

IN BYGONE DAYS.

A MEMORY.

The green was on the old beech-tree,
The gold was in the soft spring sky;
A silver tearlet, like a star,
Gleamed in the purple violet's eye.

Pink were the hawthorns, with the flush
Of blossom-time and roseate morn;
The blackbird piped on cherry spray,
The bullfinch waned in the thorn.

Red orchids spanned all the meads,
And myriad nodding yellow bells
Of fragrant cowslips speckled and starred,
With knots of gold, the greenling dells.

Oh! for the rose-hued halcyon time
Of tender dreams—of life's sweet spring,
When but to live and breathe is joy,
And youth is vassal, Love is king!

That dear old beech! I see it yet,
And shall whilst memory holds her throne;
Twas there I clasped my pure white dove,
And found her heart was all my own.

There was a rustic, moss-grown seat,
A haven for young Love's cares;
There 'twas a question sweet I asked,
And there my Nellie whispered, "Yes!"

Ah me! the brown is on the beach,
The oak is red, the elm is dun;
The hazels yellow all apace,
The reign of autumn hath begun.

And down life's hill, hand clasped in hand,
And heart to heart, as in our youth,
We go together—Nell and I—
One life, one love, one soul, one truth!

Wrinkled our cheeks, our hairs are white,
And soon must come our closing scene;
But, thanks to Him whose self is Love,
Our hearts are ever, ever green.

Ay, green as when 'neath the old beech,
On that red-letter day of life,
Our young hearts full, our young hearts joined,
She found a husband, I a wife.

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PUBLICANS and SINNERS

A LIFE PICTURE.

BY MISS M. E. BRADDON,

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BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.—Continued.

He seemed feeble, somewhat uncertain upon his legs, and Lucius's humanity came to the rescue.

"Take my arm as far as your house," he said; "my time is not especially valuable."

"Isn't it?" demanded the old man, looking at him suspiciously; "a young man about London whose time is of no use to him is in a bad road."

"I didn't say my time was of no use to me. Perhaps there are not many men in London who work harder than I. Only, as I take no pleasure, I have sometimes a margin left after work. I can spare half an hour just now, and if you like to lean on my arm it is at your service."

"I accept your friendly offer. You speak like a gentleman and an honest man. My house is not half a mile from here; you must know it if you know this neighborhood—Cedar House."

"I think I do. A curious old house, belonging evidently to two periods, half stone, half brick, standing back from the road behind a heavily buttressed wall. Is that it?"

"Yes. It was once a palace or a royal hunting-lodge, or whatever you like to call it. It was afterwards enlarged, in the reign of Anne, and became a wealthy citizen's country seat, and before there were all these abominations of factories and ropewalks and docks between the City and the eastern suburbs. I bought the place a bargain, and it suits me, as an empty house would suit a mouse—plenty of room to turn round in it."

"The house looks very large, but your family is large, no doubt."

"My family consists of myself and my granddaughter, with two old servants,—trustworthy, of course. That is to say, they have learned by experience exactly to what extent they may safely rob me."

They were walking in an eastward direction as they talked; the old man leaning somewhat heavily on the younger.

Lucius laughed pleasantly at his companion's cynicism.

"Then you don't believe even in the honesty of faithful servants."

"I believe in nothing that is not demonstrable by the rule of three. The fidelity of old ser-

vants is like the fidelity of your household cat—they are faithful to their places; the beds they have slept upon so many years; the fireside at which they have a snug corner where the east wind cannot touch their rheumatism."

"Yet there are instances of something better than mere feline constancy. Sir Walter Scott's servants, for instance, who put their shoulders to the wheel manfully when Fortune played their master false—the old butler turning scrub and Jack-of-all-trades, the old coachman going to the plough-tail. There is something awful in the descent of a butler, too,—like the downfall of an archbishop."

"I don't know anything about your Sir Walter Scott," growled Mr. Sivewright; "I suppose it is natural to youth to look at all things brightly, though I have known youth that didn't. You talk gaily enough for a young man who devotes no time to pleasure."

