

not forgotten his obligations to the French, and we can understand with what eloquence of language and sincerity of emotion he uttered the following words at a recent meeting of the Royal Bavarian Academy of Sciences, in reference to the future relations of Germany and France:

"The Academy seizes this moment to declare openly that there exists no national hatred between the German and Latin races. The peculiar character of the Germans, their knowledge of languages, their acquaintance with foreign people, the past and present state of their civilization, all tend to make them just toward other peoples, even at the risk of often becoming unjust toward their own; and thus it is that we recognize how much we owe to the great philosophers, mathematicians, and naturalists of France, who have been in so many departments our masters and our models. I went forty-eight years ago to Paris to study chemistry; a fortuitous circumstance drew upon me the attention of Alexander Von Humboldt, and a single word of recommendation from him caused M. Gay-Lussac, one of the greatest chemists and physicists of his time, to make me, a young man of twenty, the proposal to continue and finish, with his co-operation, an analysis which I had commenced: he introduced me as a pupil into his laboratory; my career was fixed after this. Never shall I forget the kindness with which Arago and Thénard received the German student; and how many compatriots, physicians, and others, could I not name, who, like myself, gratefully remember the efficacious assistance afforded to them by French men of science, in finishing their studies! An ardent sympathy for all that is noble and grand, as well as a disinterested hospitality, forms some of the most noble traits of the French character."

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WILFRID CUMBERMEDE.

An Autobiographical Story.

BY GEORGE MACDONALD,

Author of "Alec Forbes," etc.

CHAPTER XIV.—Continued.

She left her implements, led me down a stair close at hand, opened the door at its foot, and let me out into the high court. I gazed about me. I was as if I had escaped from a prison-cell into the chamber of torture: I stood the centre of a multitude of windows—the eyes of the house all fixed upon me. On one side was the great gate, through which, from the roof, I had seen the carriages drive the night before; but it was closed. I remembered, however, that Sir Giles had brought me in by a wicket in that gate. I hastened to it. There was but a bolt to withdraw, and I was free.

But all was gloomy within, and genial nature could no longer enter. Glittering jewels of sunlight and dew were nothing but drops of water upon blades of grass. Fresh-bursting trees were no more than the deadest of winter-bitten branches. The great eastern window of the universe, gorgeous with gold and roses, was but the weary sun making a fuss about nothing. My sole relief lay in motion. I roamed I knew not whither, nor how long.

At length I found myself on a height eastward of the Hall, overlooking its gardens, which lay in deep terraces beneath. Inside a low wall was the first of them, dark with an avenue of ancient trees, and below was the large oval window in the end of the hall-room. I climbed over the wall, which was built of cunningly fitted stones, with mortar only in the top row; and drawn by the gloom, strolled up and down the avenue for a long time. At length I became aware of a voice I had heard before. I could see no one; but, hearkening about, I found it must come from the next terrace. Descending by a deep flight of old mossy steps, I came upon a strip of smooth sward, with yew-trees, dark and trim, on each side of it. At the end of the walk was an arbour, in which I could see the glimmer of something white. Too miserable to be shy, I advanced and peeped in. The girl who had shown me the way to the library was talking to her mother.

"Mamma!" she said, without showing any surprise, "here is the boy who came into our room last night."

"How do you do?" said the lady kindly, making room for me on the bench beside her. I answered as politely as I could, and felt a strange comfort glide from the sweetness of her countenance.

"What an adventure you had last night!" she said. "It was well you did not fall."

"That wouldn't have been much worse than having to stop where we were," I answered.

The conversation thus commenced went on until I had told them all my history, including my last adventure.

"You must have dreamed it," said the lady. "So I thought, ma'am," I answered, "until I found my sword was gone."

"Are you sure you looked everywhere?" she asked.

"Indeed, I did."

"It does not follow however that the ghost took it. It is more likely Mrs. Wilson came in to see you after you were asleep, and carried it off."

"Oh, yes!" I cried, rejoiced at the suggestion; "that must be it. I shall ask her."

