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THE CURATE OF ST. NICHOLAS'.

Amongst the most generally beloved, not merely of the clergy, but of the whole population of Belford, as that population stood some thirty years ago, was my good old friend, the Curate of St. Nicholas'; and, in my mind, he had qualities that might both explain and justify his universal popularity.

Belford is, at present, singularly fortunate in the parochial clergy. Of the two vicars, whom I have the honour and the privilege of knowing, one confers upon the place the ennobling distinction of being the residence of a great poet; whilst both are not only, in the highest sense of that highest word, gentlemen, in birth, in education, in manners, and in mind—but eminently popular in the pulpit, and, as parish priests, not to be excelled, even amongst the generally excellent clergymen of the Church of England—a phrase, by the way, which just at this moment sounds so like a war-cry, that I cannot too quickly disclaim any intention of inflicting a political dissertation on the unwary reader. My design is simply to draw a faithful likeness of one of the most peaceable members of the establishment.

Of late years, there has been a prodigious change in the body clerical. The activity of the dissenters, the spread of education, and the immense increase of population, to say nothing of that "word of power," Reform, have combined to produce a stirring spirit of emulation amongst the younger clergy, which has quite changed the aspect of the profession. Heretofore, the "church militant" was the quietest and easiest of all avocations; and the most slender and lady-like young gentleman, the "mamma's darling" of a great family, whose lungs were too tender for the bar, and whose frame was too delicate for the army, might be sent with perfect comfort to the snug curacy of a neighbouring parish, to read Horace, cultivate auriculas, christen, marry, and bury, about twice a quarter, and do duty once every Sunday. Now times are altered; prayers must be read and sermons preached twice a day at least, not forgetting lectures in Lent, and homilies at tide times; workhouses are to be visited; schools attended, boys and girls taught in the morning, and grown-up bumpkins in the evening; children are to be catechised; masters and mistresses looked after; hymn books distributed; bibles given away; tract societies fostered amongst the zealous, and psalmody cultivated amongst the musical. In short, a curate, now-a-days, even a country curate, much more if his parish lie in a great town, has need of the lungs of a barrister in good practice, and the strength and activity of an officer of dragoons.

Now this is just as it ought to be. Nevertheless, I cannot help entertaining certain relentings in favour of the well-endowed churchman of the old school, round, indolent, and rubicund, at peace with himself and all around him, who lives in quiet and plenty in his ample parsonage-house, dispensing with a liberal hand the superfluities of his hospitable table, regular and exact in his conduct, but not so precise as to refuse a Saturday night's rubber in his own person, or to condemn his parishioners for their game of cricket on Sunday afternoons; charitable in word and deed, tolerant, indulgent, kind, to the widest extent of that widest word; but, except in such wisdom (and it is of the best,) no wiser than that eminent member of the church, Parson Adams. In a word, exactly such a man as my good old friend the rector of Had-

ley, *cidevant* curate of St. Nicholas' in Belford, who has just passed the window in that relique of antiquity, his one-horse chaise. Ah, we may see him still, through the budding leaves of the clustering China rose, as he is stopping to give a penny to poor lame Dinah Moore—stooping, and stooping his short round person with no small effort, that he may put it into her little hand, because the child would have some difficulty in picking it up on account of her crutches. Yes, there he goes, rotund and rosy, " a tun of a man," filling three parts of his roomy equipage; the shovel-hat with a rose in it, the very model of orthodoxy, overshadowing his white hairs and placid countenance; his little stunted foot-boy in a purple livery, driving a coach-horse as fat as his master; whilst the old white terrier, fatter still—his pet terrier Venom, waddles after the chaise (of which the head is let down, in honour, I presume, of this bright April morning), much resembling in gait and aspect that other white waddling thing, a goose, if a goose were gifted with four legs.

There he goes, my venerable friend the Reverend Josiah Singleton, rector of Hadleycum-Doveton, in the county of Southampton, and vicar of Delworth, in the county of Surrey. There he goes, in whose youth tract societies and adult schools *were not*, but who yet has done as much good and as little harm in his generation, has formed as just and as useful a link between the rich and the poor, the landlord and the peasant, as ever did honour to religion and to human nature. Perhaps this is only saying, in other words, that, under any system, benevolence and single-mindedness will produce their proper effects.

I am not, however, going to preach a sermon over my worthy friend—long may it be before his funeral sermon is preached! or even to write his *éloge*, for *éloges* are dull things; and to sit down with the intention of being dull,—to set about the matter with malice prepense (howbeit the calamity may sometimes happen accidentally), I hold to be an unnecessary impertinence. I am only to give a slight sketch, a sort of a bird's-eye view of my reverend friend's life, which, by the way, has been, except in one single particular, so barren of incidents, that it might almost pass for one of those proverbially uneventful narratives, The Lives of the Poets.

Fifty-six years ago, our portly rector—then, it may be presumed a sleek and comely bachelor—left college, where he had passed through his examinations and taken his degrees with respectable mediocrity, and was ordained to the curacy of St. Nicholas' parish, in our market-town of Belford, where, by the recommendation of his vicar, Dr. Grampound, he fixed himself in the small but neat first-floor of a reduced widow gentlewoman, who endeavoured to eke out a small annuity by letting lodgings at eight shillings a-week, linen, china, plate, glass, and waiting included, and by keeping a toy-shop, of which the whole stock, fiddles, drums, balls, dolls, and shuttlecocks, might safely be appraised at under eight pounds, including a stately rocking-horse, the poor widow's *cheval de betaille*, which had occupied one side of Mrs. Martin's shop from the time of her setting up in business, and still continued to keep his station uncheapened by her thrifty customers.

There, by the advice of Dr. Grampound, did he place himself on his arrival at Belford; and there he continued for full thirty years, occupying the same first-floor; the sitting-room—a pleasant apartment, with one window (for the little toy-shop was a corner-house) abutting on the High-bridge, and the other on the market-place—still, as at first, furnished with a Scotch carpet, cane chairs, a Pembroke table, and two hanging shelves, which seemed placed there less for their ostensible destination of holding books, sermons, and newspapers than for the purpose of bobbing against the head of every unwary person who might happen to sit down near the wall; and the small chamber behind, with the tent bed and dimity furniture, its mahogany chest of drawers, one chair and no table; with the self-same spare, quiet, decent landlady, in her faded but well preserved mourning gown, and the identical serving maiden, Patty, a demure, civil, modest damsel, dwarfed, as it should seem by constant curtseying, since from twelve years of age she had not grown an inch. Except the clock of time, which, however imperceptibly, does still keep moving, everything about the

little toy-shop in the market-place at Belford was at a stand still. The very tabby-cat which lay basking on the hearth, might have passed for his progenitor of happy memory, who took his station there the night of Mr. Singleton's arrival; and the self-same hobby-horse still stood rocking opposite the counter, the admiration of every urchin who passed the door, and so completely the pride of the mistress of the domicile, that it is to be questioned—convenient as 30s. lawful money of Great Britain might sometimes have proved to Mrs. Martin—whether she would not have felt more reluctance than pleasure in parting with this, the prime ornament of her stock.

There, however, the rocking-horse remained; and there remained Mr. Singleton, gradually advancing from a personable youth to a portly middle-aged man; and obscure and untempting as the station of a curate in a country-town may appear, it is doubtful whether those thirty years of comparative poverty were not amongst the happiest of his easy and tranquil life.

Very happy they undoubtedly were. To say nothing of the comforts provided for him by his assiduous landlady and her civil domestic, both of whom felt all the value of their kind, orderly, and considerate inmate; especially as compared with the racketty recruiting officers and troublesome single gentlewomen who had generally occupied the first-floor; our curate was in prime favour with his vicar, Dr. Grampound, a stately pillar of divinity, rigidly orthodox in all matters of church and state, who having a stall in a distant cathedral, and another living by the seaside, spent but little of this time at Belford, and had been so tormented by his three last curates—the first of whom was avowedly of whig politics, and more than suspected of Calvinistic religion; the second was a fox-hunter, and the third a poet—that he was delighted to intrust his flock to a staid, sober youth of high-church and tory principles, who never mounted a horse in his life, and would hardly have trusted himself on Mrs. Martin's steed of wood: and whose genius, so far from carrying him into any flights of poesy, never went beyond that weekly process of sermon-making which, as the doctor observed, was all that a sound divine need know of authorship. Never was curate a greater favourite with his principal. He has even been heard to prophesy that the young man would be a bishop.

Amongst the parishioners, high and low, Josiah was no less a favourite. The poor felt his benevolence, his integrity, his piety, and his steady kindness; whilst the richer classes (for in the good town of Belford few were absolutely rich) were won by his unaffected good-nature, the most popular of all qualities. There was nothing shining about the man, no danger of his setting the Thames on fire, and the gentlemen liked him none the worse for that; but his chief friends and allies were the ladies—not the young ladies, by whom, to say the truth, he was not so much courted, and whom, in return, he did not trouble himself to court; but the discreet mammas and grand-mammas, and maiden gentlewomen of a certain age, amongst whom he found himself considerably more valued and infinitely more at home.

Sooth to say, our staid, worthy, prudent, sober young man, had at no time of his life been endowed with the buoyant and mercurial spirit peculiar to youth. There was in him a peculiar analogy between the mind and the body. Both were heavy, sluggish, and slow. He was no strait-laced person either; he liked a joke in his own quiet way well enough; but as to encountering the quips, and cranks, and quiddities of a set of giddy girls, he would as soon have danced a cotilion. The gift was not in him. So with a wise instinct he stuck to their elders; called on them in the morning; drank tea with them at night; played whist, quadrille, cassino, backgammon, commerce, or lottery-tickets, as the party might require; told news and talked scandal as well as any woman among them all; accommodated a difference of four years' standing between the wife of the chief attorney and the sister of the principal physician; and was appealed to as absolute referee in a question of precedence between the widow of a post-captain and the lady of a colonel of volunteers, which had divided the whole gentility of town into parties. In short, he was such a favourite in the female world, then when the ladies of Belford (on their husbands setting up a weekly card-club at the

Crown) resolved to meet on the same night at each other's houses, Mr. Singleton was, by unanimous consent, the only gentleman admitted to the female coterie.

Happier man could hardly be, than the worthy Josiah in this fair company. At first, indeed, some slight interruptions to his comfort had offered themselves, in the shape of overtures matrimonial, from three mammas, two papas, one uncle, and (I grieve to say) one lady, an elderly young lady, a sort of dowager spinster in her own proper person, who, smitten with Mr. Singleton's excellent character, a small independence, besides his curacy in possession, and a trifling estate (much exaggerated by the gossip fame) in expectancy, and perhaps somewhat swayed by Dr. Grampound's magnificent prophecy, had, at the commencement of his career, respectively given him to understand that he might, if he chose, become more nearly related to them. This is a sort of dilemma which a well-bred man, and a man of humanity, (and our curate was both,) usually feels to be tolerably embarrassing. Josiah, however, extricated himself with his usual straightforward simplicity. He said, and said truly, "that he considered matrimony a great comfort—that he had a great respect for the state, and no disinclination to any of the ladies; but that he was a poor man, and could not afford so expensive a luxury." And with the exception of one mamma, who had nine unmarried daughters, and proposed waiting for a living, and the old young lady who had offered herself, and who kept her bed and threatened to die on his refusal, thus giving him the fright of having to bury his inamorata, and being haunted by her ghost—with these slight exceptions, everybody took his answer in good part.

As he advanced in life these sort of annoyances ceased—his staid, sober deportment, ruddy countenance, and portly person, giving him an air of being even older than he really was; so that he came to be considered as that privileged person, a confirmed old bachelor, the general beau of the female coterie, and the favourite marryer and christener of the town and neighbourhood. Nay, as years wore away and he began to marry some whom he had christened, and to bury many whom he had married, even Dr. Grampound's prophecy ceased to be remembered, and he appeared to be as firmly rooted in Belford as St. Nicholas's church, and as completely fixed in the toy-shop as the rocking-horse.

