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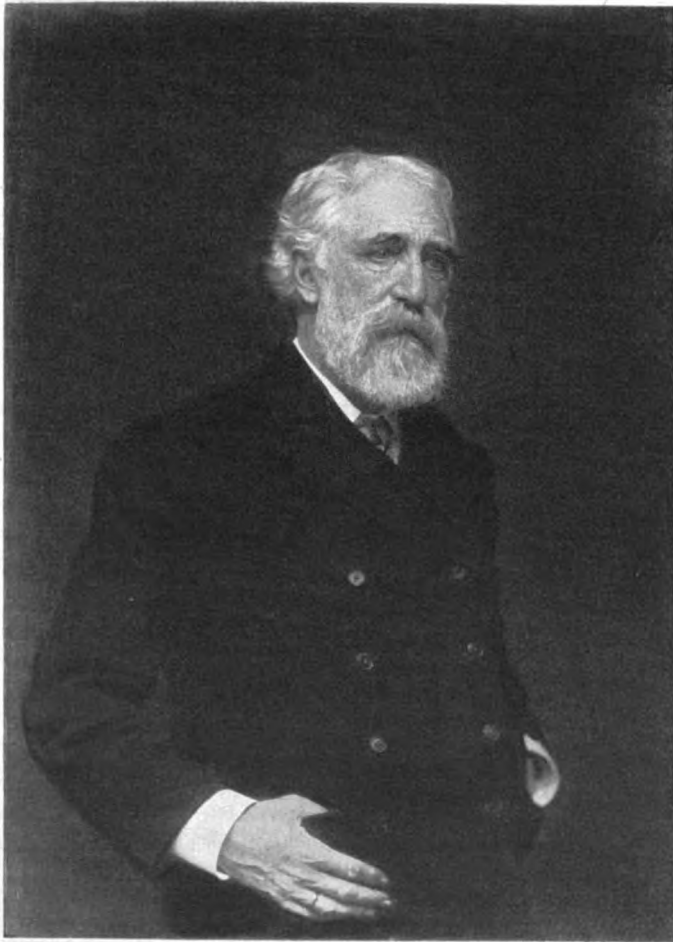


**THE COMPLETE WRITINGS OF
CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER**

**EDITED BY
THOMAS R. LOUNSBURY**

**IN FIFTEEN VOLUMES
VOLUME I**





1897

A. W. Blain & Co. Boston

Charles Dudley Warner in 1897

THE COMPLETE
WRITINGS
OF
Charles Dudley Warner

MY SUMMER IN A GARDEN
BACKLOG STUDIES
BADDECK



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EDITOR'S NOTE

THE first work in this volume — “*My Summer in a Garden*” — was written originally for the “*Hartford Courant*,” the journal of which Mr. Warner was editor. Its opening chapter appeared in the number for May 21, 1870, and with some interruptions these chapters were continued weekly until the number for October 22 of the same year, when the final one was printed. At the end of 1870 they were brought out in book form, with the date of 1871 on the title-page, and prefaced by an introductory letter from Henry Ward Beecher. To later editions was appended a memoir of Calvin, the author's cat. It is one of the most entertaining accounts ever given of a household pet, and has the further attraction of being strictly accurate. It appeared originally in “*Scribner's Monthly*” for June, 1877.

The larger portion of “*Backlog Studies*” was contributed to the old “*Scribner's Monthly*” during the years 1871 and 1872. The first chapter appeared in the number for July, 1871, and six of the following chapters — the second, the third, the fifth, the sixth, the eighth, and the ninth — in the numbers of that periodical for the months respectively of February, March, April, May, June, and July of 1872. The four remaining chapters — the fourth, the seventh, the tenth, and the eleventh — were added to the volume at the time of its publication. This took place in the latter part of 1872.

“Baddeck” appeared originally in the “Atlantic Monthly” for 1874. The first chapter was published in the January number, and the four others came out consecutively in that magazine during the months following. These articles were published in book form during the same year, with a dedication which will be found in its appropriate place. Mr. Warner had prepared and had intended to prefix to the volume a preface in the shape of a letter to the companion with whom he had made the excursion. In accordance, however, with the advice of some literary friends he withdrew it, and substituted the more formal dedication with which the work now appears. But the original is so characteristic of the writer that it has been thought desirable to reproduce it in its entirety. Accordingly it appears in this volume, printed for the first time.

THOMAS R. LOUNSBURY.

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MY SUMMER IN A GARDEN

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

MY DEAR MR. FIELDS,—I did promise to write an Introduction to these charming papers; but an Introduction,—what is it?—a sort of *pilaster*, put upon the face of a building for looks' sake, and usually flat,—very flat. Sometimes it may be called a *caryatid*, which is, as I understand it, a cruel device of architecture, representing a man or a woman, obliged to hold up upon his or her head or shoulders a structure which they did not build, and which could stand just as well without as with them. But an Introduction is more apt to be a pillar, such as one may see in Baalbec, standing up in the air all alone, with nothing on it, and with nothing for it to do.

But an Introductory Letter is different. There is in that no formality, no assumption of function, no awkward propriety or dignity to be sustained. A letter at the opening of a book may be only a footpath, leading the curious to a favorable point of observation, and then leaving them to wander as they will.

Sluggards have been sent to the ant for wisdom; but writers might better be sent to the spider,—not because he works all night, and watches all day, but because he works unconsciously. He dare not even bring his work before his own eyes, but keeps it behind him, as if too much knowledge of what

one is doing would spoil the delicacy and modesty of one's work.

Almost all graceful and fanciful work is born like a dream, that comes noiselessly, and tarries silently, and goes as a bubble bursts. And yet somewhere work must come in, — real, well-considered work.

Inness (the best American painter of Nature in her moods of real human feeling) once said, "No man can do anything in art, unless he has *intuitions*; but, between whiles, one must work hard in collecting the materials out of which intuitions are made." The truth could not be hit off better. Knowledge is the soil, and intuitions are the flowers which grow up out of it. The soil must be well enriched and worked.

It is very plain, or will be to those who read these papers, now gathered up into this book, as into a chariot for a race, that the author has long employed his eyes, his ears, and his understanding, in observing and considering the facts of Nature, and in weaving curious analogies. Being an editor of one of the oldest daily newspapers in New England, and obliged to fill its columns day after day (as the village mill is obliged to render every day so many sacks of flour or of meal to its hungry customers), it naturally occurred to him, "Why not write something which I myself, as well as my readers, shall enjoy? The market gives them facts enough; politics, lies enough; art, affectations enough; criminal news, horrors enough; fashion, more than enough of vanity upon vanity, and vexation of purse. Why should they

not have some of those wandering and joyous fancies which solace my hours?"

The suggestion ripened into execution. Men and women read, and wanted more. These garden letters began to blossom every week; and many hands were glad to gather pleasure from them. A sign it was of wisdom. In our feverish days it is a sign of health or of convalescence that men love gentle pleasure, and enjoyments that do not rush or roar, but distill as the dew.

The love of rural life, the habit of finding enjoyment in familiar things, that susceptibility to Nature which keeps the nerve gently thrilled in her homliest nooks and by her commonest sounds, is worth a thousand fortunes of money, or its equivalents.

Every book which interprets the secret lore of fields and gardens, every essay that brings men nearer to the understanding of the mysteries which every tree whispers, every brook murmurs, every weed, even, hints, is a contribution to the wealth and the happiness of our kind. And if the lines of the writer shall be traced in quaint characters, and be filled with a grave humor, or break out at times into merriment, all this will be no presumption against their wisdom or his goodness. Is the oak less strong and tough because the mosses and weather-stains stick in all manner of grotesque sketches along its bark? Now, truly, one may not learn from this little book either divinity or horticulture; but if he gets a pure happiness, and a tendency to repeat the happiness from the simple stores of Nature, he will gain from our friend's garden what Adam lost in his, and what

12 INTRODUCTION LETTER

neither philosophy nor divinity has always been able to restore.

Wherefore, thanking you for listening to a former letter, which begged you to consider whether these curious and ingenious papers, that go winding about like a half-trodden path between the garden and the field, might not be given in book-form to your million readers, I remain, yours to command in everything but the writing of an Introduction,

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

BY WAY OF DEDICATION

MY DEAR POLLY,—When a few of these papers had appeared in “The Courant,” I was encouraged to continue them by hearing that they had at least one reader who read them with the serious mind from which alone profit is to be expected. It was a maiden lady, who, I am sure, was no more to blame for her singleness than for her age ; and she looked to these honest sketches of experience for that aid which the professional agricultural papers could not give in the management of the little bit of garden which she called her own. She may have been my only disciple ; and I confess that the thought of her yielding a simple faith to what a gainsaying world may have regarded with levity has contributed much to give an increased practical turn to my reports of what I know about gardening. The thought that I had misled a lady, whose age is not her only singularity, who looked to me for advice which should be not at all the fanciful product of the Garden of Gull, would give me great pain. I trust that her autumn is a peaceful one, and undisturbed by either the humorous or the satirical side of Nature.

You know that this attempt to tell the truth about one of the most fascinating occupations in the world has not been without its dangers. I have received anonymous letters. Some of them were murderously

spelled ; others were missives in such elegant phrase and dress, that danger was only to be apprehended in them by one skilled in the mysteries of medieval poisoning, when death flew on the wings of a perfume. One lady, whose entreaty that I should pause had something of command in it, wrote that my strictures on "pusley" had so inflamed her husband's zeal, that, in her absence in the country, he had rooted up all her beds of portulaca (a sort of cousin of the fat weed), and utterly cast it out. It is, however, to be expected, that retributive justice would visit the innocent as well as the guilty of an offending family. This is only another proof of the wide sweep of moral forces. I suppose that it is as necessary in the vegetable world as it is elsewhere to avoid the appearance of evil.

In offering you the fruit of my garden, which has been gathered from week to week, without much reference to the progress of the crops or the drought, I desire to acknowledge an influence which has lent half the charm to my labor. If I were in a court of justice, or injustice, under oath, I should not like to say, that, either in the wooing days of spring, or under the suns of the summer solstice, you had been, either with hoe, rake, or miniature spade, of the least use in the garden ; but your suggestions have been invaluable, and, whenever used, have been paid for. Your horticultural inquiries have been of a nature to astonish the vegetable world, if it listened, and were a constant inspiration to research. There was almost nothing that you did not wish to know ; and this, added to what I wished to know, made a boundless

field for discovery. What might have become of the garden, if your advice had been followed, a good Providence only knows; but I never worked there without a consciousness that you might at any moment come down the walk, under the grape-arbor, bestowing glances of approval, that were none the worse for not being critical; exercising a sort of superintendence that elevated gardening into a fine art; expressing a wonder that was as complimentary to me as it was to Nature; bringing an atmosphere which made the garden a region of romance, the soil of which was set apart for fruits native to climes unseen. It was this bright presence that filled the garden, as it did the summer, with light, and now leaves upon it that tender play of color and bloom which is called among the Alps the after-glow.

C. D. W.

NOOK FARM, HARTFORD, October, 1870.

PRELIMINARY

THE love of dirt is among the earliest of passions, as it is the latest. Mud-pies gratify one of our first and best instincts. So long as we are dirty, we are pure. Fondness for the ground comes back to a man after he has run the round of pleasure and business, eaten dirt, and sown wild-oats, drifted about the world, and taken the wind of all its moods. The love of digging in the ground (or of looking on while he pays another to dig) is as sure to come back to him as he is sure, at last, to go under the ground, and stay there. To own a bit of ground, to scratch it with a hoe, to plant seeds and watch their renewal of life, — this is the commonest delight of the race, the most satisfactory thing a man can do. When Cicero writes of the pleasures of old age, that of agriculture is chief among them : “*Venio nunc ad voluptates agricoliarum, quibus ego incredibiliter delector: quæ nec ulla impediuntur senectute, et mihi ad sapientis vitam proxime videntur accedere.*” (I am driven to Latin because New York editors have exhausted the English language in the praising of spring, and especially of the month of May.)

Let us celebrate the soil. Most men toil that they may own a piece of it; they measure their success in life by their ability to buy it. It is alike the passion of the *parvenu* and the pride of the aristocrat. Broad acres are a patent of nobility; and no man

but feels more of a man in the world if he have a bit of ground that he can call his own. However small it is on the surface, it is four thousand miles deep; and that is a very handsome property. And there is a great pleasure in working in the soil, apart from the ownership of it. The man who has planted a garden feels that he has done something for the good of the world. He belongs to the producers. It is a pleasure to eat of the fruit of one's toil, if it be nothing more than a head of lettuce or an ear of corn. One cultivates a lawn even with great satisfaction; for there is nothing more beautiful than grass and turf in our latitude. The tropics may have their delights, but they have not turf: and the world without turf is a dreary desert. The original Garden of Eden could not have had such turf as one sees in England. The Teutonic races all love turf: they emigrate in the line of its growth.

To dig in the mellow soil — to dig moderately, for all pleasure should be taken sparingly — is a great thing. One gets strength out of the ground as often as one really touches it with a hoe. Antæus (this is a classical article) was no doubt an agriculturist; and such a prize-fighter as Hercules could n't do anything with him till he got him to lay down his spade, and quit the soil. It is not simply beets and potatoes and corn and string-beans that one raises in his well-hoed garden: it is the average of human life. There is life in the ground; it goes into the seeds; and it also, when it is stirred up, goes into the man who stirs it. The hot sun on his back as he bends to his shovel and hoe, or contemplatively

rakes the warm and fragrant loam, is better than much medicine. The buds are coming out on the bushes round about; the blossoms of the fruit trees begin to show; the blood is running up the grapevines in streams; you can smell the wild flowers on the near bank; and the birds are flying and glancing and singing everywhere. To the open kitchen door comes the busy housewife to shake a white something, and stands a moment to look, quite transfixed by the delightful sights and sounds. Hoeing in the garden on a bright, soft May day, when you are not obliged to, is nearly equal to the delight of going troutng.

Blessed be agriculture! if one does not have too much of it. All literature is fragrant with it, in a gentlemanly way. At the foot of the charming olive-covered hills of Tivoli, Horace (not he of Chappaqua) had a sunny farm: it was in sight of Hadrian's villa, who did landscape gardening on an extensive scale, and probably did not get half as much comfort out of it as Horace did from his more simply tilled acres. We trust that Horace did a little hoeing and farming himself, and that his verse is not all frandulent sentiment. In order to enjoy agriculture, you do not want too much of it, and you want to be poor enough to have a little inducement to work moderately yourself. Hoe while it is spring, and enjoy the best anticipations. It is not much matter if things do not turn out well.

MY SUMMER IN A GARDEN

FIRST WEEK

UNDER this modest title, I purpose to write a series of papers, some of which will be like many papers of garden-seeds, with nothing vital in them, on the subject of gardening; holding that no man has any right to keep valuable knowledge to himself, and hoping that those who come after me, except tax-gatherers and that sort of person, will find profit in the perusal of my experience. As my knowledge is constantly increasing, there is likely to be no end to these papers. They will pursue no orderly system of agriculture or horticulture, but range from topic to topic, according to the weather and the progress of the weeds, which may drive me from one corner of the garden to the other.

The principal value of a private garden is not understood. It is not to give the possessor vegetables and fruit (that can be better and cheaper done by the market-gardeners), but to teach him patience and philosophy, and the higher virtues, — hope deferred, and expectations blighted, leading directly to resignation, and sometimes to alienation. The garden thus becomes a moral agent, a test of character, as it was in the beginning. I shall keep this central truth in mind in these articles. I mean to have a moral garden, if it is not a productive one, — one

that shall teach, O my brothers ! O my sisters ! the great lessons of life.

The first pleasant thing about a garden in this latitude is, that you never know when to set it going. If you want anything to come to maturity early, you must start it in a hot-house. If you put it out early, the chances are all in favor of getting it nipped with frost ; for the thermometer will be 90° one day, and go below 32° the night of the day following. And, if you do not set out plants or sow seeds early, you fret continually ; knowing that your vegetables will be late, and that, while Jones has early peas, you will be watching your slow-forming pods. This keeps you in a state of mind. When you have planted anything early, you are doubtful whether to desire to see it above ground, or not. If a hot day comes, you long to see the young plants ; but, when a cold north wind brings frost, you tremble lest the seeds have burst their bands. Your spring is passed in anxious doubts and fears, which are usually realized ; and so a great moral discipline is worked out for you.

Now, there is my corn, two or three inches high this 18th of May, and apparently having no fear of a frost. I was hoeing it this morning for the first time, — it is not well usually to hoe corn until about the 18th of May, — when Polly came out to look at the Lima beans. She seemed to think the poles had come up beautifully. I thought they did look well : they are a fine set of poles, large and well grown, and stand straight. They were inexpensive, too. The cheapness came about from my cutting

them on another man's land, and he did not know it. I have not examined this transaction in the moral light of gardening; but I know people in this country take great liberties at the polls. Polly noticed that the beans had not themselves come up in any proper sense, but that the dirt had got off from them, leaving them uncovered. She thought it would be well to sprinkle a slight layer of dirt over them; and I, indulgently, consented. It occurred to me, when she had gone, that beans always come up that way, — wrong end first; and that what they wanted was light, and not dirt.

Observation. — Woman always did, from the first, make a muss in a garden.

I inherited with my garden a large patch of raspberries. Splendid berry the raspberry, when the strawberry has gone. This patch has grown into such a defiant attitude, that you could not get within several feet of it. Its stalks were enormous in size, and cast out long, prickly arms in all directions; but the bushes were pretty much all dead. I have walked into them a good deal with a pruning-knife; but it is very much like fighting original sin. The variety is one that I can recommend. I think it is called Brinckley's Orange. It is exceedingly prolific, and has enormous stalks. The fruit is also said to be good; but that does not matter so much, as the plant does not often bear in this region. The stalks seem to be biennial institutions; and as they get about their growth one year, and bear the next year, and then die, and the winters here nearly always kill them, unless you take them into the house (which is

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inconvenient if you have a family of small children), it is very difficult to induce the plant to flower and fruit. This is the greatest objection there is to this sort of raspberry. I think of keeping these for discipline, and setting out some others, more hardy sorts, for fruit.

SECOND WEEK

NEXT to deciding when to start your garden, the most important matter is, what to put in it. It is difficult to decide what to order for dinner on a given day: how much more oppressive is it to order in a lump an endless vista of dinners, so to speak! For, unless your garden is a boundless prairie (and mine seems to me to be that when I hoe it on hot days), you must make a selection, from the great variety of vegetables, of those you will raise in it; and you feel rather bound to supply your own table from your own garden, and to eat only as you have sown.

I hold that no man has a right (whatever his sex, of course) to have a garden to his own selfish uses. He ought not to please himself, but every man to please his neighbor. I tried to have a garden that would give general moral satisfaction. It seemed to me that nobody could object to potatoes (a most useful vegetable); and I began to plant them freely. But there was a chorus of protest against them. "You don't want to take up your ground with potatoes," the neighbors said; "you can buy potatoes" (the very thing I wanted to avoid doing is buying things). "What you want is the perishable things that you cannot get fresh in the market." — "But what kind of perishable things?" A horticulturist of eminence wanted me to sow lines of strawberries and

raspberries right over where I had put my potatoes in drills. I had about five hundred strawberry-plants in another part of my garden ; but this fruit-fanatic wanted me to turn my whole patch into vines and runners. I suppose I could raise strawberries enough for all my neighbors ; and perhaps I ought to do it. I had a little space prepared for melons, — musk-melons, — which I showed to an experienced friend. “You are not going to waste your ground on musk-melons?” he asked. “They rarely ripen in this climate thoroughly, before frost.” He had tried for years without luck. I resolved to not go into such a foolish experiment. But, the next day, another neighbor happened in. “Ah ! I see you are going to have melons. My family would rather give up anything else in the garden than musk-melons, — of the nutmeg variety. They are the most grateful things we have on the table.” So there it was. There was no compromise : it was melons, or no melons, and somebody offended in any case. I half resolved to plant them a little late, so that they would, and they would n’t. But I had the same difficulty about string-beans (which I detest), and squash (which I tolerate), and parsnips, and the whole round of green things.

I have pretty much come to the conclusion that you have got to put your foot down in gardening. If I had actually taken counsel of my friends, I should not have had a thing growing in the garden to-day but weeds. And besides, while you are waiting, Nature does not wait. Her mind is made up. She knows just what she will raise ; and she has an infinite variety of early and late. The most humil-

iating thing to me about a garden is the lesson it teaches of the inferiority of man. Nature is prompt, decided, inexhaustible. She thrusts up her plants with a vigor and freedom that I admire; and the more worthless the plant, the more rapid and splendid its growth. She is at it early and late, and all night; never tiring, nor showing the least sign of exhaustion.

“Eternal gardening is the price of liberty,” is a motto that I should put over the gateway of my garden, if I had a gate. And yet it is not wholly true; for there is no liberty in gardening. The man who undertakes a garden is relentlessly pursued. He felicitates himself that, when he gets it once planted, he will have a season of rest and of enjoyment in the sprouting and growing of his seeds. It is a green anticipation. He has planted a seed that will keep him awake nights; drive rest from his bones, and sleep from his pillow. Hardly is the garden planted, when he must begin to hoe it. The weeds have sprung up all over it in a night. They shine and wave in redundant life. The docks have almost gone to seed; and their roots go deeper than conscience. Talk about the London Docks! — the roots of these are like the sources of the Aryan race. And the weeds are not all. I awake in the morning (and a thriving garden will wake a person up two hours before he ought to be out of bed) and think of the tomato-plants, — the leaves like fine lace-work, owing to black bugs that skip around, and can't be caught. Somebody ought to get up before the dew is off (why don't the dew stay on till after a reasonable

breakfast?) and sprinkle soot on the leaves. I wonder if it is I. Soot is so much blacker than the bugs, that they are disgusted, and go away. You can't get up too early, if you have a garden. You must be early due yourself, if you get ahead of the bugs. I think, that, on the whole, it would be best to sit up all night, and sleep daytimes. Things appear to go on in the night in the garden uncommonly. It would be less trouble to stay up than it is to get up so early.

I have been setting out some new raspberries, two sorts,—a silver and a gold color. How fine they will look on the table next year in a cut-glass dish, the cream being in a ditto pitcher! I set them four and five feet apart. I set my strawberries pretty well apart also. The reason is, to give room for the cows to run through when they break into the garden,—as they do sometimes. A cow needs a broader track than a locomotive; and she generally makes one. I am sometimes astonished to see how big a space in a flower-bed her foot will cover. The raspberries are called Doolittle and Golden Cap. I don't like the name of the first variety, and, if they do much, shall change it to Silver Top. You never can tell what a thing named Doolittle will do. The one in the Senate changed color, and got sour. They ripen badly,—either mildew, or rot on the bush. They are apt to Johnsonize,—rot on the stem. I shall watch the Doolittles.

THIRD WEEK

I BELIEVE that I have found, if not original sin, at least vegetable total depravity in my garden ; and it was there before I went into it. It is the bunch, or joint, or snake-grass, — whatever it is called. As I do not know the names of all the weeds and plants, I have to do as Adam did in his garden, — name things as I find them. This grass has a slender, beautiful stalk : and when you cut it down, or pull up a long root of it, you fancy it is got rid of ; but in a day or two it will come up in the same spot in half a dozen vigorous blades. Cutting down and pulling up is what it thrives on. Extermination rather helps it. If you follow a slender white root, it will be found to run under the ground until it meets another slender white root ; and you will soon unearth a network of them, with a knot somewhere, sending out dozens of sharp-pointed, healthy shoots, every joint prepared to be an independent life and plant. The only way to deal with it is to take one part hoe and two parts fingers, and carefully dig it out, not leaving a joint anywhere. It will take a little time, say all summer, to dig out thoroughly a small patch ; but if you once dig it out, and keep it out, you will have no further trouble.

I have said it was total depravity. Here it is. If you attempt to pull up and root out any sin in you, which shows on the surface, — if it does not show,

you do not care for it, — you may have noticed how it runs into an interior network of sins, and an ever-sprouting branch of them roots somewhere; and that you cannot pull out one without making a general internal disturbance, and rooting up your whole being. I suppose it is less trouble to quietly cut them off at the top — say once a week, on Sunday, when you put on your religious clothes and face — so that no one will see them, and not try to eradicate the network within.

Remark. — This moral vegetable figure is at the service of any clergyman who will have the manliness to come forward and help me at a day's hoeing on my potatoes. None but the orthodox need apply.

I, however, believe in the intellectual, if not the moral, qualities of vegetables, and especially weeds. There was a worthless vine that (or who) started up about midway between a grape-trellis and a row of bean-poles, some three feet from each, but a little nearer the trellis. When it came out of the ground, it looked around to see what it should do. The trellis was already occupied. The bean-pole was empty. There was evidently a little the best chance of light, air, and sole proprietorship on the pole. And the vine started for the pole, and began to climb it with determination. Here was as distinct an act of choice, of reason, as a boy exercises when he goes into a forest, and, looking about, decides which tree he will climb. And, besides, how did the vine know enough to travel in exactly the right direction, three feet, to find what it wanted? This is intellect. The weeds, on the other hand, have hateful moral qualities. To

cut down a weed is, therefore, to do a moral action. I feel as if I were destroying sin. My hoe becomes an instrument of retributive justice. I am an apostle of Nature. This view of the matter lends a dignity to the art of hoeing which nothing else does, and lifts it into the region of ethics. Hoeing becomes, not a pastime, but a duty. And you get to regard it so, as the days and the weeds lengthen.

Observation. — Nevertheless, what a man needs in gardening is a cast-iron back, with a hinge in it. The hoe is an ingenious instrument, calculated to call out a great deal of strength at a great disadvantage.

The striped bug has come, the saddest of the year. He is a moral double-ender, iron-clad at that. He is unpleasant in two ways. He burrows in the ground so that you cannot find him, and he flies away so that you cannot catch him. He is rather handsome, as bugs go, but utterly dastardly, in that he gnaws the stem of the plant close to the ground, and ruins it without any apparent advantage to himself. I find him on the hills of cucumbers (perhaps it will be a cholera-year, and we shall not want any), the squashes (small loss), and the melons (which never ripen). The best way to deal with the striped bug is to sit down by the hills, and patiently watch for him. If you are spry, you can annoy him. This, however, takes time. It takes all day and part of the night. For he fieth in darkness, and wasteth at noonday. If you get up before the dew is off the plants, — it goes off very early, — you can sprinkle soot on the plant (soot is my panacea: if I can get the disease of a plant reduced to the necessity of soot, I am all right);

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and soot is unpleasant to the bug. But the best thing to do is to set a toad to catch the bugs. The toad at once establishes the most intimate relations with the bug. It is a pleasure to see such unity among the lower animals. The difficulty is to make the toad stay and watch the hill. If you know your toad, it is all right. If you do not, you must build a tight fence round the plants, which the toad cannot jump over. This, however, introduces a new element. I find that I have a zoölogical garden on my hands. It is an unexpected result of my little enterprise, which never aspired to the completeness of the Paris "Jardin des Plantes."

FOURTH WEEK

ORTHODOXY is at a low ebb. Only two clergymen accepted my offer to come and help hoe my potatoes for the privilege of using my vegetable total-depravity figure about the snake-grass, or quack-grass as some call it; and those two did not bring hoes. There seems to be a lack of disposition to hoe among our educated clergy. I am bound to say that these two, however, sat and watched my vigorous combats with the weeds, and talked most beautifully about the application of the snake-grass figure. As, for instance, when a fault or sin showed on the surface of a man, whether, if you dug down, you would find that it ran back and into the original organic bunch of original sin within the man. The only other clergyman who came was from out of town,— a half Universalist, who said he would n't give twenty cents for my figure. He said that the snake-grass was not in my garden originally, that it sneaked in under the sod, and that it could be entirely rooted out with industry and patience. I asked the Universalist-inclined man to take my hoe and try it; but he said he had n't time, and went away.

But, *jubilate*, I have got my garden all hoed the first time! I feel as if I had put down the rebellion. Only there are guerrillas left here and there, about the borders and in corners, unsubdued,— Forrest docks, and Quantrell grass, and Beauregard pig-weeds. This

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first hoeing is a gigantic task : it is your first trial of strength with the never-sleeping forces of Nature. Several times, in its progress, I was tempted to do as Adam did, who abandoned his garden on account of the weeds. (How much my mind seems to run upon Adam, as if there had been only two really moral gardens, — Adam's and mine!) The only drawback to my rejoicing over the finishing of the first hoeing is, that the garden now wants hoeing the second time. I suppose, if my garden were planted in a perfect circle, and I started round it with a hoe, I should never see an opportunity to rest. The fact is, that gardening is the old fable of perpetual labor ; and I, for one, can never forgive Adam Sisyphus, or whoever it was, who let in the roots of discord. I had pictured myself sitting at eve, with my family, in the shade of twilight, contemplating a garden hoed. Alas! it is a dream not to be realized in this world.

My mind has been turned to the subject of fruit and shade trees in a garden. There are those who say that trees shade the garden too much, and interfere with the growth of the vegetables. There may be something in this : but when I go down the potato rows, the rays of the sun glancing upon my shining blade, the sweat pouring from my face, I should be grateful for shade. What is a garden for? The pleasure of man. I should take much more pleasure in a shady garden. Am I to be sacrificed, broiled, roasted, for the sake of the increased vigor of a few vegetables? The thing is perfectly absurd. If I were rich, I think I would have my garden covered with an awning, so that it would be comfortable

to work in it. It might roll up and be removable, as the great awning of the Roman Coliseum was,— not like the Boston one, which went off in a high wind. Another very good way to do, and probably not so expensive as the awning, would be to have four persons of foreign birth carry a sort of canopy over you as you hoed. And there might be a person at each end of the row with some cool and refreshing drink. Agriculture is still in a very barbarous stage. I hope to live yet to see the day when I can do my gardening, as tragedy is done, to slow and soothing music, and attended by some of the comforts I have named. These things come so forcibly into my mind sometimes as I work, that perhaps, when a wandering breeze lifts my straw hat, or a bird lights on a near currant-bush, and shakes out a full-throated summer song, I almost expect to find the cooling drink and the hospitable entertainment at the end of the row. But I never do. There is nothing to be done but to turn round, and hoe back to the other end.

Speaking of those yellow squash-bugs, I think I disheartened them by covering the plants so deep with soot and wood-ashes that they could not find them; and I am in doubt if I shall ever see the plants again. But I have heard of another defense against the bugs. Put a fine wire-screen over each hill, which will keep out the bugs and admit the rain. I should say that these screens would not cost much more than the melons you would be likely to get from the vines if you bought them; but then think of the moral satisfaction of watching the bugs hovering over the screen, seeing, but unable

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to reach the tender plants within. That is worth paying for.

I left my own garden yesterday, and went over to where Polly was getting the weeds out of one of her flower-beds. She was working away at the bed with a little hoe. Whether women ought to have the ballot or not (and I have a decided opinion on that point, which I should here plainly give, did I not fear that it would injure my agricultural influence), I am compelled to say that this was rather helpless hoeing. It was patient, conscientious, even pathetic hoeing; but it was neither effective nor finished. When completed, the bed looked somewhat as if a hen had scratched it: there was that touching unevenness about it. I think no one could look at it and not be affected. To be sure, Polly smoothed it off with a rake, and asked me if it was n't nice; and I said it was. It was not a favorable time for me to explain the difference between puttering hoeing, and the broad, free sweep of the instrument, which kills the weeds, spares the plants, and loosens the soil without leaving it in holes and hills. But, after all, as life is constituted, I think more of Polly's honest and anxious care of her plants than of the most finished gardening in the world.

FIFTH WEEK

I LEFT my garden for a week, just at the close of the dry spell. A season of rain immediately set in, and when I returned the transformation was wonderful. In one week every vegetable had fairly jumped forward. The tomatoes which I left slender plants, eaten of bugs and debating whether they would go backward or forward, had become stout and lusty, with thick stems and dark leaves, and some of them had blossomed. The corn waved like that which grows so rank out of the French-English mixture at Waterloo. The squashes — I will not speak of the squashes. The most remarkable growth was the asparagus. There was not a spear above ground when I went away ; and now it had sprung up, and gone to seed, and there were stalks higher than my head. I am entirely aware of the value of words, and of moral obligations. When I say that the asparagus had grown six feet in seven days, I expect and wish to be believed. I am a little particular about the statement ; for, if there is any prize offered for asparagus at the next agricultural fair, I wish to compete, — speed to govern. What I claim is the fastest asparagus. As for eating purposes, I have seen better. A neighbor of mine, who looked in at the growth of the bed, said, “ Well, he ’d be —— ” : but I told him there was no use of affirming now ; he might keep his oath till I wanted

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it on the asparagus affidavit. In order to have this sort of asparagus, you want to manure heavily in the early spring, fork it in, and top-dress (that sounds technical) with a thick layer of chloride of sodium : if you cannot get that, common salt will do, and the neighbors will never notice whether it is the orthodox Na. Cl. 58.5, or not.

I scarcely dare trust myself to speak of the weeds. They grow as if the devil was in them. I know a lady, a member of the church, and a very good sort of woman, considering the subject condition of that class, who says that the weeds work on her to that extent, that, in going through her garden, she has the greatest difficulty in keeping the ten commandments in anything like an unfractured condition. I asked her which one, but she said, all of them : one felt like breaking the whole lot. The sort of weed which I most hate (if I can be said to hate anything which grows in my own garden) is the "pusley," a fat, ground-clinging, spreading, greasy thing, and the most propagatious (it is not my fault if the word is not in the dictionary) plant I know. I saw a Chinaman, who came over with a returned missionary, and pretended to be converted, boil a lot of it in a pot, stir in eggs, and mix and eat it with relish, — "Me likee he." It will be a good thing to keep the Chinamen on when they come to do our gardening. I only fear they will cultivate it at the expense of the strawberries and melons. Who can say that other weeds, which we despise, may not be the favorite food of some remote people or tribe? We ought to abate our conceit. It is possible that we destroy in our

gardens that which is really of most value in some other place. Perhaps, in like manner, our faults and vices are virtues in some remote planet. I cannot see, however, that this thought is of the slightest value to us here, any more than weeds are.

There is another subject which is forced upon my notice. I like neighbors, and I like chickens ; but I do not think they ought to be united near a garden. Neighbors' hens in your garden are an annoyance. Even if they did not scratch up the corn, and peck the strawberries, and eat the tomatoes, it is not pleasant to see them straddling about in their jerky, high-stepping, speculative manner, picking inquisitively here and there. It is of no use to tell the neighbor that his hens eat your tomatoes : it makes no impression on him, for the tomatoes are not his. The best way is to casually remark to him that he has a fine lot of chickens, pretty well grown, and that you like spring chickens broiled. He will take them away at once.

The neighbors' small children are also out of place in your garden, in strawberry and currant time. I hope I appreciate the value of children. We should soon come to nothing without them, though the Shakers have the best gardens in the world. Without them the common school would languish. But the problem is, what to do with them in a garden. For they are not good to eat, and there is a law against making away with them. The law is not very well enforced, it is true ; for people do thin them out with constant dosing, paregoric, and soothing-syrups, and scanty clothing. But I, for one, feel

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that it would not be right, aside from the law, to take the life, even of the smallest child, for the sake of a little fruit, more or less, in the garden. I may be wrong; but these are my sentiments, and I am not ashamed of them. When we come, as Bryant says in his "Iliad," to leave the circus of this life, and join that innumerable caravan which moves, it will be some satisfaction to us, that we have never, in the way of gardening, disposed of even the humblest child unnecessarily. My plan would be to put them into Sunday-schools more thoroughly, and to give the Sunday-schools an agricultural turn; teaching the children the sacredness of neighbors' vegetables. I think that our Sunday-schools do not sufficiently impress upon children the danger, from snakes and otherwise, of going into the neighbors' gardens.

SIXTH WEEK

SOMEbody has sent me a new sort of hoe, with the wish that I should speak favorably of it, if I can consistently. I willingly do so, but with the understanding that I am to be at liberty to speak just as courteously of any other hoe which I may receive. If I understand religious morals, this is the position of the religious press with regard to bitters and wringing-machines. In some cases, the responsibility of such a recommendation is shifted upon the wife of the editor or clergyman. Polly says she is entirely willing to make a certificate, accompanied with an affidavit, with regard to this hoe ; but her habit of sitting about the garden-walk, on an inverted flower-pot, while I hoe, somewhat destroys the practical value of her testimony.