"I am sure you will find it so. Are you going home soon?"

"Yes—as soon as I've had my breakfast. It's a good walk from here to Aldwick."

"So it is—We are going that way too," she added thoughtfully.

"Mr. Elder is a great friend of papa's—isn't he, mamma?" said the girl.

"Yes, my dear. They were friends at college."

"I have heard Mr. Elder speak of Mr. Osborne," I said. "Do you live near us?"

"Not very far off—in the next parish, where my husband is rector," she answered.

"If you could wait till the afternoon, we should be happy to take you there. The pony-carriage is coming for us."

"Thank you, ma'am," I answered; "but I ought to go immediately after breakfast. You won't mention about the roof, will you? I oughtn't to get Clara into trouble."

"She is a wild girl," said Mrs. Osborne; "but I think you are quite right."

"How lucky it was I knew the library!" said Mary, who had become quite friendly, from under her mother's wing.

"That it was! But I daresay you know all about the place," I answered.

"No, indeed!" she returned. "I know nothing about it. As we went to our room, mamma opened the door and showed me the library, else I shouldn't have been able to help you at all."

"Then you haven't been here often?"

"No; and I never shall be again—I'm going away to school," she added; and her voice trembled.

"So am I," I said. "I'm going to Switzerland in a month or two. But then I haven't a mamma to leave behind me."

She broke down at that, and hid her head on her mother's bosom. I had unawares added to her grief, for her brother Charley was going to Switzerland too.

I found afterwards that Mr. Elder, having been consulted by Mr. Osborne, had arranged with my uncle that Charley Osborne and I should go together.

Mary Osborne—I never called her Polly as Clara did—continued so overcome by her grief, that her mother turned to me and said,

"I think you had better go, Master Cumbermede."

I bade her good morning, and made my way to Mrs. Wilson's apartment. I found she had been to my room, and was expecting me with some anxiety, fearing I had set off without my breakfast. Alas! she knew nothing about the sword, looked annoyed, and, I thought, rather mysterious; said she would have a search, make inquiries, do what she could, and such like, but begged I would say nothing about it in the house. I left her with a suspicion that she believed the ghost had carried it away, and that it was of no use to go searching for it.

Two days after, a parcel arrived for me. I concluded it was my sword; but to my grievous disappointment, found it was only a large hamper of apples and cakes, very acceptable in themselves, but too plainly indicating Mrs. Wilson's desire to console me for what could not be helped. Mr. Elder never missed the sword. I rose high in the estimation of my schoolfellows because of the adventure, especially in that of Moberly, who did not believe in the ghost, but ineffectually tasked his poor brains to account for the disappearance of the weapon. The best light was thrown upon it by a merry boy of the name of Fisher, who declared his conviction that the steward had carried it off to add to his collection.

CHAPTER XV.

AWAY.

I will not linger longer over this part of my history—already, I fear, much too extended for the patience of my readers. My excuse is, that in looking back, the events I have recorded appear large and prominent, and that certainly they have a close relation with my after history.

The time arrived when I had to leave England for Switzerland. I will say nothing of my leave-taking. It was not a bitter one. Hope was strong, and rooted in present pleasure. I was capable of much happiness—keenly responsive to the smallest agreeable impulse from without or from within. I had good health, and life was happiness in itself. The blowing of the wind, the shining of the sun, or the glitter of water, was sufficient to make me glad; and I had self-consciousness enough to increase the delight by the knowledge that I was glad.

The fact is I was coming in for my share in the spiritual influences of Nature, so largely poured on the heart and mind of my generation. The prophets of the new blessing, Wordsworth and Coleridge, I knew nothing of. Keats was only beginning to write. I had read a little of Cowper, but did not care for him. Yet I was under the same spell as they all. Nature was a power upon me. I

was filled with the vague recognition of a present soul in Nature—with a sense of the humanity everywhere diffused through her and operating upon ours. I was but fourteen, and had only feelings, but something lay at the heart of the feelings, which would one day blossom into thoughts.

