

THE CLOUD.

A cloud came over a land of leaves
(O, hush, little leaves, lest it pass you by!)
How they had waited and watch'd for the rain,
Mountain and valley, and vineyard and plain,
With never a sign from the sky!
Day after day had the pitiless sun
Look'd down with a lidless eye.

But now! On a sudden a whisper went
Through the topmost twigs of the poplar-spire;
Out of the east a light wind blew
(All the leaves trembled, and murmur'd, and drew

Hope to the help of desire),
It stirred the faint pulse of the forest-tree
And breathed through the brake and the brier.

Slowly the cloud came; then the wind died,
Dumb lay the land in its hot suspense;
The thrush on the elm-bough suddenly stopped.
The weather-warn'd swallow in mid-flying drop-
ped,

The linnet ceased song in the fence,
Mute the cloud moved, till it hung overhead,
Heavy, big-bosom'd, and dense.

Ah, the cool rush through the dry-tongued trees,
The patter and plash on the thirsty earth,
The eager bubbling of rannel and rill,
The hisping of leaves that have drunk their fill,
The freshness that follows the dearth!
New life for the woodland, the vineyard, the vale,
New life with the world's new birth!

—All the Year Round.

Thackeray's "Gray Friars."

BY AN OLD "GOWN-BOY."

There is an eloquent passage in one of Victor Hugo's novels, in which the writer affectionately apostrophizes the Paris of his youth—those quaint old streets of the *Quartier Latin* so redolent of the happy associations which spring to the springtime of life. Were Thackeray living now, he would, we fancy, experience emotions very similar to those of his French *confrère* should he try to find his beloved "Gray Friars," which lives enshrined in the most pathetic scene he ever penned, and is ever and anon coming before us in the pages of his several stories. It is but a few years since the author of *Vanity Fair* passed away, yet already Gray Friars' surroundings are no longer those with which he was familiar.

Descending Holborn Hill five years ago, you found yourself, when at the foot of that celebrated thoroughfare, at Snow Hill, just at that point where the words, "Here he is, father!" struck upon the parental ears of Mr. Squeers as his son and heir manfully "went for" Smike. Turning to the left, instead of proceeding up Newgate Street, a circuitous street took you to Smithfield, so long associated with stakes and steaks. Thence, when half-way through the forest of pens, you turned sharp off to the left, and then, after another hundred yards by a turn to the right, found yourself in a long narrow lane, called Charter-House lane. This brought you presently to some iron gates admitting you to a quaint and not very mathematical quadrangle, such as you would never have dreamed of stumbling upon there. This is Charter-House Square, which, still intensely respectable, was once eminently fashionable. At one corner of it is a little recess known as Rutland Square, for on this site once stood the abode of the dukes of that ilk, and near to it is a stately mansion with a high pitched roof which was in days long gone the residence of the Venetian ambassador. A garden occupies the centre of the square. Everything is neat, orderly and severely dull, the most dissipated tenants of the square being boarding-house keepers of a highly sedate description. The secret of all this tremendous respectability is to be found in the contiguity to the Charter-House itself, a portion of whose buildings about on the square, which, with many of the streets adjoining, belongs to this wealthy institution. Four years ago the place was so secluded that a stranger to London might have walked around the spot a dozen times without suspecting its existence, and living in one of its comfortable old mansions supposed himself in the cathedral close of a provincial city. The entrance to the Charter-House itself is under an archway through venerable oaken portals, which are said—and there seems no reason to question the statement—to be the identical gates of the monastery which occupied the ground in the time of Henry VIII. This monastery had been a religious house of the Carthusians.* The order first came to England in 1180, and was seated at a place called Witham Priory† in Somersetshire, to this day known as Charter-House Witham. There Henry II. founded and endowed a monastery. The London branch of the establishment at Witham was founded by Sir Walter de Manni, seigneur de Manni in Cambrai, France, who was made a knight of the Garter by Edward III., in reward for gallant services. Manni founded the house in

pious commemoration of a decimating pestilence, on which occasion not fewer than fifty thousand persons are said to have been buried within the thirteen acres which he bought and enclosed, and a gentle eminence known as the "hill" in the play-ground, separating what was called "Upper Green" from "Under Green," is said to owe its shape to the thousands of bodies buried there. Manni died in 1731: his funeral was conducted with the utmost pomp, and attended by the king and the princes of the blood.