As to this hoe, I do not mind saying that it has changed my view of the desirableness and value of human life. It has, in fact, made life a holiday to me. It is made on the principle that man is an upright, sensible, reasonable being, and not a groveling wretch. It does away with the necessity of the hinge in the back. The handle is seven and a half feet long. There are two narrow blades, sharp on both edges, which come together at an obtuse angle in front ; and as you walk along with this hoe before you, pushing and pulling with a gentle motion, the weeds fall at every thrust and withdrawal, and the

slaughter is immediate and widespread. When I got this hoe I was troubled with sleepless mornings, pains in the back, kleptomania with regard to new weeders ; when I went into my garden I was always sure to see something. In this disordered state of mind and body I got this hoe. The morning after a day of using it I slept perfectly and late. I regained my respect for the eighth commandment. After two doses of the hoe in the garden, the weeds entirely disappeared. Trying it a third morning, I was obliged to throw it over the fence in order to save from destruction the green things that ought to grow in the garden. Of course, this is figurative language. What I mean is, that the fascination of using this hoe is such that you are sorely tempted to employ it upon your vegetables, after the weeds are laid low, and must hastily withdraw it, to avoid unpleasant results. I make this explanation, because I intend to put nothing into these agricultural papers that will not bear the strictest scientific investigation ; nothing that the youngest child cannot understand and cry for ; nothing that the oldest and wisest men will not need to study with care.

I need not add that the care of a garden with this hoe becomes the merest pastime. I would not be without one for a single night. The only danger is, that you may rather make an idol of the hoe, and somewhat neglect your garden in explaining it, and fooling about with it. I almost think that, with one of these in the hands of an ordinary day-laborer, you might see at night where he had been working.

Let us have peas. I have been a zealous advocate

of the birds. I have rejoiced in their multiplication. I have endured their concerts at four o'clock in the morning without a murmur. Let them come, I said, and eat the worms, in order that we, later, may enjoy the foliage and the fruits of the earth. We have a cat, a magnificent animal, of the sex which votes (but not a pole-cat), — so large and powerful that, if he were in the army, he would be called Long Tom. He is a cat of fine disposition, the most irreproachable morals I ever saw thrown away in a cat, and a splendid hunter. He spends his nights, not in social dissipation, but in gathering in rats, mice, flying-squirrels, and also birds. When he first brought me a bird, I told him that it was wrong, and tried to convince him, while he was eating it, that he was doing wrong; for he is a reasonable cat, and understands pretty much everything except the binomial theorem and the time down the cycloidal arc. But with no effect. The killing of birds went on, to my great regret and shame.

The other day I went to my garden to get a mess of peas. I had seen, the day before, that they were just ready to pick. How I had lined the ground, planted, hoed, bushed them! The bushes were very fine, — seven feet high, and of good wood. How I had delighted in the growing, the blowing, the podding! What a touching thought it was that they had all podded for me! When I went to pick them, I found the pods all split open, and the peas gone. The dear little birds, who are so fond of the strawberries, had eaten them all. Perhaps there were left as many as I planted: I did not count them. I

made a rapid estimate of the cost of the seed, the interest of the ground, the price of labor, the value of the bushes, the anxiety of weeks of watchfulness. I looked about me on the face of Nature. The wind blew from the south so soft and treacherous! A thrush sang in the woods so deceitfully! All Nature seemed fair. But who was to give me back my peas? The fowls of the air have peas; but what has man?

I went into the house. I called Calvin. (That is the name of our cat, given him on account of his gravity, morality, and uprightness. We never familiarly call him John). I petted Calvin. I lavished upon him an enthusiastic fondness. I told him that he had no fault; that the one action that I had called a vice was an heroic exhibition of regard for my interests. I bade him go and do likewise continually. I now saw how much better instinct is than mere unguided reason. Calvin knew. If he had put his opinion into English (instead of his native catalogue), it would have been: "You need not teach your grandmother to suck eggs." It was only the round of Nature. The worms eat a noxious something in the ground. The birds eat the worms. Calvin eats the birds. We eat—no, we do not eat Calvin. There the chain stops. When you ascend the scale of being, and come to an animal that is, like ourselves, inedible, you have arrived at a result where you can rest. Let us respect the cat. He completes an edible chain.

I have little heart to discuss methods of raising peas. It occurs to me that I can have an iron pea-bush, a sort of trellis, through which I could dis-

charge electricity at frequent intervals, and electrify the birds to death when they alight : for they stand upon my beautiful brush in order to pick out the peas. An apparatus of this kind, with an operator, would cost, however, about as much as the peas. A neighbor suggests that I might put up a scarecrow near the vines, which would keep the birds away. I am doubtful about it : the birds are too much accustomed to seeing a person in poor clothes in the garden to care much for that. Another neighbor suggests that the birds do not open the pods ; that a sort of blast, apt to come after rain, splits the pods, and the birds then eat the peas. It may be so. There seems to be complete unity of action between the blast and the birds. But, good neighbors, kind friends, I desire that you will not increase, by talk, a disappointment which you cannot assuage.

SEVENTH WEEK

A GARDEN is an awful responsibility. You never know what you may be aiding to grow in it. I heard a sermon, not long ago, in which the preacher said that the Christian, at the moment of his becoming one, was as perfect a Christian as he would be if he grew to be an archangel; that is, that he would not change thereafter at all, but only develop. I do not know whether this is good theology, or not; and I hesitate to support it by an illustration from my garden, especially as I do not want to run the risk of propagating error, and I do not care to give away these theological comparisons to clergymen who make me so little return in the way of labor. But I find, in dissecting a pea-blossom, that hidden in the center of it is a perfect miniature pea-pod, with the peas all in it, — as perfect a pea-pod as it will ever be, only it is as tiny as a chatelaine ornament. Maize and some other things show the same precocity. This confirmation of the theologic theory is startling, and sets me meditating upon the moral possibilities of my garden. I may find in it yet the cosmic egg.

And, speaking of moral things, I am half determined to petition the Œcumenical Council to issue a bull of excommunication against “pusley.” Of all the forms which “error” has taken in this world, I think that is about the worst. In the Middle Ages

the monks in St. Bernard's ascetic community at Clairvaux excommunicated a vineyard which a less rigid monk had planted near, so that it bore nothing. In 1120 a bishop of Laon excommunicated the caterpillars in his diocese ; and, the following year, St. Bernard excommunicated the flies in the Monastery of Foigny ; and in 1510 the ecclesiastical court pronounced the dread sentence against the rats of Autun, Macon, and Lyons. These examples are sufficient precedents. It will be well for the council, however, not to publish the bull either just before or just after a rain ; for nothing can kill this pestilent heresy when the ground is wet.

It is the time of festivals. Polly says we ought to have one, — a strawberry-festival. She says they are perfectly delightful : it is so nice to get people together ! — this hot weather. They create such a good feeling ! I myself am very fond of festivals. I always go, — when I can consistently. Besides the strawberries, there are ice-creams and cake and lemonade, and that sort of thing : and one always feels so well the next day after such a diet ! But as social reunions, if there are good things to eat, nothing can be pleasanter ; and they are very profitable, if you have a good object. I agreed that we ought to have a festival ; but I did not know what object to devote it to. We are not in need of an organ, nor of any pulpit-cushions. I do not know that they use pulpit-cushions now as much as they used to, when preachers had to have something soft to pound, so that they would not hurt their fists. I suggested pocket-handkerchiefs, and flannels for next winter. But

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Polly says that will not do at all. You must have some charitable object, — something that appeals to a vast sense of something ; something that it will be right to get up lotteries and that sort of thing for. I suggest a festival for the benefit of my garden ; and this seems feasible. In order to make everything pass off pleasantly, invited guests will bring or send their own strawberries and cream, which I shall be happy to sell to them at a slight advance. There are a great many improvements which the garden needs ; among them a sounding-board, so that the neighbors' children can hear when I tell them to get a little farther off from the currant-bushes. I should also like a selection from the ten commandments, in big letters, posted up conspicuously, and a few traps, that will detain, but not maim, for the benefit of those who cannot read. But what is most important is, that the ladies should crochet nets to cover over the strawberries. A good-sized, well-managed festival ought to produce nets enough to cover my entire beds ; and I can think of no other method of preserving the berries from the birds next year. I wonder how many strawberries it would need for a festival, and whether they would cost more than the nets.

I am more and more impressed, as the summer goes on, with the inequality of man's fight with Nature ; especially in a civilized state. In savagery, it does not much matter ; for one does not take a square hold, and put out his strength, but rather accommodates himself to the situation, and takes what he can get, without raising any dust, or putting

himself into everlasting opposition. But the minute he begins to clear a spot larger than he needs to sleep in for a night, and to try to have his own way in the least, Nature is at once up, and vigilant, and contests him at every step with all her ingenuity and unwearied vigor. This talk of subduing Nature is pretty much nonsense. I do not intend to surrender in the midst of the summer campaign, yet I cannot but think how much more peaceful my relations would now be with the primal forces, if I had let Nature make the garden according to her own notion. (This is written with the thermometer at ninety degrees, and the weeds starting up with a freshness and vigor, as if they had just thought of it for the first time, and had not been cut down and dragged out every other day since the snow went off.)

We have got down the forests, and exterminated savage beasts; but Nature is no more subdued than before: she only changes her tactics, — uses smaller guns, so to speak. She reënforces herself with a variety of bugs, worms, and vermin, and weeds, unknown to the savage state, in order to make war upon the things of our planting; and calls in the fowls of the air, just as we think the battle is won, to snatch away the booty. When one gets almost weary of the struggle, she is as fresh as at the beginning, — just, in fact, ready for the fray. I, for my part, begin to appreciate the value of frost and snow; for they give the husbandman a little peace, and enable him, for a season, to contemplate his incessant foe subdued. I do not wonder that the tropical

people, where Nature never goes to sleep, give it up, and sit in lazy acquiescence.

Here I have been working all the season to make a piece of lawn. It had to be graded and sowed and rolled; and I have been shaving it like a barber. When it was soft, everything had a tendency to go on to it, — cows, and especially wandering hackmen. Hackmen (who are a product of civilization) know a lawn when they see it. They rather have a fancy for it, and always try to drive so as to cut the sharp borders of it, and leave the marks of their wheels in deep ruts of cut-up, ruined turf. The other morning, I had just been running the mower over the lawn, and stood regarding its smoothness, when I noticed one, two, three puffs of fresh earth in it; and, hastening thither, I found that the mole had arrived to complete the work of the hackmen. In a half-hour he had rooted up the ground like a pig. I found his run-ways. I waited for him with a spade. He did not appear; but, the next time I passed by, he had ridged the ground in all directions, — a smooth, beautiful animal, with fur like silk, if you could only catch him. He appears to enjoy the lawn as much as the hackmen did. He does not care how smooth it is. He is constantly mining, and ridging it up. I am not sure but he could be countermined. I have half a mind to put powder in here and there, and blow the whole thing into the air. Some folks set traps for the mole; but my moles never seem to go twice in the same place. I am not sure but it would bother them to sow the lawn with interlacing snake-grass (the botanical name of which, somebody

writes me, is devil-grass : the first time I have heard that the Devil has a botanical name), which would worry them, if it is as difficult for them to get through it as it is for me.

I do not speak of this mole in any tone of complaint. He is only a part of the untiring resources which Nature brings against the humble gardener. I desire to write nothing against him which I should wish to recall at the last, — nothing foreign to the spirit of that beautiful saying of the dying boy, “ He had no copy-book, which, dying, he was sorry he had blotted.”

EIGHTH WEEK

MY garden has been visited by a High Official Person. President Gr—nt was here just before the Fourth, getting his mind quiet for that event by a few days of retirement, staying with a friend at the head of our street; and I asked him if he would n't like to come down our way Sunday afternoon, and take a plain, simple look at my garden, eat a little lemon ice-cream and jelly-cake, and drink a glass of native lager-beer. I thought of putting up over my gate, "Welcome to the Nation's Gardener;" but I hate nonsense, and did n't do it. I, however, hoed diligently on Saturday: what weeds I could n't remove I buried, so that everything would look all right. The borders of my drive were trimmed with scissors; and everything that could offend the Eye of the Great was hustled out of the way.

In relating this interview, it must be distinctly understood that I am not responsible for anything that the President said; nor is he, either. He is not a great speaker; but whatever he says has an esoteric and an exoteric meaning; and some of his remarks about my vegetables went very deep. I said nothing to him whatever about politics, at which he seemed a good deal surprised: he said it was the first garden he had ever been in, with a man, when the talk was not of appointments. I told him that this was purely vegetable; after which he seemed more at his ease,

and, in fact, delighted with everything he saw. He was much interested in my strawberry-beds, asked what varieties I had, and requested me to send him some seed. He said the patent-office seed was as difficult to raise as an appropriation for the St. Domingo business. The playful bean seemed also to please him ; and he said he had never seen such impressive corn and potatoes at this time of year ; that it was to him an unexpected pleasure, and one of the choicest memories that he should take away with him of his visit to New England.

N. B. — That corn and those potatoes which General Grant looked at I will sell for seed, at five dollars an ear, and one dollar a potato. Office-seekers need not apply.

Knowing the President's great desire for peas, I kept him from that part of the garden where the vines grow. But they could not be concealed. Those who say that the President is not a man easily moved are knaves or fools. When he saw my pea-pods, ravaged by the birds, he burst into tears. A man of war, he knows the value of peas. I told him they were an excellent sort, "The Champion of England." As quick as a flash he said, —

"Why don't you call them 'The Reverdy Johnson'?"

It was a very clever *bon-mot* ; but I changed the subject.

The sight of my squashes, with stalks as big as speaking-trumpets, restored the President to his usual spirits. He said the summer squash was the most ludicrous vegetable he knew. It was nearly all

leaf and blow, with only a sickly, crook-necked fruit after a mighty fuss. It reminded him of the member of Congress from —; but I hastened to change the subject.

As we walked along, the keen eye of the President rested upon some handsome sprays of "pusley," which must have grown up since Saturday night. It was most fortunate; for it led his Excellency to speak of the Chinese problem. He said he had been struck with one coupling of the Chinese and the "pusley" in one of my agricultural papers; and it had a significance more far-reaching than I had probably supposed. He had made the Chinese problem a special study. He said that I was right in saying that "pusley" was the natural food of the Chinaman, and that where the "pusley" was, there would the Chinaman be also. For his part, he welcomed the Chinese emigration: we needed the Chinaman in our gardens to eat the "pusley;" and he thought the whole problem solved by this simple consideration. To get rid of rats and "pusley," he said, was a necessity of our civilization. He did not care so much about the shoe-business; he did not think that the little Chinese shoes that he had seen would be of service in the army: but the garden-interest was quite another affair. We want to make a garden of our whole country: the hoe, in the hands of a man truly great, he was pleased to say, was mightier than the pen. He presumed that General B—tl—r had never taken into consideration the garden-question, or he would not assume the position he does with regard to the Chinese emigration. He would let the Chinese come,

even if B—tl—r had to leave, I thought he was going to say, but I changed the subject.

During our entire garden interview (operatically speaking, the garden-scene), the President was not smoking. I do not know how the impression arose that he "uses tobacco in any form;" for I have seen him several times, and he was not smoking. Indeed, I offered him a Connecticut six; but he wittily said that he did not like a weed in a garden, — a remark which I took to have a personal political bearing, and changed the subject.

The President was a good deal surprised at the method and fine appearance of my garden, and to learn that I had the sole care of it. He asked me if I pursued an original course, or whether I got my ideas from writers on the subject. I told him that I had had no time to read anything on the subject since I began to hoe, except "Lothair," from which I got my ideas of landscape gardening; and that I had worked the garden entirely according to my own notions, except that I had borne in mind his injunction, "to fight it out on this line if" — The President stopped me abruptly, and said it was unnecessary to repeat that remark: he thought he had heard it before. Indeed, he deeply regretted that he had ever made it. Sometimes, he said, after hearing it in speeches, and coming across it in resolutions, and reading it in newspapers, and having it dropped jocularly by facetious politicians, who were boring him for an office, about twenty-five times a day, say for a month, it would get to running through his head, like the "shoo-fly" song which B—tl—r sings in

the House, until it did seem as if he should go distracted. He said, no man could stand that kind of sentence hammering on his brain for years.

The President was so much pleased with my management of the garden, that he offered me (at least, I so understood him) the position of head gardener at the White House, to have care of the exotics. I told him that I thanked him, but that I did not desire any foreign appointment. I had resolved, when the administration came in, not to take an appointment; and I had kept my resolution. As to any home office, I was poor, but honest; and, of course, it would be useless for me to take one. The President mused a moment, and then smiled, and said he would see what could be done for me. I did not change the subject; but nothing further was said by General Gr—nt.

The President is a great talker (contrary to the general impression); but I think he appreciated his quiet hour in my garden. He said it carried him back to his youth farther than anything he had seen lately. He looked forward with delight to the time when he could again have his private garden, grow his own lettuce and tomatoes, and not have to get so much "sarce" from Congress.

The chair in which the President sat, while declining to take a glass of lager, I have had destroyed, in order that no one may sit in it. It was the only way to save it, if I may so speak. It would have been impossible to keep it from use by any precautions. There are people who would have sat in it, if the seat had been set with iron spikes. Such is the adoration of Station.

NINTH WEEK

I AM more and more impressed with the moral qualities of vegetables, and contemplate forming a science which shall rank with comparative anatomy and comparative philology,—the science of comparative vegetable morality. We live in an age of protoplasm. And, if life-matter is essentially the same in all forms of life, I purpose to begin early, and ascertain the nature of the plants for which I am responsible. I will not associate with any vegetable which is disreputable, or has not some quality that can contribute to my moral growth. I do not care to be seen much with the squashes or the dead-beets. Fortunately I can cut down any sorts I do not like with the hoe, and, probably, commit no more sin in so doing than the Christians did in hewing down the Jews in the Middle Ages.

This matter of vegetable rank has not been at all studied as it should be. Why do we respect some vegetables and despise others, when all of them come to an equal honor or ignominy on the table? The bean is a graceful, confiding, engaging vine; but you never can put beans into poetry, nor into the highest sort of prose. There is no dignity in the bean. Corn, which, in my garden, grows alongside the bean, and, so far as I can see, with no affectation of superiority, is, however, the child of song. It waves in all literature. But mix it with beans, and

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its high tone is gone. Succotash is vulgar. It is the bean in it. The bean is a vulgar vegetable, without culture, or any flavor of high society among vegetables. Then there is the cool cucumber, like so many people,—good for nothing when it is ripe and the wildness has gone out of it. How inferior in quality it is to the melon, which grows upon a similar vine, is of a like watery consistency, but is not half so valuable! The cucumber is a sort of low comedian in a company where the melon is a minor gentleman. I might also contrast the celery with the potato. The associations are as opposite as the dining-room of the duchess and the cabin of the peasant. I admire the potato, both in vine and blossom; but it is not aristocratic. I began digging my potatoes, by the way, about the 4th of July; and I fancy I have discovered the right way to do it. I treat the potato just as I would a cow. I do not pull them up, and shake them out, and destroy them; but I dig carefully at the side of the hill, remove the fruit which is grown, leaving the vine undisturbed: and my theory is, that it will go on bearing, and submitting to my exactions, until the frost cuts it down. It is a game that one would not undertake with a vegetable of tone.

The lettuce is to me a most interesting study. Lettuce is like conversation: it must be fresh and crisp, so sparkling that you scarcely notice the bitter in it. Lettuce, like most talkers, is, however, apt to run rapidly to seed. Blessed is that sort which comes to a head, and so remains, like a few people I know; growing more solid and satisfactory and tender at the same time, and whiter at the center, and crisp in their

maturity. Lettuce, like conversation, requires a good deal of oil, to avoid friction, and keep the company smooth; a pinch of attic salt; a dash of pepper; a quantity of mustard and vinegar, by all means, but so mixed that you will notice no sharp contrasts; and a trifle of sugar. You can put anything, and the more things the better, into salad, as into a conversation; but everything depends upon the skill of mixing. I feel that I am in the best society when I am with lettuce. It is in the select circle of vegetables. The tomato appears well on the table; but you do not want to ask its origin. It is a most agreeable *parvenu*. Of course, I have said nothing about the berries. They live in another and more ideal region; except, perhaps, the currant. Here we see, that, even among berries, there are degrees of breeding. The currant is well enough, clear as truth, and exquisite in color; but I ask you to notice how far it is from the exclusive *hauteur* of the aristocratic strawberry, and the native refinement of the quietly elegant raspberry.

I do not know that chemistry, searching for protoplasm, is able to discover the tendency of vegetables. It can only be found out by outward observation. I confess that I am suspicious of the bean, for instance. There are signs in it of an unregulated life. I put up the most attractive sort of poles for my Limas. They stand high and straight, like church-spires, in my theological garden,—lifted up; and some of them have even budded, like Aaron's rod. No church-steeple in a New England village was ever better fitted to draw to it the rising generation on

Sunday, than those poles to lift up my beans towards heaven. Some of them did run up the sticks seven feet, and then straggled off into the air in a wanton manner; but more than half of them went gallivanting off to the neighboring grape-trellis, and wound their tendrils with the tendrils of the grape, with a disregard of the proprieties of life which is a satire upon human nature. And the grape is morally no better. I think the ancients, who were not troubled with the recondite mystery of protoplasm, were right in the mythic union of Bacchus and Venus.

Talk about the Darwinian theory of development, and the principle of natural selection! I should like to see a garden let to run in accordance with it. If I had left my vegetables and weeds to a free fight, in which the strongest specimens only should come to maturity, and the weaker go to the wall, I can clearly see that I should have had a pretty mess of it. It would have been a scene of passion and license and brutality. The "pusley" would have strangled the strawberry; the upright corn, which has now ears to hear the guilty beating of the hearts of the children who steal the raspberries, would have been dragged to the earth by the wandering bean; the snake-grass would have left no place for the potatoes under ground; and the tomatoes would have been swamped by the lusty weeds. With a firm hand, I have had to make my own "natural selection." Nothing will so well bear watching as a garden, except a family of children next door. Their power of selection beats mine. If they could read half as well as they can steal awhile away, I should put up a notice,

“*Children, beware ! There is Protoplasm here.*” But I suppose it would have no effect. I believe they would eat protoplasm as quick as anything else, ripe or green. I wonder if this is going to be a cholera-year. Considerable cholera is the only thing that would let my apples and pears ripen. Of course I do not care for the fruit ; but I do not want to take the responsibility of letting so much “life-matter,” full of crude and even wicked vegetable-human tendencies, pass into the composition of the neighbors’ children, some of whom may be as immortal as snake-grass. There ought to be a public meeting about this, and resolutions, and perhaps a clam-bake. At least, it ought to be put into the catechism, and put in strong.

TENTH WEEK

I THINK I have discovered the way to keep peas from the birds. I tried the scarecrow plan, in a way which I thought would outwit the shrewdest bird. The brain of the bird is not large; but it is all concentrated on one object, and that is the attempt to elude the devices of modern civilization which injure his chances of food. I knew that, if I put up a complete stuffed man, the bird would detect the imitation at once: the perfection of the thing would show him that it was a trick. People always overdo the matter when they attempt deception. I therefore hung some loose garments, of a bright color, upon a rake-head, and set them up among the vines. The supposition was, that the bird would think there was an effort to trap him, that there was a man behind, holding up these garments, and would sing, as he kept at a distance, "You can't catch me with any such double device." The bird would know, or think he knew, that I would not hang up such a scare, in the expectation that it would pass for a man, and deceive a bird; and he would therefore look for a deeper plot. I expected to outwit the bird by a duplicity that was simplicity itself. I may have over-calculated the sagacity and reasoning power of the bird. At any rate, I did over-calculate the amount of peas I should gather.

But my game was only half played. In another part of the garden were other peas, growing and blowing. To these I took good care not to attract the attention of the bird by any scarecrow whatever! I left the old scarecrow conspicuously flaunting above the old vines; and by this means I hope to keep the attention of the birds confined to that side of the garden. I am convinced that this is the true use of a scarecrow: it is a lure, and not a warning. If you wish to save men from any particular vice, set up a tremendous cry of warning about some other; and they will all give their special efforts to the one to which attention is called. This profound truth is about the only thing I have yet realized out of my pea-vines.

However, the garden does begin to yield. I know of nothing that makes one feel more complacent, in these July days, than to have his vegetables from his own garden. What an effect it has on the market-man and the butcher! It is a kind of declaration of independence. The market-man shows me his peas and beets and tomatoes, and supposes he shall send me out some with the meat. "No, I thank you," I say carelessly; "I am raising my own this year." Whereas I have been wont to remark, "Your vegetables look a little wilted this weather," I now say, "What a fine lot of vegetables you've got!" When a man is not going to buy, he can afford to be generous. To raise his own vegetables makes a person feel, somehow, more liberal. I think the butcher is touched by the influence, and cuts off a better roast for me. The butcher is my friend

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when he sees that I am not wholly dependent on him.

It is at home, however, that the effect is most marked, though sometimes in a way that I had not expected. I have never read of any Roman supper that seemed to me equal to a dinner of my own vegetables; when everything on the table is the product of my own labor, except the clams, which I have not been able to raise yet, and the chickens, which have withdrawn from the garden just when they were most attractive. It is strange what a taste you suddenly have for things you never liked before. The squash has always been to me a dish of contempt; but I eat it now as if it were my best friend. I never cared for the beet or the bean; but I fancy now that I could eat them all, tops and all, so completely have they been transformed by the soil in which they grew. I think the squash is less squashy, and the beet has a deeper hue of rose, for my care of them.

I had begun to nurse a good deal of pride in presiding over a table whereon was the fruit of my honest industry. But woman!—John Stuart Mill is right when he says that we do not know anything about women. Six thousand years is as one day with them. I thought I had something to do with those vegetables. But when I saw Polly seated at her side of the table, presiding over the new and susceptible vegetables, flanked by the squash and the beans, and smiling upon the green corn and the new potatoes, as cool as the cucumbers which lay sliced in ice before her, and when she began to dispense the fresh

dishes, I saw at once that the day of my destiny was over. You would have thought that she owned all the vegetables, and had raised them all from their earliest years. Such quiet, vegetable airs! Such gracious appropriation! At length I said, —

“Polly, do you know who planted that squash, or those squashes?”

“James, I suppose.”

“Well, yes, perhaps James did plant them, to a certain extent. But who hoed them?”

“We did.”

“*We* did!” I said, in the most sarcastic manner. “And I suppose *we* put on the sackcloth and ashes, when the striped bug came at four o’clock A. M., and *we* watched the tender leaves, and watered night and morning the feeble plants. I tell you, Polly,” said I, uncorking the Bordeaux raspberry vinegar, “there is not a pea here that does not represent a drop of moisture wrung from my brow, not a beet that does not stand for a back-ache, not a squash that has not caused me untold anxiety; and I did hope — but I will say no more.”

Observation. — In this sort of family discussion, “I will say no more” is the most effective thing you can close up with.

I am not an alarmist. I hope I am as cool as anybody this hot summer. But I am quite ready to say to Polly, or any other woman, “You can have the ballot; only leave me the vegetables, or, what is more important, the consciousness of power in vegetables.” I see how it is. Woman is now supreme in the house. She already stretches out her hand to

grasp the garden. She will gradually control everything. Woman is one of the ablest and most cunning creatures who have ever mingled in human affairs. I understand those women who say they don't want the ballot. They purpose to hold the real power while we go through the mockery of making laws. They want the power without the responsibility. (Suppose my squash had not come up, or my beans — as they threatened at one time — had gone the wrong way : where would I have been ?) We are to be held to all the responsibilities. Woman takes the lead in all the departments, leaving us politics only. And what is politics? Let me raise the vegetables of a nation, says Polly, and I care not who makes its politics. Here I sat at the table, armed with the ballot, but really powerless among my own vegetables. While we are being amused by the ballot, woman is quietly taking things into her own hands.

ELEVENTH WEEK

PERHAPS, after all, it is not what you get out of a garden, but what you put into it, that is the most remunerative. What is a man? A question frequently asked, and never, so far as I know, satisfactorily answered. He commonly spends his seventy years, if so many are given him, in getting ready to enjoy himself. How many hours, how many minutes, does one get of that pure content which is happiness? I do not mean laziness, which is always discontent; but that serene enjoyment, in which all the natural senses have easy play, and the unnatural ones have a holiday. There is probably nothing that has such a tranquilizing effect, and leads into such content, as gardening. By gardening, I do not mean that insane desire to raise vegetables which some have; but the philosophical occupation of contact with the earth, and companionship with gently growing things and patient processes; that exercise which soothes the spirit, and develops the deltoid muscles.

In half an hour I can hoe myself right away from this world, as we commonly see it, into a large place, where there are no obstacles. What an occupation it is for thought! The mind broods like a hen on eggs. The trouble is, that you are not thinking about anything, but are really vegetating like the plants around you. I begin to know what the joy of the

grape-vine is in running up the trellis, which is similar to that of the squirrel in running up a tree. We all have something in our nature that requires contact with the earth. In the solitude of garden-labor, one gets into a sort of communion with the vegetable life, which makes the old mythology possible. For instance, I can believe that the dryads are plenty this summer: my garden is like an ash-heap. Almost all the moisture it has had in weeks has been the sweat of honest industry.

The pleasure of gardening in these days, when the thermometer is at ninety, is one that I fear I shall not be able to make intelligible to my readers, many of whom do not appreciate the delight of soaking in the sunshine. I suppose that the sun, going through a man, as it will on such a day, takes out of him rheumatism, consumption, and every other disease, except sudden death—from sun-stroke. But, aside from this, there is an odor from the evergreens, the hedges, the various plants and vines, that is only expressed and set afloat at a high temperature, which is delicious; and, hot as it may be, a little breeze will come at intervals, which can be heard in the tree-tops, and which is an unobtrusive benediction. I hear a quail or two whistling in the ravine; and there is a good deal of fragmentary conversation going on among the birds, even on the warmest days. The companionship of Calvin, also, counts for a good deal. He usually attends me, unless I work too long in one place; sitting down on the turf, displaying the ermine of his breast, and watching my movements with great intelligence. He has a feline and genuine

love for the beauties of Nature, and will establish himself where there is a good view, and look on it for hours. He always accompanies us when we go to gather the vegetables, seeming to be desirous to know what we are to have for dinner. He is a connoisseur in the garden; being fond of almost all the vegetables, except the cucumber, — a dietetic hint to man. I believe it is also said that the pig will not eat tobacco. These are important facts. It is singular, however, that those who hold up the pigs as models to us never hold us up as models to the pigs.

I wish I knew as much about natural history and the habits of animals as Calvin does. He is the closest observer I ever saw; and there are few species of animals on the place that he has not analyzed. I think he has, to use a euphemism very applicable to him, got outside of every one of them, except the toad. To the toad he is entirely indifferent; but I presume he knows that the toad is the most useful animal in the garden. I think the Agricultural Society ought to offer a prize for the finest toad. When Polly comes to sit in the shade near my strawberry-beds, to shell peas, Calvin is always lying near in apparent obliviousness; but not the slightest unusual sound can be made in the bushes, that he is not alert, and prepared to investigate the cause of it. It is this habit of observation, so cultivated, which has given him such a trained mind, and made him so philosophical. It is within the capacity of even the humblest of us to attain this.

And, speaking of the philosophical temper, there is no class of men whose society is more to be desired

for this quality than that of plumbers. They are the most agreeable men I know; and the boys in the business begin to be agreeable very early. I suspect the secret of it is, that they are agreeable by the hour. In the driest days, my fountain became disabled: the pipe was stopped up. A couple of plumbers, with the implements of their craft, came out to view the situation. There was a good deal of difference of opinion about where the stoppage was. I found the plumbers perfectly willing to sit down and talk about it,—talk by the hour. Some of their guesses and remarks were exceedingly ingenious; and their general observations on other subjects were excellent in their way, and could hardly have been better if they had been made by the job. The work dragged a little,—as it is apt to do by the hour. The plumbers had occasion to make me several visits. Sometimes they would find, upon arrival, that they had forgotten some indispensable tool; and one would go back to the shop, a mile and a half, after it; and his comrade would await his return with the most exemplary patience, and sit down and talk,—always by the hour. I do not know but it is a habit to have something wanted at the shop. They seemed to me very good workmen, and always willing to stop and talk about the job, or anything else, when I went near them. Nor had they any of that impetuous hurry that is said to be the bane of our American civilization. To their credit be it said, that I never observed anything of it in them. They can afford to wait. Two of them will sometimes wait nearly half a day while a comrade goes for a tool. They are patient

and philosophical. It is a great pleasure to meet such men. One only wishes there was some work he could do for *them* by the hour. There ought to be reciprocity. I think they have very nearly solved the problem of Life: it is to work for other people, never for yourself, and get your pay by the hour. You then have no anxiety, and little work. If you do things by the job, you are perpetually driven: the hours are scourges. If you work by the hour, you gently sail on the stream of Time, which is always bearing you on to the haven of Pay, whether you make any effort, or not. Working by the hour tends to make one moral. A plumber working by the job, trying to unscrew a rusty, refractory nut, in a cramped position, where the tongs continually slipped off, would swear; but I never heard one of them swear, or exhibit the least impatience at such a vexation, working by the hour. Nothing can move a man who is paid by the hour. How sweet the flight of time seems to his calm mind!

TWELFTH WEEK

MR. HORACE GREELEY, the introduction of whose name confers an honor upon this page (although I ought to say that it is used entirely without his consent), is my sole authority in agriculture. In politics I do not dare to follow him; but in agriculture he is irresistible. When, therefore, I find him advising Western farmers not to hill up their corn, I think that his advice must be political. You must hill up your corn. People always have hilled up their corn. It would take a constitutional amendment to change the practice, that has pertained ever since maize was raised. "It will stand the drought better," says Mr. Greeley, "if the ground is left level." I have corn in my garden, ten and twelve feet high, strong and lusty, standing the drought like a grenadier; and it is hilled. In advising this radical change, Mr. Greeley evidently has a political purpose. He might just as well say that you should not hill beans, when everybody knows that a "hill of beans" is one of the most expressive symbols of disparagement. When I become too lazy to hill my corn, I, too, shall go into politics.

I am satisfied that it is useless to try to cultivate "pusley." I set a little of it one side, and gave it some extra care. It did not thrive as well as that which I was fighting. The fact is, there is a spirit of moral perversity in the plant, which makes it grow

the more, the more it is interfered with. I am satisfied of that. I doubt if any one has raised more "pusley" this year than I have; and my warfare with it has been continual. Neither of us has slept much. If you combat it, it will grow, to use an expression that will be understood by many, like the devil. I have a neighbor, a good Christian man, benevolent, and a person of good judgment. He planted next to me an acre of turnips recently. A few days after, he went to look at his crop; and he found the entire ground covered with a thick and luxurious carpet of "pusley," with a turnip-top worked in here and there as an ornament. I have seldom seen so thrifty a field. I advised my neighbor next time to sow "pusley;" and then he might get a few turnips. I wish there was more demand in our city markets for "pusley" as a salad. I can recommend it.

It does not take a great man to soon discover that, in raising anything, the greater part of the plants goes into stalk and leaf, and the fruit is a most inconsiderable portion. I plant and hoe a hill of corn: it grows green and stout, and waves its broad leaves high in the air, and is months in perfecting itself, and then yields us not enough for a dinner. It grows because it delights to do so,—to take the juices out of my ground, to absorb my fertilizers, to wax luxuriant, and disport itself in the summer air, and with very little thought of making any return to me. I might go all through my garden and fruit trees with a similar result. I have heard of places where there was very little land to the acre. It is universally

true that there is a great deal of vegetable show and fuss for the result produced. I do not complain of this. One cannot expect vegetables to be better than men: and they make a great deal of ostentatious splurge; and many of them come to no result at last. Usually, the more show of leaf and wood, the less fruit. This melancholy reflection is thrown in here in order to make dog-days seem cheerful in comparison.

One of the minor pleasures of life is that of controlling vegetable activity and aggressions with the pruning-knife. Vigorous and rapid growth is, however, a necessity to the sport. To prune feeble plants and shrubs is like acting the part of dry-nurse to a sickly orphan. You must feel the blood of Nature bound under your hand, and get the thrill of its life in your nerves. To control and culture a strong, thrifty plant in this way is like steering a ship under full headway, or driving a locomotive with your hand on the lever, or pulling the reins over a fast horse when his blood and tail are up. I do not understand, by the way, the pleasure of the jockey in setting up the tail of the horse artificially. If I had a horse with a tail not able to sit up, I should feed the horse, and curry him into good spirits, and let him set up his own tail. When I see a poor, spiritless horse going by with an artificially set-up tail, it is only a signal of distress. I desire to be surrounded only by healthy, vigorous plants and trees, which require constant cutting-in and management. Merely to cut away dead branches is like perpetual attendance at a funeral, and puts one in low spirits. I want to have a garden and

orchard rise up and meet me every morning, with the request to "lay on, Macduff." I respect old age; but an old currant-bush, hoary with mossy bark, is a melancholy spectacle.

