited the Barnwell Plantation, one of the finest places on the island. It is situated on Broad River. The grounds are extensive, and are filled with magnificent live-oaks, magnolias, and other trees. We saw one noble old oak, said to be the largest on these islands. Some of the branches have been cut off, but the remaining ones cover an area of more than a hundred feet in circumference. We rode to a point whence the Rebels on the opposite side of the river are sometimes to be seen. But they were not visible that day; and we were disappointed in our long-cherished hope of seeing a "real live Rebel." On leaving the plantation, we rode through a long avenue of oaks,—the moss-hung branches forming a perfect arch over our heads,—and then for miles through the pine barrens. There was an Italian softness in the April air. Only a low, faint murmur—hardly "the slow song of the sea"—could be heard among the pines. The ground was thickly carpeted with ferns of a vivid green. We found large violets, purple and white, and azaleas of a deeper pink and heavier fragrance than ours. It was leaving Paradise, to emerge from the beautiful woods upon the public road,—the shell-road which runs from Beaufort to the Ferry. Then we entered a by-way leading to the plantation, where we found the Cherokee rose in all its glory. The hedges were white with it; it canopied the trees, and hung from their branches its long sprays of snowy blossoms and dark, shining leaves, forming perfect arches, and bowers which seemed fitting places for fairies to dwell in. How it gladdened our eyes and hearts! It was as if all the dark shadows that have so long hung over this Southern land had flitted away, and, in this garment of purest white, it shone forth transfigured, beautified, forevermore.

On returning to the house, we were met by the exciting news that the Rebels were bringing up pontoon-bridges, and were expected to attempt crossing over near the Ferry, which was only two or three miles from us. Couriers came in every few moments with various reports. A superintendent whose plantation was very near the Ferry had been watching through his glass the movements on the opposite side, and reported that the Rebels were gathering in large force, and evidently preparing for

some kind of demonstration. A messenger was despatched to Beaufort for reinforcements, and for some time we were in a state of expectancy, not entirely without excitement, but entirely without fear. The officers evidently enjoyed the prospect of a fight. One of them assured me that I should have the pleasure of seeing a Rebel shell during the afternoon. It was proposed that the women should be sent into Beaufort in an ambulance; against which ignoble treatment we indignantly protested, and declared our intention of remaining at our post, if the Colonel would consent; and finally, to our great joy, the best of colonels did consent that we should remain, as he considered it quite safe for us to do so. Soon a light battery arrived, and during the evening a brisk firing was kept up. We could hear the explosion of the shells. It was quite like being in the war; and as the firing was principally on our side, and the enemy was getting the worst of it, we rather enjoyed it. For a little while the Colonel read to us, in his spirited way, some of the stirring "Lays of the Old Cavaliers." It was just the time to appreciate them thoroughly, and he was of all men the fittest person to read them. But soon came a courier, "in hot haste," to make report of the doings without, and the reading was at an end. In the midst of the firing, Mrs. D. and I went to bed, and slept soundly until morning. We learned afterward that the Rebels had not intended to cross over, but were attempting to take the guns off one of our boats, which they had sunk a few days previous. The timely arrival of the battery from Beaufort prevented them from accomplishing their purpose.

In April we left Oaklands, which had always been considered a particularly unhealthy place during the summer, and came to "Seaside," a plantation on another and healthier part of the island. The place contains nearly a hundred people. The house is large and comparatively comfortable. Notwithstanding the name, we have not even a distant glimpse of the sea, although we can sometimes hear its roar. At low tide there is not a drop of water to be seen,—only dreary stretches of marsh-land, reminding us of the sad outlook of Mariana in the Moated Grange,—

"The level waste and rounding gray."

But at night we have generally a good sea-breeze, and during the hottest weather the air is purer and more invigorating than in many parts of the island.