Destiny, however, had other things in store for him. The good town of Belford, as I have already hinted, is, to its own misfortune, a poor place! an independent borough, and subject, accordingly, to the infliction (privilege, I believe, the voters are pleased to call it) of an election. For thirty years—during which period there had been seven or eight of these visitations—the calamity had passed over so mildly, that, except three or four days of intolerable drunkenness, (accompanied, of course, by a sufficient number of broken heads,) no other mischief had occurred; the two great families, whig and tory, might be said to divide the town—for this was before the days of that active reformer, Stephen Land—having entered by agreement, into a compromise to return one member each; a compact which might have held good to this time, had not some slackness of attention on the part of the whigs (the Blues, as they were called in election jargon) provoked the Yellow or tory part of the corporation, to sign a requisition to the Hon. Mr. Delworth, to stand as their second candidate, and produced the novelty of a sharp contest in their hitherto peaceful borough. When it came, it came with a vengeance. It lasted eight days—as long as it could last. The dregs of that cup of evil were drained to the very bottom. Words are faint to describe the tumult, the turmoil, the blustering, the brawling, the abuse, the ill-will, the battles by tongue and by fist, of that disastrous time. At last the Yellows carried it by six; and on a petition and scrutiny in the House of Commons, by one single vote; and as Mr. Singleton had been engaged on the side of the winning party, not merely by his own political opinions, and those of his ancient vicar, Dr. Grampound, but, by the predilections of his female allies, who were Yellows to a man, those who understood the ordinary course of such matters were not greatly astonished, in the course of the ensuing three years, to find our good curate rector of Hadley, vicar of Delworth, and chaplain to the new member's father. One thing, however, was remarkakle, that, amidst all

the scurrility and ill blood of an election contest, and in spite of the envy which is pretty sure to follow a sudden change of fortune, Mr. Singleton neither made an enemy nor lost a friend. His peaceful, unoffending character disarmed offence. He had been unexpectedly useful to the winning party, not merely by knowing and having served many of the poorer voters, but by possessing one eminent qualification, not sufficiently valued or demanded in a canvasser; he was the best listener of the party, and is said to have gained the half-dozen votes which decided the election, by the mere process of letting people talk.

This talent, which, it is to be presumed, he acquired in the ladies' club at Belford, and which probably contributed to his popularity in that society, stood him in great stead in the aristocratic circle of Delworth Castle. The whole family was equally delighted and amused by his *bonhommie* and simplicity; and he, in return, captivated by their kindness, as well as grateful for their benefits, paid them a sincere and unfeigned homage, which trebled their good-will. Never was so honest and artless a courtier. There was something at once diverting and amiable in the ascendancy which everything connected with his patron held over Mr. Singleton's imagination. Loyal subject as he unquestionably was, the king, the queen, and the royal family would have been as nothing in his eyes, compared with Lord and Lady Delworth, and their illustrious offspring. He purchased a new peerage, which, in the course of a few days, opened involuntary on the honoured page which contained an account of their genealogy; his halls were hung with ground-plans of Hadley House, elevations of Delworth Castle, maps of the estate, prints of the late and present lords, and of a judge of Queen Anne's reign, and of a bishop of George the Second's, worthies of the family; he had, on his dining-room mantle-piece, models of two wings, once projected for Hadley, but which had never been built; and is said once to have bought on old head of the first Duke of Marlborough, which a cunning auctioneer had fobbed off upon him, by pretending that the great captain was a progenitor of his noble patron.

Besides this predominant taste, he soon began to indulge other inclinations at the rectory, which savoured a little of his old bachelor habits. He became a collector of shells and china, and fancier of tulips; and when he invited the coterie of Belford ladies to partake of a syllabub, astonished and delighted them by the performance of a piping bull-finch of his own teaching, who executed the Blue Bells of Scotland in a manner not to be surpassed by the barrel organ, by means of which this accomplished bird had been instructed. He engaged Mrs. Martin as his housekeeper, and Patty as his housemaid; set up the identical one-horse shay in which he was riding to day; became a member of the clerical dinner club, took in *St. James's Chronicle* and the *Gentleman's Magazine;* and was known by everybody as a confirmed old bachelor.

All these indications notwithstanding, nothing was less in his contemplation than to remain in that forlorn condition. Marriage, after all, was his predominant taste; his real fancy was for the ladies. He was fifty seven, or thereabouts, when he began to make love; but he has amply made up for his loss of time, by marrying no less than four wives since that period. Call him Mr. Singleton, indeed!—why, his proper name would be Doubleton. Four wives has he had, and of all varieties. His first was a pretty rosy smiling lass just come from school, who had known him all her life, and seemed to look upon him just as a school-girl does upon an indulgent grand-papa, who comes to fetch her for the holidays. She was as happy as a bird, poor thing! during the three months she lived with him—but then came a violent fever and carried her off.

His next wife was a pale, sickly, consumptive lady, not over young, for whose convenience he set up a carriage, and for whose health he travelled to Lisbon and Madeira, and Nice, and Florence, and Hastings, and Clifton, and all the places by sea and land, abroad and at home, where sick people go to get well,—at one of which she, poor lady, died.

Then he espoused a buxom, jolly, merry widow, who had herself had two husbands, and who seemed likely to see him out; but the small-pox came in her way, and she died also.

Then he married his present lady, a charming woman, neither fat nor thin,

nor young nor old—not very healthy, nor particularly sickly—who makes him very happy, and seems to find her own happiness in making him so.

He has no children by any of his wives; but has abundance of adherents in parlour and hall. Half the poor of the parish are occasionally to be found in his kitchen, and his dining-room is the seat of hospitality, not only to his old friends of the town and his new friends of the country, but to all the families of all his wives. He talks of them (for he talks more now than he did at the Belford election, having fallen into the gossiping habit of "narrative old age") in the quietest manner possible, mixing, in a way the most diverting and the most unconscious, stories of his first wife and his second, of his present and his last. He seems to have been perfectly happy with all of them, especially with this. But if he should have the misfortune to lose that delightful person, he would certainly console himself, and prove his respect for the state by marrying again; and such is his reputation as a super-excellent husband, especially in the main article of giving his wives their own way, that, in spite of his being even now an octogenarian, I have no doubt but there would be abundance of fair candidates for the heart and hand of the good Rector of Hadley.

Miss Mitford.

MY FRIEND BROMELY.

One dull snowy morning in January, while sitting at breakfast in my lodgings in a dull street in London, I received the following note:—"Dear Harry, I am confined to bed—very unwell—come and see me—immediately.—Yours always, T. Bromely."

This was very laconic. I had seen Bromely a few nights before at the opera in high spirits, and apparently in good health. I was rather surprised, therefore, at the import of the card, but thinking that it might be some trifling indisposition, I finished my breakfast and my newspaper before setting out to call. I found myself about one o'clock at his lodgings, and, on enquiring of the footman how his master was, I learned that he had been confined to bed two days, and was still unable to rise. I entered the chamber, and having shaken hands, began to give the customary consolations—hoped "that the illness was trifling," and so on; but after I had become familiar with the gloom of the apartment, which was darkened, and could distinguish objects properly, I was struck with the change which had taken place in his countenance. To be sure, there must always be a great difference in a man's appearance when he exchanges the gilding of a fashionable exterior for the paraphernalia of a sick-bed; but even after making allowance for this, I thought I discovered symptoms of a serious malady. The worst part of the affair was the utter prostration of mind which he had experienced, for he hardly appeared to listen to what I said; and on enquiring what physicians he had consulted, he answered "None; it was of no use." I of course told him of the madness, the folly of this, and said I would bring Dr. Berkely with me at four o'clock, though I hoped that by that time he would be better.

"To tell the truth," said he suddenly, "I am afraid to hear the sentence of a physician, for fear of having my suspicions confirmed; but I dare say it is the best way to be resolved at once. Do bring him. Pray, what day of the month is this, Harry?"

"The sixth," I answered. "Is it?" he exclaimed with an earnestness which made me start. "Harry, I *must* be well by the twelfth."

I told him if there was any thing I could do for him on that particular day, I would do it with pleasure. "No, no, no!" he answered impatiently; "I must be out myself. What *is* to be done? You cannot imagine the horrid necessity for my being out on that day, and I can't tell you."

I tried to make him explain what he seemed so anxious about, but he was impatient of the subject; and seeing I only irritated him by inquiries, I ceased to press them, and took my leave. It was evening before I saw Dr. Berkely. The rain was pouring in torrents, and it was pitchy dark. We drove to Bromely's, and I entered the chamber along with the doctor, who, seating himself by the fireside, put the usual medical questions, felt his patient's pulse, wrote a prescription, and was about to move off.

"One moment, doctor, if you please. I shall be obliged to you, if, for once, you will lay aside your professional caution, and speak out. What is the matter?" The doctor hesitated; said that at present he could not say with certainty what was the matter; would call to-morrow; hoped it was only cold; recommended quietness; and desired him to keep his mind free from alarm, as probably there was not much to apprehend.

Bromely was dissatisfied, but the doctor would not speak out. I took my leave along with him, and, on parting, inquired if he feared any thing very bad; and though he gave me no explicit answer, I was satisfied he considered the matter serious. He went to visit his patients, and I went to the opera. In the glitter of the performance, I forgot Bromely and his illness.

Another note next morning. It ran thus: "Dear Harry, I have had a miserable night, and am wretched. Do come and see me; it will be a charity," &c. The note was hardly legible, and had been written evidently in violent agitation. In half an hour after the receipt, I was in his chamber. He was looking miserably, but seemed rejoiced when I entered.

"You must think me very selfish in boring you thus," said he; "but if you knew how miserable I am when alone, I am sure you would not grudge me an hour of your society."

What could I do? Of course I was obliged to say, that, if my presence gave him any satisfaction, I would remain with pleasure. "No, no, no!" he answered quickly. "I know very well no one would prefer being here to enjoying himself in his own way, but I shall accept of your kindness for all that." I offered to read to him, but he declined; and, accordingly, I was obliged to keep up a conversation which was any thing but enlivening.

The doctor called, and having ascertained the state of his patient, wrote another prescription. and was about to retire. "Pray, sit down, doctor," said Bromely, "and do me a favour." The doctor took a chair and looked at his watch, as much as to hint that his time was precious. "Oh, it will be your own fault if you be detained, doctor. Answer me a very simple question: I am determined to know, and I have a reason for it—if you will not tell me, I shall call another physician, who may not be so scrupulous—am I in for a fever?" The doctor nodded assent.

Bromely sank back on his pillow at this confirmation of his suspicions, and was silent for some time. He seemed greatly agitated. "How long," at last said he, "how long, doctor, may it take to set me up again; that is, supposing I recover?" and he looked rather wildly in his face.

"It is really impossible to say, Mr. Bromely. At present, I assure you, I can have no idea, and the less you think about it, the better." "But I may be out by the twelfth?" "Impossible," answered the doctor.

I shall not soon forget the look the sick man gave when he received this laconic answer. Impatience and despair seemed to agitate him fearfully. "Dr. Berkely, come what may, you *must* and *shall* enable me to be out on that day. I think I could walk about just now." He made an effort to raise himself in bed, but a sudden sickness came over him, and, with a groan, his head again sought its pillow.

"Doctor," said he, after a pause, "could you give me such a draught as would enable me to go out for an hour or two? I care not how much I suffer as the consequence. I know," continued he, "you can prolong life at times, though you cannot save it. Come, doctor, have you such a medicine?"

"Mr. Bromely, this is foolish. Forgive me, it is sinful. You must not think of going out. I can give no such medicine as you ask. For your own safety, I advise you to compose yourself. Do not think of leaving your bed."

Bromely was suddenly silent, and seemed to be engaged in painful reflection. The doctor departed, promising to call again in the evening. A considerable time elapsed before he broke silence; and when he did so, I thought the tone of his voice had altered considerably. His look was fierce: I thought the fever had gone to his brain.

"Harry," said he, "I don't care for Berkely's opinion. Doctors have their creed, and they must stick to it for the sake of consistency. If disease be in my system, how can outward circumstances affect me? What does it matter whether I lie, or sit, or walk? Besides, I recollect an anecdote of a soldier in a retreat, who kept his saddle for a week, and the man had a malignant fever on him. What is there, then, to hinder me from going out for an hour? Harry, once for all, I must be out on the twelfth, and you must assist me."

"What *is* the meaning of this nonsense?" I exclaimed impatiently, for I had almost lost my temper at his folly—"what *can* there be which so imperiously demands your presence, at the risk, nay, the certainty of your death, being the consequence? It is absurd to talk of moving from your room; and I certainly shall not assist in any such mad attempt."

I was frightened at the expression of his countenance. He was generally an open-hearted and most kind-hearted being, but his look was now dreadful to behold; and when he spoke, though he trembled with passion, the words came slowly and distinctly. "Hear me, Harry: I am fixed in my resolve to be out by the twelfth, and, what is more, you *shall* assist in that very mad attempt." He laughed; but such a laugh! I was terrified. I was afraid that he was deranged—was in a state of raving madness. "Well," said I, with the view of soothing him, "we shall see how you are on that day, and then"—He interrupted me. "Oh, yes; try and soothe me like a child! Yes, we *shall* see on that day." And he was silent.