I suppose the time has come when I am expected to say something about fertilizers: all agriculturists do. When you plant, you think you cannot fertilize too much: when you get the bills for the manure, you think you cannot fertilize too little. Of course you do not expect to get the value of the manure back in fruits and vegetables; but something is due to science, — to chemistry in particular. You must have a knowledge of soils, must have your soil analyzed, and then go into a course of experiments to find what it needs. It needs analyzing, — that, I am clear about: everything needs that. You had better have the soil analyzed before you buy: if there is "pusley" in it, let it alone. See if it is a soil that requires much hoeing, and how fine it will get if there is no rain for two months. But when you come to fertilizing, if I understand the agricultural authorities, you open a pit that will ultimately swallow you up, — farm and all. It is the great subject of modern times, how to fertilize without ruinous expense; how, in short, not to starve the earth to death while we get our living out of it. Practically, the business is hardly to the taste of a person of a poetic turn of mind. The details of fertilizing are not agreeable. Michael Angelo, who tried every art, and nearly every trade, never gave his mind to fertilizing. It is much pleasanter and easier to fertilize with a pen, as the agricultural writers do, than with a fork.

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And this leads me to say, that, in carrying on a garden yourself, you must have a "consulting" gardener; that is, a man to do the heavy and unpleasant work. To such a man, I say, in language used by Demosthenes to the Athenians, and which is my advice to all gardeners, "Fertilize, fertilize, fertilize!"

THIRTEENTH WEEK

I FIND that gardening has unsurpassed advantages for the study of natural history ; and some scientific facts have come under my own observation, which cannot fail to interest naturalists and un-naturalists in about the same degree. Much, for instance, has been written about the toad, an animal without which no garden would be complete. But little account has been made of his value : the beauty of his eye alone has been dwelt on ; and little has been said of his mouth, and its important function as a fly and bug trap. His habits, and even his origin, have been misunderstood. Why, as an illustration, are toads so plenty after a thunder-shower ? All my life long, no one has been able to answer me that question. Why, after a heavy shower, and in the midst of it, do such multitudes of toads, especially little ones, hop about on the gravel-walks ? For many years, I believed that they rained down ; and I suppose many people think so still. They are so small, and they come in such numbers only in the shower, that the supposition is not a violent one. "Thick as toads after a shower," is one of our best proverbs. I asked an explanation of this of a thoughtful woman, — indeed, a leader in the great movement to have all the toads hop in any direction, without any distinction of sex or religion. Her reply was, that the toads come out during the

shower to get water. This, however, is not the fact. I have discovered that they come out not to get water. I deluged a dry flower-bed, the other night, with pailful after pailful of water. Instantly the toads came out of their holes in the dirt, by tens and twenties and fifties, to escape death by drowning. The big ones fled away in a ridiculous streak of hopping; and the little ones sprang about in the wildest confusion. The toad is just like any other land animal: when his house is full of water, he quits it. These facts, with the drawings of the water and the toads, are at the service of the distinguished scientists of Albany in New York, who were so much impressed by the Cardiff Giant.

The domestic cow is another animal whose ways I have a chance to study, and also to obliterate in the garden. One of my neighbors has a cow, but no land; and he seems desirous to pasture her on the surface of the land of other people: a very reasonable desire. The man proposed that he should be allowed to cut the grass from my grounds for his cow. I knew the cow, having often had her in my garden; knew her gait and the size of her feet, which struck me as a little large for the size of the body. Having no cow myself, but acquaintance with my neighbor's, I told him that I thought it would be fair for him to have the grass. He was, therefore, to keep the grass nicely cut, and to keep his cow at home. I waited some time after the grass needed cutting; and, as my neighbor did not appear, I hired it cut. No sooner was it done than he promptly appeared, and raked up most of it, and carried it away. He had evidently

been waiting that opportunity. When the grass grew again, the neighbor did not appear with his scythe ; but one morning I found the cow tethered on the sward, hitched near the clothes-horse, a short distance from the house. This seemed to be the man's idea of the best way to cut the grass. I disliked to have the cow there, because I knew her inclination to pull up the stake, and transfer her field of mowing to the garden, but especially because of her voice. She has the most melancholy "moo" I ever heard. It is like the wail of one un-infallible, excommunicated, and lost. It is a most distressing perpetual reminder of the brevity of life and the shortness of feed. It is unpleasant to the family. We sometimes hear it in the middle of the night, breaking the silence like a suggestion of coming calamity. It is as bad as the howling of a dog at a funeral.

I told the man about it ; but he seemed to think that he was not responsible for the cow's voice. I then told him to take her away ; and he did, at intervals, shifting her to different parts of the grounds in my absence, so that the desolate voice would startle us from unexpected quarters. If I were to unhitch the cow, and turn her loose, I knew where she would go. If I were to lead her away, the question was, Where? for I did not fancy leading a cow about till I could find somebody who was willing to pasture her. To this dilemma had my excellent neighbor reduced me. But I found him, one Sunday morning, —a day when it would not do to get angry, —tying his cow at the foot of the hill ; the beast all the time going on in that abominable voice. I told the man

that I could not have the cow in the grounds. He said, "All right, boss ;" but he did not go away. I asked him to clear out. The man, who is a French sympathizer from the Republic of Ireland, kept his temper perfectly. He said he was n't doing anything, just feeding his cow a bit: he would n't make me the least trouble in the world. I reminded him that he had been told again and again not to come here; that he might have all the grass, but he should not bring his cow upon the premises. The imperturbable man assented to everything that I said, and kept on feeding his cow. Before I got him to go to fresh scenes and pastures new, the Sabbath was almost broken; but it was saved by one thing: it is difficult to be emphatic when no one is emphatic on the other side. The man and his cow have taught me a great lesson, which I shall recall when I keep a cow. I can recommend this cow, if anybody wants one, as a steady boarder, whose keeping will cost the owner little; but, if her milk is at all like her voice, those who drink it are on the straight road to lunacy.

I think I have said that we have a game-preserve. We keep quails, or try to, in the thickly wooded, bushed, and brushed ravine. This bird is a great favorite with us, dead or alive, on account of its tasteful plumage, its tender flesh, its domestic virtues, and its pleasant piping. Besides, although I appreciate toads and cows, and all that sort of thing, I like to have a game-preserve more in the English style. And we did. For in July, while the game-law was on, and the young quails were coming on, we were awakened one morning by firing, — musketry-firing, close at

hand. My first thought was, that war was declared; but, as I should never pay much attention to war declared at that time in the morning, I went to sleep again. But the occurrence was repeated, — and not only early in the morning, but at night. There was calling of dogs, breaking down of brush, and firing of guns. It is hardly pleasant to have guns fired in the direction of the house, at your own quails. The hunters could be sometimes seen, but never caught. Their best time was about sunrise; but, before one could dress and get to the front, they would retire.

One morning, about four o'clock, I heard the battle renewed. I sprang up, but not in arms, and went to a window. Polly (like another "blessed damozel") flew to another window, —

"The blessed damozel leaned out
From the gold bar of heaven," —

and reconnoitered from behind the blinds.

"The wonder was not yet quite gone
From that still look of hers,"

when an armed man and a legged dog appeared in the opening. I was vigilantly watching him.

"And now
She spoke through the still weather."

"Are you afraid to speak to him?" asked Polly. Not exactly,

"she spoke as when
The stars sang in their spheres."

Stung by this inquiry, I leaned out of the window till

“The bar I leaned on (was) warm,”

and cried,—

“Halloo, there! What are you doing?”

“Look out he don’t shoot you,” called out Polly from the other window, suddenly going on another tack.

I explained that a sportsman would not be likely to shoot a gentleman in his own house, with bird-shot, so long as quails were to be had.

“You have no business here: what are you after?”

I repeated.

“Looking for a lost hen,” said the man as he strode away.

The reply was so satisfactory and conclusive that I shut the blinds and went to bed.

But one evening I overhauled one of the poachers. Hearing his dog in the thicket, I rushed through the brush, and came in sight of the hunter as he was retreating down the road. He came to a halt; and we had some conversation in a high key. Of course I threatened to prosecute him. I believe that is the thing to do in such cases; but how I was to do it, when I did not know his name or ancestry, and could n’t see his face, never occurred to me. (I remember, now, that a farmer once proposed to prosecute me when I was fishing in a trout-brook on his farm, and asked my name for that purpose.) He said he should smile to see me prosecute him.

“You can’t do it: there ain’t no notice up about trespassing.”

This view of the common law impressed me; and I said, —

“But these are private grounds.”

“Private h—!” was all his response.

You can’t argue much with a man who has a gun in his hands, when you have none. Besides, it might be a needle-gun, for aught I knew. I gave it up, and we separated.

There is this disadvantage about having a game-preserve attached to your garden: it makes life too lively.

FOURTEENTH WEEK

IN these golden latter August days, Nature has come to a serene equilibrium. Having flowered and fruited, she is enjoying herself. I can see how things are going: it is a down-hill business after this; but, for the time being, it is like swinging in a hammock, — such a delicious air, such a graceful repose! I take off my hat as I stroll into the garden and look about; and it does seem as if Nature had sounded a truce. I did n't ask for it. I went out with a hoe; but the serene sweetness disarms me. Thrice is he armed who has a long-handled hoe, with a double blade. Yet to-day I am almost ashamed to appear in such a belligerent fashion, with this terrible mitrailleuse of gardening.

The tomatoes are getting tired of ripening, and are beginning to go into a worthless condition, — green. The cucumbers cumber the ground, — great yellow, over-ripe objects, no more to be compared to the crisp beauty of their youth than is the fat swine of the sty to the clean little pig. The nutmeg-melons, having covered themselves with delicate lace-work, are now ready to leave the vine. I know they are ripe if they come easily off the stem.

Moral Observations. — You can tell when people are ripe by their willingness to let go. Richness and ripeness are not exactly the same. The rich are apt to hang to the stem with tenacity. I have nothing

She is chewing my cud



against the rich. If I were not virtuous, I should like to be rich. But we cannot have everything, as the man said when he was down with small-pox and cholera, and the yellow fever came into the neighborhood.

Now, the grapes, soaked in this liquid gold, called air, begin to turn, mindful of the injunction, "to turn or burn." The clusters under the leaves are getting quite purple, but look better than they taste. I think there is no danger but they will be gathered as soon as they are ripe. One of the blessings of having an open garden is, that I do not have to watch my fruit: a dozen youngsters do that, and let it waste no time after it matures. I wish it were possible to grow a variety of grape like the explosive bullets, that should explode in the stomach: the vine would make such a nice border for the garden, — a masked battery of grape. The pears, too, are getting russet and heavy; and here and there amid the shining leaves one gleams as ruddy as the cheek of the Nutbrown Maid. The Flemish Beauties come off readily from the stem, if I take them in my hand: they say all kinds of beauty come off by handling.

The garden is peace as much as if it were an empire. Even the man's cow lies down under the tree where the man has tied her, with such an air of contentment, that I have small desire to disturb her. She is chewing my cud as if it were hers. Well, eat on and chew on, melancholy brute. I have not the heart to tell the man to take you away: and it would do no good if I had; he would n't do it. The man has not a taking way. Munch on, ruminant creature.

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The frost will soon come; the grass will be brown. I will be charitable while this blessed lull continues: for our benevolences must soon be turned to other and more distant objects, — the amelioration of the condition of the Jews, the education of theological young men in the West, and the like.

I do not know that these appearances are deceitful; but I sufficiently know that this is a wicked world, to be glad that I have taken it on shares. In fact, I could not pick the pears alone, not to speak of eating them. When I climb the trees, and throw down the dusky fruit, Polly catches it in her apron; nearly always, however, letting go when it drops, the fall is so sudden. The sun gets in her face; and, every time a pear comes down, it is a surprise, like having a tooth out, she says.

“If I could n’t hold an apron better than that!” — But the sentence is not finished: it is useless to finish that sort of a sentence in this delicious weather. Besides, conversation is dangerous. As, for instance, towards evening I am preparing a bed for a sowing of turnips, — not that I like turnips in the least; but this is the season to sow them. Polly comes out, and extemporizes her usual seat to “consult me” about matters while I work. I well know that something is coming.

“This is a rotation of crops, is n’t it?”

“Yes: I have rotated the gone-to-seed lettuce off, and expect to rotate the turnips in; it is a political fashion.”

“Is n’t it a shame that the tomatoes are all getting ripe at once? What a lot of squashes! I wish we had

an oyster-bed. Do you want me to help you any more than I am helping?"

"No, I thank you." (I wonder what all this is about?)

"Don't you think we could sell some strawberries next year?"

"By all means, sell anything. We shall no doubt get rich out of this acre."

"Don't be foolish."

And now!

"Don't you think it would be nice to have a?" — And Polly unfolds a small scheme of benevolence, which is not quite enough to break me, and is really to be executed in an economical manner. "Would n't that be nice?"

"Oh, yes! And where is the money to come from?"

"I thought we had agreed to sell the strawberries."

"Certainly. But I think we would make more money if we sold the plants now."

"Well," said Polly, concluding the whole matter, "I am going to do it." And, having thus "consulted" me, Polly goes away; and I put in the turnip-seeds quite thick, determined to raise enough to sell. But not even this mercenary thought can ruffle my mind as I rake off the loamy bed. I notice, however, that the spring smell has gone out of the dirt. That went into the first crop.

In this peaceful unison with yielding nature, I was a little taken aback to find that a new enemy had turned up. The celery had just rubbed through the fiery scorching of the drought, and stood a faint

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chance to grow ; when I noticed on the green leaves a big green-and-black worm, called, I believe, the celery-worm : but I don't know who called him ; I am sure I did not. It was almost ludicrous that he should turn up here, just at the end of the season, when I supposed that my war with the living animals was over. Yet he was, no doubt, predestinated ; for he went to work as cheerfully as if he had arrived in June, when everything was fresh and vigorous. It beats me — Nature does. I doubt not, that, if I were to leave my garden now for a week, it would n't know me on my return. The patch I scratched over for the turnips, and left as clean as earth, is already full of ambitious " pusley," which grows with all the confidence of youth and the skill of old age. It beats the serpent as an emblem of immortality. While all the others of us in the garden rest and sit in comfort a moment, upon the summit of the summer, it is as rampant and vicious as ever. It accepts no armistice.

FIFTEENTH WEEK

IT is said that absence conquers all things, love included; but it has a contrary effect on a garden. I was absent for two or three weeks. I left my garden a paradise, as paradises go in this protoplactic world; and when I returned, the trail of the serpent was over it all, so to speak. (This is in addition to the actual snakes in it, which are large enough to strangle children of average size.) I asked Polly if she had seen to the garden while I was away, and she said she had. I found that all the melons had been seen to, and the early grapes and pears. The green worm had also seen to about half the celery; and a large flock of apparently perfectly domesticated chickens were roaming over the ground, gossiping in the hot September sun, and picking up any odd trifle that might be left. On the whole, the garden could not have been better seen to; though it would take a sharp eye to see the potato-vines amid the rampant grass and weeds.

The new strawberry-plants, for one thing, had taken advantage of my absence. Every one of them had sent out as many scarlet runners as an Indian tribe has. Some of them had blossomed; and a few had gone so far as to bear ripe berries, — long, pear-shaped fruit, hanging like the ear-pendants of an East Indian bride. I could not but admire the persistence of these zealous plants, which seemed determined

to propagate themselves both by seeds and roots, and make sure of immortality in some way. Even the Colfax variety was as ambitious as the others. After having seen the declining letter of Mr. Colfax, I did not suppose that this vine would run any more, and intended to root it out. But one can never say what these politicians mean ; and I shall let this variety grow until after the next election, at least ; although I hear that the fruit is small, and rather sour. If there is any variety of strawberries that really declines to run, and devotes itself to a private life of fruit-bearing, I should like to get it. I may mention here, since we are on politics, that the Doolittle raspberries had sprawled all over the strawberry-beds : so true is it that politics makes strange bedfellows.

But another enemy had come into the strawberries, which, after all that has been said in these papers, I am almost ashamed to mention. But does the preacher in the pulpit, Sunday after Sunday, year after year, shrink from speaking of sin ? I refer, of course, to the greatest enemy of mankind, " p-sl-y." The ground was carpeted with it. I should think that this was the tenth crop of the season ; and it was as good as the first. I see no reason why our northern soil is not as prolific as that of the tropics, and will not produce as many crops in the year. The mistake we make is in trying to force things that are not natural to it. I have no doubt that, if we turn our attention to " pusley," we can beat the world.

I had no idea, until recently, how generally this

simple and thrifty plant is feared and hated. Far beyond what I had regarded as the bounds of civilization, it is held as one of the mysteries of a fallen world; accompanying the home missionary on his wanderings, and preceding the footsteps of the Tract Society. I was not long ago in the Adirondacks. We had built a camp for the night, in the heart of the woods, high up on John's Brook and near the foot of Mount Marcy: I can see the lovely spot now. It was on the bank of the crystal, rocky stream, at the foot of high and slender falls, which poured into a broad amber basin. Out of this basin we had just taken trout enough for our supper, which had been killed, and roasted over the fire on sharp sticks, and eaten before they had an opportunity to feel the chill of this deceitful world. We were lying under the hut of spruce-bark, on fragrant hemlock-boughs, talking, after supper. In front of us was a huge fire of birch-logs; and over it we could see the top of the falls glistening in the moonlight; and the roar of the falls, and the brawling of the stream near us, filled all the ancient woods. It was a scene upon which one would think no thought of sin could enter. We were talking with old Phelps, the guide. Old Phelps is at once guide, philosopher, and friend. He knows the woods and streams and mountains, and their savage inhabitants, as well as we know all our rich relations and what they are doing; and in lonely bear-hunts and sable-trappings he has thought out and solved most of the problems of life. As he stands in his wood-gear, he is as grizzly as an old cedar-tree; and he speaks in a high falsetto voice,

which would be invaluable to a boatswain in a storm at sea.

We had been talking of all subjects about which rational men are interested, — bears, panthers, trapping, the habits of trout, the tariff, the internal revenue (to wit, the injustice of laying such a tax on tobacco, and none on dogs: “There ain’t no dog in the United States,” says the guide, at the top of his voice, “that earns his living”), the Adventists, the Gorner Grat, Horace Greeley, religion, the propagation of seeds in the wilderness (as, for instance, where were the seeds lying for ages that spring up into certain plants and flowers as soon as a spot is cleared anywhere in the most remote forest; and why does a growth of oak-trees always come up after a growth of pine has been removed?) — in short, we had pretty nearly reached a solution of many mysteries, when Phelps suddenly exclaimed with uncommon energy, —

“Wall, there’s one thing that beats me!”

“What’s that?” we asked with undisguised curiosity.

“That’s ‘pusley’!” he replied, in the tone of a man who has come to one door in life which is hopelessly shut, and from which he retires in despair.

“Where it comes from I don’t know, nor what to do with it. It’s in my garden; and I can’t get rid of it. It beats me.”

About “pusley” the guide had no theory and no hope. A feeling of awe came over me, as we lay there at midnight, hushed by the sound of the stream and the rising wind in the spruce-tops. Then man

can go nowhere that "pusley" will not attend him. Though he camp on the Upper Au Sable, or penetrate the forest where rolls the Allegash, and hear no sound save his own allegations, he will not escape it. It has entered the happy valley of Keene, although there is yet no church there, and only a feeble school part of the year. Sin travels faster than they that ride in chariots. I take my hoe, and begin; but I feel that I am warring against something whose roots take hold on H.

By the time a man gets to be eighty, he learns that he is compassed by limitations, and that there has been a natural boundary set to his individual powers. As he goes on in life, he begins to doubt his ability to destroy all evil and to reform all abuses, and to suspect that there will be much left to do after he has done. I stepped into my garden in the spring, not doubting that I should be easily master of the weeds. I have simply learned that an institution which is at least six thousand years old, and I believe six millions, is not to be put down in one season.

I have been digging my potatoes, if anybody cares to know it. I planted them in what are called "Early Rose," — the rows a little less than three feet apart; but the vines came to an early close in the drought. Digging potatoes is a pleasant, soothing occupation, but not poetical. It is good for the mind, unless they are too small (as many of mine are), when it begets a want of gratitude to the bountiful earth. What small potatoes we all are, compared with what we might be! We don't plow deep enough, any

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of us, for one thing. I shall put in the plow next year, and give the tubers room enough. I think they felt the lack of it this year: many of them seemed ashamed to come out so small. There is great pleasure in turning out the brown-jacketed fellows into the sunshine of a royal September day, and seeing them glisten as they lie thickly strewn on the warm soil. Life has few such moments. But then they must be picked up. The picking-up, in this world, is always the unpleasant part of it.

SIXTEENTH WEEK

I DO not hold myself bound to answer the question, Does gardening pay? It is so difficult to define what is meant by paying. There is a popular notion that, unless a thing pays, you had better let it alone; and I may say that there is a public opinion that will not let a man or woman continue in the indulgence of a fancy that does not pay. And public opinion is stronger than the legislature, and nearly as strong as the ten commandments: I therefore yield to popular clamor when I discuss the profit of my garden.

As I look at it, you might as well ask, Does a sunset pay? I know that a sunset is commonly looked on as a cheap entertainment; but it is really one of the most expensive. It is true that we can all have front seats, and we do not exactly need to dress for it as we do for the opera; but the conditions under which it is to be enjoyed are rather dear. Among them I should name a good suit of clothes, including some trifling ornament,—not including back hair for one sex, or the parting of it in the middle for the other. I should add also a good dinner, well cooked and digestible; and the cost of a fair education, extended, perhaps, through generations in which sensibility and love of beauty grew. What I mean is, that if a man is hungry and naked, and half a savage, or with the love of

beauty undeveloped in him, a sunset is thrown away on him: so that it appears that the conditions of the enjoyment of a sunset are as costly as anything in our civilization.

Of course there is no such thing as absolute value in this world. You can only estimate what a thing is worth to *you*. Does gardening in a city pay? You might as well ask if it pays to keep hens, or a trotting-horse, or to wear a gold ring, or to keep your lawn cut, or your hair cut. It is as you like it. In a certain sense, it is a sort of profanation to consider if my garden pays, or to set a money-value upon my delight in it. I fear that you could not put it in money. Job had the right idea in his mind when he asked, "Is there any taste in the white of an egg?" Suppose there is not! What! shall I set a price upon the tender asparagus or the crisp lettuce, which made the sweet spring a reality? Shall I turn into merchandise the red strawberry, the pale green pea, the high-flavored raspberry, the sanguinary beet, that love-plant the tomato, and the corn which did not waste its sweetness on the desert air, but, after flowing in a sweet rill through all our summer life, mingled at last with the engaging bean in a pool of succotash? Shall I compute in figures what daily freshness and health and delight the garden yields, let alone the large crop of anticipation I gathered as soon as the first seeds got above ground? I appeal to any gardening man of sound mind, if that which pays him best in gardening is not that which he cannot show in his trial-balance. Yet I yield to public opinion, when I proceed to make

such a balance; and I do it with the utmost confidence in figures.

I select as a representative vegetable, in order to estimate the cost of gardening, the potato. In my statement, I shall not include the interest on the value of the land. I throw in the land, because it would otherwise have stood idle: the thing generally raised on city land is taxes. I therefore make the following statement of the cost and income of my potato-crop, a part of it estimated in connection with other garden labor. I have tried to make it so as to satisfy the income-tax collector:—

<i>Dr.</i>	
Plowing	\$0.50
Seed	1.50
Manure	8.00
Assistance in planting and digging, 3 days . .	6.75
Labor of self in planting, hoeing, digging, picking up, 5 days at 17 cents85
	\$17.60

<i>Cr.</i>	
Two thousand five hundred mealy potatoes, at 2 cents	\$50.00
Small potatoes given to neighbor's pig50
	\$50.50
Total return	\$50.50
Balance, profit in cellar	32.90

Some of these items need explanation. I have charged nothing for my own time waiting for the potatoes to grow. My time in hoeing, fighting weeds, etc., is put in at five days: it may have been a little more. Nor have I put in anything for cool-

ing drinks while hoeing. I leave this out from principle, because I always recommend water to others. I had some difficulty in fixing the rate of my own wages. It was the first time I had an opportunity of paying what I thought labor was worth ; and I determined to make a good thing of it for once. I figured it right down to European prices, — seventeen cents a day for unskilled labor. Of course, I boarded myself. I ought to say that I fixed the wages after the work was done, or I might have been tempted to do as some masons did who worked for me at four dollars a day. They lay in the shade and slept the sleep of honest toil full half the time, — at least all the time I was away. I have reason to believe that when the wages of mechanics are raised to eight and ten dollars a day, the workmen will not come at all : they will merely send their cards.

I do not see any possible fault in the above figures. I ought to say that I deferred putting a value on the potatoes until I had footed up the debit column. This is always the safest way to do. I had twenty-five bushels. I roughly estimated that there are one hundred good ones to the bushel. Making my own market price, I asked two cents apiece for them. This I should have considered dirt cheap last June, when I was going down the rows with the hoe. If any one thinks that two cents each is high, let him try to raise them.

Nature is “awful smart.” I intend to be complimentary in saying so. She shows it in little things. I have mentioned my attempt to put in a few modest turnips, near the close of the season. I sowed the

seeds, by the way, in the most liberal manner. Into three or four short rows I presume I put enough to sow an acre; and they all came up, — came up as thick as grass, as crowded and useless as babies in a Chinese village. Of course, they had to be thinned out; that is, pretty much all pulled up; and it took me a long time; for it takes a conscientious man some time to decide which are the best and healthiest plants to spare. After all, I spared too many. That is the great danger everywhere in this world (it may not be in the next): things are too thick; we lose all in grasping for too much. The Scotch say, that no man ought to thin out his own turnips, because he will not sacrifice enough to leave room for the remainder to grow: he should get his neighbor, who does not care for the plants, to do it. But this is mere talk, and aside from the point: if there is anything I desire to avoid in these agricultural papers, it is digression. I did think that putting in these turnips so late in the season, when general activity has ceased, and in a remote part of the garden, they would pass unnoticed. But Nature never even winks, as I can see. The tender blades were scarcely out of the ground when she sent a small black fly, which seemed to have been born and held in reserve for this purpose, — to cut the leaves. They speedily made lace-work of the whole bed. Thus everything appears to have its special enemy, — except, perhaps, p——y: nothing ever troubles that.

Did the Concord Grape ever come to more luscious perfection than this year? or yield so abundantly? The golden sunshine has passed into them,

and distended their purple skins almost to bursting. Such heavy clusters! such bloom! such sweetness! such meat and drink in their round globes! What a fine fellow Bacchus would have been, if he had only signed the pledge when he was a young man! I have taken off clusters that were as compact and almost as large as the Black Hamburgs. It is slow work picking them. I do not see how the gatherers for the vintage ever get off enough. It takes so long to disentangle the bunches from the leaves and the interlacing vines and the supporting tendrils; and then I like to hold up each bunch and look at it in the sunlight, and get the fragrance and the bloom of it, and show it to Polly, who is making herself useful, as taster and companion, at the foot of the ladder, before dropping it into the basket. But we have other company. The robin, the most knowing and greedy bird out of paradise (I trust he will always be kept out), has discovered that the grape-crop is uncommonly good, and has come back, with his whole tribe and family, larger than it was in pea-time. He knows the ripest bunches as well as anybody, and tries them all. If he would take a whole bunch here and there, say half the number, and be off with it, I should not so much care. But he will not. He pecks away at all the bunches, and spoils as many as he can. It is time he went south.

There is no prettier sight, to my eye, than a gardener on a ladder in his grape-arbor, in these golden days, selecting the heaviest clusters of grapes, and handing them down to one and another of a group

of neighbors and friends, who stand under the shade of the leaves, flecked with the sunlight, and cry, "How sweet!" "What nice ones!" and the like,—remarks encouraging to the man on the ladder. It is great pleasure to see people eat grapes.

Moral Truth. — I have no doubt that grapes taste best in other people's mouths. It is an old notion that it is easier to be generous than to be stingy. I am convinced that the majority of people would be generous from selfish motives, if they had the opportunity.

Philosophical Observation. — Nothing shows one who his friends are like prosperity and ripe fruit. I had a good friend in the country, whom I almost never visited except in cherry-time. By your fruits you shall know them.

SEVENTEENTH WEEK

I LIKE to go into the garden these warm latter days, and muse. To muse is to sit in the sun, and not think of anything. I am not sure but goodness comes out of people who bask in the sun, as it does out of a sweet apple roasted before the fire. The late September and October sun of this latitude is something like the sun of extreme Lower Italy: you can stand a good deal of it, and apparently soak a winter supply into the system. If one only could take in his winter fuel in this way! The next great discovery will, very likely, be the conservation of sunlight. In the correlation of forces, I look to see the day when the superfluous sunshine will be utilized; as, for instance, that which has burned up my celery this year will be converted into a force to work the garden.

This sitting in the sun amid the evidences of a ripe year is the easiest part of gardening I have experienced. But what a combat has gone on here! What vegetable passions have run the whole gamut of ambition, selfishness, greed of place, fruition, satiety, and now rest here in the truce of exhaustion! What a battle-field, if one may look upon it so! The corn has lost its ammunition, and stacked arms in a slovenly, militia sort of style. The ground vines are torn, trampled, and withered; and the ungathered cucumbers, worthless melons, and golden squashes

lie about like the spent bombs and exploded shells of a battle-field. So the cannon-balls lay on the sandy plain before Fort Fisher after the capture. So the great grassy meadow at Munich, any morning during the October Fest, is strewn with empty beer-mugs. History constantly repeats itself. There is a large crop of moral reflections in my garden, which anybody is at liberty to gather who passes this way.

I have tried to get in anything that offered temptation to sin. There would be no thieves if there was nothing to steal; and I suppose, in the thieves' catechism, the provider is as bad as the thief; and, probably, I am to blame for leaving out a few winter pears, which some predatory boy carried off on Sunday. At first I was angry, and said I should like to have caught the urchin in the act; but, on second thought, I was glad I did not. The interview could not have been pleasant. I should n't have known what to do with him. The chances are; that he would have escaped away with his pockets full, and jibed at me from a safe distance. And, if I had got my hands on him, I should have been still more embarrassed. If I had flogged him, he would have got over it a good deal sooner than I should. That sort of boy does not mind castigation any more than he does tearing his trousers in the briers. If I had treated him with kindness, and conciliated him with grapes, showing him the enormity of his offense, I suppose he would have come the next night, and taken the remainder of the grapes. The truth is, that the public morality is lax on the subject of fruit. If anybody puts arsenic or gunpowder into his watermelons, he is universally

denounced as a stingy old murderer by the community. A great many people regard growing fruit as lawful prey, who would not think of breaking into your cellar to take it. I found a man once in my raspberry-bushes, early in the season, when we were waiting for a dishful to ripen. Upon inquiring what he was about, he said he was only eating some; and the operation seemed to be so natural and simple, that I disliked to disturb him. And I am not very sure that one has a right to the whole of an abundant crop of fruit until he has gathered it. At least, in a city garden, one might as well conform his theory to the practice of the community.

As for children (and it sometimes looks as if the chief products of my garden were small boys and hens), it is admitted that they are barbarians. There is no exception among them to this condition of barbarism. This is not to say that they are not attractive; for they have the virtues as well as the vices of a primitive people. It is held by some naturalists that the child is only a zoöphyte, with a stomach, and feelers radiating from it in search of something to fill it. It is true that a child is always hungry all over: but he is also curious all over; and his curiosity is excited about as early as his hunger. He immediately begins to put out his moral feelers into the unknown and the infinite to discover what sort of an existence this is into which he has come. His imagination is quite as hungry as his stomach. And again and again it is stronger than his other appetites. You can easily engage his imagination in a story which will make him forget his dinner. He is credulous and

superstitious, and open to all wonder. In this, he is exactly like the savage races. Both gorge themselves on the marvelous; and all the unknown is marvelous to them. I know the general impression is that children must be governed through their stomachs. I think they can be controlled quite as well through their curiosity; that being the more craving and imperious of the two. I have seen children follow about a person who told them stories, and interested them with his charming talk, as greedily as if his pockets had been full of *bon-bons*.

Perhaps this fact has no practical relation to gardening; but it occurs to me that, if I should paper the outside of my high board fence with the leaves of "The Arabian Nights," it would afford me a good deal of protection, — more, in fact, than spikes in the top, which tear trousers and encourage profanity, but do not save much fruit. A spiked fence is a challenge to any boy of spirit. But if the fence were papered with fairy-tales, would he not stop to read them until it was too late for him to climb into the garden? I don't know. Human nature is vicious. The boy might regard the picture of the garden of the Hesperides only as an advertisement of what was over the fence. I begin to find that the problem of raising fruit is nothing to that of getting it after it has matured. So long as the law, just in many respects, is in force against shooting birds and small boys, the gardener may sow in tears and reap in vain.

The power of a boy is, to me, something fearful. Consider what he can do. You buy and set out a choice pear-tree; you enrich the earth for it; you

train and trim it, and vanquish the borer, and watch its slow growth. At length it rewards your care by producing two or three pears, which you cut up and divide in the family, declaring the flavor of the bit you eat to be something extraordinary. The next year, the little tree blossoms full, and sets well ; and in the autumn has on its slender, drooping limbs half a bushel of fruit, daily growing more delicious in the sun. You show it to your friends, reading to them the French name, which you can never remember, on the label ; and you take an honest pride in the successful fruit of long care. That night your pears shall be required of you by a boy ! Along comes an irresponsible urchin, who has not been growing much longer than the tree, with not twenty-five cents' worth of clothing on him, and in five minutes takes off every pear, and retires into safe obscurity. In five minutes the remorseless boy has undone your work of years, and with the easy *nonchalance*, I doubt not, of any agent of fate, in whose path nothing is sacred or safe.

And it is not of much consequence. The boy goes on his way, — to Congress, or to State Prison : in either place he will be accused of stealing, perhaps wrongfully. You learn, in time, that it is better to have had pears and lost them than not to have had pears at all. You come to know that the least (and rarest) part of the pleasure of raising fruit is the vulgar eating it. You recall your delight in conversing with the nurseryman, and looking at his illustrated catalogues, where all the pears are drawn perfect in form, and of extra size, and at that exact moment

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between ripeness and decay which it is so impossible to hit in practice. Fruit cannot be raised on this earth to taste as you imagine those pears would taste. For years you have this pleasure, unalloyed by any disenchanting reality. How you watch the tender twigs in spring, and the freshly forming bark, hovering about the healthy growing tree with your pruning-knife many a sunny morning! That is happiness. Then, if you know it, you are drinking the very wine of life; and when the sweet juices of the earth mount the limbs, and flow down the tender stem, ripening and reddening the pendent fruit, you feel that you somehow stand at the source of things, and have no unimportant share in the processes of Nature. Enter at this moment boy the destroyer, whose office is that of preserver as well; for, though he removes the fruit from your sight, it remains in your memory immortally ripe and desirable. The gardener needs all these consolations of a high philosophy.

EIGHTEENTH WEEK

REGRETS are idle; yet history is one long regret. Everything might have turned out so differently! If Ravailac had not been imprisoned for debt, he would not have stabbed Henry of Navarre. If William of Orange had escaped assassination by Philip's emissaries; if France had followed the French Calvin, and embraced Protestant Calvinism, as it came very near doing towards the end of the sixteenth century; if the Continental ammunition had not given out at Bunker's Hill; if Blucher had not "come up" at Waterloo, — the lesson is, that things do not come up unless they are planted. When you go behind the historical scenery, you find there is a rope and pulley to effect every transformation which has astonished you. It was the rascality of a minister and a contractor five years before that lost the battle; and the cause of the defeat was worthless ammunition. I should like to know how many wars have been caused by fits of indigestion, and how many more dynasties have been upset by the love of woman than by the hate of man. It is only because we are ill informed that anything surprises us; and we are disappointed because we expect that for which we have not provided.

I had too vague expectations of what my garden would do of itself. A garden ought to produce one everything, — just as a business ought to support a

man, and a house ought to keep itself. We had a convention lately to resolve that the house should keep itself; but it won't. There has been a lively time in our garden this summer; but it seems to me there is very little to show for it. It has been a terrible campaign; but where is the indemnity? Where are all "sass" and Lorraine? It is true that we have lived on the country; but we desire, besides, the fruits of the war. There are no onions, for one thing. I am quite ashamed to take people into my garden, and have them notice the absence of onions. It is very marked. In onion is strength; and a garden without it lacks flavor. The onion in its satin wrappings is among the most beautiful of vegetables; and it is the only one that represents the essence of things. It can almost be said to have a soul. You take off coat after coat, and the onion is still there; and, when the last one is removed, who dare say that the onion itself is destroyed, though you can weep over its departed spirit? If there is any one thing on this fallen earth that the angels in heaven weep over more than another, it is the onion.

