

every day more ungrateful, did pain and care leave them for a little space—a little space in which to feel that the world was good? Oh, lamentable misery! Each morning to rise more infirm, more dazed, more tottering, and yet, in spite of all, to cling obstinately to life, to spread out one's decrepitude in the sunlight, to begin anew the daily, weary wanderings—always the same slowness, the same creakings, the same cries, the same weariness, to go on ever, through the streets, the suburbs, the villages,—often, when a *fête* was announced at some distant temple, far into the country.

Early one morning, in the fields, near the crossing of two mikado-roads, death overtook old Kaka-San.

It was a lovely April morning, all things were flooded in golden sunshine. In this isle of Kiu-Siu the springtime is warmer than with us, comes earlier, and already nature was in full bloom. The roads crossed the rice-fields which showed every hue of green as the high grass bent beneath the passing wind. The air was full of the singing of the grasshoppers, which in Japan are especially noisy.

At this cross-road there was a small graveyard containing not more than a dozen graves under a group of isolated cedars, marked with square blocks, or antique boudhdhas, carved in granite, seated in the chalice of a lotus. Beyond the rice-fields came the woods, very like our own oak woods, except that here and there was a clustering growth of white or pink camelia blossoms, also a tall, slender plant-bamboo; beyond these again rose the mountain peaks against the blue sky, in form like small cupolas, slightly monotonous yet withal graceful.

It was in the midst of this calm verdure that the little box on wheels had suddenly halted, at a supreme word of command. The neighbouring peasants, some twenty good little Japanese souls, in long blue cotton gowns, pressed round the dying woman, whom Toto-San was drawing to a pilgrimage to the Temple of the Goddess Kwanon. The kind little souls gathered around her as much out of compassion as from curiosity, and did their utmost to aid the sufferer. Most of them were on their way to this *fête* of Kwanon, Goddess of Grace. Poor Kaka-San! They tried to revive her with rice brandy; they rubbed her with aromatic herbs, and poured fresh water, from a brook, on the nape of her neck. Toto-San came close up beside the little cart and touched her gently, caressingly, not knowing what to do, questioning the others rapidly in his dumb gestures, and trembling more than ever with this new anguish.

As a last resource they made her swallow, rolled into little hard bullets, pieces of paper on which, written by a priest, were prayers for the sick, and which a woman standing near drew out of the lining of her cuff. Fruitless effort, for the hour had struck, and already Death was amongst them, and had clasped poor old Kaka-San in his arms. One last contortion, one supreme agony, and the old beggar-woman was gone—open-mouthed, the body twisted and leaning half out of its box, and the arms hanging straight over the side like a marionette doll in repose—now the play was over.

The little shady graveyard, in whose presence the last scene had taken place, seemed now to have been invoked by the invisible spirits, and almost as if chosen by the dead woman herself. So they set to work, and pressing as the coolies into the service, they soon made a grave, and taking Kaka-San by the shoulders they lifted her to the ground. Toto-San tried to do everything himself, but no longer quite master of his senses he only impeded the coolies who pushed him somewhat roughly to one side; he sobbed like a child and the tears ran down his cheeks unheedingly. He put his hands on her head to feel if her hair were well dressed before appearing in the celestial mansions, if the puffs were quite straight, and the pins were in their place. A gentle rustle passed over the tree-tops; the spirits of Kaka-San's ancestors had come to receive her at the entrance to the Land of Shadows.

Toto-San took up the journey of life alone. Behind him the tiny cart was empty. Separated from her who had been his friend, his counsel, his mind, and his eyes, he groped his way at hazard, to be irrevocably alone in the world till his end, without aim as without hope, in an ever deepening night.

And still the grasshoppers sang their loudest in the growing darkness of the meadows beneath the starlight, and as the world's night descended around the blind man he again heard the murmurs that had swayed the branches in the morning at the burial; they came again, the spirits, to say to him, "Console thyself, Toto-San, she sleeps in that lovely valley Nil where we are and where you will soon be also. She is no longer old or tottering, for she is dead; nor ugly, for she is well hidden under many mounds of grass; her body unfolds in beauty beneath the earth, and Kaka-San will bloom in the flowers you love best—in the cedar-palm, in camelias, in the sweet bamboo blossoms."

REN.

### OXFORD MEMORIES.\*

DR. NEWMAN'S name, as fellow of Magdalen, happened to have the same initials as that of the present Cardinal, sometime fellow of Oriel. Naturally there were occasional mistakes in the delivery of letters, and one day our friend received, missent, a letter from a lady, requesting first a subscription for her pet charity, and at the same time some lines for her album. Fancy her surprise in receiving, as she supposed, from her reverend friend the following reply:

My name is J. H. Newman,  
And very grieved I am  
That, like an orphaned lambkin,  
I haven't got a dam.