On this, as on several other large plantations, there is a "Praise-House," which is the special property of the people. Even in the old days of Slavery, they were allowed to hold meetings here; and they still keep up the custom. They assemble on several nights of the week, and on Sunday afternoons. First, they hold what is called the "Praise-Meeting," which consists of singing, praying, and preaching. We have heard some of the old negro preachers make prayers that were really beautiful and touching. In these meetings they sing only the church-hymns which the Northern ministers have taught them, and which are far less suited to their voices than their own. At the close of the Praise-Meeting they all shake hands with each other in the most solemn manner. Afterward, as a kind of appendix, they have a grand "shout," during which they sing their own hymns. Maurice, an old blind man, leads the singing. He has a remarkable voice, and sings with the greatest enthusiasm. The first shout that we witnessed in the Praise-House impressed us very much. The large, gloomy room, with its blackened walls,—the wild, whirling dance of the shouters,—the crowd of dark, eager faces gathered around,—the figure of the old blind man, whose excitement could hardly be controlled, and whose attitude and gestures while singing were very fine,—and over all, the red glare of the burning pine-knot, which shed a circle of light around it, but only seemed to deepen and darken the shadows in the other parts of the room,—these all formed a wild, strange, and deeply impressive picture, not soon to be forgotten.

Maurice's especial favorite is one of the grandest hymns that we have yet heard:—

"De tallest tree in Paradise
De Christian calls de Tree ob Life,
An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home

To my New Jerusalem.

Chorus.

"Blow, Gabriel! trumpet, blow louder, louder!
An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
To my New Jerusalem!

"Paul and Silas jail-bound
Sing God's praise both night and day,
An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
To my New Jerusalem.

Chorus.

"Blow, Gabriel! trumpet, blow louder, louder!
An' I hope dat trumpet blow me home
To my New Jerusalem!"

The chorus has a glad, triumphal sound, and in singing it the voice of old Maurice rings out in wonderfully clear, trumpet-like tones. His blindness was caused by a blow on the head from a loaded whip. He was struck by his master in a fit of anger. "I feel great distress when I become blind," said Maurice; "but den I went to seek de Lord; and eber since I know I see in de next world, I always hab great satisfaction." We are told that the master was not a "hard man" except when in a passion, and then he seems to have been very cruel.

One of the women on the place, Old Bess, bears on her limbs many marks of the whip. Some of the scars are three and four inches long. She was used principally as a house-servant. She says, "Ebery time I lay de table I put cow-skin on one end, an' I git beatin' and thumpin' all de time. Hab all kinds o' work to do, and sich a gang [of children] to look after! One person couldn't git along wid so much work, so it go wrong, and den I git beatin'."

But the cruelty of Bess's master sinks into insignificance, when compared with the far-famed wickedness of another slave-holder, known all over the island as "Old Joe Eddings." There seem to have been no bounds to his cruelty and licentiousness; and the people tell tales of him which make one shudder. We were once asking some questions about him of an old, half-witted woman, a former slave of his. The look of horror and loathing which overspread her face was perfectly indescribable, as, with upraised hands, she exclaimed, "What! Old Joe Eddings? Lord, Missus, he second to none in de world but de Debil!" She had, indeed, good cause to detest him; for, some years before, her daughter, a young black girl, maddened by his persecutions, had thrown herself into the creek and been drowned, after having been severely beaten for refusing to degrade herself. Outraged, despised, and black, she yet preferred death to dishonor. But these are things too heart-sickening to dwell upon. God alone knows how many hundreds of plantations, all over the South, might furnish a similar record.

Early in June, before the summer heat had become unendurable, we made a pleasant excursion to Edisto Island. We left St. Helena village in the morning, dined on one of the gun-boats stationed near our island, and in the afternoon proceeded to Edisto in two row-boats. There were six of us, besides an officer and the boats' crews, who were armed with guns and cutlasses. There was no actual danger; but as we were going into the enemy's country, we thought it wisest to guard against surprises. After a delightful row, we reached the island near sunset, landing at a place called Eddingsville, which was a favorite summer resort with the aristocracy of Edisto. It has a fine beach several miles in length. Along the beach there is a row of houses, which must once have been very desirable dwellings, but

have now a desolate, dismantled look. The sailors explored the beach for some distance, and returned, reporting "all quiet, and nobody to be seen"; so we walked on, feeling quite safe, stopping here and there to gather the beautiful tiny shells which were buried deep in the sands.