I know that there is supposed to be a prejudice against the onion; but I think there is rather a cowardice in regard to it. I doubt not that all men and women love the onion; but few confess their love. Affection for it is concealed. Good New-Englanders are as shy of owning it as they are of talking about religion. Some people have days on which they eat onions,—what you might call "retreats," or their "Thursdays." The act is in the nature of a religious ceremony, an Eleusinian mystery; not a breath of it

must get abroad. On that day they see no company; they deny the kiss of greeting to the dearest friend; they retire within themselves, and hold communion with one of the most pungent and penetrating manifestations of the moral vegetable world. Happy is said to be the family which can eat onions together. They are, for the time being, separate from the world, and have a harmony of aspiration. There is a hint here for the reformers. Let them become apostles of the onion; let them eat, and preach it to their fellows, and circulate tracts of it in the form of seeds. In the onion is the hope of universal brotherhood. If all men will eat onions at all times, they will come into a universal sympathy. Look at Italy. I hope I am not mistaken as to the cause of her unity. It was the Reds who preached the gospel which made it possible. All the Reds of Europe, all the sworn devotees of the mystic Mary Ann, eat of the common vegetable. Their oaths are strong with it. It is the food, also, of the common people of Italy. All the social atmosphere of that delicious land is laden with it. Its odor is a practical democracy. In the churches all are alike: there is one faith, one smell. The entrance of Victor Emanuel into Rome is only the pompous proclamation of a unity which garlic had already accomplished; and yet we, who boast of our democracy, eat onions in secret.

I now see that I have left out many of the most moral elements. Neither onions, parsnips, carrots, nor cabbages are here. I have never seen a garden in the autumn before, without the uncouth cabbage in it; but my garden gives the impression of a garden

without a head. The cabbage is the rose of Holland. I admire the force by which it compacts its crisp leaves into a solid head. The secret of it would be priceless to the world. We should see less expansive foreheads with nothing within. Even the largest cabbages are not always the best. But I mention these things, not from any sympathy I have with the vegetables named, but to show how hard it is to go contrary to the expectations of society. Society expects every man to have certain things in his garden. Not to raise cabbage is as if one had no pew in church. Perhaps we shall come some day to free churches and free gardens; when I can show my neighbor through my tired garden, at the end of the season, when skies are overcast, and brown leaves are swirling down, and not mind if he does raise his eyebrows when he observes, "Ah! I see you have none of this, and of that." At present we want the moral courage to plant only what we need; to spend only what will bring us peace, regardless of what is going on over the fence. We are half ruined by conformity; but we should be wholly ruined without it; and I presume I shall make a garden next year that will be as popular as possible.

And this brings me to what I see may be a crisis in life. I begin to feel the temptation of experiment. Agriculture, horticulture, floriculture,—these are vast fields, into which one may wander away, and never be seen more. It seemed to me a very simple thing, this gardening; but it opens up astonishingly. It is like the infinite possibilities in worsted-work. Polly sometimes says to me, "I wish you would call

at Bobbin's, and match that skein of worsted for me, when you are in town." Time was, I used to accept such a commission with alacrity and self-confidence. I went to Bobbin's, and asked one of his young men, with easy indifference, to give me some of *that*. The young man, who is as handsome a young man as ever I looked at, and who appears to own the shop, and whose suave superciliousness would be worth everything to a cabinet minister who wanted to repel applicants for place, says, "I have n't an ounce: I have sent to Paris, and I expect it every day. I have a good deal of difficulty in getting that shade in my assortment." To think that he is in communication with Paris, and perhaps with Persia! Respect for such a being gives place to awe. I go to another shop, holding fast to my scarlet clew. There I am shown a heap of stuff, with more colors and shades than I had supposed existed in all the world. What a blaze of distraction! I have been told to get as near the shade as I could; and so I compare and contrast, till the whole thing seems to me about of one color. But I can settle my mind on nothing. The affair assumes a high degree of importance. I am satisfied with nothing but perfection. I don't know what may happen if the shade is not matched. I go to another shop, and another, and another. At last a pretty girl, who could make any customer believe that green is blue, matches the shade in a minute. I buy five cents' worth. That was the order. Women are the most economical persons that ever were. I have spent two hours in this five-cent business; but who shall say they were wasted, when I take the stuff home, and

Polly says it is a perfect match, and looks so pleased, and holds it up with the work, at arm's length, and turns her head one side, and then takes her needle, and works it in? Working in, I can see, my own obligingness and amiability with every stitch. Five cents is dirt cheap for such a pleasure.

The things I may do in my garden multiply on my vision. How fascinating have the catalogues of the nurserymen become! Can I raise all those beautiful varieties, each one of which is preferable to the other? Shall I try all the kinds of grapes, and all the sorts of pears? I have already fifteen varieties of strawberries (vines); and I have no idea that I have hit the right one. Must I subscribe to all the magazines and weekly papers which offer premiums of the best vines? Oh, that all the strawberries were rolled into one, that I could inclose all its lusciousness in one bite! Oh, for the good old days when a strawberry was a strawberry, and there was no perplexity about it! There are more berries now than churches; and no one knows what to believe. I have seen gardens which were all experiment, given over to every new thing, and which produced little or nothing to the owners, except the pleasure of expectation. People grow pear-trees at great expense of time and money, which never yield them more than four pears to the tree. The fashions of ladies' bonnets are nothing to the fashions of nurserymen. He who attempts to follow them has a business for life; but his life may be short. If I enter upon this wide field of horticultural experiment, I shall leave peace behind; and I may expect the ground to open, and

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swallow me and all my fortune. May Heaven keep me to the old roots and herbs of my forefathers! Perhaps in the world of modern reforms this is not possible; but I intend now to cultivate only the standard things, and learn to talk knowingly of the rest. Of course, one must keep up a reputation. I have seen people greatly enjoy themselves, and elevate themselves in their own esteem, in a wise and critical talk about all the choice wines, while they were sipping a decoction, the original cost of which bore no relation to the price of grapes.

NINETEENTH WEEK

THE closing scenes are not necessarily funereal. A garden should be got ready for winter as well as for summer. When one goes into winter-quarters, he wants everything neat and trig. Expecting high winds, we bring everything into close reef. Some men there are who never shave (if they are so absurd as ever to shave), except when they go abroad, and who do not take care to wear polished boots in the bosoms of their families. I like a man who shaves (next to one who does n't shave) to satisfy his own conscience, and not for display, and who dresses as neatly at home as he does anywhere. Such a man will be likely to put his garden in complete order before the snow comes, so that its last days shall not present a scene of melancholy ruin and decay.

I confess that, after such an exhausting campaign, I felt a great temptation to retire, and call it a drawn engagement. But better counsels prevailed. I determined that the weeds should not sleep on the field of battle. I routed them out, and leveled their works. I am master of the situation. If I have made a desert, I at least have peace; but it is not quite a desert. The strawberries, the raspberries, the celery, the turnips, wave green above the clean earth, with no enemy in sight. In these golden October days no work is more fascinating than this getting ready for

spring. The sun is no longer a burning enemy, but a friend, illuminating all the open space, and warming the mellow soil. And the pruning and clearing away of rubbish, and the fertilizing, go on with something of the hilarity of a wake, rather than the despondency of other funerals. When the wind begins to come out of the northwest of set purpose, and to sweep the ground with low and searching fierceness, very different from the roistering, jolly bluster of early fall, I have put the strawberries under their coverlet of leaves, pruned the grape-vines and laid them under the soil, tied up the tender plants, given the fruit trees a good, solid meal about the roots ; and so I turn away, writing *Resurgam* on the gatepost. And Calvin, aware that the summer is past and the harvest is ended, and that a mouse in the kitchen is worth two birds gone south, scampers away to the house with his tail in the air.

And yet I am not perfectly at rest in my mind. I know that this is only a truce until the parties recover their exhausted energies. All winter long the forces of chemistry will be mustering under ground, repairing the losses, calling up the reserves, getting new strength from my surface-fertilizing bounty, and making ready for the spring campaign. They will open it before I am ready : while the snow is scarcely melted, and the ground is not passable, they will begin to move on my works ; and the fight will commence. Yet how deceitfully it will open to the music of birds and the soft enchantment of the spring mornings ! I shall even be permitted to win a few skirmishes : the secret forces will even wait for me

to plant and sow, and show my full hand, before they come on in heavy and determined assault. There are already signs of an internecine fight with the devil-grass, which has intrenched itself in a considerable portion of my garden-patch. It contests the ground inch by inch; and digging it out is very much such labor as eating a piece of choke-cherry pie with the stones all in. It is work, too, that I know by experience I shall have to do alone. Every man must eradicate his own devil-grass. The neighbors who have leisure to help you in grape-picking time are all busy when devil-grass is most aggressive. My neighbors' visits are well timed: it is only their hens which have seasons for their own.

I am told that abundant and rank weeds are signs of a rich soil; but I have noticed that a thin, poor soil grows little but weeds. I am inclined to think that the substratum is the same, and that the only choice in this world is what kind of weeds you will have. I am not much attracted by the gaunt, flavorless mullein, and the wiry thistle of upland country pastures, where the grass is always gray, as if the world were already weary and sick of life. The awkward, uncouth wickedness of remote country-places, where culture has died out after the first crop, is about as disagreeable as the ranker and richer vice of city life, forced by artificial heat and the juices of an overfed civilization. There is no doubt that, on the whole, the rich soil is the best: the fruit of it has body and flavor. To what affluence does a woman (to take an instance, thank Heaven, which is common) grow, with favoring circumstances, under

the stimulus of the richest social and intellectual influences! I am aware that there has been a good deal said in poetry about the fringed gentian and the harebell of rocky districts and waysides, and I know that it is possible for maidens to bloom in very slight soil into a wild-wood grace and beauty; yet, the world through, they lack that wealth of charms, that tropic affluence of both person and mind, which higher and more stimulating culture brings, — the passion as well as the soul glowing in the Cloth-of-Gold rose. Neither persons nor plants are ever fully themselves until they are cultivated to their highest. I, for one, have no fear that society will be too much enriched. The only question is about keeping down the weeds; and I have learned by experience, that we need new sorts of hoes, and more disposition to use them.

Moral Deduction.— The difference between soil and society is evident. We bury decay in the earth; we plant in it the perishing; we feed it with offensive refuse: but nothing grows out of it that is not clean; it gives us back life and beauty for our rubbish. Society returns us what we give it.

Pretending to reflect upon these things, but in reality watching the blue-jays, who are pecking at the purple berries of the woodbine on the south gable, I approach the house. Polly is picking up chestnuts on the sward, regardless of the high wind which rattles them about her head and upon the glass roof of her winter-garden. The garden, I see, is filled with thrifty plants, which will make it always summer there. The callas about the fountain will be in

flower by Christmas: the plant appears to keep that holiday in her secret heart all summer. I close the outer windows as we go along, and congratulate myself that we are ready for winter. For the winter-garden I have no responsibility: Polly has entire charge of it. I am only required to keep it heated, and not too hot either; to smoke it often for the death of the bugs; to water it once a day; to move this and that into the sun and out of the sun pretty constantly: but she does all the work. We never relinquish that theory.

As we pass around the house, I discover a boy in the ravine filling a bag with chestnuts and hickory-nuts. They are not plenty this year; and I suggest the propriety of leaving some for us. The boy is a little slow to take the idea: but he has apparently found the picking poor, and exhausted it; for, as he turns away down the glen, he hails me with, —

“Mister, I say, can you tell me where I can find some walnuts?”

The coolness of this world grows upon me. It is time to go in and light a wood-fire on the hearth.

CALVIN
A STUDY OF CHARACTER

NOTE. — The following brief Memoir of one of the characters in this book is added by his friend, in the hope that the record of an exemplary life in an humble sphere may be of some service to the world.

HARTFORD, January, 1880.

CALVIN

A STUDY OF CHARACTER

CALVIN is dead. His life, long to him, but short for the rest of us, was not marked by startling adventures, but his character was so uncommon and his qualities were so worthy of imitation, that I have been asked by those who personally knew him to set down my recollections of his career.

His origin and ancestry were shrouded in mystery; even his age was a matter of pure conjecture. Although he was of the Maltese race, I have reason to suppose that he was American by birth as he certainly was in sympathy. Calvin was given to me eight years ago by Mrs. Stowe, but she knew nothing of his age or origin. He walked into her house one day out of the great unknown and became at once at home, as if he had been always a friend of the family. He appeared to have artistic and literary tastes, and it was as if he had inquired at the door if that was the residence of the author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and, upon being assured that it was, had decided to dwell there. This is, of course, fanciful, for his antecedents were wholly unknown, but in his time he could hardly have been in any household where he would not have heard "Uncle Tom's Cabin" talked about. When he came to Mrs. Stowe, he was as large

as he ever was, and apparently as old as he ever became. Yet there was in him no appearance of age; he was in the happy maturity of all his powers, and you would rather have said that in that maturity he had found the secret of perpetual youth. And it was as difficult to believe that he would ever be aged as it was to imagine that he had ever been in immature youth. There was in him a mysterious perpetuity.

After some years, when Mrs. Stowe made her winter home in Florida, Calvin came to live with us. From the first moment, he fell into the ways of the house and assumed a recognized position in the family, — I say recognized, because after he became known he was always inquired for by visitors, and in the letters to the other members of the family he always received a message. Although the least obtrusive of beings, his individuality always made itself felt.

His personal appearance had much to do with this, for he was of royal mould, and had an air of high breeding. He was large, but he had nothing of the fat grossness of the celebrated Angora family; though powerful, he was exquisitely proportioned, and as graceful in every movement as a young leopard. When he stood up to open a door — he opened all the doors with old-fashioned latches — he was portentously tall, and when stretched on the rug before the fire he seemed too long for this world — as indeed he was. His coat was the finest and softest I have ever seen, a shade of quiet Maltese; and from his throat downward, underneath, to the white tips of

his feet, he wore the whitest and most delicate ermine; and no person was ever more fastidiously neat. In his finely formed head you saw something of his aristocratic character; the ears were small and cleanly cut, there was a tinge of pink in the nostrils, his face was handsome, and the expression of his countenance exceedingly intelligent—I should call it even a sweet expression, if the term were not inconsistent with his look of alertness and sagacity.

It is difficult to convey a just idea of his gayety in connection with his dignity and gravity, which his name expressed. As we know nothing of his family, of course it will be understood that Calvin was his Christian name. He had times of relaxation into utter playfulness, delighting in a ball of yarn, catching sportively at stray ribbons when his mistress was at her toilet, and pursuing his own tail, with hilarity, for lack of anything better. He could amuse himself by the hour, and he did not care for children; perhaps something in his past was present to his memory. He had absolutely no bad habits, and his disposition was perfect. I never saw him exactly angry, though I have seen his tail grow to an enormous size when a strange cat appeared upon his lawn. He disliked cats, evidently regarding them as feline and treacherous, and he had no association with them. Occasionally there would be heard a night concert in the shrubbery. Calvin would ask to have the door opened, and then you would hear a rush and a “pestzt,” and the concert would explode, and Calvin would quietly come in and resume his seat on the hearth. There was no trace of anger in his manner, but he would n’t

have any of that about the house. He had the rare virtue of magnanimity. Although he had fixed notions about his own rights, and extraordinary persistency in getting them, he never showed temper at a repulse; he simply and firmly persisted till he had what he wanted. His diet was one point; his idea was that of the scholars about dictionaries,—to “get the best.” He knew as well as any one what was in the house, and would refuse beef if turkey was to be had; and if there were oysters, he would wait over the turkey to see if the oysters would not be forthcoming. And yet he was not a gross gourmand; he would eat bread if he saw me eating it, and thought he was not being imposed on. His habits of feeding, also, were refined; he never used a knife, and he would put up his hand and draw the fork down to his mouth as gracefully as a grown person. Unless necessity compelled, he would not eat in the kitchen, but insisted upon his meals in the dining-room, and would wait patiently, unless a stranger were present; and then he was sure to importune the visitor, hoping that the latter was ignorant of the rule of the house, and would give him something. They used to say that he preferred as his table-cloth on the floor a certain well-known church journal; but this was said by an Episcopalian. So far as I know, he had no religious prejudices, except that he did not like the association with Romanists. He tolerated the servants, because they belonged to the house, and would sometimes linger by the kitchen stove; but the moment visitors came in he arose, opened the door, and marched into the drawing-room. Yet he

enjoyed the company of his equals, and never withdrew, no matter how many callers — whom he recognized as of his society — might come into the drawing-room. Calvin was fond of company, but he wanted to choose it; and I have no doubt that his was an aristocratic fastidiousness rather than one of faith. It is so with most people.

The intelligence of Calvin was something phenomenal, in his rank of life. He established a method of communicating his wants, and even some of his sentiments; and he could help himself in many things. There was a furnace register in a retired room, where he used to go when he wished to be alone, that he always opened when he desired more heat; but he never shut it, any more than he shut the door after himself. He could do almost everything but speak; and you would declare sometimes that you could see a pathetic longing to do that in his intelligent face. I have no desire to overdraw his qualities, but if there was one thing in him more noticeable than another, it was his fondness for nature. He could content himself for hours at a low window, looking into the ravine and at the great trees, noting the smallest stir there; he delighted, above all things, to accompany me walking about the garden, hearing the birds, getting the smell of the fresh earth, and rejoicing in the sunshine. He followed me and gamboled like a dog, rolling over on the turf and exhibiting his delight in a hundred ways. If I worked, he sat and watched me, or looked off over the bank, and kept his ear open to the twitter in the cherry-trees. When it stormed, he

was sure to sit at the window, keenly watching the rain or the snow, glancing up and down at its falling; and a winter tempest always delighted him. I think he was genuinely fond of birds, but, so far as I know, he usually confined himself to one a day; he never killed, as some sportsmen do, for the sake of killing, but only as civilized people do, — from necessity. He was intimate with the flying-squirrels who dwell in the chestnut-trees, — too intimate, for almost every day in the summer he would bring in one, until he nearly discouraged them. He was, indeed, a superb hunter, and would have been a devastating one, if his bump of destructiveness had not been offset by a bump of moderation. There was very little of the brutality of the lower animals about him; I don't think he enjoyed rats for themselves, but he knew his business, and for the first few months of his residence with us he waged an awful campaign against the horde, and after that his simple presence was sufficient to deter them from coming on the premises. Mice amused him, but he usually considered them too small game to be taken seriously; I have seen him play for an hour with a mouse, and then let him go with a royal condescension. In this whole matter of "getting a living," Calvin was a great contrast to the rapacity of the age in which he lived.

I hesitate a little to speak of his capacity for friendship and the affectionateness of his nature, for I know from his own reserve that he would not care to have it much talked about. We understood each other perfectly, but we never made any fuss about it; when I spoke his name and snapped my fingers, he

came to me ; when I returned home at night, he was pretty sure to be waiting for me near the gate, and would rise and saunter along the walk, as if his being there were purely accidental, — so shy was he commonly of showing feeling ; and when I opened the door, he never rushed in, like a cat, but loitered, and lounged, as if he had no intention of going in, but would condescend to. And yet, the fact was, he knew dinner was ready, and he was bound to be there. He kept the run of dinner-time. It happened sometimes, during our absence in the summer, that dinner would be early, and Calvin, walking about the grounds, missed it and came in late. But he never made a mistake the second day. There was one thing he never did, — he never rushed through an open doorway. He never forgot his dignity. If he had asked to have the door opened, and was eager to go out, he always went deliberately ; I can see him now, standing on the sill, looking about at the sky as if he was thinking whether it were worth while to take an umbrella, until he was near having his tail shut in.

His friendship was rather constant than demonstrative. When we returned from an absence of nearly two years, Calvin welcomed us with evident pleasure, but showed his satisfaction rather by tranquil happiness than by fuming about. He had the faculty of making us glad to get home. It was his constancy that was so attractive. He liked companionship, but he would n't be petted, or fussed over, or sit in any one's lap a moment ; he always extricated himself from such familiarity with dignity

and with no show of temper. If there was any petting to be done, however, he chose to do it. Often he would sit looking at me, and then, moved by a delicate affection, come and pull at my coat and sleeve until he could touch my face with his nose, and then go away contented. He had a habit of coming to my study in the morning, sitting quietly by my side or on the table for hours, watching the pen run over the paper, occasionally swinging his tail round for a blotter, and then going to sleep among the papers by the inkstand. Or, more rarely, he would watch the writing from a perch on my shoulder. Writing always interested him, and, until he understood it, he wanted to hold the pen.

He always held himself in a kind of reserve with his friend, as if he had said, "Let us respect our personality, and not make a 'mess' of friendship." He saw, with Emerson, the risk of degrading it to trivial conveniency. "Why insist on rash personal relations with your friend?" "Leave this touching and clawing." Yet I would not give an unfair notion of his aloofness, his fine sense of the sacredness of the me and the not-me. And, at the risk of not being believed, I will relate an incident, which was often repeated. Calvin had the practice of passing a portion of the night in the contemplation of its beauties, and would come into our chamber over the roof of the conservatory through the open window, summer and winter, and go to sleep on the foot of my bed. He would do this always exactly in this way; he never was content to stay in the chamber if we compelled him to go upstairs and through the door. He

had the obstinacy of General Grant. But this is by the way. In the morning, he performed his toilet and went down to breakfast with the rest of the family. Now, when the mistress was absent from home, and at no other time, Calvin would come in the morning, when the bell rang, to the head of the bed, put up his feet and look into my face, follow me about when I rose, "assist" at the dressing, and in many purring ways show his fondness, as if he had plainly said, "I know that she has gone away, but I am here." Such was Calvin in rare moments.

He had his limitations. Whatever passion he had for nature, he had no conception of art. There was sent to him once a fine and very expressive cat's head in bronze, by Frémiet. I placed it on the floor. He regarded it intently, approached it cautiously and crouchingly, touched it with his nose, perceived the fraud, turned away abruptly, and never would notice it afterward. On the whole, his life was not only a successful one, but a happy one. He never had but one fear, so far as I know: he had a mortal and a reasonable terror of plumbers. He would never stay in the house when they were here. No coaxing could quiet him. Of course he did n't share our fear about their charges, but he must have had some dreadful experience with them in that portion of his life which is unknown to us. A plumber was to him the devil, and I have no doubt that, in his scheme, plumbers were foreordained to do him mischief.

In speaking of his worth, it has never occurred to me to estimate Calvin by the worldly standard. I know that it is customary now, when any one dies,

to ask how much he was worth, and that no obituary in the newspapers is considered complete without such an estimate. The plumbers in our house were one day overheard to say that, "They say that *she* says that *he* says that he would n't take a hundred dollars for him." It is unnecessary to say that I never made such a remark, and that, so far as Calvin was concerned, there was no purchase in money.

As I look back upon it, Calvin's life seems to me a fortunate one, for it was natural and unforced. He ate when he was hungry, slept when he was sleepy, and enjoyed existence to the very tips of his toes and the end of his expressive and slow-moving tail. He delighted to roam about the garden, and stroll among the trees, and to lie on the green grass and luxuriate in all the sweet influences of summer. You could never accuse him of idleness, and yet he knew the secret of repose. The poet who wrote so prettily of him that his little life was rounded with a sleep, understated his felicity; it was rounded with a good many. His conscience never seemed to interfere with his slumbers. In fact, he had good habits and a contented mind. I can see him now walk in at the study door, sit down by my chair, bring his tail artistically about his feet, and look up at me with unspeakable happiness in his handsome face. I often thought that he felt the dumb limitation which denied him the power of language. But since he was denied speech, he scorned the inarticulate mouthings of the lower animals. The vulgar mewing and yowling of the cat species was beneath him; he sometimes uttered a sort of articulate and well-bred ejaculation, when he wished

to call attention to something that he considered remarkable, or to some want of his, but he never went whining about. He would sit for hours at a closed window, when he desired to enter, without a murmur, and when it was opened, he never admitted that he had been impatient by "bolting" in. Though speech he had not, and the unpleasant kind of utterance given to his race he would not use, he had a mighty power of purr to express his measureless content with congenial society. There was in him a musical organ with stops of varied power and expression, upon which I have no doubt he could have performed Scarlatti's celebrated cat's-fugue.

Whether Calvin died of old age, or was carried off by one of the diseases incident to youth, it is impossible to say; for his departure was as quiet as his advent was mysterious. I only know that he appeared to us in this world in his perfect stature and beauty, and that after a time, like Lohengrin, he withdrew. In his illness there was nothing more to be regretted than in all his blameless life. I suppose there never was an illness that had more of dignity and sweetness and resignation in it. It came on gradually, in a kind of listlessness and want of appetite. An alarming symptom was his preference for the warmth of a furnace-register to the lively sparkle of the open wood-fire. Whatever pain he suffered, he bore it in silence, and seemed only anxious not to obtrude his malady. We tempted him with the delicacies of the season, but it soon became impossible for him to eat, and for two weeks he ate or drank scarcely anything. Sometimes he made an effort to take something, but it

was evident that he made the effort to please us. The neighbors — and I am convinced that the advice of neighbors is never good for anything — suggested catnip. He would n't even smell it. We had the attendance of an amateur practitioner of medicine, whose real office was the cure of souls, but nothing touched his case. He took what was offered, but it was with the air of one to whom the time for pellets was passed. He sat or lay day after day almost motionless, never once making a display of those vulgar convulsions or contortions of pain which are so disagreeable to society. His favorite place was on the brightest spot of a Smyrna rug by the conservatory, where the sunlight fell and he could hear the fountain play. If we went to him and exhibited our interest in his condition, he always purred in recognition of our sympathy. And when I spoke his name, he looked up with an expression that said, "I understand it, old fellow, but it's no use." He was to all who came to visit him a model of calmness and patience in affliction.

I was absent from home at the last, but heard by daily postal-card of his failing condition ; and never again saw him alive. One sunny morning, he rose from his rug, went into the conservatory (he was very thin then), walked around it deliberately, looking at all the plants he knew, and then went to the bay-window in the dining-room, and stood a long time looking out upon the little field, now brown and sere, and toward the garden, where perhaps the happiest hours of his life had been spent. It was a last look. He turned and walked away, laid himself

down upon the bright spot in the rug, and quietly died.

It is not too much to say that a little shock went through the neighborhood when it was known that Calvin was dead, so marked was his individuality ; and his friends, one after another, came in to see him. There was no sentimental nonsense about his obsequies ; it was felt that any parade would have been distasteful to him. John, who acted as undertaker, prepared a candle-box for him, and I believe assumed a professional decorum ; but there may have been the usual levity underneath, for I heard that he remarked in the kitchen that it was the "driest wake he ever attended." Everybody, however, felt a fondness for Calvin, and regarded him with a certain respect. Between him and Bertha there existed a great friendship, and she apprehended his nature ; she used to say that sometimes she was afraid of him, he looked at her so intelligently ; she was never certain that he was what he appeared to be.

When I returned, they had laid Calvin on a table in an upper chamber by an open window. It was February. He reposed in a candle-box, lined about the edge with evergreen, and at his head stood a little wine-glass with flowers. He lay with his head tucked down in his arms, — a favorite position of his before the fire, — as if asleep in the comfort of his soft and exquisite fur. It was the involuntary exclamation of those who saw him, "How natural he looks !" As for myself, I said nothing. John buried him under the twin hawthorn-trees, — one white and the other pink, — in a spot where Calvin was fond of lying

and listening to the hum of summer insects and the twitter of birds.

Perhaps I have failed to make appear the individuality of character that was so evident to those who knew him. At any rate, I have set down nothing concerning him, but the literal truth. He was always a mystery. I did not know whence he came; I do not know whither he has gone. I would not weave one spray of falsehood in the wreath I lay upon his grave.

BACKLOG STUDIES

BACKLOG STUDIES

FIRST STUDY

I

THE fire on the hearth has almost gone out in New England; the hearth has gone out; the family has lost its center; age ceases to be respected; sex is only distinguished by a difference between millinery bills and tailors' bills; there is no more toast-and-cider; the young are not allowed to eat mince-pies at ten o'clock at night; half a cheese is no longer set to toast before the fire; you scarcely ever see in front of the coals a row of roasting apples, which a bright little girl, with many a dive and start, shielding her sunny face from the fire with one hand, turns from time to time; scarce are the gray-haired sires who strop their razors on the family Bible, and doze in the chimney-corner. A good many things have gone out with the fire on the hearth.

I do not mean to say that public and private morality have vanished with the hearth. A good degree of purity and considerable happiness are possible with grates and blowers; it is a day of trial, when we are all passing through a fiery furnace, and very likely we shall be purified as we are dried up and wasted away. Of course the family is gone, as

an institution, though there still are attempts to bring up a family round a "register." But you might just as well try to bring it up by hand, as without the rallying-point of a hearthstone. Are there any homesteads nowadays? Do people hesitate to change houses any more than they do to change their clothes? People hire houses as they would a masquerade costume, liking, sometimes, to appear for a year in a little fictitious stone-front splendor above their means. Thus it happens that so many people live in houses that do not fit them. I should almost as soon think of wearing another person's clothes as his house; unless I could let it out and take it in until it fitted, and somehow expressed my own character and taste. But we have fallen into the days of conformity. It is no wonder that people constantly go into their neighbors' houses by mistake, just as, in spite of the Maine law, they wear away each other's hats from an evening party. It has almost come to this, that you might as well be anybody else as yourself.

Am I mistaken in supposing that this is owing to the discontinuance of big chimneys, with wide fireplaces in them? How can a person be attached to a house that has no center of attraction, no soul in it, in the visible form of a glowing fire, and a warm chimney, like the heart in the body? When you think of the old homestead, if you ever do, your thoughts go straight to the wide chimney and its burning logs. No wonder that you are ready to move from one fireplaceless house into another. But you have something just as good, you say. Yes, I have

heard of it. This age, which imitates everything, even to the virtues of our ancestors, has invented a fireplace, with artificial, iron, or composition logs in it, hacked and painted, in which gas is burned, so that it has the appearance of a wood-fire. This seems to me blasphemy. Do you think a cat would lie down before it? Can you poke it? If you can't poke it, it is a fraud. To poke a wood-fire is more solid enjoyment than almost anything else in the world. The crowning human virtue in a man is to let his wife poke the fire. I do not know how any virtue whatever is possible over an imitation gas-log. What a sense of insincerity the family must have, if they indulge in the hypocrisy of gathering about it. With this center of untruthfulness, what must the life in the family be? Perhaps the father will be living at the rate of ten thousand a year on a salary of four thousand; perhaps the mother, more beautiful and younger than her beautified daughters, will rouge; perhaps the young ladies will make wax-work. A cynic might suggest as the motto of modern life this simple legend,—“Just as good as the real.” But I am not a cynic, and I hope for the rekindling of wood-fires, and a return of the beautiful home light from them. If a wood-fire is a luxury, it is cheaper than many in which we indulge without thought, and cheaper than the visits of a doctor, made necessary by the want of ventilation of the house. Not that I have anything against doctors; I only wish, after they have been to see us in a way that seems so friendly, they had nothing against us.

My fireplace, which is deep, and nearly three feet

wide, has a broad hearthstone in front of it, where the live coals tumble down, and a pair of gigantic brass andirons. The brasses are burnished, and shine cheerfully in the firelight, and on either side stand tall shovel and tongs, like sentries, mounted in brass. The tongs, like the two-handed sword of Bruce, cannot be wielded by puny people. We burn in it hickory wood, cut long. We like the smell of this aromatic forest timber, and its clear flame. The birch is also a sweet wood for the hearth, with a sort of spiritual flame and an even temper, — no snappishness. Some prefer the elm, which holds fire so well; and I have a neighbor who uses nothing but apple-tree wood, — a solid, family sort of wood, fragrant also, and full of delightful suggestions. But few people can afford to burn up their fruit trees. I should as soon think of lighting the fire with sweet-oil that comes in those graceful wicker-bound flasks from Naples, or with manuscript sermons, which, however, do not burn well, be they never so dry, — not half so well as printed editorials.

Few people know how to make a wood-fire, but everybody thinks he or she does. You want, first, a large backlog, which does not rest on the andirons. This will keep your fire forward, radiate heat all day, and late in the evening fall into a ruin of glowing coals, like the last days of a good man, whose life is the richest and most beneficent at the close, when the flames of passion and the sap of youth are burned out, and there only remain the solid, bright elements of character. Then you want a forestick on the andirons; and upon these build the fire of lighter stuff.

In this way you have at once a cheerful blaze, and the fire gradually eats into the solid mass, sinking down with increasing fervor ; coals drop below, and delicate tongues of flame sport along the beautiful grain of the forestick. There are people who kindle a fire underneath. But these are conceited people, who are wedded to their own way. I suppose an accomplished incendiary always starts a fire in the attic, if he can. I am not an incendiary, but I hate bigotry. I don't call those incendiaries very good Christians who, when they set fire to the martyrs, touched off the fagots at the bottom, so as to make them go slow. Besides, knowledge works down easier than it does up. Education must proceed from the more enlightened down to the more ignorant strata. If you want better common schools, raise the standard of the colleges, and so on. Build your fire on top. Let your light shine. I have seen people build a fire under a balky horse ; but he would n't go, he 'd be a horse-martyr first. A fire kindled under one never did him any good. Of course you can make a fire on the hearth by kindling it underneath, but that does not make it right. I want my hearth-fire to be an emblem of the best things.

II

IT must be confessed that a wood-fire needs as much tending as a pair of twins. To say nothing of fiery projectiles sent into the room, even by the best wood, from the explosion of gases confined in its

cells, the brands are continually dropping down, and coals are being scattered over the hearth. However much a careful housewife, who thinks more of neatness than enjoyment, may dislike this, it is one of the chief delights of a wood-fire. I would as soon have an Englishman without side-whiskers as a fire without a big backlog; and I would rather have no fire than one that required no tending, — one of dead wood that could not sing again the imprisoned songs of the forest, or give out in brilliant scintillations the sunshine it absorbed in its growth. Flame is an ethereal sprite, and the spice of danger in it gives zest to the care of the hearth-fire. Nothing is so beautiful as springing, changing flame, — it was the last freak of the Gothic architecture men to represent the fronts of elaborate edifices of stone as on fire, by the kindling flamboyant devices. A fireplace is, besides, a private laboratory, where one can witness the most brilliant chemical experiments, minor conflagrations only wanting the grandeur of cities on fire. It is a vulgar notion that a fire is only for heat. A chief value of it is, however, to look at. It is a picture, framed between the jambs. You have nothing on your walls, by the best masters (the poor masters are not, however, represented), that is really so fascinating, so spiritual. Speaking like an upholsterer, it furnishes the room. And it is never twice the same. In this respect it is like the landscape-view through a window, always seen in a new light, color, or condition. The fireplace is a window into the most charming world I ever had a glimpse of.

Yet direct heat is an agreeable sensation. I am

not scientific enough to despise it, and have no taste for a winter residence on Mount Washington, where the thermometer cannot be kept comfortable even by boiling. They say that they say in Boston that there is a satisfaction in being well dressed which religion cannot give. There is certainly a satisfaction in the direct radiance of a hickory fire which is not to be found in the fieriest blasts of a furnace. The hot air of a furnace is a sirocco ; the heat of a wood-fire is only intense sunshine, like that bottled in *Lacrimæ Christi*. Besides this, the eye is delighted, the sense of smell is regaled by the fragrant decomposition, and the ear is pleased with the hissing, crackling, and singing, — a liberation of so many out-door noises. Some people like the sound of bubbling in a boiling pot, or the fizzing of a frying-spider. But there is nothing gross in the animated crackling of sticks of wood blazing on the earth, not even if chestnuts are roasting in the ashes. All the senses are ministered to, and the imagination is left as free as the leaping tongues of flame.

The attention which a wood-fire demands is one of its best recommendations. We value little that which costs us no trouble to maintain. If we had to keep the sun kindled up and going by private corporate action, or act of Congress, and to be taxed for the support of customs officers of solar heat, we should prize it more than we do. Not that I should like to look upon the sun as a job, and have the proper regulation of its temperature get into politics, where we already have so much combustible stuff; but we take it quite too much as a matter of course,

and, having it free, do not reckon it among the reasons for gratitude. Many people shut it out of their houses as if it were an enemy, watch its descent upon the carpet as if it were only a thief of color, and plant trees to shut it away from the mouldering house. All the animals know better than this, as well as the more simple races of men ; the old women of the southern Italian coasts sit all day in the sun and ply the distaff, as grateful as the sociable hens on the south side of a New England barn ; the slow tortoise likes to take the sun upon his sloping back, soaking in color that shall make him immortal when the imperishable part of him is cut up into shell ornaments. The capacity of a cat to absorb sunshine is only equaled by that of an Arab or an Ethiopian. They are not afraid of injuring their complexions. White must be the color of civilization ; it has so many natural disadvantages. But this is politics. I was about to say that, however it may be with sunshine, one is always grateful for his wood-fire, because he does not maintain it without some cost.

Yet I cannot but confess to a difference between sunlight and the light of a wood-fire. The sunshine is entirely untamed. Where it rages most freely it tends to evoke the brilliancy rather than the harmonious satisfactions of nature. The monstrous growths and the flaming colors of the tropics contrast with our more subdued loveliness of foliage and bloom. The birds of the middle region dazzle with their contrasts of plumage, and their voices are for screaming rather than singing. I presume the new experiments in sound would project a macaw's voice in very tan-

gled and inharmonious lines of light. I suspect that the fiercest sunlight puts people, as well as animals and vegetables, on extremes in all ways. A wood-fire on the hearth is a kindler of the domestic virtues. It brings in cheerfulness, and a family center, and, besides, it is artistic. I should like to know if an artist could ever represent on canvas a happy family gathered round a hole in the floor called a register. Given a fireplace, and a tolerable artist could almost create a pleasant family round it. But what could he conjure out of a register? If there was any virtue among our ancestors, — and they labored under a great many disadvantages, and had few of the aids which we have to excellence of life, — I am convinced they drew it mostly from the fireside. If it was difficult to read the eleven commandments by the light of a pine-knot, it was not difficult to get the sweet spirit of them from the countenance of the serene mother knitting in the chimney-corner.