A hundred and fifty years rolled on without aught very momentous to interrupt the daily routine of the monks of Charter-House, who, had there not been a woman in the case, might possibly be the occupants of the ground to this day. When, however, Henry's fancy for Anne Boleyn led him to look with favor on the Reformation, the Charter-House, in common with other such establishments, came in for an ample share of Thomas Cromwell's scrutinizing inquiries. And a sad fate its occupants had. Required to take the oath of allegiance to Henry VIII., they refused. Froude, who gives them an extended notice, says: "In general, the house was perhaps the best ordered in England. The hospitality was well sustained, the charities were profuse. Among many good, the prior, John Houghton, was the best. He was of an old English family, and had been educated at Cambridge. He had been twenty years a Carthusian at the opening of the troubles of the Reformation. He is described as small of stature, in figure graceful, in countenance dignified; in manner he was most modest, in eloquence most sweet, in chastity without stain."

On the fourth of May, 1535, Houghton was executed with all the horrors attending the punishment of death for high treason in those barbarous times. He and his companions, certain monks of Slon Priory, died without a murmur, and Houghton's arm was hung up under the archway of the Charter-House beneath which the visitor drives to-day, to awe his brethren. The remnant never gave in. Some were executed; ten died of filth and fever in Newgate; and thus the noblest band of monks in the country was broken up by Henry's ruthless hand.

The Charter-House was then granted to two men, by name Bridges and Hall, for their lives, after which it was bestowed in 1545 on Sir E. North. North's son sold it to the Duke of Norfolk, who resided there, on and off, until decapitated in 1572. The duke was beheaded by Elizabeth for intriguing with Mary Queen of Scots, and the papers proving his offence are said to have been found concealed beneath the roof of the stately mansion he had erected for himself at the Charter-House.

Before the duke came to grief that most erratic of sovereigns was a visitor at his house—as, indeed, where was she not?—coming thence from Hampton Court in 1568, and remaining a day with him; and when her successor, James I., came to take up her English sceptre, he, mindful of what the Howards had suffered for their sympathy with his mother's cause, came straight thither from Theobalds, his halting-place next to London, and remained on a visit of four days.

From the duke of Norfolk the Charter-House passed to his eldest son by his second wife, Lord Thomas Howard, who was created by James I. Earl of Suffolk;* and he, about 1609, sold it to Mr. Thomas Sutton.

Sutton's career was remarkable. It was said of the late Earl of Derby that even had he been born in a shepherd's cot on Salisbury Plain, instead of in the purple at Knowsley, he would still have proved himself a remarkable man. In local phraseology he was "bound to get on," and so was Thomas Sutton. The son of a country gentleman at a place called Knaith in Lincolnshire, he inherited early in life a good property from his father, and spent some time in travelling abroad. Then he became attached to the household of the duke of Norfolk, probably surveyor and manager of that great peer's vast estates, and in 1569, when a serious disturbance broke out in the north of England, he repaired thither, and greatly distinguished himself in aiding to quell it. He then received the appointment of master-general of ordnance for the North for life.

Whilst in the North he found another mode of making hay whilst the sun shone. Soon after his arrival he bought a lease of the bishop of Durham of the manors of Gateshead and

* Lord Suffolk probably applied the purchase-money (thirteen thousand pounds) to help build the palace, called Audley End or Inn, he raised in Essex. It stands on abbey-land granted by Henry VIII. to his wife's father, Lord Audley of Walden, near Saffron-Walden in Essex, and was generally regarded as the most magnificent structure of its period, although Evelyn gives the preference to Clarendon House, that grand mansion of the chancellor's which provoked so much jealousy against him, and came to be called Dunkirk House, from the insinuation that it was built out of the funds paid by the French for Dunkirk. Abbey-lands are supposed by many to carry ill-luck with them, and quickly to change hands. Audley End has proved no exception to this hypothetical fate. Only a portion of it now remains, but this, though much marred by injudicious alterations, is amply sufficient to show how grand it was. It has long since passed out of the hands of the Howards, and now belongs to Lord Braybrooke, whose family name is Nevill. A relation of his, a former peer of the name, edited the best edition of *Pepys' Diary*, in which and in Evelyn is frequent reference to Audley End.

Wickham, and worked the collieries on these properties to such good purpose that on coming up to London in 1580 he brought with him two horse-loads of money, and was reputed to be worth fifty thousand pounds—a great sum in those days.