At the coach-office in the county-town, I first met my future companion, with his father, who was to see us to our destination. My uncle accompanied me no farther, and I soon found myself on the top of the coach, with only one thing to do—make the acquaintance of Charles Osborne. His father was on the box-seat, and we two sat behind; but we were both shy, and for some time neither spoke. Charles was about my own age, rather like his sister, only that his eyes were blue, and his hair a lightish brown. A tremulousness about the mouth betrayed a nervous temperament. His skin was very fair and thin, showing the blue veins. As he did not speak, I sat for a little while watching him, without however the least speculation concerning him, or any effort to discover his character. I have not even yet reached the point of trying to find people out. I take what time and acquaintance discloses, but never attempt to forestall, which may come partly from trust, partly from want of curiosity, partly from a disinclination to unnecessary mental effort. But as I watched his face, half-unconsciously, I could not help observing that now and then it would light up suddenly and darken again almost instantly. At last his father turned round, and with some severity said:

"You do not seem to be making any approaches to mutual acquaintance. Charles, why don't you address your companion?"

The words were uttered in the slow tone of one used to matters too serious for common speech.

The boy cast a hurried glance at me, smiled uncertainly, and moved uneasily on his seat. His father turned away and made a remark to the coachman.

Mr. Osborne was a very tall, thin, yet square-shouldered man, with a pale face, and large features of delicate form. He looked severe, pure, and irritable. The tone of his voice, although the words were measured and rather stilted, led me to this last conclusion quite as much as the expression of his face; for it was thin and a little acid. I soon observed that Charley started slightly, as often as his father addressed him; but this might be because his father always did so with more or less of abruptness. At times there was great kindness in his manner, seeming, however, less the outcome of natural tenderness than a sense of duty. His being was evidently a weight upon his son's, and kept down the natural movements of his spirit. A number of small circumstances only led me to these conclusions: for nothing remarkable occurred to set in any strong light their mutual relation. For his side Charles was always attentive and ready, although with a promptitude that had more in it of the mechanical impulse of habit than of pleased obedience. Mr. Osborne spoke kindly to me—I think the more kindly that I was not his son, and he was therefore not so responsible for me. But he looked as if the care of the whole world lay on his shoulders; as if an awful destruction were the most likely thing to every one, and to him were committed the toilsome chance of saving some. Doubtless he would not have trusted his boys so far from home, but that the clergyman to whom he was about to hand him over, was an old friend, of the same religious opinions as himself.

I could well, but must not, linger over the details of our journey, full to me of most varied pleasure. The constant change, not so rapid as to prevent the mind from reposing a little upon the scenes which presented themselves: the passing vision of countries and peoples, manners and modes of life, so different from our own, did much to arouse and develop my nature. Those flashes of pleasure came upon Charles's pale face more and more frequently; and ere the close of the first day we had begun to talk with some degree of friendliness. But it became clear to me that with his father ever blocking up our horizon, whether he sat with his broad back in front of us on the coach-box, or paced the deck of a vessel, or perched with us under the hood on the top of a diligence, we should never arrive at any freedom of speech. I sometimes wondered, long after, whether Mr. Osborne had begun to discover that he was overlying and smothering the young life of his boy, and had therefore adopted the plan, so little to have been expected from him, of sending his son to foreign parts to continue his education.

I have no distinct recollection of dates, or even of the exact season of the year. I believe it was the early summer, but in my memory the whole journey is now a mass of confused loveliness and pleasure. Not that we had the best of weather all the way. I well recollect pouring rains, and from the fact that I distinctly remember my first view of an Alpine height, I am certain we must have had days of mist and rain immediately before. The sight, however, to me more like an individual revelation or vision than the impact of an object upon the brain, stands in my mind altogether isolated from preceding and following impressions—alone, a thing to praise God for, if there be a God to praise. If there be

not, then was the whole thing a grand and lovely illusion, worthy, for grandeur and loveliness, of a world with a God at the heart of it. But the grandeur and the loveliness spring from the operation of natural laws; the laws themselves are real and true—how could the false result from them? I hope yet and will hope that I am not a bubble filled with the mocking breath of a Mephistopheles, but a child whom his infinite Father will not hardly judge that he could not believe in him so much as he would. I will tell how the vision came.