III

WHEN the fire is made, you want to sit in front of it and grow genial in its effulgence. I have never been upon a throne, — except in moments of a traveler's curiosity, about as long as a South American dictator remains on one, — but I have no idea that it compares, for pleasantness, with a seat before a wood-fire. A whole leisure day before you, a good novel in hand, and the backlog only just beginning to kindle, with uncounted hours of comfort in it, —

has life anything more delicious? For "novel" you can substitute "Calvin's Institutes," if you wish to be virtuous as well as happy. Even Calvin would melt before a wood-fire. A great snowstorm, visible on three sides of your wide-windowed room, loading the evergreens, blown in fine powder from the great chestnut-tops, piled up in ever-accumulating masses, covering the paths, the shrubbery, the hedges, drifting and clinging in fantastic deposits, deepening your sense of security, and taking away the sin of idleness by making it a necessity, this is an excellent background to your day by the fire.

To deliberately sit down in the morning to read a novel, to enjoy yourself, is this not, in New England (I am told they don't read much in other parts of the country), the sin of sins? Have you any right to read, especially novels, until you have exhausted the best part of the day in some employment that is called practical? Have you any right to enjoy yourself at all until the fag-end of the day, when you are tired and incapable of enjoying yourself? I am aware that this is the practice, if not the theory, of our society, — to postpone the delights of social intercourse until after dark, and rather late at night, when body and mind are both weary with the exertions of business, and when we can give to what is the most delightful and profitable thing in life, social and intellectual society, only the weariness of dull brains and over-tired muscles. No wonder we take our amusements sadly, and that so many people find dinners heavy and parties stupid. Our economy leaves no place for amusements; we merely add them to the

burden of a life already full. The world is still a little off the track as to what is really useful.

I confess that the morning is a very good time to read a novel, or anything else which is good and requires a fresh mind ; and I take it that nothing is worth reading that does not require an alert mind. I suppose it is necessary that business should be transacted ; though the amount of business that does not contribute to anybody's comfort or improvement suggests the query whether it is not overdone. I know that unremitting attention to business is the price of success, but I don't know what success is. There is a man, whom we all know, who built a house that cost a quarter of a million of dollars, and furnished it for another like sum, who does not know anything more about architecture, or painting, or books, or history, than he cares for the rights of those who have not so much money as he has. I heard him once, in a foreign gallery, say to his wife, as they stood in front of a famous picture by Rubens: "That is the Rape of the Sardines!" What a cheerful world it would be if everybody was as successful as that man! While I am reading my book by the fire, and taking an active part in important transactions that may be a good deal better than real, let me be thankful that a great many men are profitably employed in offices and bureaus and country stores in keeping up the gossip and endless exchange of opinions among mankind, so much of which is made to appear to the women at home as "business." I find that there is a sort of busy idleness among men in this world that is not held in disre-

pute. When the time comes that I have to prove my right to vote, with women, I trust that it will be remembered in my favor that I made this admission. If it is true, as a witty conservative once said to me, that we never shall have peace in this country until we elect a colored woman president, I desire to be *rectus in curia* early.

IV

THE fireplace, as we said, is a window through which we look out upon other scenes. We like to read of the small, bare room, with cobwebbed ceiling and narrow window, in which the poor child of genius sits with his magical pen, the master of a realm of beauty and enchantment. I think the open fire does not kindle the imagination so much as it awakens the memory ; one sees the past in its crumbling embers and ashy grayness, rather than the future. People become reminiscent and even sentimental in front of it. They used to become something else in those good old days when it was thought best to heat the poker red hot before plunging it into the mugs of flip. This heating of the poker has been disapproved of late years, but I do not know on what grounds ; if one is to drink bitters and gins and the like, such as I understand as good people as clergymen and women take in private, and by advice, I do not know why one should not make them palatable and heat them with his own poker. Cold whiskey out of a bottle, taken as a prescription six times a day

on the sly, is n't my idea of virtue any more than the social ancestral glass, sizzling wickedly with the hot iron. Names are so confusing in this world; but things are apt to remain pretty much the same, whatever we call them.

Perhaps as you look into the fireplace it widens and grows deep and cavernous. The back and the jambs are built up of great stones, not always smoothly laid, with jutting ledges upon which ashes are apt to lie. The hearthstone is an enormous block of trap rock, with a surface not perfectly even, but a capital place to crack butternuts on. Over the fire swings an iron crane, with a row of pot-hooks of all lengths hanging from it. It swings out when the housewife wants to hang on the tea-kettle, and it is strong enough to support a row of pots, or a mammoth caldron kettle on occasion. What a jolly sight is this fireplace when the pots and kettles in a row are all boiling and bubbling over the flame, and a roasting-spit is turning in front! It makes a person as hungry as one of Scott's novels. But the brilliant sight is in the frosty morning, about daylight, when the fire is made. The coals are raked open, the split sticks are piled up in openwork criss-crossing, as high as the crane; and when the flame catches hold and roars up through the interstices, it is like an out-of-door bonfire. Wood enough is consumed in that morning sacrifice to cook the food of a Parisian family for a year. How it roars up the wide chimney, sending into the air the signal smoke and sparks which announce to the farming neighbors another day cheerfully begun! The sleepest boy in

the world would get up in his red flannel night-gown to see such a fire lighted, even if he dropped to sleep again in his chair before the ruddy blaze. Then it is that the house, which has shrunk and creaked all night in the pinching cold of winter, begins to glow again and come to life. The thick frost melts little by little on the small window-panes, and it is seen that the gray dawn is breaking over the leagues of pallid snow. It is time to blow out the candle, which has lost all its cheerfulness in the light of day. The morning romance is over; the family is astir; and member after member appears with the morning yawn, to stand before the crackling, fierce conflagration. The daily round begins. The most hateful employment ever invented for mortal man presents itself: the "chores" are to be done. The boy who expects every morning to open into a new world finds that to-day is like yesterday, but he believes to-morrow will be different. And yet enough for him, for the day, is the wading in the snowdrifts, or the sliding on the diamond-sparkling crust. Happy, too, is he, when the storm rages, and the snow is piled high against the windows, if he can sit in the warm chimney-corner and read about Burgoyne, and General Fraser, and Miss McCrea, mid-winter marches through the wilderness, surprises of wigwams, and the stirring ballad, say, of the Battle of the Kegs: —

“ Come, gallants, attend and list a friend
 Thrill forth harmonious ditty;
While I shall tell what late befell
 At Philadelphia city.”

John does not hear



I should like to know what heroism a boy in an old New England farmhouse — rough-nursed by nature, and fed on the traditions of the old wars — did not aspire to. “John,” says the mother, “you’ll burn your head to a crisp in that heat.” But John does not hear ; he is storming the Plains of Abraham just now. “Johnny, dear, bring in a stick of wood.” How can Johnny bring in wood when he is in that defile with Braddock, and the Indians are popping at him from behind every tree? There is something about a boy that I like, after all.

The fire rests upon the broad hearth ; the hearth rests upon a great substruction of stone, and the substruction rests upon the cellar. What supports the cellar I never knew, but the cellar supports the family. The cellar is the foundation of domestic comfort. Into its dark, cavernous recesses the child’s imagination fearfully goes. Bogies guard the bins of choicest apples. I know not what comical sprites sit astride the cider-barrels ranged along the walls. The feeble flicker of the tallow-candle does not at all dispel, but creates, illusions, and magnifies all the rich possibilities of this underground treasure-house. When the cellar-door is opened, and the boy begins to descend into the thick darkness, it is always with a heart-beat as of one started upon some adventure. Who can forget the smell that comes through the opened door ; — a mingling of fresh earth, fruit exhaling delicious aroma, kitchen vegetables, the mouldy odor of barrels, a sort of ancestral air, — as if a door had been opened into an old romance. Do

you like it? Not much. But then I would not exchange the remembrance of it for a good many odors and perfumes that I do like.

It is time to punch the backlog and put on a new forestick.

SECOND STUDY

I

THE log was white birch. The beautiful satin bark at once kindled into a soft, pure, but brilliant flame, something like that of naphtha. There is no other wood flame so rich, and it leaps up in a joyous, spiritual way, as if glad to burn for the sake of burning. Burning like a clear oil, it has none of the heaviness and fatness of the pine and the balsam. Woodsmen are at a loss to account for its intense and yet chaste flame, since the bark has no oily appearance. The heat from it is fierce, and the light dazzling. It flares up eagerly like young love, and then dies away; the wood does not keep up the promise of the bark. The woodsmen, it is proper to say, have not considered it in its relation to young love. In the remote settlements the pine-knot is still the torch of courtship; it endures to sit up by. The birch-bark has alliances with the world of sentiment and of letters. The most poetical reputation of the North American Indian floats in a canoe made of it; his picture-writing was inscribed on it. It is the paper that nature furnishes for lovers in the wilderness, who are enabled to convey a delicate sentiment by its use, which is expressed neither in their ideas nor chirography. It is inadequate for legal parchment, but does very well for deeds of love, which are not meant

usually to give a perfect title. With care, it may be split into sheets as thin as the Chinese paper. It is so beautiful to handle that it is a pity civilization cannot make more use of it. But fancy articles manufactured from it are very much like all ornamental work made of nature's perishable seeds, leaves, cones, and dry twigs, — exquisite while the pretty fingers are fashioning it, but soon growing shabby and cheap to the eye. And yet there is a pathos in "dried things," whether they are displayed as ornaments in some secluded home, or hidden religiously in bureau-drawers where profane eyes cannot see how white ties are growing yellow and ink is fading from treasured letters, amid a faint and discouraging perfume of ancient rose-leaves.

The birch log holds out very well while it is green, but has not substance enough for a backlog when dry. Seasoning green timber or men is always an experiment. A man may do very well in a simple, let us say, country or backwoods line of life, who would come to nothing in a more complicated civilization. City life is a severe trial. One man is struck with a dry-rot; another develops season-cracks; another shrinks and swells with every change of circumstance. Prosperity is said to be more trying than adversity, a theory which most people are willing to accept without trial; but few men stand the drying out of the natural sap of their greenness in the artificial heat of city life. This, be it noticed, is nothing against the drying and seasoning process; character must be put into the crucible some time, and why not in this world? A man who cannot stand seasoning

will not have a high market value in any part of the universe. It is creditable to the race, that so many men and women bravely jump into the furnace of prosperity and expose themselves to the drying influences of city life.

The first fire that is lighted on the hearth in the autumn seems to bring out the cold weather. Deceived by the placid appearance of the dying year, the softness of the sky, and the warm color of the foliage, we have been shivering about for days without exactly comprehending what was the matter. The open fire at once sets up a standard of comparison. We find that the advance guards of winter are besieging the house. The cold rushes in at every crack of door and window, apparently signaled by the flame to invade the house and fill it with chilly drafts and sarcasms on what we call the temperate zone. It needs a roaring fire to beat back the enemy; a feeble one is only an invitation to the most insulting demonstrations. Our pious New England ancestors were philosophers in their way. It was not simply owing to grace that they sat for hours in their barn-like meeting-houses during the winter Sundays, the thermometer many degrees below freezing, with no fire, except the zeal in their own hearts, — a congregation of red noses and bright eyes. It was no wonder that the minister in the pulpit warmed up to his subject, cried aloud, used hot words, spoke a good deal of the hot place and the Person whose presence was a burning shame, hammered the desk as if he expected to drive his text through a two-inch plank, and heated himself by all allowable ecclesiastical

gymnastics. A few of their followers in our day seem to forget that our modern churches are heated by furnaces and supplied with gas. In the old days it would have been thought unphilosophic as well as effeminate to warm the meeting-houses artificially. In one house I knew, at least, when it was proposed to introduce a stove to take a little of the chill from the Sunday services, the deacons protested against the innovation. They said that the stove might benefit those who sat close to it, but it would drive all the cold air to the other parts of the church, and freeze the people to death ; it was cold enough now around the edges. Blessed days of ignorance and upright living ! Sturdy men who served God by resolutely sitting out the icy hours of service, amid the rattling of windows and the carousal of winter in the high, wind-swept galleries ! Patient women, waiting in the chilly house for consumption to pick out his victims, and replace the color of youth and the flush of devotion with the hectic of disease ! At least, you did not doze and droop in our over-heated edifices, and die of vitiated air and disregard of the simplest conditions of organized life. It is fortunate that each generation does not comprehend its own ignorance. We are thus enabled to call our ancestors barbarous. It is something also that each age has its choice of the death it will die. Our generation is most ingenious. From our public assembly-rooms and houses we have almost succeeded in excluding pure air. It took the race ages to build dwellings that would keep out rain ; it has taken longer to build houses air-tight, but we are on the eve of suc-

cess. We are only foiled by the ill-fitting, insincere work of the builders, who build for a day, and charge for all time.

II

WHEN the fire on the hearth has blazed up and then settled into steady radiance, talk begins. There is no place like the chimney-corner for confidences; for picking up the clews of an old friendship; for taking note where one's self has drifted, by comparing ideas and prejudices with the intimate friend of years ago, whose course in life has lain apart from yours. No stranger puzzles you so much as the once close friend, with whose thinking and associates you have for years been unfamiliar. Life has come to mean this and that to you; you have fallen into certain habits of thought; for you the world has progressed in this or that direction; of certain results you feel very sure; you have fallen into harmony with your surroundings; you meet day after day people interested in the things that interest you; you are not in the least opinionated, it is simply your good fortune to look upon the affairs of the world from the right point of view. When you last saw your friend, — less than a year after you left college, — he was the most sensible and agreeable of men; he had no heterodox notions; he agreed with you; you could even tell what sort of a wife he would select, and if you could do that, you held the key to his life.

Well, Herbert came to visit me the other day from

the antipodes. And here he sits by the fireplace. I cannot think of any one I would rather see there, — except perhaps Thackery; or, for entertainment, Boswell; or old Pepys; or one of the people who was left out of the Ark. They were talking one foggy London night at Hazlitt's about whom they would most like to have seen, when Charles Lamb startled the company by declaring that he would rather have seen Judas Iscariot than any other person who had lived on the earth. For myself, I would rather have seen Lamb himself once, than to have lived with Judas. Herbert, to my great delight, has not changed; I should know him anywhere, — the same serious, contemplative face, with lurking humor at the corners of the mouth, — the same cheery laugh and clear, distinct enunciation as of old. There is nothing so winning as a good voice. To see Herbert again, unchanged in all outward essentials, is not only gratifying, but valuable as a testimony to nature's success in holding on to a personal identity, through the entire change of matter that has been constantly taking place for so many years. I know very well there is here no part of the Herbert whose hand I had shaken at the Commencement parting; but it is an astonishing reproduction of him, — a material likeness; and now for the spiritual.

Such a wide chance for divergence in the spiritual. It has been such a busy world for twenty years. So many things have been torn up by the roots again that were settled when we left college. There were to be no more wars; democracy was democracy, and progress, the differentiation of the individual, was a

mere question of clothes ; if you want to be different, go to your tailor ; nobody had demonstrated that there is a man-soul and a woman-soul, and that each is in reality only a half-soul, — putting the race, so to speak, upon the half-shell. The social oyster being opened, there appears to be two shells and only one oyster ; who shall have it ? So many new canons of taste, of criticism, of morality have been set up ; there has been such a resurrection of historical reputations for new judgment, and there have been so many discoveries, geographical, archæological, geological, biological, that the earth is not at all what it was supposed to be ; and our philosophers are much more anxious to ascertain where we came from than whither we are going. In this whirl and turmoil of new ideas, nature, which has only the single end of maintaining the physical identity in the body, works on undisturbed, replacing particle for particle, and preserving the likeness more skillfully than a mosaic artist in the Vatican ; she has not even her materials sorted and labeled, as the Roman artist has his thousands of bits of color ; and man is all the while doing his best to confuse the process, by changing his climate, his diet, all his surroundings, without the least care to remain himself. But the mind ?

It is more difficult to get acquainted with Herbert than with an entire stranger, for I have my prepossessions about him, and do not find him in so many places where I expect to find him. He is full of criticism of the authors I admire ; he thinks stupid or improper the books I most read ; he is skeptical about the “ movements ” I am interested in ; he has

formed very different opinions from mine concerning a hundred men and women of the present day ; we used to eat from one dish ; we could n't now find anything in common in a dozen ; his prejudices (as we call our opinions) are most extraordinary, and not half so reasonable as my prejudices ; there are a great many persons and things that I am accustomed to denounce, uncontradicted by anybody, which he defends ; his public opinion is not at all my public opinion. I am sorry for him. He appears to have fallen into influences and among a set of people foreign to me. I find that his church has a different steeple on it from my church (which, to say the truth, has n't any). It is a pity that such a dear friend and a man of so much promise should have drifted off into such general contrariness. I see Herbert sitting here by the fire, with the old look in his face coming out more and more, but I do not recognize any features of his mind, — except perhaps his contrariness ; yes, he was always a little contrary, I think. And finally he surprises me with, “ Well, my friend, you seem to have drifted away from your old notions and opinions. We used to agree when we were together, but I sometimes wondered where you would land ; for, pardon me, you showed signs of looking at things a little contrary.”

I am silent for a good while. I am trying to think who I am. There was a person whom I thought I knew, very fond of Herbert, and agreeing with him in most things. Where has he gone ? and, if he is here, where is the Herbert that I knew ?

If his intellectual and moral sympathies have all

changed, I wonder if his physical tastes remain, like his appearance, the same. There has come over this country within the last generation, as everybody knows, a great wave of condemnation of pie. It has taken the character of a "movement," though we have had no conventions about it, nor is any one, of any of the several sexes among us, running for president against it. It is safe almost anywhere to denounce pie, yet nearly everybody eats it on occasion. A great many people think it savors of a life abroad to speak with horror of pie, although they were very likely the foremost of the Americans in Paris who used to speak with more enthusiasm of the American pie at Madame Busque's than of the Venus of Milo. To talk against pie and still eat it is snobbish, of course; but snobbery, being an aspiring failing, is sometimes the prophecy of better things. To affect dislike of pie is something. We have no statistics on the subject, and cannot tell whether it is gaining or losing in the country at large. Its disappearance in select circles is no test. The amount of writing against it is no more test of its desuetude, than the number of religious tracts distributed in a given district is a criterion of its piety. We are apt to assume that certain regions are substantially free of it. Herbert and I, traveling north one summer, fancied that we could draw in New England a sort of diet line, like the sweeping curves on the isothermal charts, which should show at least the leading pie sections. Journeying towards the White Mountains, we concluded that a line passing through Bellows Falls, and bending a little south on either side, would

mark northward the region of perpetual pie. In this region pie is to be found at all hours and seasons, and at every meal. I am not sure, however, that pie is not a matter of altitude rather than latitude, as I find that all the hill and country towns of New England are full of those excellent women, the very salt of the housekeeping earth, who would feel ready to sink in mortification through their scoured kitchen floors, if visitors should catch them without a pie in the house. The absence of pie would be more noticed than a scarcity of Bible even. Without it the housekeepers are as distracted as the boarding-house keeper, who declared that if it were not for canned tomato, she should have nothing to fly to. Well, in all this great agitation I find Herbert unmoved, a conservative, even to the under-crust. I dare not ask him if he eats pie at breakfast. There are some tests that the dearest friendship may not apply.

“Will you smoke?” I ask.

“No, I have reformed.”

“Yes, of course.”

“The fact is, that when we consider the correlation of forces, the apparent sympathy of spirit manifestations with electric conditions, the almost revealed mysteries of what may be called the odic force, and the relation of all these phenomena to the nervous system in man, it is not safe to do anything to the nervous system that will” —

“Hang the nervous system! Herbert, we can agree in one thing: old memories, reveries, friendships, center about that: — is n't an open wood-fire good?”

“Yes,” says Herbert, combatively, “if you don’t sit before it too long.”

III

THE best talk is that which escapes up the open chimney and cannot be repeated. The finest woods make the best fire and pass away with the least residuum. I hope the next generation will not accept the reports of “interviews” as specimens of the conversations of these years of grace.

But do we talk as well as our fathers and mothers did? We hear wonderful stories of the bright generation that sat about the wide fireplaces of New England. Good talk has so much short-hand that it cannot be reported, — the inflection, the change of voice, the shrug, cannot be caught on paper. The best of it is when the subject unexpectedly goes cross-lots, by a flash of short-cut, to a conclusion so suddenly revealed that it has the effect of wit. It needs the highest culture and the finest breeding to prevent the conversation from running into mere persiflage on the one hand — its common fate — or monologue on the other. Our conversation is largely chaff. I am not sure but the former generation preached a good deal, but it had great practice in fireside talk, and must have talked well. There were narrators in those days who could charm a circle all the evening long with stories. When each day brought comparatively little new to read, there was leisure for talk, and the rare book and the infrequent magazine were

thoroughly discussed. Families now are swamped by the printed matter that comes daily upon the center-table. There must be a division of labor, one reading this, and another that, to make any impression on it. The telegraph brings the only common food, and works this daily miracle, that every mind in Christendom is excited by one topic simultaneously with every other mind; it enables a concurrent mental action, a burst of sympathy, or a universal prayer to be made, which must be, if we have any faith in the immaterial left, one of the chief forces in modern life. It is fit that an agent so subtle as electricity should be the minister of it.

When there is so much to read, there is little time for conversation; nor is there leisure for another pastime of the ancient firesides, called reading aloud. The listeners, who heard while they looked into the wide chimney-place, saw there pass in stately procession the events and the grand persons of history, were kindled with the delights of travel, touched by the romance of true love, or made restless by tales of adventure; — the hearth became a sort of magic stone that could transport those who sat by it to the most distant places and times, as soon as the book was opened and the reader began, of a winter's night. Perhaps the Puritan reader read through his nose, and all the little Puritans made the most dreadful nasal inquiries as the entertainment went on. The prominent nose of the intellectual New-Englander is evidence of the constant linguistic exercise of the organ for generations. It grew by talking through. But I have no doubt that practice made good read-

ers in those days. Good reading aloud is almost a lost accomplishment now. It is little thought of in the schools. It is disused at home. It is rare to find any one who can read, even from the newspaper, well. Reading is so universal, even with the uncultivated, that it is common to hear people mispronounce words that you did not suppose they had ever seen. In reading to themselves they glide over these words, in reading aloud they stumble over them. Besides, our every-day books and newspapers are so larded with French that the ordinary reader is obliged *marcher à pas de loup*, — for instance.

The newspaper is probably responsible for making current many words with which the general reader is familiar, but which he rises to in the flow of conversation, and strikes at with a splash and an unsuccessful attempt at appropriation; the word, which he perfectly knows, hooks him in the gills, and he cannot master it. The newspaper is thus widening the language in use, and vastly increasing the number of words which enter into common talk. The Americans of the lowest intellectual class probably use more words to express their ideas than the similar class of any other people; but this prodigality is partially balanced by the parsimony of words in some higher regions, in which a few phrases of current slang are made to do the whole duty of exchange of ideas; if that can be called exchange of ideas when one intellect flashes forth to another the remark, concerning some report, that "you know how it is yourself," and is met by the response of "that's what's the

matter," and rejoins with the perfectly conclusive "that's so." It requires a high degree of culture to use slang with elegance and effect; and we are yet very far from the Greek attainment.

IV

THE fireplace wants to be all aglow, the wind rising, the night heavy and black above, but light with sifting snow on the earth, — a background of inclemency for the illumined room with its pictured walls, tables heaped with books, capacious easy-chairs and their occupants, — it needs, I say, to glow and throw its rays far through the crystal of the broad windows, in order that we may rightly appreciate the relation of the wide-jambed chimney to domestic architecture in our climate. We fell to talking about it; and, as is usual when the conversation is professedly on one subject, we wandered all around it. The young lady staying with us was roasting chestnuts in the ashes, and the frequent explosions required considerable attention. The mistress, too, sat somewhat alert, ready to rise at any instant and minister to the fancied want of this or that guest, forgetting the reposeful truth that people about a fireside will not have any wants if they are not suggested. The worst of them, if they desire anything, only want something hot, and that later in the evening. And it is an open question whether you ought to associate with people who want that.

I was saying that nothing had been so slow in its

progress in the world as domestic architecture. Temples, palaces, bridges, aqueducts, cathedrals, towers of marvelous delicacy and strength, grew to perfection while the common people lived in hovels, and the richest lodged in the most gloomy and contracted quarters. The dwelling-house is a modern institution. It is a curious fact that it has only improved with the social elevation of women. Men were never more brilliant in arms and letters than in the age of Elizabeth, and yet they had no homes. They made themselves thick-walled castles, with slits in the masonry for windows, for defense, and magnificent banquet-halls for pleasure; the stone rooms into which they crawled for the night were often little better than dog-kennels. The Pompeians had no comfortable night-quarters. The most singular thing to me, however, is that, especially interested as woman is in the house, she has never done anything for architecture. And yet woman is reputed to be an ingenious creature.

HERBERT. I doubt if woman has real ingenuity; she has great adaptability. I don't say that she will do the same thing twice alike, like a Chinaman, but she is most cunning in suiting herself to circumstances.

THE FIRE-TENDER. Oh, if you speak of constructive, creative ingenuity, perhaps not; but in the higher ranges of achievement — that of accomplishing any purpose dear to her heart, for instance — her ingenuity is simply incomprehensible to me.

HERBERT. Yes, if you mean doing things by indirection.

THE MISTRESS. When you men assume all the direction, what else is left to us?

THE FIRE-TENDER. Did you ever see a woman refurnish a house?

THE YOUNG LADY STAYING WITH US. I never saw a man do it, unless he was burned out of his rookery.

HERBERT. There is no comfort in new things.

THE FIRE-TENDER (not noticing the interruption). Having set her mind on a total revolution of the house, she buys one new thing, not too obtrusive, nor much out of harmony with the old. The husband scarcely notices it, least of all does he suspect the revolution, which she already has accomplished. Next, some article that does look a little shabby beside the new piece of furniture is sent to the garret, and its place is supplied by something that will match in color and effect. Even the man can see that it ought to match, and so the process goes on, it may be for years, it may be forever, until nothing of the old is left, and the house is transformed as it was predetermined in the woman's mind. I doubt if the man ever understands how or when it was done; his wife certainly never says anything about the refurnishing, but quietly goes on to new conquests.

THE MISTRESS. And is n't it better to buy little by little, enjoying every new object as you get it, and assimilating each article to your household life, and making the home a harmonious expression of your own taste, rather than to order things in sets, and turn your house, for the time being, into a furniture ware-room?

THE FIRE-TENDER. Oh, I only spoke of the ingenuity of it.

THE YOUNG LADY. For my part, I never can get acquainted with more than one piece of furniture at a time.

HERBERT. I suppose women are our superiors in artistic taste, and I fancy that I can tell whether a house is furnished by a woman or a man; of course, I mean the few houses that appear to be the result of individual taste and refinement, — most of them look as if they had been furnished on contract by the upholsterer.

THE MISTRESS. Woman's province in this world is putting things to rights.

HERBERT. With a vengeance, sometimes. In the study, for example. My chief objection to woman is that she has no respect for the newspaper, or the printed page, as such. She is Siva, the destroyer. I have noticed that a great part of a married man's time at home is spent in trying to find the things he has put on his study-table.

THE YOUNG LADY. Herbert speaks with the bitterness of a bachelor shut out of paradise. It is my experience that if women did not destroy the rubbish that men bring into the house, it would become uninhabitable, and need to be burned down every five years.

THE FIRE-TENDER. I confess women do a great deal for the appearance of things. When the mistress is absent, this room, although everything is here as it was before, does not look at all like the same place; it is stiff, and seems to lack a soul.

When she returns, I can see that her eye, even while greeting me, takes in the situation at a glance. While she is talking of the journey, and before she has removed her traveling-hat, she turns this chair and moves that, sets one piece of furniture at a different angle, rapidly, and apparently unconsciously, shifts a dozen little knick-knacks and bits of color, and the room is transformed. I could n't do it in a week.

THE MISTRESS. That is the first time I ever knew a man admit he could n't do anything if he had time.

HERBERT. Yet with all their peculiar instinct for making a home, women make themselves very little felt in our domestic architecture.

THE MISTRESS. Men build most of the houses in what might be called the ready-made-clothing style, and we have to do the best we can with them; and hard enough it is to make cheerful homes in most of them. You will see something different when the woman is constantly consulted in the plan of the house.

HERBERT. We might see more difference if women would give any attention to architecture. Why are there no women architects?

THE FIRE-TENDER. Want of the ballot, doubtless. It seems to me that here is a splendid opportunity for woman to come to the front.

THE YOUNG LADY. They have no desire to come to the front; they would rather manage things where they are.

THE FIRE-TENDER. If they would master the

noble art, and put their brooding taste upon it, we might very likely compass something in our domestic architecture that we have not yet attained. The outside of our houses needs attention as well as the inside. Most of them are as ugly as money can build.

THE YOUNG LADY. What vexes me most is, that women, married women, have so easily consented to give up open fires in their houses.

HERBERT. They dislike the dust and the bother. I think that women rather like the confined furnace heat.

THE FIRE-TENDER. Nonsense; it is their angelic virtue of submission. We would n't be hired to stay all day in the houses we build.

THE YOUNG LADY. That has a very chivalrous sound, but I know there will be no reformation until women rebel and demand everywhere the open fire.

HERBERT. They are just now rebelling about something else; it seems to me yours is a sort of counter-movement, a fire in the rear.

THE MISTRESS. I'll join that movement. The time has come when woman must strike for her altars and her fires.

HERBERT. Hear, hear!

THE MISTRESS. Thank you, Herbert. I applauded you once, when you declaimed that years ago in the old Academy. I remember how eloquently you did it.

HERBERT. Yes, I was once a spouting idiot.

Just then the door-bell rang, and company came

in. And the company brought in a new atmosphere, as company always does, — something of the disturbance of out-doors, and a good deal of its healthy cheer. The direct news that the thermometer was approaching zero, with a hopeful prospect of going below it, increased to liveliness our satisfaction in the fire. When the cider was heated in the brown stone pitcher, there was difference of opinion whether there should be toast in it; some were for toast, because that was the old-fashioned way, and others were against it, “because it does not taste good” in cider. Herbert said there was very little respect left for our forefathers.

More wood was put on, and the flame danced in a hundred fantastic shapes. The snow had ceased to fall, and the moonlight lay in silvery patches among the trees in the ravine. The conversation became worldly.

THIRD STUDY

I

HERBERT said, as we sat by the fire one night, that he wished he had turned his attention to writing poetry like Tennyson's.

The remark was not whimsical, but satirical. Tennyson is a man of talent, who happened to strike a lucky vein, which he has worked with cleverness. The adventurer with a pick-axe in Washoe may happen upon like good fortune. The world is full of poetry as the earth is of "pay-dirt;" one only needs to know how to "strike" it. An able man can make himself almost anything that he will. It is melancholy to think how many epic poets have been lost in the tea-trade, how many dramatists (though the age of the drama has passed) have wasted their genius in great mercantile and mechanical enterprises. I know a man who might have been the poet, the essayist, perhaps the critic, of this country, who chose to become a country judge, to sit day after day upon a bench in an obscure corner of the world, listening to wrangling lawyers and prevaricating witnesses, preferring to judge his fellow-men rather than enlighten them.

It is fortunate for the vanity of the living and the reputation of the dead, that men get almost as much credit for what they do not as for what they do. It

was the opinion of many that Burns might have excelled as a statesman, or have been a great captain in war; and Mr. Carlyle says that if he had been sent to a university, and become a trained intellectual workman, it lay in him to have changed the whole course of British literature! A large undertaking, as so vigorous and dazzling a writer as Mr. Carlyle must know by this time, since British literature has swept by him in a resistless and widening flood, mainly uncontaminated, and leaving his grotesque contrivances wrecked on the shore with other curiosities of letters, and yet among the richest of all the treasures lying there.

It is a temptation to a temperate man to become a sot, to hear what talent, what versatility, what genius, is almost always attributed to a moderately bright man who is habitually drunk. Such a mechanic, such a mathematician, such a poet he would be, if he were only sober; and then he is sure to be the most generous, magnanimous, friendly soul, conscientiously honorable, if he were not so conscientiously drunk. I suppose it is now notorious that the most brilliant and promising men have been lost to the world in this way. It is sometimes almost painful to think what a surplus of talent and genius there would be in the world if the habit of intoxication should suddenly cease; and what a slim chance there would be for the plodding people who have always had tolerably good habits. The fear is only mitigated by the observation that the reputation of a person for great talent sometimes ceases with his reformation.

It is believed by some that the maidens who would make the best wives never marry, but remain free to bless the world with their impartial sweetness, and make it generally habitable. This is one of the mysteries of Providence and New England life. It seems a pity, at first sight, that all those who become poor wives have the matrimonial chance, and that they are deprived of the reputation of those who would be good wives were they not set apart for the high and perpetual office of priestesses of society. There is no beauty like that which was spoiled by an accident, no accomplishments and graces are so to be envied as those that circumstances rudely hindered the development of. All of which shows what a charitable and good-tempered world it is, notwithstanding its reputation for cynicism and detraction.

Nothing is more beautiful than the belief of the faithful wife that her husband has all the talents, and could, if he would, be distinguished in any walk in life; and nothing will be more beautiful—unless this is a very dry time for signs—than the husband's belief that his wife is capable of taking charge of any of the affairs of this confused planet. There is no woman but thinks that her husband, the green-grocer, could write poetry if he had given his mind to it, or else she thinks small beer of poetry in comparison with an occupation or accomplishment purely vegetable. It is touching to see the look of pride with which the wife turns to her husband from any more brilliant personal presence or display of wit than his, in the perfect confidence that if the world knew what she knows, there would be one more

popular idol. How she magnifies his small wit, and dotes upon the self-satisfied look in his face as if it were a sign of wisdom! What a councilor that man would make! What a warrior he would be! There are a great many corporals in their retired homes who did more for the safety and success of our armies in critical moments, in the late war, than any of the "high-cock-a-lorum" commanders. Mrs. Corporal does not envy the reputation of General Sheridan; she knows very well who really won Five Forks, for she has heard the story a hundred times, and will hear it a hundred times more with apparently unabated interest. What a general her husband would have made; and how his talking talent would shine in Congress!

HERBERT. Nonsense. There is n't a wife in the world who has not taken the exact measure of her husband, weighed him and settled him in her own mind, and knows him as well as if she had ordered him after designs and specifications of her own. That knowledge, however, she ordinarily keeps to herself, and she enters into a league with her husband, which he was never admitted to the secret of, to impose upon the world. In nine out of ten cases he more than half believes that he is what his wife tells him he is. At any rate, she manages him as easily as the keeper does the elephant, with only a bamboo wand and a sharp spike in the end. Usually she flatters him, but she has the means of pricking clear through his hide on occasion. It is the great secret of her power to have him think that she thoroughly believes in him.

THE YOUNG LADY STAYING WITH US. And you call this hypocrisy? I have heard authors, who thought themselves sly observers of women, call it so.

HERBERT. Nothing of the sort. It is the basis on which society rests, the conventional agreement. If society is about to be overturned, it is on this point. Women are beginning to tell men what they really think of them; and to insist that the same relations of downright sincerity and independence that exist between men shall exist between women and men. Absolute truth between souls, without regard to sex, has always been the ideal life of the poets.

THE MISTRESS. Yes; but there was never a poet yet who would bear to have his wife say exactly what she thought of his poetry, any more than he would keep his temper if his wife beat him at chess; and there is nothing that disgusts a man like getting beaten at chess by a woman.

HERBERT. Well, women know how to win by losing. I think that the reason why most women do not want to take the ballot and stand out in the open for a free trial of power, is that they are reluctant to change the certain domination of centuries, with weapons they are perfectly competent to handle, for an experiment. I think we should be better off if women were more transparent, and men were not so systematically puffed up by the subtle flattery which is used to control them.

MANDEVILLE. Deliver me from transparency. When a woman takes that guise, and begins to convince me that I can see through her like a ray of

light, I must run or be lost. Transparent women are the truly dangerous. There was one on ship-board [Mandeville likes to say that ; he has just returned from a little tour in Europe, and he quite often begins his remarks with " on the ship going over ;" the Young Lady declares that he has a sort of roll in his chair, when he says it, that makes her sea-sick] who was the most innocent, artless, guileless, natural bunch of lace and feathers you ever saw ; she was all candor and helplessness and dependence ; she sang like a nightingale, and talked like a nun. There never was such simplicity. There was n't a sounding-line on board that would have gone to the bottom of her soulful eyes. But she managed the captain and all the officers, and controlled the ship as if she had been the helm. All the passengers were waiting on her, fetching this and that for her comfort, inquiring of her health, talking about her genuineness, and exhibiting as much anxiety to get her ashore in safety, as if she had been about to knight them all and give them a castle apiece when they came to land.