Days rolled on, and still the same wild determination remained, and every day only saw his resolution become stronger, if possible. He laughed at bodily pain, philosophised upon it, made me read medical books upon fever and delirium, and reasoned upon them as abstract speculations; always ending by repeating his fixed resolution to be out on the twelfth.

It was on the evening of the eleventh that I was sitting with him. He was in a state of high excitement, and talked of going out to-morrow as a thing of course—said I must go with him, in a coach, and implored my acquiescence in terms which distressed me. I had hitherto refrained from contradicting him, as I thought the irritation caused by my opposition made him worse; but now I thought it was high time to tell him my mind, and did so. I represented to him as strongly as possible the madness, the impossibility of his going out—nay, more, that force was to be used to compel him to remain in bed if he persisted in the attempt—and tried by every means in my power to dissuade him from it. He heard me with perfect quietness, though with impatience. When I had finished, he made no answer, but, to my astonishment, got out of bed, threw a dressing-gown about him, walked firmly across the room, and, opening a drawer, took out a pair of dumb-bells, and having exercised them in the usual way for about a minute, put them back in their place, and returned to bed.

"Every night," said he, "since I have been confined, I have done this; and as long as I can

do it, no one shall persuade me that I can't go out; and, as for force," continued he, "look here!" He opened a case which lay at the back of his bed, and produced a pair of pistols, nodded significantly, and replaced them. It was in vain to remonstrate. I still, of course, thought the necessity of his being out existed only in his imagination, and I determined to take serious measures for his confinement. At night I easily got possession of the pistols.

Next day I called, as he had made me solemnly promise to do. He had discovered that the pistols had been taken away, and I expected a violent scene, which I was prepared for. I was mistaken, however. He lay a few minutes perfectly silent; and when he spoke, he did so slowly and mildly.

"Harry," said he, "are you determined not to assist me in going out to-day—for an hour—or two?" I shook my head.

"When I assure you," continued he, calmly, "when I assure you that my honour, and the honour of my family—nay, that my life depends upon it?"

I was astonished at the calmness and firmness with which he spoke, but I was determined not to give way. "Bromely," said I, "once more for all, I will not be accessary to your death, and it is idle to say another word about it."

"Well," said he, "I have now no alternative but to speak out. Is the door shut?" I answered in the affirmative. "Come near me." I approached the bed.

He moved his lips two or three times as if he had been about to speak, but his tongue refused to perform its office; a flush spread over him as he raised himself on one arm, and, looking me steadfastly and sternly in the face, whispered,

"Harry, I HAVE FORGED A BILL."

I forget what exclamation I made. I sat down by the fire, and was silent for some time. I knew that he was watching every motion, but I knew not what to say. I was thankful that he spoke first, though bitterly.

"Well," said he, "you know all, and I suppose are thinking of a decent excuse for shaking me off. And the truth is, Harry, though you should go this instant, I shall not blame you."

"You wrong me," I said; "but what on earth could have tempted you to such an act of madness?"

"What could tempt me? Do you recollect the night we were at Mallet's, some months ago, when I won eight hundred pounds from young Denson? You won from him yourself, Harry. I thought he was rich. He left the table that night not worth a farthing. A fortnight afterwards, I learned that his boy was lying dead in his house, and he had not the means of burying him; that his wife was distracted, and that he was starving. At that moment there was an execution or some such thing going on in the house for 1000*l.* What could I do? I had not the money. I had been the cause of his ruin. I forged a bill upon old Denham for 1500*l.* and gave Denson the money. I expected to have been in funds long before this, but have been disappointed. The bill is due on the 13th—you see I am a correct man of business—and unless it be taken up to-day, all must come out to morrow; and you remember the fate of Dr. Dodd—it will be mine. Now, will you lend me a hand?"

"With all my heart," said I, "but how? I have not half the money."

"God bless you, Harry. I'll get the money, but then I must make another confession." "To whom?" said I. "To my sister Jane, Lady Dashley."

"Will Lady Dashley give you money?" "Will she not, and the honour of the family at stake? Come assist me to rise."

I did get him out of bed, and his clothes on. He fainted once, and I gave up all for lost; but he recovered, and his resolution was as strong as ever. I had almost to carry him to the coach, and, when seated there, had to support him from falling. By the time we had approached Lady Dashley's, he rallied; and though I trembled for the result, he went out firmly, but deadly pale, and walked into the house. I was left in no enviable state. A quarter of an hour passed away, and no tidings; another quarter had nearly been measured, when a servant came out and requested me to walk in. I was shown into a parlour where Bromely was lying on a sofa. His sister, Lady Dashley, was at a writing-desk, and evidently dreadfully agitated; there was no time for salutations; she advanced to meet me.

"You know this dreadful business. Here is a draft on Coutts for the amount. I know there is not so much, but I daresay they will not refuse; at all events you must try. Hasten; let me know the moment you get the business finished."

Bromely was too much exhausted to go with me. I bolted into the coach, gave the driver a sovereign to drive with all the speed he could—presented the cheque at Coutts's; it was shown to one of the partners. I was in a dreadful state of suspense; but it was passed. I got the money, and drove at equal speed to the bank at which the bill was payable. I alighted, and, for the first time, hesitated. I was in a state of considerable agitation, and I must appear calm to prevent suspicion. After pausing a few minutes to recover myself, I walked calmly into the telling room of the bank, and asked as coolly as possible for Mr. Denham's bill.

There was no such bill. I recollected in an instant that it was due only on the morrow. I metioned this, and added that it would be obliging if they would take payment of the bill to-day. It was got and paid, and in my possession. My feelings must have betrayed me when I had the fatal document in my hand, for the clerk did look suspicious. However, it *was* in my possession, and I was again at the coach in an instant. Driving with the former rapidity, I was at Lady Dashley's door in a twinkling. I rushed up stairs, and found the parties as I had left them. Neither had power to utter a syllable.

"There is the bill," said I, putting it in the fire.

I never witnessed such a relief to two human beings. It is impossible to record the lady's thanks and Bromely's gratitude. I got him to his lodgings. He was dreadfully ill for months, and raved continually of bills, and banks, and felony, but he recovered.

HE HAS NOT TOUCHED CARD NOR DICE-BOX SINCE.

THE DECAYED GENTLEWOMAN.

There is something, it appears to us, deeply and peculiarly affecting in the expression—applied to persons in distress —"they have seen better days.". No claim upon our sympathy touches us so nearly as this. It at once brings before our minds the possibility of a change in our own circumstances, and no appeal—such is our nature—comes so home to our bosoms as that which suggests the chance of ourselves and those dear to us having one day to ask for such pity as is called for from us. When woman, in particular, gentle, good, and unobtrusive, is the unfortunate object that has "seen better days," the case is still more strongly calculated to move our compassion; for we are usually inclined to presume, and with probability, that, though she is a participator in the sad reverse, she could not have had any blameable share in producing it. Of all objects of pity, indeed, under the sun, the woman who has undergone a change in her estate, and bears her fall with uncomplaining mildness and patience, is one of the most truly and profoundly interesting. Shoeless, garmentless, homeless poverty, poverty that sits by the wayside begging with its many wants obtruded on every hand, never touches the soul with a pang a hundreth part so acute, as does the shrinking, carefully concealed indigence of the Decayed Gentlewoman.

Mrs. Mellick of Westborough was so exactly the realization of this character, that, in describing her, we shall describe the class, an interesting and peculiar one, to which she belonged. In person she was above the middle size, but of a slender make; in middle life she looked much older than she really was, but she gained, as she advanced towards seventy, a well-preserved and comely look, which it was a pleasure to see. In fact, while the early troubles of her life made her old before her time, the quiet unruffled tenor of her later years had in some measure restored her original appearance, though her hour of bodily and mental ease came too late to save many traces of her youthful beauty.

About forty years before she reached the time of life referred to, Mrs. Mellick's evil day had come to pass, in the ruin and sudden death of her husband, the last of an old landed family in the neighbourhood of Westborough. But amid the wreck of her fortunes, she had found some individuals not unmindful of her conduct in her prosperity; and it is to the honour of our nature, that persons, who, like her, have fallen from their prosperous estate, do find, in general, some humble shelter, to which they are welcome in memory of the past. It is true, that, when she was received into the house of Mr. Mason, a cabinetmaker in Westborough, Mrs. Mellick sought nothing in charity, nor did she ever need to do so while she lived there. But then Mr. and Mrs. Mason did not know that the case would turn out thus, and therefore they are entitled to praise for their conduct. A small parlour and bedroom was all that Mrs. Mellick and her little boy required, and, indeed, the cabinetmaker had no more to give. Year after year went on, subsequently to this arrangement; Mrs. Mellick's little boy was put to school by her relations, and the Masons and their inmate found themselves so mutually agreeable, that neither ever thought of change. Mrs. Mason, indeed, was in the habit of remarking to her acquaintances, when her lodger first came, "that as to the money they received, it was a mere nothing; but then they had reason to think the poor lady had not much to spare; besides, whatever the world might say of Mr. Mellick, he had always behaved well to them, and paid honestly for what work was done for him, and *that* was more than could be said of many; and poor Mrs. Mellick was so quiet, and gave so little trouble, that, for her part, she was glad to have her;" and so on, always winding up her insinuations of small payment by a reclaiming clause to her lodger's advantage.

The circumstance of Mr. Mason being a cabinetmaker, turned out greatly to Mrs. Mellick's comfort as regarded lodge-

ment. As her worth became known to the good couple with whom she lived, they gave her the benefit of all the nice little pieces of furniture—the walnut bedstead, the mahogany chest of drawers, the oaken cupboard, inlaid with ivory and parti-coloured woods, and other articles—all manufactured by Mr. Mason at his leisure hours. Into the parlour where these things stood, and which was further decorated with shell-work and other ornaments, visitors were freely admitted; but into the bedroom beyond, Mrs. Mason only was privileged by her lodger with the right of entrance. This exclusion, it was supposed, had some connection with the portrait of Mr. Mellick, painted in the heyday of his youth, which was known to hang within.

Visitors to Mrs. Mellick had to pass through her landlady's kitchen, and, then ascending by two steps into the parlour, at once the Decayed Gentlewoman was before them, a woman whose hand a duke might have kissed without derogating from his dignity, and yet who had less to live upon than the stipend he paid to his valet! She sat regularly in one place—in an ancient chair of faded damask—near the fire, out of the draught, and with her back to the window. She was always dressed in black, and a most respectable and interesting figure she was, in spite of her antique garments, dyed though they might have been. Her long satin cloak, well wadded, and trimmed with its enduring narrow fur, and her small but at one time costly ermine muff, and her quiet self-possessed air, established her at once for a lady born and bred. It was well for Mrs. Mellick that in the days of her full purse, silks and satins were made for wear, and that nobody wore any worse velvets than those of Genoa. But, in truth, the clothes of the Decayed Gentlewoman never *did* wear out, for with what care were they husbanded! Worn only, in their first estate, to go out in, or to grace the call of some especial visitor; never burnt brown by the fire; never exposed to the tumbling of disorderly children; never worn to carve great dinners in; worn with a sense of their value ever before the mind; invisibly darned and repaired if accident happened; turned if soiled, and re-turned when the first side had freshened; pinned up in a napkin, and put by without crease or false fold, under secure lock and key. Well may the best gown wear for ever—wear till the heartless and the fastidious make a jest of it! Again, how wonderfully is the every-day dress kept in a visibly good condition! But, oh! the darns and joins and laboriously-kept-together parts which are needfully concealed under the nice muslin apron and the over-handkerchief! I could shed tears when I look at the decent appearance of the Decayed Gentlewoman in her every-day dress; for I know how every thin place has been anticipated, how the tatter that *would* come, in spite of prevention, has been subject of regret and anxiety! Not one corner of that handkerchief, artlessly as its folds may seem to be disposed, but has a purpose in its arrangement—has some little darn, or spot worn into visible network—to hide from the prying eye! And this garment, for which the dealer in cast-off apparel would not give you three groats, may be put off for one still more dilapidated, or for a cotton wrapper, when no one is expected to come, and yet even this shall have no observable rent or tatter about it! The poverty of the Decayed Gentlewoman is a respectable thing; it has nothing squalid nor sordid about it; it can never make her an object of vulgar pity; on the contrary, it excites the esteem, nay, the very reverence, of good hearts!