We took supper in a room of one of the deserted houses, using for seats some old bureau-drawers turned edgewise. Afterward we sat on the piazza, watching the lightning playing from a low, black cloud over a sky flushed with sunset, and listening to the merry songs of the sailors who occupied the next house. They had built a large fire, the cheerful glow of which shone through the windows, and we could see them dancing, evidently in great glee. Later, we had another walk on the beach, in the lovely moonlight. It was very quiet then. The deep stillness was broken only by the low, musical murmur of the waves. The moon shone bright and clear over the deserted houses and gardens, and gave them a still wilder and more desolate look.

We went within-doors for the night very unwillingly. Having, of course, no beds, we made ourselves as comfortable as we could on the floor, with boat-cushions, blankets, and shawls. No fear of Rebels disturbed us. There was but one road by which they could get to us, and on that a watch was kept, and in case of their approach, we knew we should have ample time to get to the boats and make our escape. So, despite the mosquitoes, we had a sound night's sleep.

The next morning we took the boats again, and followed the course of the most winding of little creeks. In and out, in and out, the boats went. Sometimes it seemed as if we were going into the very heart of the woods; and through the deep silence we half expected to hear the sound of a Rebel rifle. The banks were overhung with a thick tangle of shrubs and bushes, which threatened to catch our boats, as we passed close beneath their branches. In some places the stream was so narrow that we ran aground, and then the men had to get out, and drag and pull with all their might before we could be got clear again. After a row full of excitement and pleasure, we reached our place of destination,—the Eddings Plantation, whither some of the freedmen had preceded us in their search for corn. It must once have been a beautiful place. The grounds were laid out with great taste, and filled with fine trees, among which we noticed particularly the oleander, laden with deep rose-hued and deliciously fragrant flowers, and the magnolia, with its wonderful, large blossoms, which shone dazzlingly white among the dark leaves. We explored the house,—after it had first been examined by our guard, to see that no foes lurked there,—but found nothing but heaps of rubbish, an old bedstead, and a bathing-tub, of which we afterward made good use. When we returned to the shore, we found that the tide had gone out, and between us and the boats lay a tract of marsh-land, which it would have been impossible to cross without a wetting. The gentlemen determined on wading. But what were we to do? In this dilemma somebody suggested the bathing-tub, a suggestion which was eagerly seized upon. We were placed in it, one at a time, borne aloft in triumph on the shoulders of four stout sailors, and safely deposited in the boat. But, through a mistake, the tub was not sent back for two of the ladies, and they were brought over on the crossed hands of two of the sailors, in the "carry-a-lady-to-London" style. Again we rowed through the windings of the creek, then out into the open sea, among the white, exhilarating breakers,—reached the gun-boat, dined again with its hospitable officers, and then returned to our island, which we reached after nightfall, feeling thoroughly tired, but well pleased with our excursion.

From what we saw of Edisto, however, we did not like it better than our own island,—except, of course, the beach; but we are told that farther in the interior it is much more beautiful. The freed people, who left it at the time of its evacuation, think it the loveliest place in the world, and long to return. When we were going, Miss T.—the much-loved and untiring friend and physician of the people—asked some whom we met if we should give their love to Edisto. "Oh, yes, yes, Miss!" they said. "Ah, Edisto a beautiful city!" And when we came back, they inquired, eagerly,—"How you like Edisto? How Edisto stan'?" Only the fear of again falling into the hands of the "Secesh" prevents them from returning to their much-loved home.

As the summer advanced, the heat became intense. We found it almost overpowering, driving to school near the middle of the day, as we were obliged to do. I gave up riding, and mounted a sulky, such as a single gentleman drives in at the North. It was exceedingly high, and I found it no small task to mount up into it. Its already very comical appearance was enhanced by the addition of a cover of black India-rubber cloth, with which a friend kindly provided me. Thus adorned, it looked like the skeleton of some strange creature surmounted by a huge bonnet, and afforded endless amusement to the soldiers we chanced to meet, who hailed its appearance with shouts of laughter, and cries of "Here comes the Calithumpian!" This unique vehicle, with several others on our island, kindred, but not quite equal to it, would create a decided sensation in the streets of a Northern city.