THE MISTRESS. What harm? It shows what I have always said, that the service of a noble woman is the most ennobling influence for men.

MANDEVILLE. If she is noble, and not a mere manager. I watched this woman to see if she would ever do anything for any one else. She never did.

THE FIRE-TENDER. Did you ever see her again? I presume Mandeville has introduced her here for some purpose.

MANDEVILLE. No purpose. But we did see her on the Rhine ; she was the most disgusted traveler,

and seemed to be in very ill humor with her maid. I judged that her happiness depended upon establishing controlling relations with all about her. On this Rhine boat, to be sure, there was reason for disgust. And that reminds me of a remark that was made.

THE YOUNG LADY. Oh!

MANDEVILLE. When we got aboard at Mayence we were conscious of a dreadful odor somewhere; as it was a foggy morning, we could see no cause of it, but concluded it was from something on the wharf. The fog lifted, and we got under way, but the odor traveled with us, and increased. We went to every part of the vessel to avoid it, but in vain. It occasionally reached us in great waves of disagreeableness. We had heard of the odors of the towns on the Rhine, but we had no idea that the entire stream was infected. It was intolerable.

The day was lovely, and the passengers stood about on deck holding their noses and admiring the scenery. You might see a row of them leaning over the side, gazing up at some old ruin or ivied crag, entranced with the romance of the situation, and all holding their noses with thumb and finger. The sweet Rhine! By and by somebody discovered that the odor came from a pile of cheese on the forward deck, covered with a canvas; it seemed that the Rhinelanders are so fond of it that they take it with them when they travel. If there should ever be war between us and Germany, the borders of the Rhine would need no other defense from American soldiers than a barricade of this cheese. I went to the stern of the steamboat to tell a stout American traveler

what was the origin of the odor he had been trying to dodge all the morning. He looked more disgusted than before, when he heard that it was cheese; but his only reply was: "It must be a merciful God who can forgive a smell like that!"

II

THE above is introduced here in order to illustrate the usual effect of an anecdote on conversation. Commonly it kills it. That talk must be very well in hand, and under great headway, that an anecdote thrown in front of will not pitch off the track and wreck. And it makes little difference what the anecdote is; a poor one depresses the spirits, and casts a gloom over the company; a good one begets others, and the talkers go to telling stories; which is very good entertainment in moderation, but is not to be mistaken for that unwearying flow of argument, quaint remark, humorous color, and sprightly interchange of sentiments and opinions, called conversation.

The reader will perceive that all hope is gone here of deciding whether Herbert could have written Tennyson's poems, or whether Tennyson could have dug as much money out of the Heliogabalus Lode as Herbert did. The more one sees of life, I think the impression deepens that men, after all, play about the parts assigned them, according to their mental and moral gifts, which are limited and preordained, and that their entrances and exits are governed by a

law no less certain because it is hidden. Perhaps nobody ever accomplishes all that he feels lies in him to do ; but nearly every one who tries his powers touches the walls of his being occasionally, and learns about how far to attempt to spring. There are no impossibilities to youth and inexperience ; but when a person has tried several times to reach high C and been coughed down, he is quite content to go down among the chorus. It is only the fools who keep straining at high C all their lives.

Mandeville here began to say that that reminded him of something that happened when he was on the —

But Herbert cut in with the observation that no matter what a man's single and several capacities and talents might be, he is controlled by his own mysterious individuality, which is what metaphysicians call the substance, all else being the mere accidents of the man. And this is the reason that we cannot with any certainty tell what any person will do or amount to, for, while we know his talents and abilities, we do not know the resulting whole, which is he himself.

THE FIRE-TENDER. So if you could take all the first-class qualities that we admire in men and women, and put them together into one being, you would n't be sure of the result ?

HERBERT. Certainly not. You would probably have a monster. It takes a cook of long experience, with the best materials, to make a dish " taste good ; " and the " taste good " is the indefinable essence, the resulting balance or harmony which makes man

or woman agreeable or beautiful or effective in the world.

THE YOUNG LADY. That must be the reason why novelists fail so lamentably in almost all cases in creating good characters. They put in real traits, talents, dispositions, but the result of the synthesis is something that never was seen on earth before.

THE FIRE-TENDER. Oh, a good character in fiction is an inspiration. We admit this in poetry. It is as true of such creations as Colonel Newcome, and Ethel, and Beatrix Esmond. There is no patchwork about them.

THE YOUNG LADY. Why was n't Thackeray ever inspired to create a noble woman?

THE FIRE-TENDER. That is the standing conundrum with all the women. They will not accept Ethel Newcome even. Perhaps we shall have to admit that Thackeray was a writer for men.

HERBERT. Scott and the rest had drawn so many perfect women that Thackeray thought it was time for a real one.

THE MISTRESS. That's ill-natured. Thackeray did, however, make ladies. If he had depicted, with his searching pen, any of us just as we are, I doubt if we should have liked it much.

MANDEVILLE. That's just it. Thackeray never pretended to make ideals, and if the best novel is an idealization of human nature, then he was not the best novelist. When I was crossing the Channel —

THE MISTRESS. Oh dear, if we are to go to sea again, Mandeville, I move we have in the nuts and apples, and talk about our friends.

III

THERE is this advantage in getting back to a wood-fire on the hearth, that you return to a kind of simplicity; you can scarcely imagine any one being stiffly conventional in front of it. It thaws out formality, and puts the company who sit around it into easy attitudes of mind and body, — lounging attitudes, Herbert said.

And this brought up the subject of culture in America, especially as to manner. The backlog period having passed, we are beginning to have in society people of the cultured manner, as it is called, or polished bearing, in which the polish is the most noticeable thing about the man. Not the courtliness, the easy simplicity of the old-school gentleman, in whose presence the milkmaid was as much at her ease as the countess, but something far finer than this. These are the people of unruffled demeanor, who never forget it for a moment, and never let you forget it. Their presence is a constant rebuke to society. They are never "jolly;" their laugh is never anything more than a well-bred smile; they are never betrayed into any enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is a sign of inexperience, of ignorance, of want of culture. They never lose themselves in any cause; they never heartily praise any man or woman or book; they are superior to all tides of feeling and all outbursts of passion. They are not even shocked at vulgarity. They are simply indifferent. They are calm, visibly calm, painfully calm; and it is not the

eternal, majestic calmness of the Sphinx either, but a rigid, self-conscious repression. You would like to put a bent pin in their chair when they are about calmly to sit down.

A sitting hen on her nest is calm, but hopeful; she has faith that her eggs are not china. These people appear to be sitting on china eggs. Perfect culture has refined all blood, warmth, flavor, out of them. We admire them without envy. They are too beautiful in their manners to be either pigs or snobs. They are at once our models and our despair. They are properly careful of themselves as models, for they know that if they should break, society would become a scene of mere animal confusion.

MANDEVILLE. I think that the best-bred people in the world are the English.

THE YOUNG LADY. You mean at home.

MANDEVILLE. That's where I saw them.¹ There is no nonsense about a cultivated English man or woman. They express themselves sturdily and naturally, and with no subservience to the opinions of others. There's a sort of hearty sincerity about them that I like. Ages of culture on the island have gone deeper than the surface, and they have simpler and more natural manners than we. There is something good in the full, round tones of their voices.

HERBERT. Did you ever get into a diligence with a growling Englishman who had n't secured the place he wanted?

¹ Mandeville once spent a week in London, riding about on the tops of omnibuses.

THE MISTRESS. Did you ever see an English exquisite at the San Carlo, and hear him cry "Bwavo"?

MANDEVILLE. At any rate, he acted out his nature, and was n't afraid to.

THE FIRE-TENDER. I think Mandeville is right, for once. The men of the best culture in England, in the middle and higher social classes, are what you would call good fellows, — easy and simple in manner, enthusiastic on occasion, and decidedly not cultivated into the smooth calmness of indifference which some Americans seem to regard as the *sine qua non* of good breeding. Their position is so assured that they do not need that lacquer of calmness of which we were speaking.

THE YOUNG LADY. Which is different from the manner acquired by those who live a great deal in American hotels?

THE MISTRESS. Or the Washington manner?

HERBERT. The last two are the same.

THE FIRE-TENDER. Not exactly. You think you can always tell if a man has learned his society carriage of a dancing-master. Well, you cannot always tell by a person's manner whether he is a *habitué* of hotels or of Washington. But these are distinct from the perfect polish and politeness of indifferentism.

IV

DAYLIGHT disenchants. It draws one from the fire-side, and dissipates the idle illusions of conversation, except under certain conditions. Let us say that the

conditions are: a house in the country, with some forest trees near, and a few evergreens, which are Christmas-trees all winter long, fringed with snow, glistening with ice-pendants, cheerful by day and grotesque by night; a snow-storm beginning out of a dark sky, falling in a soft profusion that fills all the air, its dazzling whiteness making a light near at hand, which is quite lost in the distant darkling spaces.

If one begins to watch the swirling flakes and crystals, he soon gets an impression of infinity of resources that he can have from nothing else so powerfully, except it be from Adirondack gnats. Nothing makes one feel at home like a great snow-storm. Our intelligent cat will quit the fire and sit for hours in the low window, watching the falling snow with a serious and contented air. His thoughts are his own, but he is in accord with the subtlest agencies of Nature; on such a day he is charged with enough electricity to run a telegraphic battery, if it could be utilized. The connection between thought and electricity has not been exactly determined, but the cat is mentally very alert in certain conditions of the atmosphere. Feasting his eyes on the beautiful out-doors does not prevent his attention to the slightest noise in the wainscot. And the snow-storm brings content, but not stupidity, to all the rest of the household.

I can see Mandeville now, rising from his arm-chair and swinging his long arms as he strides to the window, and looks out and up, with, "Well, I declare!" Herbert is pretending to read Herbert Spencer's tract on the philosophy of style; but he loses much time in looking at the Young Lady, who

is writing a letter, holding her portfolio in her lap, — one of her everlasting letters to one of her fifty everlasting friends. She is one of the female patriots who save the post-office department from being a disastrous loss to the treasury. Herbert is thinking of the great radical difference in the two sexes, which legislation will probably never change; that leads a woman always to write letters on her lap and a man on a table, — a distinction which is commended to the notice of the anti-suffragists.

The Mistress, in a pretty little breakfast-cap, is moving about the room with a feather-duster, whisking invisible dust from the picture-frames, and talking with the Parson, who has just come in, and is thawing the snow from his boots on the hearth. The Parson says the thermometer is 15° , and going down; that there is a snowdrift across the main church entrance three feet high, and that the house looks as if it had gone into winter quarters, religion and all. There were only ten persons at the conference meeting last night, and seven of those were women; he wonders how many weather-proof Christians there are in the parish, anyhow.

The Fire-Tender is in the adjoining library, pretending to write; but it is a poor day for ideas. He has written his wife's name about eleven hundred times, and cannot get any farther. He hears the Mistress tell the Parson that she believes he is trying to write a lecture on the Celtic Influence in Literature. The Parson says that it is a first-rate subject, if there were any such influence, and asks why he does n't take a shovel and make a path to

the gate. Mandeville says that, by George! he himself should like no better fun, but it would n't look well for a visitor to do it. The Fire-Tender, not to be disturbed by this sort of chaff, keeps on writing his wife's name.

Then the Parson and the Mistress fall to talking about the soup-relief, and about old Mrs. Grumples in Pig Alley, who had a present of one of Stowe's Illustrated Self-Acting Bibles on Christmas, when she had n't coal enough in the house to heat her gruel; and about a family behind the church, a widow and six little children and three dogs; and he did n't believe that any of them had known what it was to be warm in three weeks, and as to food, the woman said, she could hardly beg cold victuals enough to keep the dogs alive.

The Mistress slipped out into the kitchen to fill a basket with provisions and send it somewhere; and when the Fire-Tender brought in a new forestick, Mandeville, who always wants to talk, and had been sitting drumming his feet and drawing deep sighs, attacked him.

MANDEVILLE. Speaking about culture and manners, did you ever notice how extremes meet, and that the savage bears himself very much like the sort of cultured persons we were talking of last night?

THE FIRE-TENDER. In what respect?

MANDEVILLE. Well, you take the North American Indian. He is never interested in anything, never surprised at anything. He has by nature that calmness and indifference which your people of culture have acquired. If he should go into literature

as a critic, he would scalp and tomahawk with the same emotionless composure, and he would do nothing else.

THE FIRE-TENDER. Then you think the red man is a born gentleman of the highest breeding?

MANDEVILLE. I think he is calm.

THE FIRE-TENDER. How is it about the war-path and all that?

MANDEVILLE. Oh, these studiously calm and cultured people may have malice underneath. It takes them to give the most effective "little digs;" they know how to stick in the pine-splinters and set fire to them.

HERBERT. But there is more in Mandeville's idea. You bring a red man into a picture-gallery, or a city full of fine architecture, or into a drawing-room crowded with objects of art and beauty, and he is apparently insensible to them all. Now I have seen country people,—and by country people I don't mean people necessarily who live in the country, for everything is mixed in these days,—some of the best people in the world, intelligent, honest, sincere, who acted as the Indian would.

THE MISTRESS. Herbert, if I did n't know you were cynical, I should say you were snobbish.

HERBERT. Such people think it a point of breeding never to speak of anything in your house, nor to appear to notice it, however beautiful it may be; even to slyly glance around strains their notion of etiquette. They are like the countryman who confessed afterwards that he could hardly keep from laughing at one of Yankee Hill's entertainments.

THE YOUNG LADY. Do you remember those English people at our house in Flushing last summer, who pleased us all so much with their apparent delight in everything that was artistic or tasteful, who explored the rooms and looked at everything, and were *so* interested? I suppose that Herbert's country relations, many of whom live in the city, would have thought it very ill-bred.

MANDEVILLE. It's just as I said. The English, the best of them, have become so civilized that they express themselves, in speech and action, naturally, and are not afraid of their emotions.

THE PARSON. I wish Mandeville would travel more, or that he had stayed at home. It's wonderful what a fit of Atlantic sea-sickness will do for a man's judgment and cultivation. He is prepared to pronounce on art, manners, all kinds of culture. There is more nonsense talked about culture than about anything else.

HERBERT. The Parson reminds me of an American country minister I once met walking through the Vatican. You could n't impose upon him with any rubbish; he tested everything by the standards of his native place, and there was little that could bear the test. He had the sly air of a man who could not be deceived, and he went about with his mouth in a pucker of incredulity. There is nothing so placid as rustic conceit. There was something very enjoyable about his calm superiority to all the treasures of art.

MANDEVILLE. And the Parson reminds *me* of another American minister, a consul in an Italian

city, who said he was going up to Rome to have a thorough talk with the Pope, and give him a piece of his mind. Ministers seem to think that is their business. They serve it in such small pieces in order to make it go round.

THE PARSON. Mandeville is an infidel. Come, let's have some music; nothing else will keep him in good humor till lunch-time.

THE MISTRESS. What shall it be?

THE PARSON. Give us the *largetto* from Beethoven's second symphony.

The Young Lady puts aside her portfolio. Herbert looks at the young lady. The Parson composes himself for critical purposes. Mandeville settles himself in a chair and stretches his long legs nearly into the fire, remarking that music takes the tangles out of him.

After the piece is finished, lunch is announced. It is still snowing.

FOURTH STUDY

IT is difficult to explain the attraction which the uncanny and even the horrible have for most minds. I have seen a delicate woman half fascinated, but wholly disgusted, by one of the most unseemly of reptiles, vulgarly known as the "blowing viper" of the Alleghanies. She would look at it, and turn away with irresistible shuddering and the utmost loathing, and yet turn to look at it again and again, only to experience the same spasm of disgust. In spite of her aversion, she must have relished the sort of electric mental shock that the sight gave her.

I can no more account for the fascination for us of the stories of ghosts and "appearances," and those weird tales in which the dead are the chief characters; nor tell why we should fall into converse about them when the winter evenings are far spent, the embers are glazing over on the hearth, and the listener begins to hear the eerie noises in the house. At such times one's dreams become of importance, and people like to tell them and dwell upon them, as if they were a link between the known and unknown, and could give us a clew to that ghostly region which in certain states of the mind we feel to be more real than that we see.

Recently, when we were, so to say, sitting around the borders of the supernatural late at night, MANDEVILLE related a dream of his which he assured us was

true in every particular, and it interested us so much that we asked him to write it out. In doing so he has curtailed it, and to my mind shorn it of some of its more vivid and picturesque features. He might have worked it up with more art, and given it a finish which the narration now lacks, but I think best to insert it in its simplicity. It seems to me that it may properly be called,

A NEW "VISION OF SIN "

IN the winter of 1850 I was a member of one of the leading colleges of this country. I was in moderate circumstances pecuniarily, though I was perhaps better furnished with less fleeting riches than many others. I was an incessant and indiscriminate reader of books. For the solid sciences I had no particular fancy, but with mental modes and habits, and especially with the eccentric and fantastic in the intellectual and spiritual operations, I was tolerably familiar. All the literature of the supernatural was as real to me as the laboratory of the chemist, where I saw the continual struggle of material substances to evolve themselves into more volatile, less palpable and coarse forms. My imagination, naturally vivid, stimulated by such repasts, nearly mastered me. At times I could scarcely tell where the material ceased and the immaterial began (if I may so express it); so that once and again I walked, as it seemed, from the solid earth onward upon an impalpable plain, where I heard the same voices, I think, that Joan of Arc heard call to her in the garden at Domremy

She was inspired, however, while I only lacked exercise. I do not mean this in any literal sense; I only describe a state of mind. I was at this time of spare habit, and nervous, excitable temperament. I was ambitious, proud, and extremely sensitive. I cannot deny that I had seen something of the world, and had contracted about the average bad habits of young men who have the sole care of themselves, and rather bungle the matter. It is necessary to this relation to admit that I had seen a trifle more of what is called life than a young man ought to see, but at this period I was not only sick of my experience, but my habits were as correct as those of any Pharisee in our college, and we had some very favorable specimens of that ancient sect.

Nor can I deny that at this period of my life I was in a peculiar mental condition. I well remember an illustration of it. I sat writing late one night, copying a prize essay, — a merely manual task, leaving my thoughts free. It was in June, a sultry night, and about midnight a wind arose, pouring in through the open windows, full of mournful reminiscence, not of this, but of other summers, — the same wind that De Quincey heard at noonday in midsummer blowing through the room where he stood, a mere boy, by the side of his dead sister, — a wind centuries old. As I wrote on mechanically, I became conscious of a *presence* in the room, though I did not lift my eyes from the paper on which I wrote. Gradually I came to know that my grandmother — dead so long ago that I laughed at the idea — was in the room. She stood beside her old-fashioned spinning-wheel, and

quite near me. She wore a plain muslin cap with a high puff in the crown, a short woolen gown, a white and blue checked apron, and shoes with heels. She did not regard me, but stood facing the wheel, with the left hand near the spindle, holding lightly between the thumb and forefinger the white roll of wool which was being spun and twisted on it. In her right hand she held a small stick. I heard the sharp click of this against the spokes of the wheel, then the hum of the wheel, the buzz of the spindles as the twisting yarn was teased by the whirl of its point, then a step backwards, a pause, a step forward and the running of the yarn upon the spindle, and again a backward step, the drawing out of the roll and the droning and hum of the wheel,—most mournful, hopeless sound that ever fell on mortal ear. Since childhood it has haunted me. All this time I wrote, and I could hear distinctly the scratching of the pen upon the paper. But she stood behind me (why I did not turn my head I never knew), pacing backward and forward by the spinning-wheel, just as I had a hundred times seen her in childhood in the old kitchen on drowsy summer afternoons. And I heard the step, the buzz and whirl of the spindle, and the monotonous and dreary hum of the mournful wheel. Whether her face was ashy pale and looked as if it might crumble at the touch, and the border of her white cap trembled in the June wind that blew, I cannot say, for I tell you I did not see her. But I *know* she was there, spinning yarn that had been knit into hose years and years ago by our fireside. For I was in full possession of my faculties, and never cop-

ied more neatly and legibly any manuscript than I did the one that night. And there the phantom (I use the word out of deference to a public prejudice on this subject) most persistently remained until my task was finished, and, closing the portfolio, I abruptly rose. Did I see anything? That is a silly and ignorant question. Could I see the wind which had now risen stronger, and drove a few cloud-scuds across the sky, filling the night, somehow, with a longing that was not altogether born of reminiscence?

In the winter following, in January, I made an effort to give up the use of tobacco, — a habit in which I was confirmed, and of which I have nothing more to say than this: that I should attribute to it almost all the sin and misery in the world, did I not remember that the old Romans attained a very considerable state of corruption without the assistance of the Virginia plant.

On the night of the third day of my abstinence, rendered more nervous and excitable than usual by the privation, I retired late, and later still I fell into an uneasy sleep, and thus into a dream, vivid, illuminated, more real than any event of my life. I was at home, and fell sick. The illness developed into a fever, and then a delirium set in, not an intellectual blank, but a misty and most delicious wandering in places of incomparable beauty. I learned subsequently that our regular physician was not certain to finish me, when a consultation was called, which did the business. I have the satisfaction of knowing that they were of the proper school. I lay sick for three days.

On the morning of the fourth, at sunrise, I died.

The sensation was not unpleasant. It was not a sudden shock. I passed out of my body as one would walk from the door of his house. There the body lay, — a blank, so far as I was concerned, and only interesting to me as I was rather entertained with watching the respect paid to it. My friends stood about the bedside, regarding *me* (as they seemed to suppose), while I, in a different part of the room, could hardly repress a smile at their mistake, solemnized as they were, and I too, for that matter, by my recent demise. A sensation (the word you see is material and inappropriate) of etherealization and imponderability pervaded me, and I was not sorry to get rid of such a dull, slow mass as I now perceived myself to be, lying there on the bed. — When I speak of my death, let me be understood to say that there was no change, except that I passed out of my body and floated to the top of a bookcase in the corner of the room, from which I looked down. For a moment I was interested to see my person from the outside, but thereafter I was quite indifferent to the body. I was now simply soul. I seemed to be a globe, impalpable, transparent, about six inches in diameter. I saw and heard everything as before. Of course, matter was no obstacle to me, and I went easily and quickly wherever I willed to go. There was none of that tedious process of communicating my wishes to the nerves, and from them to the muscles. I simply resolved to be at a particular place, and I was there. It was better than the telegraph.

It seemed to have been intimated to me at my death (birth I half incline to call it) that I could remain on this earth for four weeks after my decease, during which time I could amuse myself as I chose.

I chose, in the first place, to see myself decently buried, to stay by myself to the last, and attend my own funeral for once. As most of those referred to in this true narrative are still living, I am forbidden to indulge in personalities, nor shall I dare to say exactly how my death affected my friends, even the home circle. Whatever others did, I sat up with myself and kept awake. I saw the "pennies" used instead of the "quarters" which I should have preferred. I saw myself "laid out," a phrase that has come to have such a slang meaning that I smile as I write it. When the body was put into the coffin, I took my place on the lid.

I cannot recall all the details, and they are commonplace besides. The funeral took place at the church. We all rode thither in carriages, and I, not fancying my place in mine, rode on the outside with the undertaker, whom I found to be a good deal more jolly than he looked to be. The coffin was placed in front of the pulpit when we arrived. I took my station on the pulpit cushion, from which elevation I had an admirable view of all the ceremonies, and could hear the sermon. How distinctly I remember the services. I think I could even at this distance write out the sermon. The tune sung was of the usual country selection, — Mount Vernon. I recall the text. I was rather flattered by the tribute paid to me, and my future was spoken of gravely

and as kindly as possible,—indeed, with remarkable charity, considering that the minister was not aware of my presence. I used to beat him at chess, and I thought, even then, of the last game; for, however solemn the occasion might be to others, it was not so to me. With what interest I watched my kinsfolks and neighbors as they filed past for the last look! I saw, and I remember, who pulled a long face for the occasion and who exhibited genuine sadness. I learned with the most dreadful certainty what people really thought of me. It was a revelation never forgotten.

Several particular acquaintances of mine were talking on the steps as we passed out.

“Well, old Starr’s gone up. Sudden, was n’t it? He was a first-rate fellow.”

“Yes, queer about some things; but he had some mighty good streaks,” said another. And so they ran on.

Streaks! So that is the reputation one gets during twenty years of life in this world. Streaks!

After the funeral I rode home with the family. It was pleasanter than the ride down, though it seemed sad to my relations. They did not mention me, however, and I may remark, that although I stayed about home for a week, I never heard my name mentioned by any of the family. Arrived at home, the tea-kettle was put on and supper got ready. This seemed to lift the gloom a little, and under the influence of the tea they brightened up and gradually got more cheerful. They discussed the sermon and the singing, and the mistake of the sexton in digging

the grave in the wrong place, and the large congregation. From the mantel-piece I watched the group. They had waffles for supper, — of which I had been exceedingly fond, but now I saw them disappear without a sigh.

For the first day or two of my sojourn at home I was here and there at all the neighbors', and heard a good deal about my life and character, some of which was not very pleasant, but very wholesome, doubtless, for me to hear. At the expiration of a week this amusement ceased to be such, for I ceased to be talked of. I realized the fact that I was dead and gone.

By an act of volition I found myself back at college. I floated into my own room, which was empty. I went to the room of my two warmest friends, whose friendship I was and am yet assured of. As usual, half a dozen of our set were lounging there. A game of whist was just commencing. I perched on a bust of Dante on the top of the book-shelves, where I could see two of the hands and give a good guess at a third. My particular friend Timmins was just shuffling the cards.

“Be hanged if it is n't lonesome without old Starr. Did you cut? I should like to see him lounge in now with his pipe, and with feet on the mantel-piece proceed to expound on the duplex functions of the soul.”

“There — misdeal,” said his *vis-à-vis*. “Hope there's been no misdeal for old Starr.”

“Spades, did you say?” the talk ran on. “I never knew Starr was sickly.”

“No more was he; stouter than you are, and as brave and plucky as he was strong. By George, fellows, how we do get cut down! Last term little Stubbs, and now one of the best fellows in the class.”

“How suddenly he did pop off, — one for game, honors easy, — he was good for the Spouts’ Medal this year, too.”

“Remember the joke he played on Prof. A., freshman year?” asked another.

“Remember he borrowed ten dollars of me about that time,” said Timmins’s partner, gathering the cards for a new deal.

“Guess he is the only one who ever did,” retorted some one.

And so the talk went on, mingled with whist-talk, reminiscent of me, not all exactly what I would have chosen to go into my biography, but on the whole kind and tender, after the fashion of the boys. At least I was in their thoughts, and I could see was a good deal regretted, — so I passed a very pleasant evening. Most of those present were of my society, and wore crape on their badges, and all wore the usual crape on the left arm. I learned that the following afternoon a eulogy would be delivered on me in the chapel.

The eulogy was delivered before members of our society and others, the next afternoon, in the chapel. I need not say that I was present. Indeed, I was perched on the desk within reach of the speaker’s hand. The apotheosis was pronounced by my most intimate friend, Timmins, and I must say he did me

ample justice. He never was accustomed to "draw it very mild" (to use a vulgarism which I dislike) when he had his head, and on this occasion he entered into the matter with the zeal of a true friend, and a young man who never expected to have another occasion to sing a public "In Memoriam." It made my hair stand on end, — metaphorically, of course. From my childhood I had been extremely precocious. There were anecdotes of preternatural brightness, picked up, Heaven knows where, of my eagerness to learn, of my adventurous, chivalrous young soul, and of my arduous struggles with chill penury, which was not able (as it appeared) to repress my rage, until I entered this institution, of which I had been ornament, pride, cynosure, and fair promising bud blasted while yet its fragrance was mingled with the dew of its youth. Once launched upon my college days, Timmins went on with all sails spread. I had, as it were, to hold on to the pulpit cushion. Latin, Greek, the old literatures, I was perfect master of; all history was merely a light repast to me; mathematics I glanced at, and it disappeared; in the clouds of modern philosophy I was wrapped but not obscured; over the field of light literature I familiarly roamed as the honey-bee over the wide fields of clover which blossom white in the Junes of this world! My life was pure, my character spotless, my name was inscribed among the names of those deathless few who were not born to die!

It was a noble eulogy, and I felt before he finished, though I had misgivings at the beginning, that I deserved it all. The effect on the audience was

a little different. They said it was a "strong" oration, and I think Timmins got more credit by it than I did. After the performance they stood about the chapel, talking in a subdued tone, and seemed to be a good deal impressed by what they had heard, or perhaps by thoughts of the departed. At least they all soon went over to Austin's and called for beer. My particular friends called for it twice. Then they all lit pipes. The old grocery keeper was good enough to say that I was no fool, if I did go off owing him four dollars. To the credit of human nature, let me here record that the fellows were touched by this remark reflecting upon my memory, and immediately made up a purse and paid the bill, — that is, they told the old man to charge it over to them. College boys are rich in credit and the possibilities of life.

It is needless to dwell upon the days I passed at college during this probation. So far as I could see, everything went on as if I were there, or had never been there. I could not even see the place where I had dropped out of the ranks. Occasionally I heard my name, but I must say that four weeks was quite long enough to stay in a world that had pretty much forgotten me. There is no great satisfaction in being dragged up to light now and then, like an old letter. The case was somewhat different with the people with whom I had boarded. They were relations of mine, and I often saw them weep, and they talked of me a good deal at twilight and Sunday nights, especially the youngest one, Carrie, who was handsomer than any one I knew, and not much older than

I. I never used to imagine that she cared particularly for me, nor would she have done so, if I had lived, but death brought with it a sort of sentimental regret, which, with the help of a daguerreotype, she nursed into quite a little passion. I spent most of my time there, for it was more congenial than the college.

But time hastened. The last sand of probation leaked out of the glass. One day, while Carrie played (for me, though she knew it not) one of Mendelssohn's "songs without words," I suddenly, yet gently, without self-effort or volition, moved from the house, floated in the air, rose higher, higher, by an easy, delicious, exultant, yet inconceivably rapid motion. The ecstasy of that triumphant flight! Groves, trees, houses, the landscape, dimmed, faded, fled away beneath me. Upward mounting, as on angels' wings, with no effort, till the earth hung beneath me a round black ball swinging, remote, in the universal ether. Upward mounting, till the earth, no longer bathed in the sun's rays, went out to my sight, — disappeared in the blank. Constellations, before seen from afar, I sailed among. Stars, too remote for shining on earth, I neared, and found to be round globes flying through space with a velocity only equaled by my own. New worlds continually opened on my sight; new fields of everlasting space opened and closed behind me.

For days and days — it seemed a mortal forever — I mounted up the great heavens, whose everlasting doors swung wide. How the worlds and systems, stars, constellations, neared me, blazed and flashed

in splendor, and fled away ! At length, — was it not a thousand years ? — I saw before me, yet afar off, a wall, the rocky bourn of that country whence travelers come not back, a battlement wider than I could guess, the height of which I could not see, the depth of which was infinite. As I approached, it shone with a splendor never yet beheld on earth. Its solid substance was built of jewels the rarest, and stones of priceless value. It seemed like one solid stone, and yet all the colors of the rainbow were contained in it. The ruby, the diamond, the emerald, the carbuncle, the topaz, the amethyst, the sapphire ; of them the wall was built up in harmonious combination. So brilliant was it that all the space I floated in was full of the splendor. So mild was it and so translucent, that I could look for miles into its clear depths.

Rapidly nearing this heavenly battlement, an immense niche was disclosed in its solid face. The floor was one large ruby. Its sloping sides were of pearl. Before I was aware I stood within the brilliant recess. I say I stood there, for I was there bodily, in my habit as I lived ; how, I cannot explain. Was it the resurrection of the body ? Before me rose, a thousand feet in height, a wonderful gate of flashing diamond. Beside it sat a venerable man, with long white beard, a robe of light gray, ancient sandals, and a golden key hanging by a cord from his waist. In the serene beauty of his noble features I saw justice and mercy had met and were reconciled. I cannot describe the majesty of his bearing or the benignity of his appearance. It is needless to

say that I stood before St. Peter, who sits at the Celestial Gate.

I humbly approached, and begged admission. St. Peter arose, and regarded me kindly, yet inquiringly.

“What is your name?” asked he, “and from what place do you come?”

I answered, and, wishing to give a name well known, said I was from Washington, United States. He looked doubtful, as if he had never heard the name before.

“Give me,” said he, “a full account of your whole life.”

I felt instantaneously that there was no concealment possible; all disguise fell away, and an unknown power forced me to speak absolute and exact truth. I detailed the events of my life as well as I could, and the good man was not a little affected by the recital of my early trials, poverty, and temptation. It did not seem a very good life when spread out in that presence, and I trembled as I proceeded; but I plead youth, inexperience, and bad examples.

“Have you been accustomed,” he said, after a time, rather sadly, “to break the Sabbath?”

I told him frankly that I had been rather lax in that matter, especially at college. I often went to sleep in the chapel on Sunday, when I was not reading some entertaining book. He then asked who the preacher was, and when I told him, he remarked that I was not so much to blame as he had supposed.

“Have you,” he went on, “ever stolen, or told any lie?”

I was able to say no, except admitting as to the first, usual college "conveyances," and as to the last, an occasional "blinder" to the professors. He was gracious enough to say that these could be overlooked as incident to the occasion.

"Have you ever been dissipated, living riotously and keeping late hours?"

"Yes."

This also could be forgiven me as an incident of youth.

"Did you ever," he went on, "commit the crime of using intoxicating drinks as a beverage?"

I answered that I had never been a habitual drinker, that I had never been what was called a "moderate drinker," that I had never gone to a bar and drank alone; but that I had been accustomed, in company with other young men, on convivial occasions to taste the pleasures of the flowing bowl, sometimes to excess, but that I had also tasted the pains of it, and for months before my demise had refrained from liquor altogether. The holy man looked grave, but, after reflection, said this might also be overlooked in a young man.

"What," continued he, in tones still more serious, "has been your conduct with regard to the other sex?"

I fell upon my knees in a tremor of fear. I pulled from my bosom a little book like the one Leperello exhibits in the opera of "Don Giovanni." There, I said, was a record of my flirtation and inconstancy. I waited long for the decision, but it came in mercy.

"Rise," he cried; "young men will be young men, I suppose. We shall forgive this also to your youth and penitence."

"Your examination is satisfactory," he informed me, after a pause; "you can now enter the abodes of the happy."

Joy leaped within me. We approached the gate. The key turned in the lock. The gate swung noiselessly on its hinges a little open. Out flashed upon me unknown splendors. What I saw in that momentary gleam I shall never whisper in mortal ears. I stood upon the threshold, just about to enter.

"Stop! one moment," exclaimed St. Peter, laying his hand on my shoulder; "I have one more question to ask you."

I turned toward him.

"Young man, *did you ever use tobacco?*"

"I both smoked and chewed in my lifetime," I faltered, "but" —

"THEN TO HELL WITH YOU!" he shouted in a voice of thunder.

Instantly the gate closed without noise, and I was flung, hurled, from the battlement, down! down! down! Faster and faster I sank in a dizzy, sickening whirl into an unfathomable space of gloom. The light faded. Dampness and darkness were round about me. As before, for days and days I rose exultant in the light, so now forever I sank into thickening darkness, — and yet not darkness, but a pale, ashy light more fearful.

In the dimness, I at length discovered a wall before me. It ran up and down and on either hand

endlessly into the night. It was solid, black, terrible in its frowning massiveness.

Straightway I alighted at the gate,— a dismal crevice hewn into the dripping rock. The gate was wide open, and there sat — I knew him at once ; who does not? — the Arch Enemy of mankind. He cocked his eye at me in an impudent, low, familiar manner that disgusted me. I saw that I was not to be treated like a gentleman.

“Well, young man,” said he, rising, with a queer grin on his face, “what are you sent here for?”

“For using tobacco,” I replied.

“Ho!” shouted he in a jolly manner, peculiar to devils, “that’s what most of ’em are sent here for now.”

Without more ado, he called four lesser imps, who ushered me within. What a dreadful plain lay before me! There was a vast city laid out in regular streets, but there were no houses. Along the streets were places of torment and torture exceedingly ingenious and disagreeable. For miles and miles, it seemed, I followed my conductors through these horrors. Here was a deep vat of burning tar. Here were rows of fiery ovens. I noticed several immense caldron kettles of boiling oil, upon the rims of which little devils sat, with pitchforks in hand, and poked down the helpless victims who floundered in the liquid. But I forbear to go into unseemly details. The whole scene is as vivid in my mind as any earthly landscape.