The sombreness of Mrs. Mellick's dress was relieved by the white apron, always spotless, save for those pertinacious iron-moulds, which, spite of salt of lemons, *will* come in old muslin. The folds of the apron were always fresh; and a white India muslin handkerchief was laid in delicate fold over her bosom. God help her! those very handkerchiefs were poor Mr. Mellick's cravats; and long was it before she could prevail upon herself to apply them to her own use; and when at length she did, compelled by her own store being exhausted, she had forcibly to put away the agonising consciousness, and assiduously to occupy her mind with other thoughts. But that is years since, and her heart has long beat quiescently under the fair folds of the muslin. A very nice rather high cap, but not of the widow's form, completed her costume; the clear starching and making up of

which was always an object of great attention, although nobody, except Mrs. Mason and her little maid, ever saw her about the first part of the operation.

Of Mrs. Mellick's little parlour, a word must be said; and the more so, because in its leading features the description will apply to the parlour of every Decayed Gentlewoman. Mrs. Mellick's room was small and low, but not unpleasant looking; with two old-fashioned sash-windows, screened by white netted blinds, scrupulously clean. Within a recess or alcove were a few shelves decorated with half-a-dozen old china teacups and saucers, three jars, and certain nondescript vessels of an antique cast, and the grate was so bricked internally as to consume the least possible quantity of fuel, consistent with the retention of the character of a fire. An antiquated pier-glass and two good prints decorated the walls, which were covered with old-fashioned paper. The chairs were plain, but bright and polished, and in one corner, on a turn-down stand of Mr. Mason's making, stood a little glass, filled with flowers, the proceeds of the small garden attached to the house. On the table before the venerable inmate of the chamber, might always be seen her knitting or netting, and most commonly her Prayer-book. On one of the window seats lay two or three volumes of the Ladies' Magazine, Young's Night Thoughts, Cowper's Poems, Hervey's Meditations, and a large Family Bible. In the latter book Mrs. Mellick very frequently read, for she was devout, not only in seeming, but in sincerity. As if essential to the character in which we have presented her, she was a devout Church-of-England lady; and bad indeed must the weather have been, when her well-preserved old silk umbrella was not seen, or the sound of her pattens heard, at the hour of service in the church of Westborough.

This portrait of a Decayed Gentlewoman will call up the recollection, we imagine, of some counterpart or other in the minds of many of our readers. The young will remember calling, it may be, with their mammas upon some ancient and venerable old lady, who presented them with a modicum of comfits taken from an old cupboard, where they were kept in the sugar bowl of a tea set of china. A canister of gingerbread nuts was the treasure Mrs. Mellick kept for this purpose. On an elderly person she occasionally bestowed a glass of wine; and as this was always remarked to be of a fine quality, it was conjectured that some rich relation now and then sent her a bottle or two as a present; for it was guessed that she could not herself afford it out of her small means. And what were these means? Thirty pounds a-year, the joint annuity of two relations. Small occasional presents she might receive in addition to this; but of a certainty they were like angel visits, "few and far between." One present which Mrs. Mellick regularly got, deserves mention. This was a barrel of oysters, which she received annually from her son in London, where he had commenced practice as physician, and subsequently had married, and had a large family. In return, Mrs. Mellick devoted much of her time to the knitting of lamb's-wool stockings for her grandchildren. The London papers were also regularly sent to Mrs. Mellick by her son, and this deserves notice as being a characteristic feature of the old lady's caste. Decayed Gentlewomen in provincial situations always receive second-hand metropolitan papers; and this gives them no small superiority in a certain way, enabling them to oblige their news-loving neighbours and to assume credit for the possession of rich friends far away. But this was not Mrs. Mellick's disposition or desire.

With thirty pounds a-year only, and every thing to find out of it, Mrs. Mellick could neither give parties nor indulge in luxurious living for herself. The Decayed Gentlewoman's eating, like her dress, was reduced to the very lowest possible scale of expenditure; and Mrs. Mason could tell, if she would, how short the commons of her inmate often were. She wondered with herself how the poor lady kept soul and body together on the modicum of victuals that she consumed; and many a time she added from her own more amply supplied table any savoury morsel which she thought could not be unpalatable to the lady, and yet might look rather like a little polite attention than a gift out of pure charity. Ill as Mrs. Mellick, however, could afford to entertain company, she did, nevertheless,

to relieve her mind perhaps of a sense of obligation, invite now and then two or three quiet ladies to take a cup of tea with her. And then came out that little chased silver tea-pot, about the size and as round as a small melon, that dainty silver cream-jug, and that pair of silver candlesticks, which, together with a gold etui-case, and a most elaborate and delicately carved gold snuff-box, were, as she never failed to relate during tea, the legacy of her godmother, together with the history of the old lady, which it must be confessed was well worth hearing. But she did not tell how this legacy came to her on the very day of poor Mellick's funeral, and being put aside in the overwhelming agony of the time into her wardrobe, was, unknown to herself, saved among her clothes from the general wreck which followed. An incident like this, connected with that sad event, she could never have related. No allusion was ever made by her to the dark times of her ruined hopes and fortunes. And though people wondered at her settling for life in the neighbourhood of her former happiness and later misfortunes, and it perhaps might not be easy to account for such a choice, still her sense of suffering was so great, that, during forty years, she was never known to walk upon the road that led to her former residence, even though the house was soon taken down, the materials sold, the whole demesne ploughed, planted, and every way changed, so that she could not have known where it had stood. Her sensibilities towards the past were very acute; her study seemed to be to forget all connected with it. Mellick-field was as though it had never been, and she never alluded to it, except to her most intimate friends, and then only casually.

But though Mrs. Mellick, like all those of her class who are possessed of keen sensibilities, was unable to talk of the circumstances immediately and intimately connected with her former condition, she was not so unwilling to converse of the collateral affairs, as they may be called, relating to past times. She had some remote family connection with two noble houses, and in the heyday of her prosperity, an earl, her cousin, had lunched at Mellick-field, as he passed through the county; this established the validity of her claim with the whole neighbourhood, and left a lasting interest in her own heart for every branch of his widely extended family. Laterally and collaterally she knew how they had branched out, and had a sort of maternal anxiety about the younger scions of the house; wondered how they were to be provided for; and if any of the name or connection signalised themselves at home or abroad, she never failed to relate it. She had a feeling of strong regard for old George III. and his queen; thought they were good family people, and vastly superior to their successors. The fact was, when she was young she passed three years in London with relations who lived near the palace, and the princes and princesses, the old king aud queen, were mixed up in her memory with many a bright young remembrance, that not even the troubles of her after life could obliterate.

If Mrs. Mellick, as we have said, upon her thirty pounds a-year, could be no giver of parties, she still was often invited to many quiet family parties in Westborough. She was an excellent hand at a rubber of whist, and with some old gentlemen of the place was a favourite partner; and, moreover, as she had two tolerably handsome visiting gowns, and was a person of good presence, a lady, even scrupulous as to the appearance of her rooms, could never object to Mrs. Mellick on that score. But as no Decayed Gentlewoman may ever calculate on being sent home in the carriages of her friends, or on being attended by their liveried servants, and equally rarely may look to have the escort of any gentleman who would go out of his way to leave her at her own door, so dear Mrs. Mellick was always fetched home by Mrs. Mason's little maid, who came with a modest rap and low voice, bringing lantern and cloak, as the night might be, to convoy home the lady at ten, or at farthest half an hour later.

Through the whole of her life, Mrs. Mellick was a proof how totally independent of large income is personal respectability. Its great secret is self-respect. Poverty could never degrade such as she, for she never degraded herself by pretence or duplicity.

RAMBLES IN MEXICO.

TAMPICO.

It was well that our minds, on landing, were really disposed to contentment, and that we were inclined to overlook minor grievances in our escape from far greater, otherwise, there were circumstances attending our first début in this land of delights, teeming, as we supposed, with gold and silver, and the richest fruits of the earth, which were certainly far more agreeable, setting aside the causes of trial at which I hinted at the close of my last letter.

The first thing we experienced, which considerably surprised us on placing foot in the town, was the great difficulty of finding a *shelter*: and we were in the end fain to put up, all three, with a small room in the second story of a square, ill-built, open, wood barrack, the ground floor of which served as a billiard room and gambling house to the piebald population of Tampico de las Tamaulipas.

The second thing which quite horrified us, was the difficulty of procuring *food* wherewith to satisfy the appetites of three able-bodied gentlemen just from sea. Eggs we found were rare, meat was rarer, bread the rarest of all; and, except at certain hours of the day, when it was doled forth in most apologetic morsels, could not be had for love and money.

The third thing in my list, which nearly petrified us, was the *cold*. Lying under the tropic of Cancer, we were absolutely forced to rise in the night, and dress ourselves before we could sleep.

The fourth—but no, I will save a few miseries to qualify some future page of enjoyment.

As late as 1825, the site of the present town of Tampico was solely occupied by a few Indian huts, and the feeble commerce carried on in the port was concentrated at the Pueblo Viejo, or Old Town, situated on the shore of a shallow lagoon a few miles distant, in the state of Vera Cruz. The difficulty of approach, added to the heavy dues exacted for all goods crossing into the state of Tamaulipas on their road to the interior, seems to have directed the attention of the merchants and other speculators to the present site. And truly no possible position could have been better chosen, as it is nearer the bar, situated on the main river, with sufficient depth of water to admit vessels of burden to anchor close to the town, and, moreover, commands an unimpeded navigation for one hundred and twenty miles up the country. Were it not for the annual visits of the yellow fever, and irremediable difficulties which the interposition of the bar imposes upon the merchant, there is no doubt that Tampico would become the most flourishing port in New Spain. As it is, vessels are frequently detained four or five months; being blown off and on by the frequent severe gales, before they can unload and get inside the bar; and held prisoners as long, before they can cross it again.

The new town is built in regular squares, upon the narrow and depressed termination of a rocky peninsula, at the lower extremity of a cluster of lakes which empty their waters into the gulf by the river Panuco. The houses have no pretension to uniformity in their style of architecture. The European merchant builds substantial stone stores and dwelling houses, according to the fashion of his country. The American runs up his flimsy clap board edifices. The Mexican of Spanish descent exhibits his taste and his knowledge of the climate by low thick walls, gayly painted and flat-roofed habitations, with internal courts; and the Indian raises his bamboo cage, plastered with mud, and thatched with palm leaves, according to the custom of his forefathers.

The population is, of course, the most mongrel that can be conceived. The commerce of the port is principally in the hands of foreigners; the imports consisting of every imaginable fabric, whether their introduction is consistent with the existing laws of the republic or not. Smuggling is reduced to a system. The exports are confined to specie and fustic alone. Of the former, seven millions of dollars from the upper provinces were shipped at this port alone, during the year 1833.

The sum of the population the preceding year, before the cholera broke out, had been estimated at five thousand. Of these, three thousand are said to have been swept away: and though the town was rapidly recruiting its numbers at the time of our visit, the enormous price paid for every article, whether of foreign or domestic production, as well as for labour, is hardly to be credited. Wages for the poorest mason or carpenter, generally English or German, amounted to three or four dollars a day: indeed, I knew one instance of a "turn out" of the workmen employed upon the house of one of the principal merchants, who were not content with four dollars, but laid a claim to six! The most ragged urchin lying all day under the shade in the street, if asked to lend a hand to aid the operations of the merchant for a few hours, will not stir till he has made his bargain for a couple of dollars payment. You cannot cross the river, a row of five minutes, for less. To come up from the bar, a distance of six miles, though you be ten in company—ten dollars per head is the sum demanded. Good law, and good physicking—and one might add, good advice, that cheapest of all articles in an ordinary state of society—cannot be had for love or money. This, among a beggarly, half-naked population, (I cry your pardon for speaking so of a sovereign people,) would be perfectly laughable, if it were not felt to be a serious matter. You may remark, that both classes, native and foreign, have the same lust of gain; they only differ in their mode of following it, the one striving for it by hook and crook, the others waiting till it drops before their noses.

While I am scrawling these general outlines upon paper, I may at once say that the tone of society is neither creditable to the superior education of European residents, nor to the lofty pretensions of the Mexican *employés*, who form the nucleus of native society here. The latter are ignorant and debased, insufferably

bigoted and proud: jealous of foreigners, and, I believe, the majority here, as throughout the country, thoroughly unprincipled. Extraordinary indeed must the virtue be, which will make the possessor sensible to stern justice, and insensible to a bribe.

As to religion—name it not: the God of the South is Mammon. There is nothing in the degraded ultra-Cotholocism of New Spain which can touch the heart and elevate human nature; and, unfortunately, the majority of the young European merchants who resort here to drive their gainful commerce, evince by word and deed, that the lessons of their youth, and the God of their fathers, are alike both forgotten. Had there been more family men among them, one might perhaps have met with more honourable exceptions. Like many *mauvais sujets* all the world over, they were in general good-tempered, serviceable fellows; and, personally, we had nothing to complain of, as far as our slight intercourse with them went.

