

"A friend of yours? Of course you do not mention it—that is, Captain Austwick's name. Unless I am sure of this, of course I can have nothing—"

"Give yourself no concern on that head. I've a deep sense of honour myself, as a Burke, madam. It's the grief of my life that I was led into this, and my family corrupted by it; and I'd die rather than let it be known, make you sure of that."

He clenched his hands, as if holding something tight from all the world, and pressed them on his chest as he spoke.

Miss Austwick drew out her purse: there was a tuppence note, two sovereigns, and some silver in it. She took the note from the rest, and said—

"I must think over what you have told me, and consider what must be done in this matter. I give you this on account. I'm not prepared to promise that I will, or can, make good your losses; but find the children. You say they are in England—London I think you said. Well, I will see them for myself. I am willing to help them, and to—reward fidelity—that is to say, diligence."

Her proud heart swelled and nearly choked her utterance, as she spoke thus confidentially, and gave the retaining fee to this ally of her brother's—and now of hers.

As with cringing bows he went out, she was ready to dash her head against the carved oak of the high old chimney-piece, she so resented the humiliation. Ah, if she had but thought of her duty to God as highly as of her station in society, she would have cleared her eyes unclouded of the film of pride, and seen clearly the meanness of all crooked ways, and the danger of the edge tools low and base, with which she was unwittingly playing—tools she was sharpening for her own destruction.

(To be continued.)

UNACKNOWLEDGED GIFTS.

WE saw the other day in an article, which, we think, found place in the "Saturday Reader," that it was very hard, indeed, to guess anything of the contents of a book from its name. A few minutes ago, we read in the advertisements appended to an early copy of Pope's Homer, names of publications recent in the beginning of the last century, which, in the present day of "making many books," would save immense trouble, for the name gives a neat condensation and review of the book. No doubt, the old plan was the more honest; and we see it still sometimes adopted in scientific works, though often it is not easy to tell whether a new literary bantling is born of fact or fancy. Philosophers, theologians, poets and novelists seem to vie with each other in the mystery of their bibliographical nomenclature. Perhaps an aiming at conciseness, a trying to express in a word or two the object, plan and idea of the book, as well as a consideration of the piquancy of interest, which "*omne ignotum*" carries with it, and that love of dashing smartness which characterizes our times, may lie near the roots of this mystery.

We have been led to make these remarks by the difficulty we had in choosing a name, which would properly intimate what we are going to say a few words about. There can be no doubt, it is true, about what a "gift" is. It is something "given." It is, in fact, the old form of this participle, still surviving in the Scotch "gied," which reminds us of "Maxwellton braes," "where Annie Laurie gied her promise true;" and we think that in the course of twenty minutes, we could lay our hands on a Somersetshire man, who, with bold conservatism, persists in making the verb "give" invariably regular.

We have never corrected him for his archaism, though our ears suffered great pain at first. But we have our revenge; for we are his amanuensis, and once a year or so, write letters in modern English to a "dear brother," somewhere near Bridgewater. We may conclude our philology by saying that we have heard Irishmen, as radical as our friend George is conservative, use

"giv" (and even "gov" and "guv") instead of "given."

We hope our patient readers will excuse these preliminary wanderings.

A "gift," then, being "something given," we might be going to speak of Christmas-boxes, and birth-day presents, and keepsakes, and friendships' offerings, and "*gages d'amour*" and "*souvenirs*," and (as Lord Dundreary would say) "all that sort of thing." But we are not. Nor yet of those nebulous "gifts on the thumb that surely come, and gifts on the finger that always linger;" nor of those "gifts" which are common to both man and beast, as food, air, water; nor of those which are peculiar to man only, as speech and reason; nor of those endowments of genius, which distinguish the great from those who call them so; for all these, where they exist, are (less or more) acknowledged as "gifts." We are going to speak of "unacknowledged" gifts, and we shall divide them for convenience into three classes, viz., the domestic, the social and the practical.