Although comparatively few people visited Switzerland in those days, Mr. Osborne had been there before, and for some reason or other had determined on going round by Interlachen. At Thun we found a sail-boat, which we hired to take us and our luggage. At starting, an incident happened which would not be worth mentioning, but for the impression it made upon me: a French lady accompanied by a young girl approached Mr. Osborne—doubtless perceiving he was a clergyman, for, being an *Evangelical* of the most pure, honest and narrow type, he was in every point and line of his countenance marked a priest and apart from his fellowmen—and asked him to allow her and her daughter to go in the boat with us to Interlachen. A glow of pleasure awoke in me at sight of his courtly behaviour, with lifted hat and bowed head, for I had never been in the company of such a gentleman before. But the wish instantly followed that his son might have shared in his courtesy. We partook freely of his justice and benevolence, but he showed no such grace as he showed the lady. I have since observed that sons are endlessly grateful for courtesy from their fathers.

The lady and her daughter sat down in the stern of the boat; and therefore Charley and I, not certainly to our discomfort, had to go before the mast. The men rowed out into the lake, and then hoisted the sail. Away we went, careering in for a pleasant breeze. As yet it blew fog and mist, but the hope was that it would soon blow it away.

An unspoken friendship by this time bound Charley and me together, silent in its beginnings and slow in its growth—not the worst pledges of endurance. And now for the first time in our journey, Charley was hidden from his father: the sail came between them. He glanced at me with a slight sigh, which even then I took for an involuntary sigh of relief. We lay leaning over the bows, now looking up at the mist blown in never-ending volumed sheets, now at the sail swelling in the wind before which it fled, and again down at the water through which our boat was ploughing its evanescent furrow. We could see very little. Portions of the shore would now and then appear, dim like reflections from a tarnished mirror, and then fade back into the depths of cloudy dissolution. Still it was growing lighter, and the man who was on the outlook became less anxious in his forward gaze, and less frequent in his calls to the helmsman. I was lying half over the gunwale, looking into the strange-coloured water, blue dimmed with undissolved white, when a cry from Charles made me start and look up. It was indeed a God-like vision. The mist yet rolled thick below, but away up, far away and far up, yet as if close at hand, the clouds were broken into a mighty window, through which looked in upon us a huge mountain peak, swathed in snow. One great level band of darker cloud crossed its breast, above which rose the peak, triumphant in calmness, and stood unutterably solemn and grand, in clouds as white as its own whiteness. It had been there all the time! I sunk on my knees in the boat and gazed up. With a sudden sweep the clouds sustained the mighty window, and the Jungfrau withdrew into its Holy of Holies. I am painfully conscious of the helplessness of my speech. The vision vanishes from the words as it vanished from the bewildered eyes. But from the mind it glorified it has never vanished. I have been more ever since that sight. To have beheld a truth is an apotheosis. What the truth was I could not tell; but I had seen something which raised me above my former self and made me long to rise higher yet. It awoke worship, and a belief in the incomprehensible divine; but admitted of being analysed no more than, in that transient vision, my intellect could—ere dawning it vanished—analyse it into the deserts of rock, the gulfs of green ice and flowing water, the savage solitudes of snow, the mysterious miles of draperied mist, that went to make up the vision, each and all essential thereto.

I had been too much given to the attempted production in myself of effects to justify the vague theories towards which my inborn propensities carried me. I had felt enough to believe there was more to be felt; and such stray scraps of verse of the new order as, floating about, had reached me, had set me questioning and testing my own life and perceptions and sympathies by what these awoke in me at second-hand. I had often doubted, oppressed by the power of these, whether I could myself see, or whether my sympathy with Nature was not merely inspired by the vision of others. Ever after this, if such a doubt returned, with it arose the Jungfrau, looking into my very soul.

"Oh, Charley!" was all I could say. On