I have summarily mentioned the two principal classes of the inhabitants, forming, as it were, the elite of the town. It may be observed of the common people, that, little as can be said in their favour as a mass, individually they are by far the most picturesque in form, manner, and clothing. Their characters and costumes are as various as their blood. The poor Indian is distinguished by his sandalled foot, miserable attire, and subdued air. He, at least, seems to have gained nothing by the change of masters. How should he! He was the slave of the few, now he is the slave of the many. If the Spaniard did little to raise the character of the conquered vassal, the Mexican does less, if possible, to instruct the darker skin whom he pretends to consider politically as his equal, but whom, in fact, he always treats as his inferior. They are as they ever were—governed by the priests, and kept in utter ignorance. They supply the market with fruits, water, and vegetables.

You have here the modern Mexican of every degree, from the substantial *ranchero*, or proprietor, bespurred, and bedizened in the full and showy Mexican costume of stamped leather, embroidered vest, and gaudy *serape*, and curbing a wild horse loaded with furniture; or the trusty *arriero*, with his long string of mules, his precious cargo of specie, and his train of assistant *mozos;* down to the poor adventurer whose whole wardrobe consists of a pair of faded velveteen trousers slit half way up the leg, and a tawdry cloak, haunting the gambling table, and living upon what fortune sends.

The costumes are extremely picturesque from their diversity of colour and pattern, aud the brilliant hues in fashion. I have omitted to mention the soldiery, than which a more shabaroon, cut-throat set, whether officers or men, I never beheld. It is said that they fight well. I do not dispute the *on dit*, but from all the evidence I could ever collect, I have considerable difficulty in believing it. I think they would run better; and I know that on most occasions, they do so with very slight provocation. As to costume, nothing could be more diverting. There was *an orderly* in attendance on a general officer dwelling in our vicinity, who used to shamble past our quarters every morning at a certain hour, garbed in a short coatee, richly embroidered with worsted, a clumsy sword, a cap and sash, and never a strap or shred upon his lower limbs—saving your presence.

The Fonda de la Bolza, where you have seen us lodged, was at the time of our visit, in the hands of a Frenchman. He was on the point of retiring with a handsome independence drawn from divers sources: to wit, the gleanings of the billiard tables below stairs—the proceeds of the miserable lodgings above, let to gentlemen who could, unfortunately, not better themselves; those of a bar for the dispensation of *aqua ardiente*, (strong waters,) lemonade, and liqueurs; a table d'hote, morning and evening, furnished with a little fish, a little flesh, and a little fowl, and garnished with gizzard, tripe, ox cheek, yams, black beans, and bananas; and lastly, a gaming table in a retired piazza, over which he acted as presiding genius and banker.

Uncomfortable within, and environed with filth and garbage without, there was little in the Fonda to keep us willing prisoners; for we happened to be addicted neither to tippling nor gambling; and our first care after realizing our position, was to contrive the means of passing as much of our time as possible out of doors.

A few days gave us an insight into all the capabilities of the spot where we were cooped up. Society, I have said, was very confined. The young foreigners, when emancipated from their counting-houses, passed their evenings in riding in the vicinity; playing at bowls, or worse, at *monte;* or made an attempt to get up a waltz by the aid of a poor pianoforte, a fife, and a pair of matrons. Books and literature, or the study of natural history, had no votaries among them. Now and then a tawdry masquerade, in which all classes mingled, was the amusement of the evening; but they were dull and stupid as might be, and only to be surpassed in stupidity by the fandangoes danced by the lower orders once or twice a week, under an open thatched shed, in the outskirts of the town.

By aid of sundry letters of credit, and the real kindness of the gentleman who acted as English and American consul, to whom we were all along greatly indebted, we soon achieved the purchase of horses. They may always be purchased—as to selling them, that, we found on divers occasions, to be quite another affair. We also hired *an orderly* to wait upon our donships; and set to work to make such preparations for our journey into the interior as were in our power, in the absence of all the accoutrements purchased at New Orleans for the purpose; and, moreover, took occasion, as weather and temper invited, to garb ourselves in our best—in which you will recollect we were not much embarrassed

by variety of choice—to sneak out of our den at the Bolza, and ride about the environs.

These rides, however, were principally confined to the evening hours preceding sunset, and to the back of the ridge on the San Luis Potosi road, from many of the banana and sugar plantations on which line, the view over the nearer lakes, and towards the distant Siersa Madre, a spur of which appeared far to the southward, was uncommonly beautiful.

A rocky bluff overhanging the Panuco, at the upper end of the town just above the market, was the scene of almost a daily visit, as it commanded an extended view over the distant country both far and near. A little above this point, the river Tammasee, draining the Lago Chairel, and many other lagoons covering a vast tract of country to the westward, forms its junction with the Panuco or Tula, which comes from afar, flowing in a most graceful sweep among low wooded islands from the south-west. Beyond the farther shore lies the lagoon of Pueblo Viego; and farther to the south, far in the distance, the fertile uplands of the Huastec, and the advanced spurs of the eastern Cordillera of Mexico.

There is yet a distant object, which excites the marvel of the traveller at Tampico, and this is the Bernal, an isolated mountain, rising like a huge stack, with smooth perpendicular sides, and jagged summit, over the level line of the horizon to the westward. It is about thirty leagues distant, if we were rightly informed.

Immediately above Tampico, the peninsula, which is rendered such by the lagoon Carpentaro at the back of the town, continues to rise gradually towards the westward, and appears crowded by the Indian huts. They and their bamboo enclosures are nearly buried in a tangled labyrinth of weed of the Solanum species, overtopped occasionally by a banana, or the tall mutilated trunk of a yellow-wood tree.

At early morning the landing below the bluff might be observed beset by the market boats and canoes of the Indians, laden with the produce of the farms of the upper district—sugar-cane, bamboo, hay, and fruit, or with loads of sweet water brought down the Tammasee. At the same hour the shore was lined by females standing up to their knees in water, patiently labouring at the purification of some article of apparel, in defiance of the alligators swarming on the neighbouring swampy shore, and disporting themselves in the river. Lower down, abreast of the custom-house, and busy market-place, appeared the various foreign merchant vessels at anchor; and still farther to the left, the range of hills which rise above Pueblo Viejo, and form the right bank of the Panuco to the gulf. Nothing could exceed the picturesque appearance of many of the figures which here continually pass before us, or the classic character of the women, laden with the Etruscan-shaped water jar of the country; and many a time were we allured to maintain our post, till the heat of the sun, and the effluvia of putrid carcasses which line the shore, forced us to retire. The most striking features of the same view were to be commanded from any of the farms situated to the right of the St. Luis Potosi road, which, from the peculiar water-girt position of the town, formed the only evening ride of all the gallants of Tampico; the road to the bar being nearly impassable, on account of the state of the intervening swamps.

Every evening during this period of our detention, our tawdry retainer, Juliano, appeared about an hour before sunset, with our horses, at the door of the Bolza, and mounting, we never failed to forget the ennui of our position, and the heat and annoyances of midday, in our two hours' gallop amid scenes of such beauty.

But you will not be tempted to suspect that I could be, with my prying disposition, in a new country, teeming with novelty and wonders in natural history, without a partial resumption of my wonted habit of an occasional stroll on foot, in spite of heat, insects, and the robbers, from whom there was of course some risk, as in other highly civilized countries. "What was the heat to me," thought I, "I can bear it; and the insects, they are what I have come in search of. What are the robbers to me, they will not find my present wardrobe worth cutting my throat for:" so leaving my two companions to their sedentary philosophy, and their siestas, which were sometimes taken by anticipation in the morning as well as afternoon—as soon as the weather became genial, I might be daily seen, after securing a breakfast, which, considering how doubtful the dinner was, was a very necessary precaution, stealing off up to the bluff, and among the fragile Indian huts. My accoutrement consisted of a good cudgel, a long sharp knife, the same that had operated upon the bisons, a few thousand entomological pins, a bag of seeds, and a broad-eaved palmetto *sombrero*.

That was certainly a species of intoxication! All was new, except the earth I trod upon—trees, shrubs, plants, insects, and birds. I gathered, examined, impaled. No flower courted my admiring gaze in vain. No insect hummed in my ear unattended to. If I skirted the riverside—there was the garrulous jackdaw with his mates quarrelling in their indescribable manner among the glossy leaves and innumerable stems of the mangroves; the white snow crane standing motionless in the shallow water, or a flight of vultures hovering over a dark corner, where my approach had scared them from a bloated carcass—not unfrequently a humnn one. Farther, the huge slimy log, half buried in the mud, crowded with terrapins; and the loathsome alligator squatting among the reeds on the shore. I would then follow one of those narrow winding paths cut in that thick dense shrubbery which covers a great portion of the surface of the country in the vicinity of Tampico—a wilder ness of curious trees and thickets, matted and woven together with ten thousand creepers and parasitical plants, with their graceful hanging flowers, seed vessels—vines, passifloras, and splendid convolvuli rendered quite

impervious by the thorny nature of the covert, and the rank growth of prickly aloes which form the undergrowth. These were the paradise of the parrot and other gaudy rivals. Here and there, a small enclosure of sugarcane, and a picturesque Indian hut, would rise on the ordinary solitude of my stroll. I always found the pure-blooded native friendly: and a yard of sugarcane, a gnurd of water, and perhaps a glass of *aqua ardiente*, were always at my service. For a whole week I found these daily predatory walks perfectly delightful. I rushed into every thieket, I culled every flower, I handled everything within reach, aud longed to handle a great deal which was beyond it. I went wheresoever I listed, nothing doubting; and you certainly have no suspicion of the cause which was all this time, silently but surely, operating a total change in my taste, habits, and pursuits.

I have described what I was the first week: I will now tell you what I was the second, and, in fact, as long as I remained in the lower country. My love of locomotion remained the same, but all my eagerness and fire to make collections, and to touch what I saw, were utterly extinguished. I walked abroad it is true, but it was with the noli-me-tangere air of a spruce gentleman in a street full of chimney-sweepers. My eyes roamed as they had hitherto done—but as to contact with flower or leaf, however curious or beautiful it might be, that I most scrupulously avoided. I found it was one thing to catch crickets, or gather lilies, daisies, or daffodils, in England, and another to make collections under the tropics.

In fact, here the insects and flowers are in league for mutual defence; every leaf, every spray, holds its myriads of *garapatos*, a species of wood bug, from the size of a small pin head to that of a pea; and the slightest touch is sure to bring a host upon your person, where, attaining the skin, they silently and insensibly bury themselves to the neck, with their barbed claws, and are seldom perceived till they are too firmly fixed to extract without danger; and, at the best, cause great irritation, and often inflammation. Now, in consequence of my love of natural history, I had become a perfect pasture for these omniverous nuisances, with others of their confraternity, not to be described; and at the end of the term indicated, what between the attacks of the *garapatos* without, and the nightly wounds inflicted within doors by myriads of moschetoes—which are here very large and sanguinary, not quite as large as a jacksnipe—I was upon the verge of a fever, and solemnly abjured my occupation. It was nearly three weeks before I lost all the consequences of my imprudence, for such it was, and never can I sufficiently appreciate the real merit of those patient, indefatigable and rhinoceros-skinned men, who have succeeded in enriching our European collections with the wonders of the torrid zone.

Such was the terror which the torment I had been subjected to inspired, that, as long as we were in the *tiérres calientes* to which these parts are fortunately confined, I never ran unnecessary risks; and after any accidental contact with tree or shrub, instituted the ordinary patient search to which all must submit.—*Latrobe.*

ENTHUSIASM IN PAPER MAKING.

In the Transactions of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, &c., numerous experiments are detailed of the manufacture of paper from various materials, and in their library is to be seen a book written in German, containing between thirty and forty specimens of paper made of different materials. The author of this curious work, M. Schäffer, was apparently one of those enthusiasts who become so enamoured of a particular pursuit as to cause everything to be subservient to the one great end which they propose. M. Schäffer relates, that his interest in the pursuit becoming well known, everybody was anxious to supply some material, or to suggest some hint in furtherance of his views, and that the most heterogeneous substances were constantly presented to him with the question, "Can you make this into paper?" His account of the causes which led him to many trials of different substances is confirmatory of the foregoing, while it illustrates the observation, that from the most trifling circumstances useful knowledge may be obtained by those who walk abroad with their senses and understandings alive to surrounding objects. By this means, and by the zealous co-operation of those more immediately about him, M. Schäffer affirms that his catalogue was much increased: while he became so absorbed in the all-engrossing subject, that it would seem the whole world assumed to him the character of one vast mass of latent material for paper.