1. As to the domestic. It is a fine thing to sing well, to play well, to draw well, to dress well, to dance well, or to walk well. But these fine things we call accomplishments, not gifts or endowments. But is not an accomplishment an endowment completed, made perfect? Is it not custom only that applies this word to the development of one faculty more than another, and is not an accomplishment a "gift" in a certain state of cultivation? This will not be denied with regard to the first three of those "fine things" above mentioned; for musicians and painters have their genius as well as orators or poets. But of the three last? What shall we say of the gift of walking, or of dancing, or of dressing? Well, "*propius res aspicere nostras*," we talk of people being born with no "eye," with no "ear," and we know it would be waste of time to try to make some persons musicians or artists, and madness to attempt to make them poets. True, we do not generally talk of people being born without hands or feet, in exactly the same sense, but we are ready to believe that there are some who cannot be taught to walk, to dance or to dress with taste and grace. Indeed, very few can. Habit, of course, and the consciousness of what "is expected" do a good deal in making the most of what is, but it is easy to tell who has the gift and who has not. Are we, then, irclaimable heretics, denounced by the great council of common sense, if we call gifts,—to sing, to play, to draw, to dress, to dance, to walk,—*well*? Now, in calling these gifts of the domestic class, we mean, that they are such as we would like to see those who make our "homes," possessed of. We do not want them all to be always in exercise, but we feel better for the satisfaction of having them at command. It is very pleasant to hear, now and then, a song or an air on the piano; or to look at a new picture drawn by household hands. There is no harm, occasionally, in a quiet dance, out of a ball-room, and it is a comfort always to see neatness in dress. But, however, these gifts are not the unacknowledged ones. They do not pass unnoticed; they often win compliments and appreciation. But the unacknowledged domestic gifts are the unshowy ones, that are seldom praised, hardly ever flattered. They are those which are too often discovered only when they are *missed*,—and when their quiet possessors are far away or in their graves. Yet they are those which really give *home* its *homeness*, and for which no charms of person, or voice, or manner, could make a tithe of recompense. They are such as may once have attracted, blessed, weary feet to the peaceful hearth of Bothany—such as gave birth to awful tears, where Love and Power met and embraced, in the precincts of the cavern-tomb of Lazarus. And what are these "gifts"? They are "Blessed Presences" more than abstractions; but if we are to feebly name them—they are affection and sweetness of temper, and patience, and self-denial, and gentleness and tenderness, and cheerfulness, and all those subtle elements that make up the atmosphere of domestic happiness—so seldom analysed: as we do not think of analysing the fresh air, till some way of disease warns us of the absence of some of

its vital ingredients. If you, reader, are a hero-worshipper or a genius-worshipper or a beauty worshipper, just weigh for a few moments the benefits that answer your incense on the altars of these duties, against the genial joy-producing showers of blessing, that your neglected household gods, (or rather, goddesses) cause daily and hourly to descend upon your life, like the "small rain upon the tender herb." So much for one class of "unacknowledged gifts."

2. As to the social. Part of what has been said under the head "domestic," applies to the social. By "social," we mean not merely "gifts" of "society," exclusively so called, but all those endowments of nature, which are esteemed more than others, in our general intercourse with all those who do not belong to our own family. The statesman, the orator, the man of letters, the man of science—these are the "gifted" men of the world. Some men have a way or a knack of doing something, which makes them important in a less eminent degree; some have "tact," which is a sort of small diplomacy, and some are "clever"—that is, they could be, if they liked, but evidently do not like, to be distinguished in any way. But all these have their reward; for abroad, as well as at home, the showy are the acknowledged and the unshowy, the unacknowledged gifts. We do not mean to say a word now against this inevitable sentence; we only assert a fact. Do we ever talk of the gift of honesty, or constancy, or benevolence? Of course not, nor need we talk of them; but we not even think of them as "gifts," inestimable gifts, possessed by few, denied to many. There are individuals and families to whom, we firmly believe, these qualities are next to impossible; who are incapable of truth or friendship, or any real desire to see others happy, and yet such people may be the idols of many worshippers. Would it be too much to say that the faculty of friendship is almost as rare as poetical genius; that there are people who could no more harbour a *disinterested* attachment, than they could write "Hamlet" or "Paradise Lost"? Perhaps it would; but we do not think it would be far from the truth. The same might be said of other "unacknowledged gifts" of the social class, "too numerous to mention," of candour and generosity and *simplicity*, and all that thoroughness and sterlingness of character—which, with dignity and courtesy—should always be associated with the "grand old name of gentleman." Too often the plutocrats and plutocrats, alike, are contented to ignore such "gifts" as these. But they are not to be bought with gold. Now, lest we should be tempted to indulge, even for a moment, in that cup of spite of cursing the precious metals, we beg to say that we consider gold,—or at least the power to win it,—and the discretion to use it aright—as no mean "gifts" themselves. In defiance of all the Titans in the world, we have a hearty veneration for old Plutus, and we are sure that, when he is well treated, he is a very kindly fosterer of what is best in human nature. But these gifts, perhaps, belong rather to our third class, to which we now hasten.

3. As to the practical. These are the "gifts" "which we ignorantly worship" in the merchant, the soldier, the director of the banking, railroad or insurance company, the engineer, and the discoverer, but which, in circumstances less auspicious, or conspicuous, we never dream of existing at all.

Perhaps we have all known in our school-day (we mean the men of us) some unfortunate fellow, to whom the Latin grammar must be for ever a "scaled book;" who had to be cudgelled (or caned) over the *pons asinorum*; who could never be induced to take a farther interest in the verb "tupto" (*τίπτω*) than to escape its practical application in the passive voice; and who passed through school and college, (if he ever got there) with "shame and confusion of face." No Vulcan could bring the coy Minerva out of the chap's head. But had the fellow no "gift" do you think? Follow him from the school within to the school without doors. See what nerve and muscle he has for a bat or an oar; see what a hand he has for a rein or a fishing-rod; what an eye for any winged or four-footed thing sacred