No description of life on these islands would be complete without a word concerning the fleas. They appeared at the opening of spring, and kept constantly "risin'," as the people said, until they reached a height the possibility of which we had never conceived. We had heard and read of fleas. We had never *realized* them before. Words utterly fail to describe the tortures we endured for months from these horrible little tyrants. Remembering our sufferings "through weary day and weary *night*," we warn everybody not gifted with extraordinary powers of endurance to beware of a summer on the Sea Islands.

Notwithstanding the heat, we determined to celebrate the Fourth of July as worthily as we could. The freed people and the children of the different schools assembled in the grove near the Baptist Church. The flag was hung across the road, between two magnificent live-oaks, and the children, being grouped under it, sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" with much spirit. Our good General could not come, but addresses were made by Mr. P.,—the noble-hearted founder of the movement for the benefit of the people here, and from first to last their stanch and much-loved friend,—by Mr. L., a young colored minister, and others. Then the people sang some of their own hymns; and the woods resounded with the grand notes of "Roll, Jordan, roll." They all afterward partook of refreshments, consisting of molasses and water,—a very great luxury to them,—and hardtack.

Among the visitors present was the noble young Colonel Shaw, whose regiment was then stationed on the island. We had met him a few nights before, when he came to our house to witness one of the people's shouts. We looked upon him with the deepest interest. There was something in his face finer, more exquisite, than one often sees in a man's face, yet it was full of courage and decision. The rare and singular charm of his manner drew all hearts to him. He was deeply interested in the singing and appearance of the people. A few days afterwards we saw his regiment on dress-parade, and admired its remarkably fine and manly appearance. After taking supper with the Colonel we sat outside the tent, while some of his men entertained us with excellent singing. Every moment we became more and more charmed with him. How full of life and hope and lofty aspirations he was that night! How eagerly he expressed his wish that they might soon be ordered to Charleston! "I do hope they will give *us* a chance," he said. It was the desire of his soul that his men should do themselves honor,—that they should prove themselves to an unbelieving world as brave soldiers as though their skins were white. And for himself, he was like the Chevalier of old, "without reproach or fear." After we had mounted our horses and rode away, we seemed still to feel the kind clasp of his hand,—to hear the pleasant, genial tones of his voice, as he bade us good-bye, and hoped that we might meet again. We never saw him afterward. In two short weeks came the terrible massacre at Fort Wagner, and the beautiful head of the young hero and martyr was laid low in the dust. Never shall we forget the heart-sickness with which we heard of his death. We could not realize it at first, —we, who had seen him so lately in all the strength and glory of his young manhood. For days we clung to a vain hope; then it fell away from us, and we knew that he was gone. We knew that he died gloriously, but still it seemed very hard. Our hearts bled for the mother whom he so loved,—for the young wife, left desolate. And then we said, as we say now,—"God comfort them! He only can." During a few of the sad days which followed the attack on Fort Wagner, I was in one of the hospitals of Beaufort, occupied with the wounded soldiers of the Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts. The

first morning was spent in mending the bullet-holes and rents in their clothing. What a story they told! Some of the jackets of the poor fellows were literally cut in pieces. It was pleasant to see the brave, cheerful spirit among them. Some of them were severely wounded, but they uttered no complaint; and in the letters which they dictated to their absent friends there was no word of regret, but the same cheerful tone throughout. They expressed an eager desire to get well, that they might "go at it again." Their attachment to their young colonel was beautiful to see. They felt his death deeply. One and all united in the warmest and most enthusiastic praise of him. He was, indeed, exactly the person to inspire the most loyal devotion in the hearts of his men. And with everything to live for, he had given up his life for them. Heaven's best gifts had been showered upon him, but for them he had laid them all down. I think they truly appreciated the greatness of the sacrifice. May they ever prove worthy of such a leader! Already, they, and the regiments of freedmen here, as well, have shown that true manhood has no limitations of color.

Daily the long-oppressed people of these islands are demonstrating their capacity for improvement in learning and labor. What they have accomplished in one short year exceeds our utmost expectations. Still the sky is dark; but through the darkness we can discern a brighter future. We cannot but feel that the day of final and entire deliverance, so long and often so hopelessly prayed for, has at length begun to dawn upon this much-enduring race. An old freedman said to me one day, "De Lord make me suffer long time, Miss. 'Peared like we nebber was gwine to git troo. But now we's free. He bring us all out right at las'." In their darkest hours they have clung to Him, and we know He will not forsake them.