The bark of various trees, of the willow, the beech, the aspin, and the hawthorn, have been successfully formed into paper. That made from the bark of the lime-tree is of a reddish-brown colour, and so extremely smooth as to be peculiarly well calculated for drawings; the paper produce of this bark is not merely confined to the leaves of a book of specimens, but it is manufactured for useful purposes in some of the northern parts of the Continent. The wood, as well as the inner bark, of the mullberry, is likewise capable of being made into this substance. A specimen of paper made from the down of the catkins of the black poplar is of a very superior quality, being very soft and silky. A paper similar to the last was likewise produced from the silky down of the *asclepias*, with the admixture of a portion of linen rags. The tendrils of the vine, after being subjected to putrefactive fermentation, can be converted into a tolerable paper. The stalks of the mugwort, or *artemisia*, formed another material of nearly similar quality. This plant may almost be considered a weed, as it grows spontaneously on banks and on the sides of foot-paths, and its roots spread and propogate very rapidly. The nettle is another weed from which two kinds of paper have been made: the one from the rind, the other from

the ligneous part. The paper manufactured from this plant by M. de Villette was of a dark green colour; that produced by M. Schäffer is tolerably white. The stalks of the common thistle, as well as the down which envelopes its seed, were both made available to this purpose. In relating the manner of manufacturing these stalks into paper, it is stated that the first experiment perfectly answered; a pulpy substance was produced, which cohered in thin sheets: but on a second trial, vain were the maceration and subsequent manipulations; it refused to become a coherent mass, and paper could not be produced without the addition of linen rags. At a subsequent period, M. Schäffer was led to suspect that this want of success might possibly have arisen in consequence of the more mature age of the plants, which rendered them woody, and less capable of being formed into a pulp.

The bark and stalk of bryony—the leaves of the *typha latifolia*, or cat's tail—the slender stalks of the climbing *clematis*—the more ligneous twigs of the branching broom—the fibrous stem of the upright lily—and the succulent stalks of the lordly river-weed, all were alike successfully brought into a pulpy consistence capable of cohering in thin and smooth surfaces. Substances yet more unpromisng did this persevering experimentalist endeavour to convert to his favourite object. Turf-tree, earth, and coral moss, were successfully manufactured into paper. Even cabbage-stalks, wood-shavings, and saw-dust, were each in turn placed under process, and specimens of the result are to be seen in the above-mentioned book. Then the rind of potatoes was acted upon, and, finally, the potatoe itself; this latter substance proved a most excellent material, producing a paper extremely smooth and soft to the touch, while its tenacity approached nearer to parchment than any other vegetable substance thus employed, and caused M. Schäffer to esteem it as a valuable drawing-paper, which he recommended should be manufactured exclusively for that purpose, as he supposed that an edible substance might be deemed too valuable to allow of its extensive use, except as an article of food. A good and cheap paper was produced from "pine buds," which, from the description given of them, are the common fir-apples, or fruit of fir-trees. These are well known as being hard woody cones, composed of scales overlapping each other. A singular accident led to the attemp. with so apparently inappropriate a substancet

M. Schäffer's foreman had purchased a particular kind of bird, whose natural food is the fir-apple. Soon after it had been provided with its first meal, the man remarked a considerable quantity of downy litter in the bird's cage, and supposing that it had been negligently introduced with its food, the careful owner cleansed the cage, and procured a fresh supply of the pine buds. After a time, the same appearance was again observed in the cage, and on watching the movements of the bird, it was found diligently tearing to pieces each scale of the cone, until at length the whole assumed the form of a ball of tow, and then it was in a proper state of preparation to be used as food by the feathered epicure. Profiting by this hint, its owner went joyfully to tell the wonderful labours of the industrious bird, and how it had converted the harsh fir cone into a material of which paper could be made. No time was lost in imitating the operations of the bird on the fir-apple, and paper was shortly produced, extremely strong and serviceable, and fit for use as a wrapping paper.—*Library of Entertaining Knowledge.*

IN SEARCH OF A SITUATION.

The long-wished-for day at length arrived that was to release me from a bondage, by indenture of seven years' laborious servitude; and surely I can never forget the enthusiastic manner in which I exclaimed "I am free," on that eventful day.

With an elated heart I set out for Liverpool, where I felt convinced my mercantile knowledge would soon be appreciated, and an excellent situation soon obtained. I provided, or rather my discreet sister provided, several introductory letters to the merchants resident there; and an abrupt departure saw me on the coach for that commercial town. On my arrival I procured genteel lodgings, and next morning I set off in search of a situation; but the hum and bustle of commerce drew me from my aim, and three days elapsed in admiring and wondering at the extent of the docks, the magnificence of the public buildings, &c., when I awoke from my inertness with—"This wont do; it really wont; I must commence in earnest to-morrow morning;" and I accordingly visited the advertising offices, and perused the *wanted* columns of the day's paper, and was fortunate enough to find a vacancy advertised in the Mercury:—"Wanted, a young man who has a thorough knowledge of book-keeping and accounts; a reference as to character and ability will be required. Address, ——— Box, —, Post-office." I immediately wrote in my best hand an application, saying as much as I could as to ability, &c., and consigned it with a prayer for success to the post-office; but a few days convinced me I was not the chosen one, as I never heard anything more concerning it. It was not long ere I applied for a situation as a traveller, advertised in another paper, but without success. Another day, another vacancy, and another application. And all in vain. However, patience and perseverance were my watchwords.

I now began to perceive I was an unwelcome daily visitor at the office of a gentleman who had consented to allow my letters to be directed there—in fact, I thought I appeared unwelcome to the town; and tired with my own fruitless exertions, I determined to use my introductory letters, and selected one to Mr B., merchant, for the experiment. I obtained an audience in his private office; but he eyed me on my entrance, as if he anticipated my errand; for there is something about a man out

of a situation by which he is easily distinguished. "Who is this letter from?" he coldly inquired; and on being informed, "Oh! out of a situation. How is Mr. B.? When did you see him last?" But before I could answer his inquiries, he resumed, "I have no vacancy myself; but if I should hear of anything, I'll let you know." I thanked him, and begged permission to call again in a few days; but he told me I need not give myself the trouble, as he should let me know if he should hear of anything. I forgot to leave my address, and therefore never heard from him. I then tried my fortune with another, addressed to Mr. L., He could not be seen, I was informed by the clerk. Was it anything he could deliver? he inquired. I put the letter into his hands, and he forwarded it to Mr. L. in a private office. A few minutes elapsed, and the clerk was called in; I could distinctly hear what passed between them. "Ask the young man—I suppose he is waiting—ask him how Mr. R. is, and tell him I am not in the way of hearing of vacancies;" but the clerk feeling for my distress, told, me in language which his master had neither the politeness nor the humanity to use, that Mr. L. was sorry, &c., and should feel happy to render me any assistance, but could do nothing in the mean time. I left the office, the indignant blood boiling within me, and wishing anything but benedictions on his head.

I now took from the remaining four letters, one which happened to be for Mr. M., in the immediate neighbourhood, resolving, whether fortunate or otherwise, to consign the others to the flames. I was fortunate enough to find him disengaged, and had a private interview. He was a man whose penetrating eye seemed to read my wants; a man of peculiar behaviour and thinking, and I leave the reader to judge of his speech, which I give verbatim, so far as my memory serves. On my putting the letter into his hand, he remarked, "Well, young man, I preceive this is from my friend Mr. C., at least its like his handwriting," forcing a kind of a laugh at the circumstance of recognition; "how was he and his family when you left?" I answered him whilst he was perusing the letter. "In search of a situation, I find; well, don't let me discourage you," said he; "but it really is a piece of indiscretion to leave a place where you are well known, to come to another, a complete stranger; besides, only consider, suppose a vacancy should occur, the preference would certainly be given to one who is acquainted with the localities of the town, trade, &c., and therefore I see but little chance of your succeeding. But don't let me discourage you; all I have got to say is, a young man should always remain in the town where he is known, so long as he can keep his character; and he will find great difficulty in succeeding anywhere after that is gone. For my own part, I have no opening in my establishment at present; Indeed, if I had, I could not, for the first three months, allow anything in the shape of a stipend. As I said before, I have got my complement in the office. However as you are so well recommended by Mr. C., I will allow you to come here until you meet with a situation, which will be much better than lounging or rambling about the town." A pretty compliment to one who had served seven years in the same department of commerce, and that with a most extensive house; but, because not acquainted with the localities of the town and trade, I must be estimated at the low grade of a country lad! After a few common place expressions on both sides, I bade the great man good morning, and so we parted.

Thus ended another week, with no better prospects than before; my finances becoming low, I changed my lodgings, and farmed the remainder of my money to the best advantage. Time kept stealing on; every day applying, every day disappointed: 'tis true I had a note to attend an office where I had been making application, but it would not answer even my purpose. A salary of twenty pounds per annum for twelve hours' work per day, I thought worse than starving, and therefore refused it; for like the Vicar of Wakefield, I had a "knack of hoping" for brighter, balmier days. At another time I ventured to undertake the engrossing of a deed (I had studied ornamental writing) for an attorney, which occupied me two days and a night, and for which I received—nothing, The fellow pleaded his own case most fluently, telling me that his work was not *professionally done*, and therefore he must consider what I deserved, ere he could pay me anything; but the number of "call agains" disgusted me, and I never received a shilling for it. What sorry luck for eleven weeks' probation! and yet, even this little success induced me to think that the eye of the public was upon me, and I was ever busying about; and if I chance to look in a shop-window, it was always done in a run-away posture; every artifice I could devise was used, but all proved abortive. Few, indeed, can rightly estimate the painful intensity of such an existence, spent thus by one who had been for seven years trained to think of nothing but business, and yet to be, in the midst of it, doing nothing. All the world seemed happy and busy but myself.

I frequently met with a young man pursuing the same inquiry at the different offices, who, after he had got settled himself, introduced me to a concern, the owner of which immediately professed a friendly feeling towards me, and raised my expectations high with one of his hair-brained schemes, which, when tried, proved a complete failure, and was abruptly told in a few weeks that my services were no longer wanted. I found afterwards that he had served several in the same way, and had more than once lured young men from their situations by splendid professions and promises, only to be entrapped; and away they were sent to sink or swim in the ocean of life. It does not require much foresight to anticipate the result of such new-fangled actions—he was made to drink deep of the cup he had so frequently handed to others.

Distress now stared me in the face, and, reduced to the last shilling, I knew not how to act; a stubborn pride, which not even misery could subdue, prevented me from applying to my relations for pecuniary assistance; indeed, the same feeling would not allow me to write to them at all, to their great discomfiture and frequent solicitations. My landlady was prompt in her demands for her weekly rental; but having my luggage in her possession, she did not trouble me so much as I anticipated. I now began to fear that all my little chattels would soon be reduced to the portable compass of a pawn-ticket, but, by entreaty they were saved that honor. My clothes, of which I had but a slender stock, grew gradually more and more shabby, but still I tried to keep up an appearance of gentility. Often has a clean shirt-collar done the office of a shirt; indeed, every thing, more or less, partook of a struggle with poverty. Hunger and I were good friends. Often have I returned in an evening, after a day spent in tedious search, and gone to bed without breaking my fast. Who can picture my aching heart?

The strange remarks of Mr. M. frequently occurred to my mind, and seemed to be an augury of my fate. I wished I had stopt in the "town where I was known," or even accepted the twenty pound salary per year offered me.

> How readily we wish the time revoked,
> That we might try the ground again, where once
> (Through inexperience we now perceive)
> We miss'd the happiness we might have found.

One circumstance I should not forget. Passing along Paradise-street, one evening I met an old school fellow, along with two smart young gentlemen. I plainly perceived he recognised me, though he passed without moving or speaking. They turned the corner of Richmond-street, and I moved on; but to my surprise he left his companions and came to me. I related my sad tale to him as briefly as possible, for I could perceive he was impatient of delay. He pulled out a handful of silver, and selected two half-crowns, which he gave me, remarking he would have given me more, but he was going to see Liston perform at the theatre, and would want all the money he had with him. Had I been possessed of five shillings, I would have spurned the gift; but poverty and distress are poor aids for the independent mind.