After an hour’s walk my tormentors halted before the mouth of an oven, — a furnace heated seven

times, and now roaring with flames. They grasped me, one hold of each hand and foot. Standing before the blazing mouth, they, with a swing, and a "one, *two*, THREE" —

I again assure the reader that in this narrative I have set down nothing that was not actually dreamed, and much, very much of this wonderful vision I have been obliged to omit.

Hæc fabula docet: It is dangerous for a young man to leave off the use of tobacco.

FIFTH STUDY

I

I WISH I could fitly celebrate the joyousness of the New England winter. Perhaps I could if I more thoroughly believed in it. But skepticism comes in with the south wind. When that begins to blow, one feels the foundations of his belief breaking up. This is only another way of saying that it is more difficult, if it be not impossible, to freeze out orthodoxy, or any fixed notion, than it is to thaw it out; though it is a mere fancy to suppose that this is the reason why the martyrs, of all creeds, were burned at the stake. There is said to be a great relaxation in New England of the ancient strictness in the direction of toleration of opinion, called by some a lowering of the standard, and by others a raising of the banner of liberality; it might be an interesting inquiry how much this change is due to another change, — the softening of the New England winter and the shifting of the Gulf Stream. It is the fashion nowadays to refer almost everything to physical causes, and this hint is a gratuitous contribution to the science of metaphysical physics.

The hindrance to entering fully into the joyousness of a New England winter, except far inland among the mountains, is the south wind. It is a grateful wind, and has done more, I suspect, to de-

moralize society than any other. It is not necessary to remember that it filled the silken sails of Cleopatra's galley. It blows over New England every few days, and is in some portions of it the prevailing wind. That it brings the soft clouds, and sometimes continues long enough to almost deceive the expectant buds of the fruit trees, and to tempt the robin from the secluded evergreen copses, may be nothing ; but it takes the tone out of the mind, and engenders discontent, making one long for the tropics ; it feeds the weakened imagination on palm-leaves and the lotus. Before we know it we become demoralized, and shrink from the tonic of the sudden change to sharp weather, as the steamed hydropathic patient does from the plunge. It is the insidious temptation that assails us when we are braced up to profit by the invigorating rigor of winter.

Perhaps the influence of the four great winds on character is only a fancied one ; but it is evident on temperament, which is not altogether a matter of temperature, although the good old deacon used to say, in his humble, simple way, that his third wife was a very good woman, but her " temperature was very different from that of the other two." The north wind is full of courage, and puts the stamina of endurance into a man, and it probably would into a woman too if there were a series of resolutions passed to that effect. The west wind is hopeful ; it has promise and adventure in it, and is, except to Atlantic voyagers America-bound, the best wind that ever blew. The east wind is peevishness ; it is mental rheumatism and grumbling, and curls one up

in the chimney-corner like a cat. And if the chimney ever smokes, it smokes when the wind sits in that quarter. The south wind is full of longing and unrest, of effeminate suggestions of luxurious ease, and perhaps we might say of modern poetry, — at any rate, modern poetry needs a change of air. I am not sure but the south is the most powerful of the winds, because of its sweet persuasiveness. Nothing so stirs the blood in spring, when it comes up out of the tropical latitude ; it makes men “longen to gon on pilgrimages.”

I did intend to insert here a little poem (as it is quite proper to do in an essay) on the south wind, composed by the Young Lady Staying With Us, beginning, —

“ Out of a drifting southern cloud
My soul heard the night-bird cry,” —

but it never got any farther than this. The Young Lady said it was exceedingly difficult to write the next two lines, because not only rhyme but meaning had to be procured. And this is true ; anybody can write first lines, and that is probably the reason we have so many poems which seem to have been begun in just this way, that is, with a south-wind-longing without any thought in it, and it is very fortunate when there is not wind enough to finish them. This emotional poem, if I may so call it, was begun after Herbert went away. I liked it, and thought it was what is called “suggestive ;” although I did not understand it, especially what the night-bird was ; and I am afraid I hurt the Young Lady’s feelings by

asking her if she meant Herbert by the "night-bird," — a very absurd suggestion about two unsentimental people. She said, "Nonsense;" but she afterwards told the Mistress that there were emotions that one could never put into words without the danger of being ridiculous; a profound truth. And yet I should not like to say that there is not a tender lonesomeness in love that can get comfort out of a night-bird in a cloud, if there be such a thing. Analysis is the death of sentiment.

But to return to the winds. Certain people impress us as the winds do. Mandeville never comes in that I do not feel a north-wind vigor and healthfulness in his cordial, sincere, hearty manner, and in his wholesome way of looking at things. The Parson, you would say, was the east wind, and only his intimates know that his peevishness is only a querulous humor. In the fair west wind I know the Mistress herself, full of hope, and always the first one to discover a bit of blue in a cloudy sky. It would not be just to apply what I have said of the south wind to any of our visitors, but it did blow a little while Herbert was here.

II

IN point of pure enjoyment, with an intellectual sparkle in it, I suppose that no luxurious lounging on tropical isles set in tropical seas compares with the positive happiness one may have before a great wood-fire (not two sticks laid crossways in a grate), with a

veritable New England winter raging outside. In order to get the highest enjoyment, the faculties must be alert, and not be lulled into a mere recipient dullness. There are those who prefer a warm bath to a brisk walk in the inspiring air, where ten thousand keen influences minister to the sense of beauty and run along the excited nerves. There are, for instance, a sharpness of horizon outline and a delicacy of color on distant hills which are wanting in summer, and which convey to one rightly organized the keenest delight, and a refinement of enjoyment that is scarcely sensuous, not at all sentimental, and almost passing the intellectual line into the spiritual.

I was speaking to Mandeville about this, and he said that I was drawing it altogether too fine; that he experienced sensations of pleasure in being out in almost all weathers; that he rather liked to breast a north wind, and that there was a certain inspiration in sharp outlines and in a landscape in trim winter-quarters, with stripped trees, and, as it were, scudding through the season under bare poles; but that he must say that he preferred the weather in which he could sit on the fence by the wood-lot, with the spring sun on his back, and hear the stir of the leaves and the birds beginning their housekeeping.

A very pretty idea for Mandeville; and I fear he is getting to have private thoughts about the Young Lady. Mandeville naturally likes the robustness and sparkle of winter, and it has been a little suspicious to hear him express the hope that we shall have an early spring.

I wonder how many people there are in New Eng-

land who know the glory and inspiration of a winter walk just before sunset, and that, too, not only on days of clear sky, when the west is aflame with a rosy color, which has no suggestion of languor or unsatisfied longing in it, but on dull days, when the sullen clouds hang about the horizon, full of threats of storm and the terrors of the gathering night. We are very busy with our own affairs, but there is always something going on out-doors worth looking at; and there is seldom an hour before sunset that has not some special attraction. And, besides, it puts one in the mood for the cheer and comfort of the open fire at home.

Probably if the people of New England could have a plebiscitum on their weather, they would vote against it, especially against winter. Almost no one speaks well of winter. And this suggests the idea that most people here were either born in the wrong place, or do not know what is best for them. I doubt if these grumblers would be any better satisfied, or would turn out as well, in the tropics. Everybody knows our virtues, — at least if they believe half we tell them, — and for delicate beauty, that rare plant, I should look among the girls of the New England hills as confidently as anywhere, and I have traveled as far south as New Jersey, and west of the Genesee Valley. Indeed, it would be easy to show that the parents of the pretty girls in the West emigrated from New England. And yet—such is the mystery of Providence — no one would expect that one of the sweetest and most delicate flowers that blooms, the trailing arbutus, would blossom in this inhospita-

ble climate, and peep forth from the edge of a snow-bank at that.

It seems unaccountable to a superficial observer that the thousands of people who are dissatisfied with their climate do not seek a more congenial one — or stop grumbling. The world is so small, and all parts of it are so accessible, it has so many varieties of climate, that one could surely suit himself by searching; and, then, is it worth while to waste our one short life in the midst of unpleasant surroundings and in a constant friction with that which is disagreeable? One would suppose that people set down on this little globe would seek places on it most agreeable to themselves. It must be that they are much more content with the climate and country upon which they happen, by the accident of their birth, than they pretend to be.

III

HOME sympathies and charities are most active in the winter. Coming in from my late walk, — in fact driven in by a hurrying north wind that would brook no delay, — a wind that brought snow that did not seem to fall out of a bounteous sky, but to be blown from polar fields, — I find the Mistress returned from town, all in a glow of philanthropic excitement.

There has been a meeting of a woman's association for Ameliorating the Condition of somebody — here at home. Any one can belong to it by paying a dollar, and for twenty dollars one can become

a life Ameliorator, — a sort of life assurance. The Mistress, at the meeting, I believe, “seconded the motion” several times, and is one of the Vice-Presidents; and this family honor makes me feel almost as if I were a president of something myself. These little distinctions are among the sweetest things in life, and to see one’s name officially printed stimulates his charity, and is almost as satisfactory as being the chairman of a committee or the mover of a resolution. It is, I think, fortunate, and not at all discreditable, that our little vanity, which is reckoned among our weaknesses, is thus made to contribute to the activity of our nobler powers. Whatever we may say, we all of us like distinction; and probably there is no more subtle flattery than that conveyed in the whisper, “That’s he,” “That’s she.”

There used to be a society for ameliorating the condition of the Jews; but they were found to be so much more adept than other people in ameliorating their own condition that I suppose it was given up. Mandeville says that to his knowledge there are a great many people who get up ameliorating enterprises merely to be conspicuously busy in society, or to earn a little something in a good cause. They seem to think that the world owes them a living because they are philanthropists. In this Mandeville does not speak with his usual charity. It is evident that there are Jews, and some Gentiles, whose condition needs ameliorating, and if very little is really accomplished in the effort for them, it always remains true that the charitable reap a benefit to themselves. It is one of the beautiful compensations of

this life that no one can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.

OUR NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOR. Why is it that almost all philanthropists and reformers are disagreeable?

I ought to explain who our next-door neighbor is. He is the person who comes in without knocking, drops in in the most natural way, as his wife does also, and not seldom in time to take the after-dinner cup of tea before the fire. Formal society begins as soon as you lock your doors, and only admit visitors through the media of bells and servants. It is lucky for us that our next-door neighbor is honest.

THE PARSON. Why do you class reformers and philanthropists together? Those usually called reformers are not philanthropists at all. They are agitators. Finding the world disagreeable to themselves, they wish to make it as unpleasant to others as possible.

MANDEVILLE. That's a noble view of your fellow-men.

OUR NEXT DOOR. Well, granting the distinction, why are both apt to be unpleasant people to live with?

THE PARSON. As if the unpleasant people who won't mind their own business were confined to the classes you mention! Some of the best people I know are philanthropists, — I mean the genuine ones, and not the uneasy busybodies seeking notoriety as a means of living.

THE FIRE-TENDER. It is not altogether the not minding their own business. Nobody does that.

The usual explanation is, that people with one idea are tedious. But that is not all of it. For few persons have more than one idea, — ministers, doctors, lawyers, teachers, manufacturers, merchants, — they all think the world they live in is the central one.

MANDEVILLE. And you might add authors. To them nearly all the life of the world is in letters, and I suppose they would be astonished if they knew how little the thoughts of the majority of people are occupied with books, and with all that vast thought-circulation which is the vital current of the world to book-men. Newspapers have reached their present power by becoming unliterary, and reflecting all the interests of the world.

THE MISTRESS. I have noticed one thing, that the most popular persons in society are those who take the world as it is, find the least fault, and have no hobbies. They are always wanted to dinner.

THE YOUNG LADY. And the other kind always appear to me to want a dinner.

THE FIRE-TENDER. It seems to me that the real reason why reformers and some philanthropists are unpopular is, that they disturb our serenity and make us conscious of our own shortcomings. It is only now and then that a whole people get a spasm of reformatory fervor, of investigation and regeneration. At other times they rather hate those who disturb their quiet.

OUR NEXT DOOR. Professional reformers and philanthropists are insufferably conceited and intolerant.

THE MISTRESS. Everything depends upon the

spirit in which a reform or a scheme of philanthropy is conducted.

MANDEVILLE. I attended a protracted convention of reformers of a certain evil, once, and had the pleasure of taking dinner with a tableful of them. It was one of those country dinners accompanied with green tea. Every one disagreed with every one else, and you would n't wonder at it, if you had seen them. They were people with whom good food would n't agree. George Thompson was expected at the convention, and I remember that there was almost a cordiality in the talk about him, until one sallow brother casually mentioned that George took snuff, — when a chorus of deprecatory groans went up from the table. One long-faced maiden in spectacles, with purple ribbons in her hair, who drank five cups of tea by my count, declared that she was perfectly disgusted, and did n't want to hear him speak. In the course of the meal the talk ran upon the discipline of children, and how to administer punishment. I was quite taken by the remark of a thin, dyspeptic man who summed up the matter by growling out in a harsh, deep bass voice, "Punish 'em in love!" It sounded as if he had said, "Shoot 'em on the spot!"

THE PARSON. I supposed you would say that he was a minister. There is another thing about those people. I think they are working against the course of nature. Nature is entirely indifferent to any reform. She perpetuates a fault as persistently as a virtue. There's a split in my thumb-nail that has been scrupulously continued for many years, not-

withstanding all my efforts to make the nail resume its old regularity. You see the same thing in trees whose bark is cut, and in melons that have had only one summer's intimacy with squashes. The bad traits in character are passed down from generation to generation with as much care as the good ones. Nature, unaided, never reforms anything.

MANDEVILLE. Is that the essence of Calvinism?

THE PARSON. Calvinism has n't any essence, — it's a fact.

MANDEVILLE. When I was a boy, I always associated Calvinism and calomel together. I thought that homœopathy — *similia, etc.* — had done away with both of them.

OUR NEXT DOOR (*rising*). If you are going into theology, I'm off.

IV

I FEAR we are not getting on much with the joyousness of winter. In order to be exhilarating it must be real winter. I have noticed that the lower the thermometer sinks the more fiercely the north wind rages, and the deeper the snow is, the higher rise the spirits of the community. The activity of the "elements" has a great effect upon country folk especially; and it is a more wholesome excitement than that caused by a great conflagration. The abatement of a snow-storm that grows to exceptional magnitude is regretted, for there is always the half-hope that this will be, since it has gone so far, the largest fall of snow ever known in the region, burying out of

sight the great fall of 1808, the account of which is circumstantially and aggravatingly thrown in our way annually upon the least provocation. We all know how it reads: "Some said it began at daylight, others that it set in after sunrise; but all agree that by eight o'clock Friday morning it was snowing in heavy masses that darkened the air."

The morning after we settled the five — or is it seven? — points of Calvinism, there began a very hopeful snow-storm, one of those wide-sweeping, careering storms that may not much affect the city, but which strongly impress the country imagination with a sense of the personal qualities of the weather, — power, persistency, fierceness, and roaring exultation. Out-doors was terrible to those who looked out of windows, and heard the raging wind, and saw the commotion in all the high tree-tops and the writhing of the low evergreens, and could not summon resolution to go forth and breast and conquer the bluster. The sky was dark with snow, which was not permitted to fall peacefully like a blessed mantle, as it sometimes does, but was blown and rent and tossed like the split canvas of a ship in a gale. The world was taken possession of by the demons of the air, who had their will of it. There is a sort of fascination in such a scene, equal to that of a tempest at sea, and without its attendant haunting sense of peril; there is no fear that the house will founder or dash against your neighbor's cottage, which is dimly seen anchored across the field; at every thundering onset there is no fear that the cook's galley will upset, or the screw break loose

and smash through the side, and we are not in momentarily expectation of the tinkling of the little bell to "stop her." The snow rises in drifting waves, and the naked trees bend like strained masts; but so long as the window-blinds remain fast, and the chimney-tops do not go, we preserve an equal mind. Nothing more serious can happen than the failure of the butcher's and the grocer's carts, unless, indeed, the little news-carrier should fail to board us with the world's daily bulletin, or our next-door neighbor should be deterred from coming to sit by the blazing, excited fire, and interchange the trifling, harmless gossip of the day. The feeling of seclusion on such a day is sweet, but the true friend who does brave the storm and come is welcomed with a sort of enthusiasm that his arrival in pleasant weather would never excite. The snow-bound in their Arctic hulk are glad to see even a wandering Esquimau.

On such a day I recall the great snow-storms on the northern New England hills, which lasted for a week with no cessation, with no sunrise or sunset, and no observation at noon; and the sky all the while dark with the driving snow, and the whole world full of the noise of the rioting Boreal forces; until the roads were obliterated, the fences covered, and the snow was piled solidly above the first-story windows of the farmhouse on one side, and drifted before the front door so high that egress could only be had by tunneling the bank.

After such a battle and siege, when the wind fell and the sun struggled out again, the pallid world lay

subdued and tranquil, and the scattered dwellings were not unlike wrecks stranded by the tempest and half buried in sand. But when the blue sky again bent over all, the wide expanse of snow sparkled like diamond-fields, and the chimney signal-smokes could be seen, how beautiful was the picture! Then began the stir abroad, and the efforts to open up communication through roads, or fields, or wherever paths could be broken, and the ways to the meeting-house first of all. Then from every house and hamlet the men turned out with shovels, with the patient, lumbering oxen yoked to the sleds, to break the roads, driving into the deepest drifts, shoveling and shouting as if the severe labor were a holiday frolic, the courage and the hilarity rising with the difficulties encountered; and relief parties, meeting at length in the midst of the wide white desolation, hailed each other as chance explorers in new lands, and made the whole country-side ring with the noise of their congratulations. There was as much excitement and healthy stirring of the blood in it as in the Fourth of July, and perhaps as much patriotism. The boy saw it in dumb show from the distant, low farmhouse window, and wished he were a man. At night there were great stories of achievement told by the cavernous fireplace; great latitude was permitted in the estimation of the size of particular drifts, but never any agreement was reached as to the "depth on a level." I have observed since that people are quite as apt to agree upon the marvelous and the exceptional as upon simple facts.

V

By the firelight and the twilight, the Young Lady is finishing a letter to Herbert, — writing it, literally, on her knees, transforming thus the simple deed into an act of devotion. Mandeville says that it is bad for her eyes, but the sight of it is worse for his eyes. He begins to doubt the wisdom of reliance upon that worn apothegm about absence conquering love. Memory has the singular characteristic of recalling in a friend absent, as in a journey long past, only that which is agreeable. Mandeville begins to wish he were in New South Wales.

I did intend to insert here a letter of Herbert's to the Young Lady, — obtained, I need not say, honorably, as private letters which get into print always are, — not to gratify a vulgar curiosity, but to show how the most unsentimental and cynical people are affected by the master passion. But I cannot bring myself to do it. Even in the interests of science one has no right to make an autopsy of two loving hearts, especially when they are suffering under a late attack of the one agreeable epidemic. All the world loves a lover, but it laughs at him none the less in his extravagances. He loses his accustomed reticence; he has something of the martyr's willingness for publicity; he would even like to show the sincerity of his devotion by some piece of open heroism. Why should he conceal a discovery which has transformed the world to him, a secret which explains all the mysteries of nature and hu-

manity? He is in that ecstasy of mind which prompts those who were never orators before to rise in an experience-meeting and pour out a flood of feeling in the tritest language and the most conventional terms. I am not sure that Herbert, while in this glow, would be ashamed of his letter in print, but this is one of the cases where chancery would step in and protect one from himself by his next friend. This is really a delicate matter, and perhaps it is brutal to allude to it at all.

In truth, the letter would hardly be interesting in print. Love has a marvelous power of vivifying language and charging the simplest words with the most tender meaning, of restoring to them the power they had when first coined. They are words of fire to those two who know their secret, but not to others. It is generally admitted that the best love-letters would not make very good literature. "Dearest," begins Herbert, in a burst of originality, felicitously selecting a word whose exclusiveness shuts out all the world but one, and which is a whole letter, poem, confession, and creed in one breath. What a weight of meaning it has to carry! There may be beauty and wit and grace and naturalness and even the splendor of fortune elsewhere, but there is one woman in the world whose sweet presence would be compensation for the loss of all else. It is not to be reasoned about; he wants that one; it is her plume dancing down the sunny street that sets his heart beating; he knows her form among a thousand, and follows her; he longs to run after her carriage, which the cruel coachman whirls out of his sight. It is mar-

velous to him that all the world does not want her too, and he is in a panic when he thinks of it. And what exquisite flattery is in that little word addressed to her, and with what sweet and meek triumph she repeats it to herself, with a feeling that is not altogether pity for those who still stand and wait. To be chosen out of all the available world — it is almost as much bliss as it is to choose. “All that long, long stage-ride from Blim’s to Portage I thought of you every moment, and wondered what you were doing and how you were looking just that moment, and I found the occupation so charming that I was almost sorry when the journey was ended.” Not much in that! But I have no doubt the Young Lady read it over and over, and dwelt also upon every moment, and found in it new proof of unshaken constancy, and had in that and the like things in the letter a sense of the sweetest communion. There is nothing in this letter that we need dwell on it, but I am convinced that the mail does not carry any other letters so valuable as this sort.

I suppose that the appearance of Herbert in this new light unconsciously gave tone a little to the evening’s talk; not that anybody mentioned him, but Mandeville was evidently generalizing from the qualities that make one person admired by another to those that win the love of mankind.

MANDEVILLE. There seems to be something in some persons that wins them liking, special or general, independent almost of what they do or say.

THE MISTRESS. Why, everybody is liked by some one.

MANDEVILLE. I'm not sure of that. There are those who are friendless, and would be if they had endless acquaintances. But, to take the case away from ordinary examples, in which habit and a thousand circumstances influence liking, what is it that determines the world upon a personal regard for authors whom it has never seen?

THE FIRE-TENDER. Probably it is the spirit shown in their writings.

THE MISTRESS. More likely it is a sort of tradition; I don't believe that the world has a feeling of personal regard for any author who was not loved by those who knew him most intimately.

THE FIRE-TENDER. Which comes to the same thing. The qualities, the spirit, that got him the love of his acquaintances he put into his books.

MANDEVILLE. That does n't seem to me sufficient. Shakespeare has put everything into his plays and poems, swept the whole range of human sympathies and passions, and at times is inspired by the sweetest spirit that ever man had.

THE YOUNG LADY. No one has better interpreted love.

MANDEVILLE. Yet I apprehend that no person living has any personal regard for Shakespeare, or that his personality affects many, — except they stand in Stratford church and feel a sort of awe at the thought that the bones of the greatest poet are so near them.

THE PARSON. I don't think the world cares personally for any mere man or woman dead for centuries.

MANDEVILLE. But there is a difference. I think there is still rather a warm feeling for Socrates the man, independent of what he said, which is little known. Homer's works are certainly better known, but no one cares personally for Homer any more than for any other shade.

OUR NEXT DOOR. Why not go back to Moses? We've got the evening before us for digging up people.

MANDEVILLE. Moses is a very good illustration. No name of antiquity is better known, and yet I fancy he does not awaken the same kind of popular liking that Socrates does.

OUR NEXT DOOR. Fudge! You just get up in any lecture assembly and propose three cheers for Socrates, and see where you'll be. Mandeville ought to be a missionary, and read Robert Browning to the Fijis.

THE FIRE-TENDER. How do you account for the alleged personal regard for Socrates?

THE PARSON. Because the world called Christian is still more than half heathen.

MANDEVILLE. He was a plain man; his sympathies were with the people; he had what is roughly known as "horse-sense," and he was homely. Franklin and Abraham Lincoln belong to his class. They were all philosophers of the shrewd sort, and they all had humor. It was fortunate for Lincoln that, with his other qualities, he was homely. That was the last touching recommendation to the popular heart.

THE MISTRESS. Do you remember that ugly

brown-stone statue of St. Antonio by the bridge in Sorrento? He must have been a coarse saint, patron of pigs as he was, but I don't know any one anywhere, or the homely stone image of one, so loved by the people.

OUR NEXT DOOR. Ugliness being trump, I wonder more people don't win. Mandeville, why don't you get up a "centenary" of Socrates, and put up his statue in the Central Park? It would make that one of Lincoln in Union Square look beautiful.

THE PARSON. Oh, you 'll see that some day, when they have a museum there illustrating the "Science of Religion."

THE FIRE-TENDER. Doubtless, to go back to what we were talking of, the world has a fondness for some authors, and thinks of them with an affectionate and half-pitying familiarity; and it may be that this grows out of something in their lives quite as much as anything in their writings. There seems to be more disposition of personal liking to Thackeray than to Dickens, now both are dead, — a result that would hardly have been predicted when the world was crying over Little Nell, or agreeing to hate Becky Sharp.

THE YOUNG LADY. What was that you were telling about Charles Lamb, the other day, Mandeville? Is not the popular liking for him somewhat independent of his writings?

MANDEVILLE. He is a striking example of an author who is loved. Very likely the remembrance of his tribulations has still something to do with the tenderness felt for him. He supported no dignity,

and permitted a familiarity which indicated no self-appreciation of his real rank in the world of letters. I have heard that his acquaintances familiarly called him "Charley."

OUR NEXT DOOR. It's a relief to know that! Do you happen to know what Socrates was called?

MANDEVILLE. I have seen people who knew Lamb very well. One of them told me, as illustrating his want of dignity, that as he was going home late one night through the nearly empty streets, he was met by a roustering party who were making a night of it from tavern to tavern. They fell upon Lamb, attracted by his odd figure and hesitating manner, and, hoisting him on their shoulders, carried him off, singing as they went. Lamb enjoyed the lark, and did not tell them who he was. When they were tired of lugging him, they lifted him, with much effort and difficulty, to the top of a high wall, and left him there amid the broken bottles, utterly unable to get down. Lamb remained there philosophically in the enjoyment of his novel adventure, until a passing watchman rescued him from his ridiculous situation.

THE FIRE-TENDER. How did the story get out?

MANDEVILLE. Oh, Lamb told all about it next morning; and when asked afterwards why he did so, he replied that there was no fun in it unless he told it.

SIXTH STUDY

I

THE King sat in the winter-house in the ninth month, and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him. . . . When Jehudi had read three or four leaves he cut it with the penknife.

That seems to be a pleasant and home-like picture from a not very remote period, — less than twenty-five hundred years ago, and many centuries after the fall of Troy. And that was not so very long ago, for Thebes, in the splendid streets of which Homer wandered and sang to the kings when Memphis, whose ruins are older than history, was its younger rival, was twelve centuries old when Paris ran away with Helen.

I am sorry that the original — and you can usually do anything with the “original” — does not bear me out in saying that it was a pleasant picture. I should like to believe that Jehoiakim — for that was the singular name of the gentleman who sat by his hearthstone — had just received the Memphis “Palimpsest,” fifteen days in advance of the date of its publication, and that his secretary was reading to him that monthly, and cutting its leaves as he read. I should like to have seen it in that year when Thales was learning astronomy in Memphis, and Necho was

organizing his campaign against Carchemish. If Jehoiakim took the "Attic Quarterly," he might have read its comments on the banishment of the Alcmaeonidæ, and its gibes at Solon for his prohibitory laws, forbidding the sale of unguents, limiting the luxury of dress, and interfering with the sacred rights of mourners to passionately bewail the dead in the Asiatic manner; the same number being enriched with contributions from two rising poets,—a lyric of love by Sappho, and an ode sent by Anacreon from Teos, with an editorial note explaining that the *MAGA* was not responsible for the sentiments of the poem.

But, in fact, the gentleman who sat before the backlog in his winter-house had other things to think of. For Nebuchadnezzar was coming that way with the chariots and horses of Babylon and a great crowd of marauders; and the king had not even the poor choice whether he would be the vassal of the Chaldean or of the Egyptian. To us, this is only a ghostly show of monarchs and conquerors stalking across vast historic spaces. It was no doubt a vulgar enough scene of war and plunder. The great captains of that age went about to harry each other's territories and spoil each other's cities very much as we do nowadays, and for similar reasons;—Napoleon the Great in Moscow, Napoleon the Small in Italy, Kaiser William in Paris, Great Scott in Mexico! Men have not changed much.

—The Fire-Tender sat in his winter-garden in the third month; there was a fire on the hearth burning before him. He cut the leaves of "Scrib-

ner's Monthly " with his penknife, and thought of Jehoiakim.

That seems as real as the other. In the garden, which is a room of the house, the tall callas, rooted in the ground, stand about the fountain; the sun, streaming through the glass, illumines the many-hued flowers. I wonder what Jehoiakim did with the mealy-bug on his passion-vine, and if he had any way of removing the scale-bug from his African acacia? One would like to know, too, how he treated the red spider on the Le Marque rose. The record is silent. I do not doubt he had all these insects in his winter-garden, and the aphidæ besides; and he could not smoke them out with tobacco, for the world had not yet fallen into its second stage of the knowledge of good and evil by eating the forbidden tobacco-plant.

I confess that this little picture of a fire on the hearth so many centuries ago helps to make real and interesting to me that somewhat misty past. No doubt the lotus and the acanthus from the Nile grew in that winter-house, and perhaps Jehoiakim attempted — the most difficult thing in the world — the cultivation of the wild flowers from Lebanon. Perhaps Jehoiakim was interested also, as I am through this ancient fireplace, — which is a sort of domestic window into the ancient world, — in the loves of Bernice and Abaces at the court of the Pharaohs. I see that it is the same thing as the sentiment — perhaps it is the shrinking which every soul that is a soul has, sooner or later, from isolation — which grew up between Herbert and the Young Lady

Staying With Us. Jeremiah used to come in to *that* fireside very much as the Parson does to ours. The Parson, to be sure, never prophesies, but he grumbles, and is the chorus in the play that sings the everlasting *ai ai* of "I told you so!" Yet we like the Parson. He is the sprig of bitter herb that makes the pottage wholesome. I should rather, ten times over, dispense with the flatterers and the smoothsayers than the grumblers. But the grumblers are of two sorts, — the healthful-toned and the whiners. There are makers of beer who substitute for the clean bitter of the hops some deleterious drug, and then seek to hide the fraud by some cloying sweet. There is nothing of this sickish drug in the Parson's talk, nor was there in that of Jeremiah. I sometimes think there is scarcely enough of this wholesome tonic in modern society. The Parson says he never would give a child sugar-coated pills. Mandeville says he never would give them any. After all, you cannot help liking Mandeville.

II

WE were talking of this late news from Jerusalem. The Fire-Tender was saying that it is astonishing how much is telegraphed us from the East that is not half so interesting. He was at a loss philosophically to account for the fact that the world is so eager to know the news of yesterday which is unimportant, and so indifferent to that of the day before which is of some moment.

MANDEVILLE. I suspect that it arises from the want of imagination. People need to touch the facts, and nearness in time is contiguity. It would excite no interest to bulletin the last siege of Jerusalem in a village where the event was unknown, if the date was appended ; and yet the account of it is incomparably more exciting than that of the siege of Metz.

OUR NEXT DOOR. The daily news is a necessity. I cannot get along without my morning paper. The other morning I took it up, and was absorbed in the telegraphic columns for an hour nearly. I thoroughly enjoyed the feeling of immediate contact with all the world of yesterday, until I read among the minor items that Patrick Donahue, of the city of New York, died of a sunstroke. If he had frozen to death, I should have enjoyed that ; but to die of sunstroke in February seemed inappropriate, and I turned to the date of the paper. When I found it was printed in July, I need not say that I lost all interest in it, though why the trivialities and crimes and accidents, relating to people I never knew, were not as good six months after date as twelve hours, I cannot say.

THE FIRE-TENDER. You know that in Concord the latest news, except a remark or two by Thoreau or Emerson, is the Vedas. I believe the Rig-Veda is read at the breakfast-table instead of the Boston journals.

THE PARSON. I know it is read afterward instead of the Bible.

MANDEVILLE. That is only because it is supposed to be older. I have understood that the Bible is

very well spoken of there, but it is not antiquated enough to be an authority.

OUR NEXT DOOR. There was a project on foot to put it into the circulating library, but the title *New* in the second part was considered objectionable.

HERBERT. Well, I have a good deal of sympathy with Concord as to the news. We are fed on a daily diet of trivial events and gossip, of the unfruitful sayings of thoughtless men and women, until our mental digestion is seriously impaired; the day will come when no one will be able to sit down to a thoughtful, well-wrought book and assimilate its contents.

THE MISTRESS. I doubt if a daily newspaper is a necessity, in the higher sense of the word.

THE PARSON. Nobody supposes it is to women, — that is, if they can see each other.

THE MISTRESS. Don't interrupt, unless you have something to say; though I should like to know how much gossip there is afloat that the minister does not know. The newspaper may be needed in society, but how quickly it drops out of mind when one goes beyond the bounds of what is called civilization. You remember when we were in the depths of the woods last summer how difficult it was to get up any interest in the files of late papers that reached us, and how unreal all the struggle and turmoil of the world seemed. We stood apart, and could estimate things at their true value.

THE YOUNG LADY. Yes, that was real life. I never tired of the guide's stories; there was some interest in the intelligence that a deer had been down

to eat the lily-pads at the foot of the lake the night before; that a bear's track was seen on the trail we crossed that day; even Mandeville's fish-stories had a certain air of probability; and how to roast a trout in the ashes and serve him hot and juicy and clean, and how to cook soup and prepare coffee and heat dish-water in one tin-pail, were vital problems.

THE PARSON. You would have had no such problems at home. Why will people go so far to put themselves to such inconvenience? I hate the woods. Isolation breeds conceit; there are no people so conceited as those who dwell in remote wildernesses and live mostly alone.

THE YOUNG LADY. For my part, I feel humble in the presence of mountains, and in the vast stretches of the wilderness.

THE PARSON. I'll be bound a woman would feel just as nobody would expect her to feel, under given circumstances.

MANDEVILLE. I think the reason why the newspaper and the world it carries take no hold of us in the wilderness is that we become a kind of vegetable ourselves when we go there. I have often attempted to improve my mind in the woods with good solid books. You might as well offer a bunch of celery to an oyster. The mind goes to sleep: the senses and the instincts wake up. The best I can do when it rains, or the trout won't bite, is to read Dumas's novels. Their ingenuity will almost keep a man awake after supper, by the camp-fire. And there is a kind of unity about them that I like; the history is as good as the morality.

OUR NEXT DOOR. I always wondered where Mandeville got his historical facts.

THE MISTRESS. Mandeville misrepresents himself in the woods. I heard him one night repeat "The Vision of Sir Launfal" —

(THE FIRE-TENDER. Which comes very near being our best poem.)

— as we were crossing the lake, and the guides became so absorbed in it that they forgot to paddle, and sat listening with open mouths, as if it had been a panther story.

THE PARSON. Mandeville likes to show off well enough. I heard that he related to a woods' boy up there the whole of the Siege of Troy. The boy was very much interested, and said "there 'd been a man up there that spring from Troy, looking up timber." Mandeville always carries the news when he goes into the country.

MANDEVILLE. I'm going to take the Parson's sermon on Jonah next summer; it's the nearest to anything like news we've had from his pulpit in ten years. But, seriously, the boy was very well informed. He'd heard of Albany; his father took in the "Weekly Tribune," and he had a partial conception of Horace Greeley.

OUR NEXT DOOR. I never went so far out of the world in America yet that the name of Horace Greeley did n't rise up before me. One of the first questions asked by any camp-fire is, "Did ye ever see Horace?"

HERBERT. Which shows the power of the press again. But I have often remarked how little real con-

ception of the moving world, as it is, people in remote regions get from the newspaper. It needs to be read in the midst of events. A chip cast ashore in a reflux eddy tells no tale of the force and swiftness of the current.

OUR NEXT DOOR. I don't exactly get the drift of that last remark ; but I rather like a remark that I can't understand ; like the landlady's indigestible bread, it stays by you.

HERBERT. I see that I must talk in words of one syllable. The newspaper has little effect upon the remote country mind, because the remote country mind is interested in a very limited number of things. Besides, as the Parson says, it is conceited. The most accomplished scholar will be the butt of all the guides in the woods, because he cannot follow a trail that would puzzle a sable (sable the trappers call it).

THE PARSON. It's enough to read the summer letters that people write to the newspapers from the country and the woods. Isolated from the activity of the world, they come to think that the little adventures of their stupid days and nights are important. Talk about that being real life ! Compare the letters such people write with the other contents of the newspaper, and you will see which life is real. That's one reason I hate to have summer come, the country letters set in.

THE MISTRESS. I should like to see something the Parson does n't hate to have come.

MANDEVILLE. Except his quarter's salary ; and the meeting of the American Board.

THE FIRE-TENDER. I don't see that we are get-

ting any nearer the solution of the original question. The world is evidently interested in events simply because they are recent.

OUR NEXT DOOR. I have a theory that a newspaper might be published at little cost, merely by reprinting the numbers of years before, only altering the dates; just as the Parson preaches over his sermons.