"The poor among men shall rejoice,
For the terrible one is brought to nought."

While writing these pages I am once more nearing Port Royal. The Fortunate Isles of Freedom are before me. I shall again tread the flower-skirted wood-paths of St. Helena, and the sombre pines and bearded oaks shall whisper in the sea-wind their grave welcome. I shall dwell again among "mine own people." I shall gather my scholars about me, and see smiles of greeting break over their dusk faces. My heart sings a song of thanksgiving, at the thought that even I am permitted to do something for a long-abused race, and aid in promoting a higher, holier, and happier life on the Sea Islands.

A FAST-DAY AT FOXDEN

I

Colonel Elijah Prowley, like all good and true genealogists, held the mother-country in tender reverence. For, if there be any truth in the well-known *mot* which calls Paris the Paradise of virtuous Yankees, it is limited to a few city-bucks of mongrel caste. England must be the Promised Land for the genuine representative of the Puritan. Whatever we may have felt about her lately,—and I confess there have been times when the declaration of the Fee-Faw-Fum giant of nursery-romance seemed to be of a moral and praiseworthy character,—there is no doubt, that, in the year of grace of which I write, and in the regards of many ratherish-scholarly gentlemen of our country-towns, the British Islands were the nearest terrestrial correspondences to the Islands of the Blest. About the massive Past Colonel Prowley never ceased to thrust his epistolary tendrils. Was not Great Britain a genealogical hunting-ground where game of rarest plumage might be started? Was not a family-connection with Sir Walter Raleigh (whose name should be written *Praleigh*, a common corruption of "Prowley" in the sixteenth century) susceptible of the clearest proof? There were, in fact, few distinguished Englishmen of the present day, who, if a provoking ancestor or two could be unearthed, might not be shown to have the Prowley fluid in their veins. To many of these eminent personages the head of the American branch of the family had written, and with several he had succeeded in establishing a correspondence. Old sermons, moral obituaries of public characters, celebrations of centennial anniversaries, and heavy reading of like description, constantly left the Foxden Post-Office addressed to the British Museum. The printed formulas of acknowledgment which arrived in return were preserved as the rarest treasures.

And in fulness of time all this corresponding and presenting produced a glorious result. Elijah Prowley, of Foxden, was chosen an Honorary Member of the Royal Society of British Sextons,—an association than which there is none more mouldy in the whole world. Certainly, this was glory enough for any Western genealogist,—yet Fortune had a higher gratification to bestow. For, in His Worship, the Most Primordial, the High Senior Governour and Primitive Patriarch of all Sextons, Colonel Prowley soon discovered a relative of his own. Sir Joseph Barley, a rubicund old knight, and the Most Primordial in question, after an elaborate investigation and counter-investigation, a jockeying of the wits of very old women, and a raid into divers registers, scrolls, schedules, archives, and the like,—Sir Joseph Barley, I say, turned out to be *a long-lost cousin*. "Barley," it appeared, had anciently been written "Parley," and "Praley," and even "Proley." Having arrived at this point, Sir Joseph conjectured that his ancestor Proley might have dropped a *w* out of his name, and the Colonel conjectured that his progenitor, the Puritan, might have put one into his. Now it did not matter which was right, for, as was convincingly underscored in one of my letters from Foxden, "*upon either hypothesis*, the relationship of the Barleys of Old England to the Prowleys of New England was positively established."

And so Sir Joseph Barley was dead!

Although shocked, when the fact of his demise was abruptly announced in the familiar chirography of my old friend, I was unable to prevent a certain sense of the grotesque from mingling with the idea. A portrait in pastel, which hung over the chimney-piece in the Colonel's study, had given me a thorough acquaintance with the outward Sir Joseph. That brief, but bulky figure, clad in official robes as High Senior Governour, that weighty seal of the Sextons which dangled from the fob, those impressive spectacles with the glasses cut in parallelograms, above all, that full-blown face blandly contemplating our American rudeness like a smiling Phœbus from British skies,—how could all these things, which had so individualized the natural body of Sir Joseph Barley, be dispensed with in its spiritual counterpart? No answer to such question,—only the grim facts, that one brother

more had "gone over to the majority," and that the living minority got on very comfortably without him. Comfortably? Ay, truly; for in the very letter that brought the news I was begged to spend the approaching Fast-Day in Foxden, just as if nothing had happened. The season, so I was assured, was unusually advanced, and already the flavor of spring was perceptible in the air; moreover, the different congregations in town were to unite in services at the Orthodox Church, and, by extraordinary favor, one of the Colonel's Boston correspondents, no less a man than the distinguished Dr. Burge, was to preach the sermon.