Compelled by poverty, I now determined to accept any situation that came in my way, and no longer considered myself *too good* for this or that; and I soon found an opportunity of trying my resolution. "An errand boy wanted," was wafered on a bookseller's shop window. I applied; he seemed surprised at the application, and kindly inquired into my circumstances. He relieved me, and in three days—wonderful to tell—procured me a situation of £100 per year, which soon enabled me to defray all my debts, and assume a respectable appearance. Three years afterwards I was taken into partnership, in an opulent firm, and became rich, and willing to relieve the destitute wherever I could find them.

If men in office and power would only consider what benefactions they could confer by a single effort of their own; how they could lighten and alleviate the sufferings of virtue bowed down by misfortune; and what prayers would ascend to the Almighty for their preservation, offered up from hearts grateful for benefits received, they would find in it its own rich reward.

Chambers' Edinburgh Journal.

NATURAL CAVES IN IRELAND.

About two miles from Kilkenny, in the neighbourhood of the park-house of Donmore, are a number of caves, as curious, perhaps, as any mentioned in natural history, except those of Antiparos in the Archipelago. After a difficult descent of about one hundred feet, the entrance into this subterraneous world is gained. The appearance of the first cavern is uncommonly awful, and gives rise to an idea of a grand Gothic structure in ruins. The solemnity of this place is not a little increased by the gaity of those scenes that present themselves on every side previous to our entering it: the floor is uneven, and stones of various sizes are promiscuously dispersed upon it: the sides are composed of ragged work, in some parts covered with moss, and in others curiously frosted; and from the roof, which is a kind of arch, several huge rocks project beyond each other, that seem to threaten instant ruin. The circumference of this cave is not less than two hundred feet, and in height about fifty. There is a small, but continual dropping of water from the ceiling, and a few petrifications resembling icicles.

The place has its inhabitants; for immediately on entering into it you are surprised with a confused noise, which is occasioned by a multitude of wild pigeons; hence there is a passage towards the left, where by a small ascent a kind of a hole is gained, much like, but larger than the mouth of an oven, which introduces to a place where, by the help of candles, daylight being excluded, a broken and surprising scene of monstrous stones heaped on each other, chequered with various colors, inequality of rocks overhead, and an infinity of statactical stones, presents itself. Nature, one would imagine, designed the first cave as a preparative for what remains to be seen; by it the eye is familiarized with uncommon and awful objects, and the mind tolerably fortified against those ideas that result from a combination of appearances unthought of, surprising and menacing. The spectator flatters himself that he has nothing to behold more awful, nor anything more dangerous to meet, than what he finds in the first cavern; but he soon discovers his mistake; for the bare want of that light which dresses nature with gaiety is alone sufficient to render the second far more dreadful. In the first he fancies ruin frowns upon him from several parts; but in this it is threatened from a thousand vast rocks rudely piled on each other, that compose the sides.

which seem bending in, and a multitude of no smaller size are pendent from the roof in the most extraordinary manner; add to this, that by a false step one would be dashed from precipice to precipice. Indeed, it would be a matter of much difficulty, or rather impracticable, to walk over this apartment, had not nature, as if studious for the safety of the curious, caused a sort of branches to shoot from the surface of the rocks, which are remarkably unequal, and always damp. These branches are from four to six inches in length, and nearly as thick: they are useful in the summits of the rocks to prevent slipping, and in the sides are ladders to descend and ascend with tolerable facility. This astonishing passage leads to a place far more curious than any of the rest. On entering into it, a person is almost induced to believe himself situated in an ancient temple, decorated with all the expense of art; yet, notwithstanding the beauty and splendour that catch the eye on every side, there is something of solemnity in the fashion of the place which must be felt by the most ordinary spectator. The floor in some parts is covered with a crystalline substance; the sides in many places are incrusted with the same, wrought in a mode not unlike the Gothic style of ornament, and the top is almost entirely covered with inverted pyramids of the like elegantly white and lucid matter. At the points of these statactical strata are perpetually hanging drops of pellucid water; for when one fails, another succeeds; these pendent gems contribute not a little to the glory of the roof, which, when the place is properly illuminated, appears as if formed of the purest crystal.

Here are three extraordinary and beautiful congelations, which, without the aid of a strong imagination, may be taken for an organ, altar, and cross. The former, except when strictly examined, appears to be a regular work of art, and is of a considerable size; the second is of a simple form, rather long and square, and the third reaches from the floor to the roof, which must be about twenty feet. These curious figures are owing either to water that falls from the upper parts of the cave to the ground, which coagulated into stone from time to time, until at length it acquired those forms which are now so pleasing; or to an exudation, or extillation, or petrifying juices out of the earth; or, perhaps, they partake of spar, which is a kind of a rock plant. The former seems to be the most probable supposition, as these figures in color and consistence appear exactly like the icicles on the top, which are only seen from the wet parts of the caverns, and in this place there is a great oosing of water, and a much larger number of petrifications, than in any other. When this curious apartment has been sufficiently examined, the guides lead you for a considerable way through winding places, until a glimmering light agreeably surprises. Here a journey of above a quarter of a mile through those parts is ended; but upon returning into the first cavern, the entrance into other apartments, less curious indeed, but as extensive as those we have described, offers itself. The passages into some of these are so very low, that there is a necessity of creeping through them; by these we proceed until the noise of the subterraneous river is heard; farther than this none have ventured.—*Mirror.*

NATURAL LIFE OF TREES.—There are various opinions respecting the full age or natural life of trees. The few following instances will show the length of time which trees have been known to exist. Mr. Galyne, and others, imagine that from 300 to 400 years form the natural life of the oak tree. An oak tree was felled in April 1791, in the park of Sir John Rushout, bart. at Northwick, near Blackley, in Worcestershire, judged to be about 300 years old. It was perfectly sound; contained 634 cubical feet of timber in the trunk, and the arms were estimated at 200 feet more. In Mr. Gilpin's work on forest scenery, there is an account of oak trees in the new forest, which had marks of existence before the time of the conquest. The tree in the same forest against which the arrow of Sir Walter Tyrrel glanced and killed King William Rufus, remains still a tree though much mutilated. In Mr. Robert Lowe's "View of the Agriculture of Nottinghamshire," several trees are said to have been lately felled in Sherwood Forest, which were found to have cut in them I. R. or In. R. (Rex.) and some had a crown over the letters. Mr. M'William, in his "Essay on the dryrot," goes still further—he says that many trees might be mentioned, in this and other countries, which bear sufficient testimony of their being far above 1,000 years old, and he gives reasons for believing that several trees now exist above 3,000 years old!

FLOWERS ON THE ALPS.—The flowers of the mountains—they must not be forgotten. It is worth a botanist's while to traverse all these high passes; nay, it is worth the while of a painter, or any one who delights to look upon graceful flowers, or lovely hues, to pay a visit to these little wild nymphs of Flora, at their homes in the mountains of St. Bernard. We are speaking now, generally, of what may be seen throughout the whole of the route, from Moutier by the little St. Bernard, to Aosta,—and thence again to Martigny. There is no flower so small, so beautiful, so splendid in colour, but its equal may be met with in these sequestered places. The tenaciousness of flowers is not known: their hardihood is not sufficiently admired. Whereever there is a handful of earth, their also is a patch of wild-flowers. If there be a crevice in the rock, sufficient to thrust in the edge of a knife, there will the winds carry a few grains of dust, and there straight up springs a flower. In the lower parts of the Alps, they cover the earth with beauty. Thousands, and tens of thousands, blue, and yellow, and pink, and violet, and white, of every shadow and every form, are to be seen, vying with each other, and eclipsing every thing besides. Midway they meet you again, sometimes fragrant and always lovely; and in the topmost ploces, where the larch, and the pine, and the rododendron

THE TIME-PIECE.

Who is *he*, so swiftly flying,
His career no eye can see?
Who are *they*, so early dying,
From their birth they cease to be?
Time—behold his pictured face!
Moments—can you count their face?

Though, with aspect deep-dissembling,
Here he feigns unconscious sleep,
Round and round this circle trembling
Day and night his symbols creep;
While unseen, through earth and sky,
His unwearying pinions ply.

Hark! what petty pulses, beating,
Spring new moments into light;
Every pulse, its stroke repeating,
Sends its moments back to night;
Yet not one of all the train
Comes uncalled, or flits in vain.

In the highest realms of glory,
Spirits trace before the throne,
On eternal scrolls, the story
Of each little moment flown,
Every deed, and word, and thought,
Through the whole creation wrought.

Were the volume of a minute
Thus to mortal sight unroll'd,
More of sin and sorrow in it,
More of man might we behold
Than on history's broadest page
In the relics of an age.

Montgomery.

NAY, TELL ME NOT, DEAR.

Nay, tell me not, dear, that the goblet drowns
One charm of feeling, one fond regret;
Believe me, a few of thy angry frowns
Are all I've sunk in its bright wave yet:
Ne'er hath a beam
Been lost in the stream
That ever was shed from thy form or soul;
The spell of those eyes,
The balm of thy sighs,
Still float on the surface and hallow my bowl.
Then fancy not, dearest, that wine can steal
One blissful dream of the heart from me;
Like founts that awaken the pilgrim's zeal,
The bowl but brightens my love for thee.

They tell us that love, in his fairy bower,
Had two blush-roses of birth divine;
He sprinkled the one with a rainbow's shower,
But bath'd the other with mantling wine:
Soon did the buds
That drank the floods
Distill'd by the rainbow decline and fade:
While those which the tide
Of ruby had dy'd
All blush'd into beauty, like thee, sweet maid!
Then fancy not, dearest, that wine can steal
One blissful dream of the heart from me;
Like founts, that awaken the pilgrim's zeal,
The bowl but brightens my love for thee.

Moore.

THE TIME I'VE LOST IN WOOING.

The time I've lost in wooing,
In watching and pursuing
The light that lies
In woman's eyes,
Has been my heart's undoing,
Tho' wisdom oft has taught me,
I scorn'd the love she brought me—
My only books
Were woman's looks,
And folly's all they've taught me.

Her smile, when beauty granted,
I hung with gaze enchanted,
Like him the sprite
Whom maids by night
Oft meet in glen that's haunted.
Like him, too, beauty won me,
But while her eyes were on me,
If once their ray
Was turn'd away,
O! winds could not outrun me.

And are those follies going?
And is my proud heart growing
Too cold or wise
For brilliant eyes
Again to set it going?
No, vain, alas! th' endeavour
From bonds so sweet to sever;
Poor wisdom's chance
Against a glance
Is now as weak as ever.

Moore.

WHEN LOVE IS KIND.

When love is kind,
Cheerful, and free,
Love's sure to find
Welcome from me.

But when love brings
Heartache or pang,
Tears and such things—
Love may go hang!

If love can sigh
For one alone,
Well pleased am I
To be that one.

But should I see
Love giv'n to rove
To two or three,
Then—good-by love!

Love must, in short,
Keep fond and true
Through good report
And evil too.

Else, here I swear,
Young love may go,
For aught I care—
To Jericho.

Moore.

A HOME ARGUMENT.

By one decisive argument.
Giles gained his lovely Kate's consent,
To fix the bridal day.
"Why in such haste, dear Giles, to wed?
I shall not change my mind," she said,
"But then," says Giles, "I may."

HOW A DUEL MAY BE GOT UP.

This affair of the duel is worth recording. It happened thus :—" That was a beautiful ostrich plum which Miss Smith wore at the race ball last night," said I. "I thought it the ugliest thing I ever saw," remarked Captain Brown. " It certainly was not ugly," I replied ; " but of course there may be different opinions as to its beauty. I, for instance, thought it very beautiful." " And I thought it very ugly," responded Captain Brown ; " As ugly as Miss Smith herself." " Miss Smith is not exactly handsome, I allow," was my answer ; " but a lady may not be handsome, and yet not ugly." " Every one to his taste," said Captain Brown, with what I considered an insulting air ; and he added, " every Jack has his Gill !" " Miss Smith is no Gill of mine," I replied." " I did not say she was," said Captain Brown, and laughed. " And I am no Jack," I continued, nettled by his laugh. " I did not say you were," said Captain Brown, fiercely ; " but if you want to make a quarrel of it you may. I say again, and I have as much right to say what I say, as you have to say what you say, that Miss Smith's ostrich plum was ugly, as ugly as Miss Smith herself." " Since you put it thus offensively, Captain Brown," I retorted, " I now maintain there was nothing ugly, no, nor anything ugly at all, either in Miss Smith's feathers, or Miss Smith herself. I'll not be brow-beaten by any man, Captain Brown !" " Sir, you are insolent !" exclaimed Captain Brown, looking as scarlet as his own jacket. " Very likely ; but I always make it a rule to conduct myself towards persons as they deserve," and I turned upon my heel to quit the room. Captain Brown followed me to the door. " You shall hear from me in an hour," " In half an hour, if you like," said I, and walked away boiling, with indignation.