About 1582 he increased his wealth by marriage, and commenced business as a merchant in London. His large amount of ready money—a commodity especially scarce in those days—soon enabled him to carry on very large commercial operations; and amongst other sources of wealth he probably derived considerable profit from his office of victualer of the navy. In 1590, finding himself without prospect of children, he withdrew from business, and retired to the country, having already invested largely in real estate. Although very frugal, there are sufficient evidences of his liberality to the poor on his property; and it seems not improbable that his charitable schemes now began to take definite form, for after his death a credible witness stated that Sutton was in the habit of repairing to a summer-house in his garden for private devotion, and on one of these occasions he heard him utter the words: "Lord, Thou hast given me a large and liberal estate: give me also a heart to make use thereof."

About 1608, when he had quite retired from the world, he was greatly exercised by a rumor that he was to be raised to the peerage—an honor which it was contemplated to bestow with the understanding that he would make Prince Charles, subsequently Charles I., his heir. This was a court intrigue to get his money, but an urgent appeal to Lord Chancellor Ellesmere and the earl of Salisbury, prime minister, appears to have put an end to trouble in the matter. He died on the 12th of December, 1611, at the age of seventy-nine, leaving immense wealth, and on the 12th of Dec., 1614, his body was brought on the shoulders of his pensioners to Charter-House Chapel, and interred in a vault ready for it there, beneath the huge monument erected to his memory.

"The death-day of the founder is still kept solemnly by Cistercians. In their chapel, where assemble the boys of the school and the fourscore old men of the hospital, the founder's tomb stands, a huge edifice emblazoned with heraldic decorations and clumsy carved allegories. There is an old hall, a beautiful specimen of the architecture of James's time. An old hall? Many old halls, old staircases, old passages, old chambers decorated with old portraits, walking in the midst of which we walk as it were in the early seventeenth century. To others than Cistercians, Gray Friars is a dreary place possibly. Nevertheless, the pupils educated there love to revisit it, and the oldest of us grow young again for an hour or two as we come back into those scenes of childhood.

"The custom of the school is that on the 12th of December, the Founder's Day, the head gown-boy shall recite a Latin oration in praise *Fundatoris Nostri*, and upon other subjects; and a goodly company of old Cistercians is generally brought together to attend this oration; after which,..... we adjourn to a great dinner, where old condisciples meet, old toasts are given and speeches are made. Before marching from the oration-hall to chapel the stewards of the day's dinner, according to old-fashioned rite, have wands put into their hands, walk to church at the head of the procession, and sit there in places of honor. The boys are already in their seats, with smug fresh faces and shining white collars; the old black-gowned pensioners are on their benches; the chapel is lighted, and Founder's tomb, with its grotesque carvings, heraldries, darkies and shines with the most wonderful shadows and lights. There he lies, Fundator Noster, in his ruff and gown, awaiting the great Examination Day. We oldsters, be we ever so old, become boys again as we look at that familiar old tomb, and think how the seats are altered since we were here; and how the doctor—not the present doctor, the doctor of *our* time—used to sit yonder, and his awful eye used to frighten us shuddering boys on whom it lighted; and how the boy next us would kick our shins during service-time; and how the monitor would cane us afterward because our shins were kicked.

"The service for Founder's Day is a special one. How solemn the well-remembered prayers are! how beautiful and decorous the rite! how noble the ancient words of the supplication which the priest utters, and to which generations of fresh children and troops of bygone seniors have cried Amen under those arches."

Having resolved to found a charity which should provide both for young and old, Sutton, who had ample reason fully to appreciate the unprincipled and grasping character of the court, proceeded to take every precaution that sagacity and ingenuity could suggest to keep his money secure from the hands of such harpies as Carr and "Steenie," and hedge it round with every bulwark possible. Perhaps he consulted "Jingling Geordie," then planning his own singular scheme,† on the point, and got him to persuade the king, always vain of his scholarship, that it would well become him to become patron of an institution having for one of its main objects the education of youth in sound learning. Be this as it may, the fact is certain that a de-

† The order of proceedings was subsequently inverted.

* *The Newcomes*: "Founder's Day at Gray Friars." On one of the last Founder's Days of his life Thackeray came with a friend early in the day, and scattered half sovereigns to the little gown-boys in "Gown-boys' Hall."

† Heriot's Hospital at Edinburgh, vol. xi., 28.

gree of royal and other powerful protection was somehow secured for the institution which for all time prevented its funds from being diverted to other purposes.