A noble specimen of our New-England clergy was this Dr. Burge. He held the old creed-formulas through which Wilson and Mather declared their faith, yet warmed them into ruddy life by whatever fire the last transcendental Prometheus or Comte-devoted scientist filched from aërial or material heaven. A good diner-out, a good visitor among the poor. His parishioners supplied him with a wood-fire, a saddle-horse, and, it was maliciously said, a boxing-master; and he, on his part, —so ran the idle rumor of the street,—covenanted never to call upon them for cod-liver oil, Bourbon whiskey, or a tour to Europe. In his majestic presence there was a total impression sanative to body and soul. The full powers of manner and tone, of pause and emphasis, were at his command. He would rise in a shingled meeting-house as effective as choir, organ, and sacerdotal vestments in full cathedral-service. I was glad to learn that this stalwart servant of the Word would be at Foxden. He had formerly been well acquainted with the Reverend Charles Clifton, late pastor of a church in that place. He might deal wisely with the evil intelligence, or, possibly, the infatuated egotism, which controlled that unfortunate man. Dr. Burge would possess his soul in calmness in presence of the singular epidemic which was then running through Foxden, as it had previously run through, and run out of, other river-towns.

And now it has come in my way to speak of that strange murmuring of phantoms and their attendant seers, psychometers, and dactylomancers, which in these latter days has revived among us. And what I may have to say about what is called Spiritualism will reflect actual observations. I do not forget that to the advocacy of the "New Dispensation" are devoted many men of earnestness and a few of ability. It is possible that the facts they build upon may render mine exceptional and unimportant. What is here set down is but a trifling contribution to that mass of human testimony and human opinion from which the truth must be finally elicited.

Mr. Stellato had been celestially commissioned to Barnum the spirits in their Foxden exhibitions. Two years previously this gentleman was to be seen at the head of a fanatical and tumultuary offshoot from a cause the most humane and noble. He had done whatever his slender abilities permitted to bring into discredit large-hearted and devoted men and women whom history will honorably remember as New-England Reformers. But to lead anything on a large scale, without a continual winding-up by his companion, the fibrous Mrs. Romulus, was beyond the crassitude of Stellato's pursy nature. Now it had come to pass that this acidulated lady, essaying fresh flurries of progression, discovering higher passional affinities and new duties of demolition, proving that in Church and State every brick was loose and every timber rotten, testifying ever to the existence of a certain harmonial mortar by which the rubbish of a demolished civilization could be rebuilt into unexceptionable forms,—it happened that this woman, having towered for one proud moment at the very apex of her mission, slipped suddenly into the Romish communion, and was no more seen of men. Stellato, perceiving that the peculiar machinery be had been taught to manage was now out of repair and impracticable, looked about for some new invention whereby to gain a livelihood from the credulity of his neighbors. "The spirits," then at the height of their profit and renown, were adapted to his purpose. A blank and vacant mind was freely offered to any power of earth or air which would condescend to enter and possess it. And so Mr. Stellato, with his three parts knavery and two parts delusion, became a popular and successful ghost-monger.

The parsonage had been closed since Charles Clifton terminated his connection with the parish two years before. The newest lights of the Liberal persuasion, fledglings from divinity-schools, youths

of every possible variety of creed and no creed, had by turns occupied the vacant pulpit. The Gospel vibrated at all points between the interpretations of Calvin and Strauss. The congregation grew more and more critical, and could agree upon no candidate for settlement. They demanded the respectability of belief with the showy talents of skepticism,—an impossible combination, at least for a parish which offered only eight hundred dollars and a decrepit house. At length Colonel Prowley took a pew in the Orthodox Church;—it was a temporary arrangement, he said, to be terminated whenever a settled minister should be provided for the First Parish.