Before I heard from Captain Brown, I was as cool as a cucumber. I saw all the folly of my situation. I had never spoken to Miss Smith in my life. What was it to me, then, whether her ostrich plume was beautiful or ugly, or she herself handsome or a fright ? I resolved to treat the matter with ridicule. It would be preposterous to go out for such a cause. We should be the laughing-stocks of all our friends and acquaintance. These were my first thoughts, when my mind was calm enough for thought to take the place of feeling. Besides; I might be shot through the body ; and all for what ?—a silly dispute about Miss Smith and her feathers ! I did not like the idea. I determined I would not make an affair of honor of it. But what would the world say, if Captain Brown posted me as a coward, or horse-whipped me, or if I were pointed at as a man who had sneaked out of a duel by a voluntary apology ? These were my *second* thoughts. They carried the day after a sharp struggle with my first. I determined I would make an affair of honor of it. I did so. I met Captain Brown the next morning at sunrise, and sacrificed one of my fingers, besides the risk of sacrificing my life, in defence of Miss Smith's personal charms and the disputed pulchritude of her ostrich plume.

Soup.—The celebrated chemist, Justus Liebeg, in a new work on the *Chemistry of Food*, gives the following result of his researches on alimentary substances :—When one pound of lean beef, free of fat, and separated from the bones, in the finely chopped state in which it is used for beef-sausages, or mince meat, is uniformly mixed with its own weight of cold water, slowly heated to boiling ; and the liquid, after boiling briskly for a minute or two, is strained through a cloth from the coagulated albumen and the fibrine, now become hard and horny, we obtain an equal weight of the most aromatic soup, of such strength as cannot be obtained even by boiling for hours from a piece of flesh. When mixed with salt, and the other usual additions by which soup is usually seasoned, and tinged somewhat darker, by means of roasted onions, or burnt sugar, it forms the best soup which can in any way be prepared from one pound of flesh.

The influence which the brown colour of this soup, or colour in general, exercises on the taste, in consequence of the ideas associated with colour in the mind (ideas of strength, concentration, &c.), may be rendered quite evident by the following experiment :—The soup coloured brown by means of caramel, is declared by all persons to have a much stronger taste than the same soup when not coloured ; and yet the caramel, in point of fact, does not in any way actually heighten the taste.

The extract of meat may, perhaps, admit of being employed as a valuable remedy for many dyspeptic patients, with a view to increasing the activity of the stomach and promoting digestion. For, if the blood, or the muscular substance of emaciated convalescents cannot supply the matters necessary for digestion in sufficient quantity for a rapid reproduction of the lost strength (that is, lost parts of the organism), the benefit derived from well-made soup during convalescence admits of a simple explanation.

Drunkenness.—A drunken man is a greater monster than any that is to be found amongst all the creatures which God has made ; as indeed there is no character which appears more despicable and defamed in the eyes of all reasonable persons than a drunkard. Æschines commending Philip, King of Macedonia, for a jovial man that would drink freely, Demosthenes answered—" That this was a good quality in a sponge, but not in a king."

Bonosus, one of our own countrymen, who was addicted to this vice, having set up for a share in the Roman empire, and being defeated in a great battle, hanged himself. When he was seen by the army in this melancholy situation, notwithstanding he had behaved himself very bravely, the common jest was, that the thing they saw hanging upon a tree before them was not a man, but a bottle.

DEER HUNTING IN SOUTH AMERICA.

As the haunts of the fallow-deer or venays are generally far from the abodes of men, and as they live in continual alarm from the depredations of the host of enemies, beasts and birds of prey, and even reptiles, that beset them, but for the extraordinary instinct or sagacity nature has endowed them with for their preservation, the race must long since have been extinct. The impenetrable mountains of the Cordilleras are inhabited by immense herds of these animals; a species of the stag-kind also sometimes herds amongst them, though, as there seems a great aversion to this commixture, it must be considered as dictated by some necessary or instinctive policy. In those haunts are also to be met the *cabia montes*, or mountain-goat, so much admired for its symmetry of form and delicious flavour. The intricate and steep pathways leading to their couching haunts are mostly in clefts of rocky precipices, inaccessible to beasts of prey; and even a nimble dog can scarcely skip from rock to rock, to the outposts where their videttes are placed. Should any of them venture, they soon have occasion to repent their temerity.

It is not uncommon to see the jaguar, the tiger, &c., who have the hardihood to attack their outposts, hurled by the butting sentinels, the horned patriarchs of the flock, down a precipice of five or six hundred feet; so that unless impelled by extreme hunger, they never attack them, except in their more open pastures. As those ravenous creatures are dormant during the day, the deer are then partly secure. At night a straggler from the community is sure of his fate; as the jaguars hunt in packs, and are very quick-scented. One trait of the South American deer is worthy of notice. In Europe, a hunted deer is driven from amongst the herd, and abandoned to its fate; here, the guardians of the flock succour even a stranger of their community. I apprehend, that during the fawning season the females and fawns suffer more than the males, as the young are obliged to be deposited in thickets, and the eagle and vulture are always watching over head. The large brown snake is also a great destroyer of them, but the jaguar and wild-cat are their worst enemies. There are about four bucks to one doe, in the herd, which shows what destruction there must be of the latter. The colours of the deer are various, and mostly beautifully dipped upon yellow, white and dun. The stag is generally of a dusky brown. Hunting those animals is a source both of amusement and emolument to the Indian tribes in high latitudes, and they may be said to have brought it to high perfection. Having ascertained the haunts of the animals for about a week, the whole tribe assemble before day-break, some ascend the highest trees, to mark their progress; others crouch under leaves, so as to impound them when they betake themselves to their fastnesses; then the whole tribe, men, women, and boys, stretch over a vast extent of country, and, assisted by their curs and horns, make every kind of hideous noises obliging them to quit their grazing spots while the dew is on the ground. As the deer assemble, they form in complete marching order, preceded by the elders or patriarchs, while the bucks of the second class bring up the rear, to protect the females and young, and repel any attacks. In this manner they arrive at their haunts; whilst the Indians, advancing in all directions, prevent their retreat, by closing up all the embouchures or openings, and while the deer are forming in battle array, prepare the instruments of destruction, viz. large lances, resinous torches, and nooses fixed to long poles. The women are also busy stuffing jaguar and tiger skins. The Indians having made proper crevices, dug into the grit and brown rock which form the paths, advance. The images of the wild beasts are now presented, to intimidate the deer from breaking, which the bucks no sooner perceive than they make a violent effort to strike them into the gulf,—their animosity to those beasts being such, that they often pass or leap over a man to get at them. The Indians then strike, and hurl them into the abyss below, where the women are ready to hamstring or disable them, before they recover from their stupor. When the hunters can no longer provoke them to rush on the stuffed tigers, &c., they make signals for those overhead to throw lighted flambeaux amongst them. This causes them to make a desperate effort to escape, and when the Indians have hurled a sufficient number down the precipices, they suffer the females and the fawns, and some of the bucks to escape. Indeed, they seem very much averse to destroying a doe at all, and always liberate the doe fawns. In those excursions they take on an average from four to five hundred. In taking the *Ciervo Grande*, or Large Stag, they seldom get more than from thirty to fifty; but of the mountain-goat they catch an immense number; they enter the caverns in the rocks by night, and pursue them by torch-light; and frequently yoke a great many of them together alive, although the flesh loses its flavour from the effort to domesticate them, and they scarcely ever lose their native wildness. A full-grown fallow-deer could be bought at Valentia for seven pisettos, or about five shillings British. During the hunting season, the Creoles sometimes hunt, but the Indians are more expert.

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AN AFRICAN KING.

In the afternoon I was visited by the king, who was attended by a great number of eunuchs and a cavalcade of about a dozen horsemen. He was splendidly dressed in silk and velvet robes, and appeared to be a man of immense size. His countenance is by no means prepossessing, particularly his eyes, which are of a dirty red colour, having a sinister and foreboding expression. I presented him with a brass-mounted sword, an umbrella five feet in diameter, highly ornamented, a brace of pistols, and several other things, and then informed him through my interpreter that I had

come a great distance to look at him in the face, and to hold a good palaver with him; that his messengers had informed me it was his desire to see the face of a white man; and trusting to his good faith, though ill, and unable to walk, that I was anxious to give him our goods for ivory, and had brought with me a good quantity for that purpose. Having finished my speech, he rose, and said in the Housaa language, that he was glad to see the face of a white man—it was what he had long wished for; that he had abundance of ivory, and that all he had was mine; to which sentiment twelve grey-headed negroes, who appeared to form his privy council, bowed assent. In the evening I had a visit from a man whose face I thought was not new to me, and a lady who assured me she was the king's mother, and to whom it was intimated that I should give a present. A looking-glass and a cake of Windsor soap satisfied her, but not her companion, who became abusive, and was at length bundled off by my Kroomen. On the following morning I was carried to the king's house to return his visit, but was only allowed to enter the outer court yard, which is about forty feet wide, with a verandah on the side next the house. Under this verandah I was placed, and in a short time the very man who had been turned out of my hut by my Kroomen the night before came and sat down by my side. After some conversation, I asked for the king; on which he said that he was the king! This was too much for me to believe, until he went through a gatewaay and returned in a few minutes with his stomacher and his splendid robes on. After laughing heartily at my astonishment, he asked for the carpet on which I was seated, and which I refused him, having no other. After some angry words on both sides, he went off in a pet, and I returned to my hut in any but a pleasant state of mind. On inquiry of the owner of my hut, he informed me, and I afterwards found it to be the case, that on all great occasions it is customary for the king and his attendants to puff themselves out to a ridiculous size with cotton wadding; and this fully explained the mistake I was under with regard to the king's identity. On his first visit be appeared to be an immense-sized personage; and could not even rise from his seat without assistance. When he visited me incognito, he was a raw-boned active-looking man.—*Laird's Narrative of the Last Expedition into Central Africa.*

The Sunflower.—The value of this plant, which is easily cultivated, and ornamental to the garden, is scarcely known in most parts of the kingdom. The seed forms a most excellent and convenient food for poultry, and it is only necessary to cut of the heads off the plant when ripe, tie them in bunches, and hang them up in a dry situation, to be used as wanted. They not only fatten every kind of poultry, but greatly increase the quantity of eggs they lay. When cultivated to a considerable extent, they are also capital food for sheep and pigs, and for pheasants. The leaves when dried form a good powder for cattle; the dry stalks burn well, and form an abundance of alkali; and when in bloom, the flower is most attractive to bees.

Abstinence.—Pliny says, a person may live seven days without any food whatever, and that many people have continued more than eleven days without either food or drink. Petrus de Albano says, there was in his time, in Normandy, a woman, thirty years of age, who had lived without food for eighteen years. Alexander Benedictus mentions a person at Venice, who lived six days without food. Jubertus relates, that a woman lived in good health three years, without either food or drink; and that he saw another who had lived to her tenth year without food or drink, and that when she arrived at a proper age she was married, and lived like other people in respect to diet, and had children. Clausius mentions, that some of the more rigid Banmanians in India abstain from food, frequently for twenty days together. Albertus Kratizus says, that a hermit in the mountains in the canton of Schwitz, lived twenty years without food. Guarginus says, that Louis the pious, emperor of France, who died in 840, existed the last forty days of his life without either food or drink. Citois gives the history of a girl who lived three years without food. Albertus Magnus says, he saw a woman at Cologne who often lived twenty and sometimes thirty days without food; and that he saw an hypochondrical man, who lived without food for seven weeks, drinking a draught of water every other day. Hildanus relates the case of a girl who lived many days without food or drink. Sylvius says there was a young woman in Spain, aged twenty-two years, who never ate any food, but lived entirely upon water; and that there was a girl in Narbonne, and another in Germany, who lived three years in good health without any kind of food or drink. It is said that Democritus lived to the age of one hundred and nine years, and that in the latter part of his life he subsisted almost entirely, for forty days at one time, on smelling honey and bread.—Others might be adduced, but these shall for the present suffice.

Mode of Administering Aperients to Children.—Phosphate of soda may be used conveniently as a condiment in soup, in the place of common salt. Children may be unconsciously beguiled into the taking of the medicine in this way, and it will be found an excellent purgative.

Self-Denial.—There never did, and never will exist, anything permanently noble and excellent in a character which was a stranger to the exercise of resolute self-denial.—*Sir W. Scott.*

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