Sutton's bequest of the bulk of his estate to charitable uses was not unnaturally viewed with strong disapprobation by his nephew, one Simon Baxter, for whom he had, however, not neglected to provide, who brought a suit to set aside the will. However, notwithstanding that he had Bacon for his counsel, he failed to interfere with his uncle's disposition of his estate; the court holding that the claims of kinship had been sufficiently recognized.*

In the same year, 1614, the institution opened. The rules and orders for its government may yet be seen, bearing the autograph signature of Charles I., then prince of Wales. From that time almost every man in the country, of the first rank of eminence by birth or fortune, has been a governor, and the name of Cromwell may be seen not far from that of Charles on the roll. Up to about 1850 the patronage was vested exclusively in the governors. Amongst these were always included—though not necessarily—the sovereign, the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London. The remainder were men eminent in Church or State, "the master of the hospital,"§ who must not be confounded with the schoolmaster, being the only official member. The sovereign had two nominations to the other governors' one. Thackeray makes the great marquis of Steyne a governor, and shows how little Rawdon Crawley benefited by that august personage's patronage: "When Lord Steyne was benevolently disposed he did nothing by halves, and his kindness towards the Crawley family did the greatest honor to his benevolent discrimination. His lordship extended his goodness to little Rawdon: he pointed out to the boy's parents the necessity of sending him to a public school; that he was of an age now when emulation, the first principles of the Latin language, pugilistic exercises and the society of his fellow boys would be of the greatest benefit to the boy..... All objections disappeared before the generous perseverance of the marquis. His lordship was one of the governors of that famous old collegiate institution called the White Friars. It had been a Cistercian convent in old days, when Smithfield, which is contiguous to it, was a tournament ground. Obstinate heretics used to be brought thither, convenient for burning hard by. Henry VIII., the Defender of the Faith, seized upon the monastery and its possessions, and hanged and tortured some of the monks who could not accommodate themselves to the pace of his reform. Finally, a great merchant bought the house and land adjoining, in which, and with the help of other wealthy endowments of land and money, he established a famous foundation hospital for old men and children. An extern school grew round the old almost monastic foundation, which subsists still with its Middle-Age costume and usages; and all Cistercians pray that it may long flourish. Of this famous house some of the greatest noblemen, prelates and dignitaries of the land are governors; and as the boys are very comfortably lodged, fed and educated, and subsequently inducted to good scholarships at the university and livings in the Church, many little gentlemen are devoted to the ecclesiastical profession from their tenderest years, and there is considerable emulation to procure nominations for the foundation.

"It was originally intended for the sons of poor and deserving clerics and laics, but many of the noble governors of the institution, with an enlarged and rather capricious benevolence, selected all sorts of objects for their bounty. To get an education for nothing, and a future livelihood and profession assured, was so excellent a scheme that some of the richest people did not disdain it, and not only great men's relations, but great men themselves, sent their sons to profit by the chance."

A boy on the foundation received his education entirely free. Whilst within the walls he was clothed in black cloth at the expense of the house and even had shirts and shoes provided for him. His only expenses were a fee to the matron of twenty-five dollars a year, and the cost of books, stationery, etc., the whole amounting to a sum less than one hundred dollars a year. On leaving school for college he received an allowance—four hundred dollars for three years and five hundred dollars for the fourth.

There may have been a time when much of the patronage was improperly bestowed, but this certainly was not the case in our day. The majority of the boys on the foundation were the sons of well-born and often distinguished gentlemen of small means, and the sort of perversion of patronage to which Thackeray alludes had ceased to take place. When some of the places on the foundation were thrown open, it was a subject of general remark that several of the boys who got scholarships were those whose parents could perfectly have afforded to give them a first-class education.

* Simon Baxter was his only sister's son. Sutton had left him an estate which in 1615 he sold to the ancestor of the present earl of Sefton for fifteen thousand pounds—equal to about seventy-five thousand pounds now—and a legacy of three hundred pounds.

§ This was a post which Thackeray coveted, and had he lived might possibly have filled. The master's lodge, a spacious antique residence, lined with portraits of governors in their robes of estate, by Lely, Kneller, etc., would in his hands have become a resort of rare interest and hospitality.

* The original seat of the Carthusian order was at Chartreux in Dauphiny, where it was founded by Saint Bruno.

† Witham, which is not far from Fonthill, became in 1763 the property of Alderman Beckford, the millionaire father of the celebrated author of *Vathek*.