The Reverend Charles Clifton seldom left the rooms which he had taken in a farmer's family on the outskirts of the town. We have seen how this man had once believed that Providence had called him to an exceptional and brilliant destiny. The total renouncement of what once glowed as a mission requires a sturdy nature and plenty of active work. Clifton possessed an exceeding susceptibility of nervous organization; he was full of subtile intimations of what was passing in the minds of other men, and at times seemed to have a strange power of controlling them. The deep passion for metaphysical knowledge, which in his youth had been kindled, was stilled, but never overcome. Wifeless, childless, he was put under no bonds to struggle with the world. He knew the coldness of the church in which he had been ordained to minister,—the hard and dreary lives of those whom he had undertaken to illumine. But he made the fatal mistake—inexcusable, it would seem, in a man of his liberal nurture —of supposing that this world's evil was owing to the absence of right opinion, and not of right feeling. It is to be feared that it was not principle, but only a paroxysm of cowardice, which caused Clifton to bury Vannelle's legacy in the Mather Safe. At all events, the minister found himself unable to dismiss a certain thin and impalpable fantasy which lingered behind that ponderous speculation of an all-embracing philosophy. For the past two years he had fitfully sought, or rather persuaded himself that he sought, some clue through the sad labyrinth of his fate. He had indulged in the most morbid conditions of his physical organism; there was neither steadiness in his purpose nor firmness in his action. He yearned for that proximity to hidden things, which, if not forbidden to all men, yet is dangerous to most men. At length he succeeded in freeing his soul from the weight of conscious intellectual life which had become too heavy for it to bear. And while the Foxden people were wondering about the occupation of a late pastor in one of their churches, and inquiring of each other whether he would again speak before them, their gossiping solicitude was suddenly set at rest. Printed show-bills were posted about the streets: "Grand Festival of Spiritualists at the Town Hall." "The Reverend Charles Clifton will speak"—a line of largest type gloated upon the scandal—"IN A TRANCE-STATE."

"I really ought to apologize," said Colonel Prowley, upon opening the hall-door for my admittance, on the afternoon of the second Wednesday in April, and this after repeated summons had been sounded by the brazen knocker,—"I ought to apologize for keeping you here so long; but there has been so much knocking about the house of late, and our cook and housemaid having turned out to be such excellent mediums, taking just as much interest in their circle down-stairs as we do in ours in the parlor, and then Mrs. Colfodder being so positive that it was either Sir Joseph Barley or Roger Williams,—though I am sure neither of them ever knocked half so satisfactorily before, and besides"–

"My dear Sir," interrupted I, "no excuse is necessary. I have seen enough of 'the spirits' to know how they put aside all conventionalities. I should have accompanied Dr. Burge to the hotel, had I anticipated disturbing the circle which, I infer, is at present in session."

"You would have grieved me very much by doing so," rejoined the kind old gentleman. "Dr. Burge dines with me to-morrow, and I confess—not yet calling myself a convert to these miracles which are now vouchsafed in Foxden—it would not be amiss to rid my premises of the amiable magicians congregated in my parlor before a minister were invited to enter. But a layman, as I take it, might witness these thaumaturgical matters without scandal,—nay, perchance you may help me to that wholesome credence in their reality which my celestial visitants so unceasingly demand."

Colonel Prowley was in the state of mind not unusual to many well-meaning, unoccupied people, when this modern necromancy was thrust upon them by those pecuniarily or socially interested in its advocacy. The upheaval to the air of that dark inward nature which is ever working in us,—the startling proof of that loudly proclaimed, faintly realized truth, that this mind, so pervading every fibre of the body, is yet separate in its essence,—the novel gratification of the petty vanities and petty questionings which beset undecided men,—what wonder that persons not accustomed to sound analysis of evidence should be beguiled by these subtilest adaptations to their conditions, and hold dalliance with the feeble shades that imposture or enthusiasm vended about the towns? Historical personages—a nerveless mimicry of the conventional stage-representation of them—stalked the Colonel's parlor. Departed friends, Indians *à discrétion*, local celebrities, Deacon Golly, who in the year '90 took the ten first shares in the Wrexford Turnpike, the very Pelatiah Brimble from whom "Brimble's Corner" had taken its name, the identical Timson forever immortal in "Timson's Common,"—these defunct worthies were audibly, visibly, or tangibly present, pecking at great subjects in ghostly feebleness, swimming in Tupperic dilutions of cheapest wisdom, and finally inducing in their patrons strange derangements of mind and body.