"Do you think pleasure—in the common acceptance of the word, meaning late hours and mixed company—really conduces to good spirits?"

"Only as opium engenders sleep—to leave a

"That way of talking is a fashion," said Lucius quietly; "but I daresay if you were seriously ill to-morrow, your thoughts would turn instinctively towards Savile-row; and perhaps if you were going to die, you'd feel all the happier if the friendly voice of your parish priest breathed familiar words of hope and comfort beside your pillow."

"I know nothing of my parish except that its rates are four-and-two-pence in the pound," returned the other in his incisive voice.

A quarter of an hour's walking, beguiled by such talk as this, brought them to the house of which Lucius had spoken, a dwelling altogether out of keeping with the present character of the Shadrack-road. That heavily-buttressed wall, dark with the smoke and foul weather of centuries; that rusty iron gate, with its florid scrollwork, and forgotten coat-of-arms (a triumph of the blacksmith's art three hundred years old); that dark-browed building within, formed of a red-brick centre, square, many-windowed, and prosaic, with a tall narrow doorway, overshadowed by a stone shell, sustained by cherubic heads of the Anne period, flanked by an older

without, and which seemed to the doctor of a lower temperature, as if in crossing that narrow boundary he had travelled a degree northward.

"Come in," said Mr. Sivewright, with the tone of a man who offers reluctant hospitality, "and have a glass of sherry. You've had a cold walk on my account; you'd better take a little refreshment."

"No, thanks; but I should like to see your house."

"Should you? There's not much to see; an old barrack, that's all," said the old man, stopping short, with a doubtful air, as if he would have infinitely preferred leaving the surgeon outside. "Very few strangers ever cross my threshold, except the tag-along. However,"—with an air of resignation,— "come in."

The old woman had opened the tall narrow door meanwhile, revealing a vista dimly lighted—lighted with a lamp which must have been feeble always, but which was now the veriest glimmer. Lucius followed his new acquaintance through this doorway into a large square hall, from which a broad oaken staircase ascended to a gallery that went all round it. There was just enough light for Lucius to see that this hall, instead of being bare and meagrely furnished, as he had expected to see it, was crowded with a vast assemblage of heterogeneous objects. Pictures piled against the gloomy panelled walls. Sculpture, porcelain and delf of every nation and every period, from monster vases of Imperial lacquer to fragile déjeuners of Dresden and Copenhagen; from inchoate groups of vermin and shell-fish from the workshop of Pallissy, to the exquisite modellings of teacups resplendent with gods and goddesses from Capo-di-Monte; from gaudy dishes and bowls of old Rouen delf, to the perfection of Louis-Seize Sevres. Armor of every age, vases of jasper and porphyry, carved-oak cabinets, the particolored plumage of stuffed birds, Gobelins tapestry, South Sea shells, Venetian glass, Milan ironwork, were curiously intermingled, as if some maniac artist in the confusion of a once fine taste had heaped these things together. By that dim light, Lucius saw only the fitful glimmer of steel casques and breast-plates, the whiteness of marble busts and figures, the outline of jasper vases and huge Pallissy dishes. Later he came to know all those treasures by heart.

A Louis-Quatorze clock on a bracket began to strike six, and immediately a chorus of clocks in adjacent rooms, in tones feeble or strong, tenor or bass, took up the strain.

"I am like Charles the Fifth, particular about my clocks. I keep them all going. This way, if you please, Mr.——"

"Davoren."

"Davoren. That sounds a good name."

"My father cherished a tradition to that effect—a good middle-class family. Our ancestor represented his native county in Queen Elizabeth's first Parliament. But I inherited nothing except the name."

He was staring about him in that doubtful light as he spoke, trying to penetrate the gloom.

"You are surprised to see such a collection as that in the Shadrack-road? Dismiss your wonder. I am not an antiquarian; but a dealer. Those things represent the remnant of my stock-in-trade. I kept a shop in Bond street for five-and-thirty years."

"And when you retired from business you kept all those things?"

"I kept them as some men keep their money, at compound interest. Every year I live increases the value of those things. They belong to manufactures that are extinct. With every year examples perish. Ten years hence the value of my stock will have multiplied by the square of my original capital."