\* From "Oxford Memories: A Retrospect After Fifty Years." By the Rev. A. Pycroft, B.A., Trinity College, Oxford. Vol. I. London: R. Bentley and Son.

OLD MR. BERESFORD, of Thibworth, the author of a strange book, once with a large circulation, but now rarely seen, "The Miseries of Human Life," held that living of Merton College till nearly eighty years of age. Once he saw some of the junior fellows prospecting, and said, "Walk in, gentlemen, walk in, and take stock not only of the parsonage, but of the present incumbent. Most happy at all times to do anything to oblige you except—die." It is a sad life, waiting for dead men's shoes. My venerable old neighbour, Mr. Wickens, of Blank Church, bought a next presentation of a rector of eighty, who lived till ninety-five. All his calculations of the probabilities of human life proved delusive, and, as to the doctors, they knew no more of a man's constitution than so many idiots; and in these fifteen years he became completely soured, and talked like one of the many much-injured men. At last the old rector died, and was buried, and almost the first week a couple, who came to be married, complained to the new rector that he had kept them ten minutes waiting! "Ten minutes, indeed!" he replied; "why, look at that tomb; there lies a man who kept me waiting fifteen years."

As to the so-called Saints, this set consisted of two or three who held together, and were chiefly distinguished by their absurdly preaching to every one else, and sometimes having the worst of the argument. Certain truths and promises divine they would enunciate in too wide a sense, and most erroneously in a temporal sense; on such occasions to hear the peculiarly temporal replies of those they called "worldly men," was amusing. Round once maintained, "Whatsoever you ask in prayer believing you shall receive." "Yes," said Briggs; "but 'believing' is all the difficulty. Now, I am backing the favourite for the Derby. If I could believe he'd win, you'd say it would be all right, but I can't." "The doctrine is carried too far," said Charlie; "it's no use praying for money, for I tried it first thing after a sermon I once heard. And it's no good when out fishing; I tried that, too, and never had a bite."

Dogs and horses formed the very furniture of Tom's [Tom Winch's] mind; there seemed hardly room for anything else, save slang, *ad libitum*. One day he was showing the pictures in his college hall to a party of visitors, and pointed out the figures in the grand picture of The Nativity, as follows: "This is reckoned one of the finest pictures in Oxford. There you see the Magi; there Mary and Joseph; there, in the little manger, is the little Jesus; and there's the bull-terrier."

Most of the fellows of the New College eventually succeeded to livings, though sometimes so late that their college habits proved too stiff and rigid for parish work. Oxford is a sphere of its own, and the worst place for studying rustic nature. When some young man spoke of studying "The Fathers," an old-fashioned rector said rather bluntly: "You had much better study 'The Mothers,' or how to take care of the old women and children in a parish."

JOHN GREEN, who took care of the new college horses, and let out tandems, was a very handy man for the wilder class of gownsmen. One day Billy Mills had arranged an elopement with the pretty daughter of an organist in Holywell, but was checkmated in the very first move, the lady's *trousseau*, done up in a towel, having been thrown out of her window and caught by her offended papa's hands as he was standing on the watch—instead of by those of some traitorous maid-of-all-work. "That's all because Mr. Mills didn't come to me," said John Green. "If gentlemen will do those silly things it isn't my particular line of business to educate them better. All I say is, 'First of all keep straight, but if you must go crooked, don't get found out.' That 'ere servant girl, with only ten pounds a year wages, and use of the parlour teapot, was to be paid only two bob for her trouble! 'Twasn't likely, when she could get five bob and more for telling. In them sort of jobs you must always bid higher than anyone else is likely to."

THE last time I saw Short he said he was seventy-five, and in talking of his college experience he said, "A man's fate all depends on the nursery—on the mother, not on the father; the father commonly has to do little with the boy till the bent is given, and the foundation of character is laid; all depends on the mother. Of course, I am myself too old to marry, but to my young friends I give this solemn caution: 'Be sure you never marry a fool; I have long observed that women who are fools swarm with children and, of course, spoil them all.'" This advice struck me as quite original, though I had once heard an old lady, a noted character, and an authoress, say, in speaking of the evangelical clergy, "The lower the church, the larger the family;" but that Short's study and observation in natural history should have resulted in a discovery of the law that the greater the fool (feminine), the larger the family, this was quite a new piece of mento-physical information.

ABOUT the same time a little book made its appearance, called "The Art of Pluck," being a parody on our Aristotelian studies, giving also instances of pluck answers. One very good one I remember was "The herald of Darius came to ask for—not earth and water (a token of submission, earth being *geen* in Greek) but—*gin* and water."

LORD SHERBROKE was pronounced by his tutors certain of a first in mathematics, and not certain in classics; he came out first in the latter, and second in the former. What was said of him at first of course as a joke, has been repeated since as a fact—that being so near-sighted he rubbed out with his nose the figures made by his pen, and thereby lost his chance in mathematics.