The circle, which was very select, consisted of three highly susceptible ladies and Stellato as medium-in-chief. Miss Turligood, a sort of Oroveso to the Druidical chorus, was a muscular spinster, fierce and forty, sporting steel spectacles, a frizette of the most scrupulous honesty, and a towering comb which formed what the landscape-gardeners call "an object" in the distance. Next this commanding lady, with fat hands sprawled upon the table, sat Mrs. Colfodder, widow, according to the flesh, of a respectable Foxden grocer. By later spiritual communications, however, it appeared that matters stood very differently; for no sooner had the departed Colfodder looked about him a little in the world to come than he proceeded to contract marriage with Queen Elizabeth of England, thereby leaving his mortal relict quite free to receive the addresses of the late Lord Byron, whose proposals were of the most honorable as well as amatory character. Miss Branly, by far the most pleasing of the lady-patronesses, was a fragile, stove-dried mantua-maker,—and, truly, it seemed something like poetic justice to recompense her depressed existence with the satisfactions of a material heaven full of marryings and givings in marriage.

"Will Sir Joseph tip for us again?" inquired Miss Turligood, with her eyes fixed upon a crack in the mahogany table. "Will he? Will he not? Will he?"

Sir Joseph vouchsafed no answer.

"Hark! wasn't that a rap?" cried Stellato, in a husky whisper.

Here every one pricked an ear towards the table.

"Doctor Franklin, is that you?"

"The Doctor promised to be present to give a scientific and philosophical view of these communications," parenthesized the interrogator.

"Doctor Franklin, is that *you*?"

A faint creaking is audible.

"Byron's sign, as I'm a living woman!" ejaculated the Widow Colfodder.

"Her spiritual partner and guardian-angel," explained Miss Turligood,—and this for my satisfaction as the last-comer.

Direct examination by the widow:—

"Have you brought your patent lyre here to-night?"

For the enlightenment of the company:—

"He played the lyre so beautiful on earth, that when he got to the spheres a committee gave him a golden one, with all the modern improvements."

Question concerning the lyre repeated. A mysterious rubbing interpreted as an affirmative reply.

"Have you brought Pocahontas with you? (she 'most always comes with him)—and if so, can she kiss me to-night?"

The table is exceedingly doubtful.

"Could she kiss Colonel Prowley, or even pull his hair a little?"

No certainty of either.

"Can she kiss Miss Turligood?"

The table is satisfied that it couldn't be done.

"Let me try her," urged Stellato, with the confidence of an expert; then in seductive tones,—

"Couldn't Pocahontas kiss Miss Branly, if all the lights were put out?"

Pocahontas thought it highly probable that she could.

Here some interesting badgering. Miss Branly declined being kissed in the dark. Miss Turligood thought it would be very satisfactory, if she would, and couldn't see why any one should object to it. She (Miss Turligood) would willingly be kissed in the dark, or in the light, in furtherance of scientific investigation.

Stellato suggested a compromise.

"Might not the kissing be done through a medium?"

At first the table thought it couldn't, but afterwards relented, and thought it might.

"Would Pocahontas appoint that medium?"

She would.

"Should the alphabet be called?"

It should not.

"Would the table tip towards the medium indicated?"

It could not be done.

"Should somebody call over the names of all mediums present, and would the table tip at the right one?"

Ah, that was it!

"I suppose you and I have no share in this Gift Enterprise," whispered Colonel Prowley.

"Order! order!" shouted Miss Turligood, glancing in our direction with great severity. "This general conversation cannot be permitted. We are about to have a most interesting manifestation.—Pocahontas, do you wish me to call over the names?"

Pocahontas did not object.

"Very well, then, you will tip when I come to the name of the medium through whom you consent to kiss Miss Sarah Branly?"

Pocahontas certainly would.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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