Mr. Sivewright opened a door on one side of the hall, and motioning to his guest to follow him, entered a room somewhat brighter of aspect than the hall without. It was a large room, sparsely furnished as to the luxurious appliances of modern homes, but boasting, here and there, in rich relief against the panelled walls, one of those rare and beautiful objects upon which the virtuoso is content to gaze throughout the leisure moments of a lifetime. In the recess on one side of the fireplace stood a noble old buffet, in cherrywood and ebony; in the corresponding recess on the side a cabinet in Florentine mosaic! from one corner came the solemn tick of an eight-day clock, whose carved and inlaid walnut-wood case was a miracle of art; and upon each central panel of the walls hung a cabinet picture of the Dutch school. So much for the pleasure of the eye. Mere sensual comfort had been less regarded in the arrangement of Mr. Sivewright's sitting-room. A small square of threadbare Persian carpet covered the centre of the oaken floor, serving more for ornament than for luxury. The rest was bare. A mahogany Pembroke table, value about fifteen shillings, occupied the middle of the room; one shabby-looking arm-chair, horsehair-cushioned, high-backed, and by no means suggestive of repose; two other chairs of the same family, but without arms; and a business-like desk in one of the windows, completed the catalogue of Mr. Sivewright's goods and chattels.

Preparations for dinner, scanty like the furniture, occupied the table, or rather preparations for that joint meal which, in some economical households, combines the feminine refreshment of tea with the mor masculine and substantial repast. On one side of the table a small white cloth neatly spread, with a single knife and fork, tumbler, and Venetian flask half full of claret, indicated that Mr. Sivewright was going to dine; on the other side, a small oval mahogany tray, with a black Wedgewood teapot, suggested that some one else was going to drink tea. A handful of fire burned cheerfully in the wide old,



"ON THAT RED-LETTER DAY OF LIFE."

man three times as wakeful afterwards," said Mr. Sivewright. "I have done without that kind of pleasure myself throughout a long life, yet I hardly count myself wise. Fairly to estimate the lightness of his own particular burden, a man should try to carry a heavier one. There is no better tonic for the hardworker than a course of pleasure. You are in some trade or profession, I presume," he added, turning his sharp glance upon his companion; "a clerk, perhaps?"

"No; but something that works harder than a clerk. A parish doctor."

Mr. Sivewright recoiled palpably. "Don't be alarmed," said Lucius; "it was not as a possible patient that I pulled you out of the cab. My practice doesn't lie among the upper classes."

"Nor do I belong to the upper classes," answered the other quickly. "I forgive you your profession, though I am among those prejudiced people who have an innate aversion from doctors, lawyers, and parsons. But the machinery of commerce won't allow us to dispense with the lawyers; and I suppose among the poor there still lingers a remnant of the old belief that there's some use in doctors. The parsons thrive upon the foolishness of women. So there is a field still left for your three learned professions."

wing of gray moss-discolored stone, with massive mullioned windows, had nothing in common with the shabby rows and shops and skimp terraces and bulkheads and low-roofed disreputable habitations of the neighborhood. It stood alone, a solitary relic of the past; splendid, gloomy, inscrutable.

Nothing in the man Sivewright interested Lucius Davoren half so much as the fact that he lived in this queer old house. After all, a man's surroundings are often half the man, and our first impression of a new acquaintance is generally taken from his chairs and tables, the manner of the servant who opens his door, or the aspect of his entrance hall.

The grim old iron gate was not a portal to be opened with a latchkey. It looked like one of the outworks of a fortification, to be taken by assault. Mr. Sivewright pulled at an iron ring, suspended beyond the reach of the gutter children of the district, and a bell rang at a distance within the fastness, a hoarse old bell, rusty no doubt like the gate. After a lengthy interval, measured by the gauge of a visitor's patience, but which Mr. Sivewright accepted with resignation as a thing of course, this summons produced an elderly female, with slipped feet, a bonnet, and bare arms, who unlocked the gate, and admitted them to an enclosure of fog, stagnant as compared with the fog in circulation