THE FIRE-TENDER. It's evident we must have a higher order of news-gatherers. It has come to this, that the newspaper furnishes thought-material for all the world, actually prescribes from day to day the themes the world shall think on and talk about. The occupation of news-gathering becomes, therefore, the most important. When you think of it, it is astonishing that this department should not be in the hands of the ablest men, accomplished scholars, philosophical observers, discriminating selectors of the news of the world that is worth thinking over and talking about. The editorial comments frequently are able enough, but is it worth while keeping an expensive mill going to grind chaff? I sometimes wonder, as I open my morning paper, if nothing did happen in the twenty-four hours except crimes, accidents, defalcations, deaths of unknown loafers, robberies, monstrous births, — say about the level of police-court news.

OUR NEXT DOOR. I have even noticed that murders have deteriorated; they are not so high-toned and mysterious as they used to be.

THE FIRE-TENDER. It is true that the newspapers have improved vastly within the last decade.

HERBERT. I think, for one, that they are very much above the level of the ordinary gossip of the country.

THE FIRE-TENDER. But I am tired of having the under-world still occupy so much room in the newspapers. The reporters are rather more alert for a dog-fight than a philological convention. It must be that the good deeds of the world outnumber the bad in any given day ; and what a good reflex action it would have on society if they could be more fully reported than the bad ! I suppose the Parson would call this the Enthusiasm of Humanity.

THE PARSON. You'll see how far you can lift yourself up by your boot-straps.

HERBERT. I wonder what influence on the quality (I say nothing of quantity) of news the coming of women into the reporter's and editor's work will have.

OUR NEXT DOOR. There are the baby-shows ; they make cheerful reading.

THE MISTRESS. All of them got up by speculating men, who impose upon the vanity of weak women.

HERBERT. I think women reporters are more given to personal details and gossip than the men. When I read the Washington correspondence I am proud of my country, to see how many Apollo Belvederes, Adonises, how much marble brow and piercing eye and hyacinthine locks, we have in the two houses of Congress.

THE YOUNG LADY. That's simply because women understand the personal weakness of men ; they have a long score of personal flattery to pay off too.

MANDEVILLE. I think women will bring in elements of brightness, picturesqueness, and purity very much needed. Women have a power of investing simple ordinary things with a charm ; men are bungling narrators compared with them.

THE PARSON. The mistake they make is in trying to write, and especially to "stump-speak," like men ; next to an effeminate man there is nothing so disagreeable as a mannish woman.

HERBERT. I heard one once address a legislative committee. The knowing air, the familiar, jocular, smart manner, the nodding and winking innuendoes, supposed to be those of a man "up to snuff," and *au fait* in political wiles, were inexpressibly comical. And yet the exhibition was pathetic, for it had the suggestive vulgarity of a woman in man's clothes. The imitation is always a dreary failure.

THE MISTRESS. Such women are the rare exceptions. I am ready to defend my sex ; but I won't attempt to defend both sexes in one.

THE FIRE-TENDER. I have great hope that women will bring into the newspaper an elevating influence ; the common and sweet life of society is much better fitted to entertain and instruct us than the exceptional and extravagant. I confess (saving the Mistress's presence) that the evening talk over the dessert at dinner is much more entertaining and piquant than the morning paper, and often as important.

THE MISTRESS. I think the subject had better be changed.

MANDEVILLE. The person, not the subject. There

is no entertainment so full of quiet pleasure as the hearing a lady of cultivation and refinement relate her day's experience in her daily rounds of calls, charitable visits, shopping, errands of relief and condolence. The evening budget is better than the finance minister's.

OUR NEXT DOOR. That's even so. My wife will pick up more news in six hours than I can get in a week, and I'm fond of news.

MANDEVILLE. I don't mean gossip, by any means, or scandal. A woman of culture skims over that like a bird, never touching it with the tip of a wing. What she brings home is the freshness and brightness of life. She touches everything so daintily, she hits off a character in a sentence, she gives the pith of a dialogue without tediousness, she mimics without vulgarity; her narration sparkles, but it does not sting. The picture of her day is full of vivacity, and it gives new value and freshness to common things. If we could only have on the stage such actresses as we have in the drawing-room!

THE FIRE-TENDER. We want something more of this grace, sprightliness, and harmless play of the finer life of society in the newspaper.

OUR NEXT DOOR. I wonder Mandeville does not marry, and become a permanent subscriber to his embodied idea of a newspaper.

THE YOUNG LADY. Perhaps he does not relish the idea of being unable to stop his subscription.

OUR NEXT DOOR. Parson, won't you please punch that fire, and give us more blaze? we are getting into the darkness of socialism.

III

HERBERT returned to us in March. The Young Lady was spending the winter with us, and March, in spite of the calendar, turned out to be a winter month. It usually is in New England, and April too, for that matter. And I cannot say it is unfortunate for us. There are so many topics to be turned over and settled at our fireside that a winter of ordinary length would make little impression on the list. The fireside is, after all, a sort of private court of chancery, where nothing ever does come to a final decision. The chief effect of talk on any subject is to strengthen one's own opinions, and, in fact, one never knows exactly what he does believe until he is warmed into conviction by the heat of attack and defence. A man left to himself drifts about like a boat on a calm lake ; it is only when the wind blows that the boat goes anywhere.

Herbert said he had been dipping into the recent novels written by women, here and there, with a view to noting the effect upon literature of this sudden and rather overwhelming accession to it. There was a good deal of talk about it evening after evening, off and on, and I can only undertake to set down fragments of it.

HERBERT. I should say that the distinguishing feature of the literature of this day is the prominence women have in its production. They figure in most of the magazines, though very rarely in the scholarly and critical reviews, and in thousands of newspapers ;

to them we are indebted for the oceans of Sunday-school books, and they write the majority of the novels, the serial stories, and they mainly pour out the watery flood of tales in the weekly papers. Whether this is to result in more good than evil it is impossible yet to say, and perhaps it would be unjust to say, until this generation has worked off its froth, and women settle down to artistic, conscientious labor in literature.

THE MISTRESS. You don't mean to say that George Eliot, and Mrs. Gaskell, and George Sand, and Mrs. Browning, before her marriage and severe attack of spiritism, are less true to art than contemporary men novelists and poets.

HERBERT. You name some exceptions that show the bright side of the picture, not only for the present, but for the future. Perhaps genius has no sex; but ordinary talent has. I refer to the great body of novels, which you would know by internal evidence were written by women. They are of two sorts: the domestic story, entirely unidealized, and as flavorless as water-gruel; and the spiced novel, generally immoral in tendency, in which the social problems are handled, unhappy marriages, affinity and passionate attraction, bigamy, and the violation of the seventh commandment. These subjects are treated in the rawest manner, without any settled ethics, with little discrimination of eternal right and wrong, and with very little sense of responsibility for what is set forth. Many of these novels are merely the blind outbursts of a nature impatient of restraint and the conventionalities of society, and

are as chaotic as the untrained minds that produce them.

MANDEVILLE. Don't you think these novels fairly represent a social condition of unrest and upheaval?

HERBERT. Very likely ; and they help to create and spread abroad the discontent they describe. Stories of bigamy (sometimes disguised by divorce), of unhappy marriages, where the injured wife, through an entire volume, is on the brink of falling into the arms of a sneaking lover, until death kindly removes the obstacle, and the two souls, who were born for each other, but got separated in the cradle, melt and mingle into one in the last chapter, are not healthful reading for maids or mothers.

THE MISTRESS. Or men.

THE FIRE-TENDER. The most disagreeable object to me in modern literature is the man the women novelists have introduced as the leading character ; the women who come in contact with him seem to be fascinated by his disdainful mien, his giant strength, and his brutal manner. He is broad across the shoulders, heavily moulded, yet as lithe as a cat ; has an ugly scar across his right cheek ; has been in the four quarters of the globe ; knows seventeen languages ; had a harem in Turkey and a Fayaway in the Marquesas ; can be as polished as Bayard in the drawing-room, but is as gloomy as Conrad in the library ; has a terrible eye and a withering glance, but can be instantly subdued by a woman's hand, if it is not his wife's ; and through all his morose and vicious career has carried a heart as pure as a violet.

THE MISTRESS. Don't you think the Count of Monte Cristo is the elder brother of Rochester?

THE FIRE-TENDER. One is a mere hero of romance; the other is meant for a real man.

MANDEVILLE. I don't see that the men novel-writers are better than the women.

HERBERT. That's not the question; but what are women who write so large a proportion of the current stories bringing into literature? Aside from the question of morals, and the absolutely demoralizing manner of treating social questions, most of their stories are vapid and weak beyond expression, and are slovenly in composition, showing neither study, training, nor mental discipline.

THE MISTRESS. Considering that women have been shut out from the training of the universities, and have few opportunities for the wide observation that men enjoy, is n't it pretty well that the foremost living writers of fiction are women?

HERBERT. You can say that for the moment, since Thackeray and Dickens have just died. But it does not affect the general estimate. We are inundated with a flood of weak writing. Take the Sunday-school literature, largely the product of women; it has n't as much character as a dried apple pie. I don't know what we are coming to if the presses keep on running.

OUR NEXT DOOR. We are living, we are dwelling, in a grand and awful time; I'm glad I don't write novels.

THE PARSON. So am I.

OUR NEXT DOOR. I tried a Sunday-school book

once; but I made the good boy end in the poor-house, and the bad boy go to Congress; and the publisher said it would n't do, the public would n't stand that sort of thing. Nobody but the good go to Congress.

THE MISTRESS. Herbert, what do you think women *are* good for?

OUR NEXT DOOR. That's a poser.

HERBERT. Well, I think they are in a tentative state as to literature, and we cannot yet tell what they will do. Some of our most brilliant books of travel, correspondence, and writing on topics in which their sympathies have warmly interested them, are by women. Some of them are also strong writers in the daily journals.

MANDEVILLE. I'm not sure there's anything a woman cannot do as well as a man, if she sets her heart on it.

THE PARSON. That's because she's no conscience.

CHORUS. O Parson!

THE PARSON. Well, it does n't trouble her, if she wants to do anything. She looks at the end, not the means. A woman, set on anything, will walk right through the moral crockery without wincing. She'd be a great deal more unscrupulous in politics than the average man. Did you ever see a female lobbyist? Or a criminal? It is Lady Macbeth who does not falter. Don't raise your hands at me! The sweetest angel or the coolest devil is a woman. I see in some of the modern novels we have been talking of the same unscrupulous daring, a blindness to moral dis-

tinctions, a constant exaltation of a passion into a virtue, an entire disregard of the immutable laws on which the family and society rest. And you ask lawyers and trustees how scrupulous women are in business transactions!

THE FIRE-TENDER. Women are often ignorant of affairs, and, besides, they may have a notion often that a woman ought to be privileged more than a man in business matters; but I tell you, as a rule, that if men would consult their wives, they would go a deal straighter in business operations than they do go.

THE PARSON. We are all poor sinners. But I've another indictment against the women writers. We get no good old-fashioned love-stories from them. It's either a quarrel of discordant natures — one a panther, and the other a polar bear — for courtship, until one of them is crippled by a railway accident; or a long wrangle of married life between two unpleasant people, who can neither live comfortably together nor apart. I suppose, by what I see, that sweet wooing, with all its torturing and delightful uncertainty, still goes on in the world; and I have no doubt that the majority of married people live more happily than the unmarried. But it's easier to find a dodo than a new and good love-story.

MANDEVILLE. I suppose the old style of plot is exhausted. Everything in man and outside of him has been turned over so often that I should think the novelists would cease simply from want of material.

THE PARSON. Plots are no more exhausted than

men are. Every man is a new creation, and combinations are simply endless. Even if we did not have new material in the daily change of society, and there were only a fixed number of incidents and characters in life, invention could not be exhausted on them. I amuse myself sometimes with my kaleidoscope, but I can never reproduce a figure. No, no. I cannot say that you may not exhaust everything else : we may get all the secrets of a nature into a book by and by, but the novel is immortal, for it deals with men.

The Parson's vehemence came very near carrying him into a sermon ; and as nobody has the privilege of replying to his sermons, so none of the circle made any reply now.

Our Next Door mumbled something about his hair standing on end, to hear a minister defending the novel ; but it did not interrupt the general silence. Silence is unnoticed when people sit before a fire ; it would be intolerable if they sat and looked at each other.

The wind had risen during the evening, and Mandeville remarked, as they rose to go, that it had a spring sound in it, but it was as cold as winter. The Mistress said she heard a bird that morning singing in the sun ; it was a winter bird, but it sang a spring song.

SEVENTH STUDY

WE have been much interested in what is called the Gothic revival. We have spent I don't know how many evenings in looking over Herbert's plans for a cottage, and have been amused with his vain efforts to cover with Gothic roofs the vast number of large rooms which the Young Lady draws in her sketch of a small house.

I have no doubt that the Gothic, which is capable of infinite modification, so that every house built in that style may be as different from every other house as one tree is from every other, can be adapted to our modern uses, and will be, when artists catch its spirit instead of merely copying its old forms. But just now we are taking the Gothic very literally, as we took the Greek at one time, or as we should probably have taken the Saracenic, if the Moors had not been colored. Not even the cholera is so contagious in this country as a style of architecture which we happen to catch; the country is just now broken out all over with the Mansard-roof epidemic.

And in secular architecture we do not study what is adapted to our climate any more than in ecclesiastic architecture we adopt that which is suited to our religion.

We are building a great many costly churches here and there, we Protestants, and as the most of them are ill adapted to our forms of worship, it may be

necessary and best for us to change our religion in order to save our investments. I am aware that this would be a grave step, and we should not hasten to throw overboard Luther and the right of private judgment without reflection. And yet, if it is necessary to revive the ecclesiastical Gothic architecture, not in its spirit (that we nowhere do), but in the form which served another age and another faith, and if, as it appears, we have already a great deal of money invested in this reproduction, it may be more prudent to go forward than to go back. The question is, "Cannot one easier change his creed than his pew?"

I occupy a seat in church which is an admirable one for reflection, but I cannot see or hear much that is going on in what we like to call the apse. There is a splendid stone pillar, a clustered column, right in front of me, and I am as much protected from the minister as Old Put's troops were from the British, behind the stone wall at Bunker's Hill. I can hear his voice occasionally wandering round in the arches overhead, and I recognize the tone, because he is a friend of mine and an excellent man, but what he is saying I can very seldom make out. If there was any incense burning, I could smell it, and that would be something. I rather like the smell of incense, and it has its holy associations. But there is no smell in our church, except of bad air,—for there is no provision for ventilation in the splendid and costly edifice. The reproduction of the old Gothic is so complete that the builders even seem to have brought over the ancient air from one of the

churches of the Middle Ages, — you would declare it had n't been changed in two centuries.

I am expected to fix my attention during the service upon one man, who stands in the centre of the apse and has a sounding-board behind him in order to throw his voice out of the sacred semicircular space (where the altar used to stand, but now the sounding-board takes the place of the altar) and scatter it over the congregation at large, and send it echoing up in the groined roof. I always like to hear a minister who is unfamiliar with the house, and who has a loud voice, try to fill the edifice. The more he roars and gives himself with vehemence to the effort, the more the building roars in indistinguishable noise and hubbub. By the time he has said (to suppose a case), "The Lord is in his holy temple," and has passed on to say, "let all the earth keep silence," the building is repeating "The Lord is in his holy temple" from half a dozen different angles and altitudes, rolling it and growling it, and is not keeping silence at all. A man who understands it waits until the house has had its say, and has digested one passage, before he launches another into the vast, echoing spaces. I am expected, as I said, to fix my eye and mind on the minister, the central point of the service. But the pillar hides him. Now if there were several ministers in the church, dressed in such gorgeous colors that I could see them at the distance from the apse at which my limited income compels me to sit, and candles were burning, and censers were swinging, and the platform was full of the sacred bustle of a gorgeous ritual worship, and a bell rang to tell me the

holy moments, I should not mind the pillar at all. I should sit there, like any other Goth, and enjoy it. But, as I have said, the pastor is a friend of mine, and I like to look at him on Sunday, and hear what he says, for he always says something worth hearing. I am on such terms with him, indeed we all are, that it would be pleasant to have the service of a little more social nature, and more human. When we put him away off in the apse, and set him up for a Goth, and then seat ourselves at a distance, scattered about among the pillars, the whole thing seems to me a trifle unnatural. Though I do not mean to say that the congregations do not "enjoy their religion" in their splendid edifices which cost so much money and are really so beautiful.

A good many people have the idea, so it seems, that Gothic architecture and Christianity are essentially one and the same thing. Just as many regard it as an act of piety to work an altar cloth or to cushion a pulpit. It may be, and it may not be.

Our Gothic church is likely to prove to us a valuable religious experience, bringing out many of the Christian virtues. It may have had its origin in pride, but it is all being overruled for our good. Of course I need n't explain that it is the thirteenth century ecclesiastic Gothic that is epidemic in this country; and I think it has attacked the Congregational and the other non-ritual churches more violently than any others. We have had it here in its most beautiful and dangerous forms. I believe we are pretty much all of us supplied with a Gothic church now. Such has been the enthusiasm in this devout direc-

tion, that I should not be surprised to see our rich private citizens putting up Gothic churches for their individual amusement and sanctification. As the day will probably come when every man in Hartford will live in his own mammoth, five-story granite insurance building, it may not be unreasonable to expect that every man will sport his own Gothic church. It is beginning to be discovered that the Gothic sort of church edifice is fatal to the Congregational style of worship that has been prevalent here in New England; but it will do nicely (as they say in Boston) for private devotion.

There is n't a finer or purer church than ours anywhere, inside and outside Gothic to the last. The elevation of the nave gives it even that "high-shouldered" appearance which seemed more than anything else to impress Mr. Hawthorne in the cathedral at Amiens. I fancy that for genuine high-shoulderness we are not exceeded by any church in the city. Our chapel in the rear is as Gothic as the rest of it, — a beautiful little edifice. The committee forgot to make any more provision for ventilating than the church, and it takes a pretty well-seasoned Christian to stay in it long at a time. The Sunday-school is held there, and it is thought to be best to accustom the children to bad air before they go into the church. The poor little dears should n't have the wickedness and impurity of this world break on them too suddenly. If the stranger noticed any lack about our church, it would be that of a spire. There is a place for one; indeed, it was begun, and then the builders seem to have stopped, with the notion that

it would grow itself from such a good root. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that we do not know that the church has what the profane here call a "stump-tail" appearance. But the profane are as ignorant of history as they are of true Gothic. All the Old World cathedrals were the work of centuries. That at Milan is scarcely finished yet; the unfinished spires of the Cologne cathedral are one of the best-known features of it. I doubt if it would be in the Gothic spirit to finish a church at once. We can tell cavilers that we shall have a spire at the proper time, and not a minute before. It may depend a little upon what the Baptists do, who are to build near us. I, for one, think we had better wait and see how high the Baptist spire is before we run ours up. The church is everything that could be desired inside. There is the nave, with its lofty and beautiful arched ceiling; there are the side aisles, and two elegant rows of stone pillars, stained so as to be a perfect imitation of stucco; there is the apse, with its stained glass and exquisite lines; and there is an organ-loft over the front entrance, with a rose window. Nothing was wanting, so far as we could see, except that we should adapt ourselves to the circumstances; and that we have been trying to do ever since. It may be well to relate how we do it, for the benefit of other inchoate Goths.

It was found that if we put up the organ in the loft, it would hide the beautiful rose window. Besides, we wanted congregational singing, and if we hired a choir, and hung it up there under the roof, like a cage of birds, we should not have congrega-

tional singing. We therefore left the organ-loft vacant, making no further use of it than to satisfy our Gothic cravings. As for choir,—several of the singers of the church volunteered to sit together in the front side-seats, and as there was no place for an organ, they gallantly rallied round a melodeon,—or perhaps it is a cabinet organ,—a charming instrument, and, as everybody knows, entirely in keeping with the pillars, arches, and great spaces of a real Gothic edifice. It is the union of simplicity with grandeur, for which we have all been looking. I need not say to those who have ever heard a melodeon, that there is nothing like it. It is rare, even in the finest churches on the Continent. And we had congregational singing. And it went very well indeed. One of the advantages of pure congregational singing is that you can join in the singing whether you have a voice or not. The disadvantage is, that your neighbor can do the same. It is strange what an uncommonly poor lot of voices there is, even among good people. But we enjoy it. If you do not enjoy it, you can change your seat until you get among a good lot.

So far, everything went well. But it was next discovered that it was difficult to hear the minister, who had a very handsome little desk in the apse, somewhat distant from the bulk of the congregation; still, we could most of us see him on a clear day. The church was admirably built for echoes, and the centre of the house was very favorable to them. When you sat in the centre of the house, it sometimes seemed as if three or four ministers were speaking.

It is usually so in cathedrals ; the Right Reverend So-and-So is assisted by the very Reverend Such-and-Such, and the good deal Reverend Thus-and-Thus, and so on. But a good deal of the minister's voice appeared to go up into the groined arches, and, as there was no one up there, some of his best things were lost. We also had a notion that some of it went into the cavernous organ-loft. It would have been all right if there had been a choir there, for choirs usually need more preaching, and pay less heed to it, than any other part of the congregation. Well, we drew a sort of screen over the organ-loft ; but the result was not as marked as we had hoped. We next devised a sounding-board, — a sort of mammoth clamshell, painted white, — and erected it behind the minister. It had a good effect on the minister. It kept him up straight to his work. So long as he kept his head exactly in the focus, his voice went out and did not return to him ; but if he moved either way, he was assailed by a Babel of clamoring echoes. There was no opportunity for him to splurge about from side to side of the pulpit, as some do. And if he raised his voice much, or attempted any extra flights, he was liable to be drowned in a reflux sea of his own eloquence. And he could hear the congregation as well as they could hear him. All the coughs, whispers, noises, were gathered in the wooden tympanum behind him, and poured into his ears.

But the sounding-board was an improvement, and we advanced to bolder measures ; having heard a little, we wanted to hear more. Besides, those who sat in front began to be discontented with the melo-

deon. There are depths in music which the melodeon, even when it is called a cabinet organ, with a colored boy at the bellows, cannot sound. The melodeon was not, originally, designed for the Gothic worship. We determined to have an organ, and we speculated whether, by erecting it in the apse, we could not fill up that elegant portion of the church, and compel the preacher's voice to leave it, and go out over the pews. It would of course do something to efface the main beauty of a Gothic church; but something must be done, and we began a series of experiments to test the probable effects of putting the organ and choir behind the minister. We moved the desk to the very front of the platform, and erected behind it a high, square board screen, like a section of tight fence round the fair-grounds. This did help matters. The minister spoke with more ease, and we could hear him better. If the screen had been intended to stay there, we should have agitated the subject of painting it. But this was only an experiment.

Our next move was to shove the screen back and mount the volunteer singers, melodeon and all, upon the platform, — some twenty of them crowded together behind the minister. The effect was beautiful. It seemed as if we had taken care to select the finest-looking people in the congregation, — much to the injury of the congregation, of course, as seen from the platform. There are few congregations that can stand this sort of culling, though ours can endure it as well as any; yet it devolves upon those of us who remain the responsibility of looking as well as we can.

The experiment was a success, so far as appearances went, but when the screen went back, the minister's voice went back with it. We could not hear him very well, though we could hear the choir as plain as day. We have thought of remedying this last defect by putting the high screen in front of the singers, and close to the minister, as it was before. This would make the singers invisible, — "though lost to sight, to memory dear," — what is sometimes called an "angel choir," when the singers (and the melodeon) are concealed, with the most subdued and religious effect. It is often so in cathedrals.

This plan would have another advantage. The singers on the platform, all handsome and well dressed, distract our attention from the minister, and what he is saying. We cannot help looking at them, studying all the faces and all the dresses. If one of them sits up very straight, he is a rebuke to us; if he "lops" over, we wonder why he does n't sit up; if his hair is white, we wonder whether it is age or family peculiarity; if he yawns, we want to yawn; if he takes up a hymn-book, we wonder if he is uninterested in the sermon; we look at the bonnets, and query if that is the latest spring style, or whether we are to look for another; if he shaves close, we wonder why he does n't let his beard grow; if he has long whiskers, we wonder why he does n't trim 'em; if she sighs, we feel sorry; if she smiles, we would like to know what it is about. And, then, suppose any of the singers should ever want to eat fennel, or peppermints, or Brown's troches, and pass them round! Suppose the singers, more or less of them, should sneeze!

Suppose one or two of them, as the handsomest people sometimes will, should go to sleep! In short, the singers there take away all our attention from the minister, and would do so if they were the homeliest people in the world. We must try something else.

It is needless to explain that a Gothic religious life is not an idle one.

EIGHTH STUDY

I

PERHAPS the clothes question is exhausted, philosophically. I cannot but regret that the Poet of the Breakfast-Table, who appears to have an uncontrollable *penchant* for saying the things you would like to say yourself, has alluded to the anachronism of "Sir Cœur de Lion Plantagenet in the mutton-chop whiskers and the plain gray suit." A great many scribblers have felt the disadvantage of writing after Montaigne; and it is impossible to tell how much originality in others Dr. Holmes has destroyed in this country. In whist there are some men you always prefer to have on your left hand, and I take it that this intuitive essayist, who is so alert to seize the few remaining unappropriated ideas and analogies in the world, is one of them.

No doubt if the Plantagenets of this day were required to dress in a suit of chain-armor and wear iron pots on their heads, they would be as ridiculous as most tragedy actors on the stage. The pit which recognizes Snooks in his tin breastplate and helmet laughs at him, and Snooks himself feels like a sheep; and when the great tragedian comes on, shining in mail, dragging a two-handed sword, and mouths the grandiloquence which poets have put into the speech of heroes, the dress-circle requires all its good-breed-

ing and its feigned love of the traditionary drama not to titter.

If this sort of acting, which is supposed to have come down to us from the Elizabethan age, and which culminated in the school of the Keans, Kembles, and Siddonses, ever had any fidelity to life, it must have been in a society as artificial as the prose of Sir Philip Sidney. That anybody ever believed in it is difficult to think, especially when we read what privileges the fine beaux and gallants of the town took behind the scenes and on the stage in the golden days of the drama. When a part of the audience sat on the stage, and gentlemen lounged or reeled across it in the midst of a play, to speak to acquaintances in the audience, the illusion could not have been very strong.

Now and then a genius, like Rachel as Horatia, or Hackett as Falstaff, may actually seem to be the character assumed by virtue of a transforming imagination, but I suppose the fact to be that getting into a costume, absurdly antiquated and remote from all the habits and associations of the actor, largely accounts for the incongruity and ridiculousness of most of our modern acting. Whether what is called the "legitimate drama" ever was legitimate we do not know, but the advocates of it appear to think that the theatre was some time cast in a mould, once for all, and is good for all times and peoples, like the propositions of Euclid. To our eyes the legitimate drama of to-day is the one in which the day is reflected, both in costume and speech, and which touches the affections, the passions, the humor, of the present time. The brilliant success of the few good plays

that have been written out of the rich life which we now live — the most varied, fruitful, and dramatically suggestive — ought to rid us forever of the buskin-fustian, except as a pantomimic or spectacular curiosity.

We have no objection to Julius Cæsar or Richard III. stalking about in impossible clothes, and stepping four feet at a stride, if they want to, but let them not claim to be more “legitimate” than “Ours” or “Rip Van Winkle.” There will probably be some orator for years and years to come, at every Fourth of July, who will go on asking, Where is Thebes? but he does not care anything about it, and he does not really expect an answer. I have sometimes wished I knew the exact site of Thebes, so that I could rise in the audience, and stop that question, at any rate. It is legitimate, but it is tiresome.

If we went to the bottom of this subject, I think we should find that the putting upon actors clothes to which they are unaccustomed makes them act and talk artificially, and often in a manner intolerable. An actor who has not the habits or instincts of a gentleman cannot be made to appear like one on the stage by dress; he only caricatures and discredits what he tries to represent; and the unaccustomed clothes and situation make him much more unnatural and insufferable than he would otherwise be. Dressed appropriately for parts for which he is fitted, he will act well enough, probably. What I mean is, that the clothes inappropriate to the man make the incongruity of him and his part more apparent. Vulgarity is never so conspicuous as in fine apparel, on

or off the stage, and never so self-conscious. Shall we have, then, no refined characters on the stage? Yes; but let them be taken by men and women of taste and refinement, and let us have done with this masquerading in false raiment, ancient and modern, which makes nearly every stage a travesty of nature and the whole theatre a painful pretension. We do not expect the modern theatre to be a place of instruction (that business is now turned over to the telegraphic operator, who is making a new language), but it may give amusement instead of torture, and do a little in satirizing folly and kindling love of home and country by the way.

This is a sort of summary of what we all said, and no one in particular is responsible for it; and in this it is like public opinion. The Parson, however, whose only experience of the theatre was the endurance of an oratorio once, was very cordial in his denunciation of the stage altogether.

MANDEVILLE. Yet, acting itself is delightful; nothing so entertains us as mimicry, the personation of character. We enjoy it in private. I confess that I am always pleased with the Parson in the character of grumbler. He would be an immense success on the stage. I don't know but the theatre will have to go back into the hands of the priests, who once controlled it.

THE PARSON. Scoffer!

MANDEVILLE. I can imagine how enjoyable the stage might be, cleared of all its traditionary nonsense, stilted language, stilted behavior, all the rubbish of false sentiment, false dress, and the manners

of times that were both artificial and immoral, and filled with living characters, who speak the thought of to-day, with the wit and culture that are current to-day. I've seen private theatricals, where all the performers were persons of cultivation, that —

OUR NEXT DOOR. So have I. For something particularly cheerful, commend me to amateur theatricals. I have passed some melancholy hours at them.

MANDEVILLE. That's because the performers acted the worn stage plays, and attempted to do them in the manner they had seen on the stage. It is not always so.

THE FIRE-TENDER. I suppose Mandeville would say that acting has got into a mannerism which is well described as stagey, and is supposed to be natural to the stage; just as half the modern poets write in a recognized form of literary manufacture, without the least impulse from within, and not with the purpose of saying anything, but of turning out a piece of literary work. That's the reason we have so much poetry that impresses one like sets of faultless cabinet-furniture made by machinery.

THE PARSON. But you need n't talk of nature or naturalness in acting or in anything. I tell you nature is poor stuff. It can't go alone. Amateur acting — they get it up at church sociables nowadays — is apt to be as near nature as a school-boy's declamation. Acting is the Devil's art.

THE MISTRESS. Do you object to such innocent amusement?

MANDEVILLE. What the Parson objects to is, that he is n't amused.

THE PARSON. What's the use of objecting? It's the fashion of the day to amuse people into the kingdom of heaven.

HERBERT. The Parson has got us off the track. My notion about the stage is, that it keeps along pretty evenly with the rest of the world; the stage is usually quite up to the level of the audience. Assumed dress on the stage, since you were speaking of that, makes people no more constrained and self-conscious than it does off the stage.

THE MISTRESS. What sarcasm is coming now?

HERBERT. Well, you may laugh, but the world has n't got used to good clothes yet. The majority do not wear them with ease. People who only put on their best on rare and stated occasions step into an artificial feeling.

OUR NEXT DOOR. I wonder if that's the reason the Parson finds it so difficult to get hold of his congregation.

HERBERT. I don't know how else to account for the formality and vapidness of a set "party," where all the guests are clothed in a manner to which they are unaccustomed, dressed into a condition of vivid self-consciousness. The same people, who know each other perfectly well, will enjoy themselves together without restraint in their ordinary apparel. But nothing can be more artificial than the behavior of people together who rarely "dress up." It seems impossible to make the conversation as fine as the clothes, and so it dies in a kind of inane helplessness. Especially is this true in the country, where people have not obtained the mastery of their clothes that

those who live in the city have. It is really absurd, at this stage of our civilization, that we should be so affected by such an insignificant accident as dress. Perhaps Mandeville can tell us whether this clothes panic prevails in the older societies.

THE PARSON. Don't. We've heard it; about its being one of the Englishman's thirty-nine articles that he never shall sit down to dinner without a dress-coat, and all that.

THE MISTRESS. I wish, for my part, that everybody who has time to eat a dinner would dress for that, the principal event of the day, and do respectful and leisurely justice to it.

THE YOUNG LADY. It has always seemed singular to me that men who work so hard to build elegant houses, and have good dinners, should take so little leisure to enjoy either.

MANDEVILLE. If the Parson will permit me, I should say that the chief clothes question abroad just now is, how to get any; and it is the same with the dinners.

II

It is quite unnecessary to say that the talk about clothes ran into the question of dress-reform, and ran out, of course. You cannot converse on anything nowadays that you do not run into some reform. The Parson says that everybody is intent on reforming everything but himself. We are all trying to associate ourselves to make everybody else behave as we do. Said

OUR NEXT DOOR. Dress reform! As if people could n't change their clothes without concert of action. Resolved, that nobody should put on a clean collar oftener than his neighbor does. I'm sick of every sort of reform. I should like to retrograde awhile. Let a dyspeptic ascertain that he can eat porridge three times a day and live, and straightway he insists that everybody ought to eat porridge and nothing else. I mean to get up a society every member of which shall be pledged to do just as he pleases.

THE PARSON. That would be the most radical reform of the day. That would be independence. If people dressed according to their means, acted according to their convictions, and avowed their opinions, it would revolutionize society.

OUR NEXT DOOR. I should like to walk into your church some Sunday and see the changes under such conditions.

THE PARSON. It might give you a novel sensation to walk in at any time. And I'm not sure but the church would suit your retrograde ideas. It's so Gothic that a Christian of the Middle Ages, if he were alive, could n't see or hear in it.

HERBERT. I don't know whether these reformers who carry the world on their shoulders in such serious fashion, especially the little fussy fellows, who are themselves the standard of the regeneration they seek, are more ludicrous than pathetic.

THE FIRE-TENDER. Pathetic, by all means. But I don't know that they would be pathetic if they were not ludicrous. There are those reform singers

who have been piping away so sweetly now for thirty years, with never any diminution of cheerful, patient enthusiasm ; their hair growing longer and longer, their eyes brighter and brighter, and their faces, I do believe, sweeter and sweeter ; singing always with the same constancy for the slave, for the drunkard, for the snuff-taker, for the suffragist, — “ There ’s-a-good-time-com-ing-boys (nothing offensive is intended by “ boys,” it is put in for euphony, and sung pianissimo, not to offend the suffragists), it ’s-almost-here.” And what a brightening up of their faces there is when they say, “ it ’s-al-most-here,” not doubting for a moment that “ it ’s ” coming to-morrow ; and the accompanying melodeon also wails its wheezy suggestion that “ it ’s-al-most-here,” that “ good-time ” (delayed so long, waiting perhaps for the invention of the melodeon) when we shall all sing and all play that cheerful instrument, and all vote, and none shall smoke, or drink, or eat meat, “ boys.” I declare it almost makes me cry to hear them, so touching is their faith in the midst of a jeering world.

HERBERT. I suspect that no one can be a genuine reformer and not be ridiculous. I mean those who give themselves up to the unction of the reform.

THE MISTRESS. Does n’t that depend upon whether the reform is large or petty ?

THE FIRE-TENDER. I should say rather that the reforms attracted to them all the ridiculous people, who almost always manage to become the most conspicuous. I suppose that nobody dare write out all that was ludicrous in the great abolition movement.

But it was not at all comical to those most zealous in it; they never could see—more's the pity, for thereby they lose much—the humorous side of their performances, and that is why the pathos overcomes one's sense of the absurdity of such people.

THE YOUNG LADY. It is lucky for the world that so many are willing to be absurd.

HERBERT. Well, I think that, in the main, the reformers manage to look out for themselves tolerably well. I knew once a lean and faithful agent of a great philanthropic scheme, who contrived to collect every year for the cause just enough to support him at a good hotel comfortably.

THE MISTRESS. That's identifying one's self with the cause.

MANDEVILLE. You remember the great free-soil convention at Buffalo, in 1848, when Van Buren was nominated. All the world of hope and discontent went there, with its projects of reform. There seemed to be no doubt, among hundreds that attended it, that if they could get a resolution passed that bread should be buttered on both sides, it would be so buttered. The platform provided for every want and every woe.

THE FIRE-TENDER. I remember. If you could get the millennium by political action, we should have had it then.

MANDEVILLE. We went there on the Erie Canal, the exciting and fashionable mode of travel in those days. I was a boy when we began the voyage. The boat was full of conventionists; all the talk was of what must be done there. I got the impression that

as that boat-load went so would go the convention ; and I was not alone in that feeling. I can never be grateful enough for one little scrubby fanatic who was on board, who spent most of his time in drafting resolutions and reading them privately to the passengers. He was a very enthusiastic, nervous, and somewhat dirty little man, who wore a woollen muffler about his throat, although it was summer ; he had nearly lost his voice, and could only speak in a hoarse, disagreeable whisper, and he always carried a teacup about, containing some sticky compound which he stirred frequently with a spoon, and took, whenever he talked, in order to improve his voice. If he was separated from his cup for ten minutes, his whisper became inaudible. I greatly delighted in him, for I never saw any one who had so much enjoyment of his own importance. He was fond of telling what he would do if the convention rejected such and such resolutions. He 'd make it hot for 'em. I did n't know but he 'd make them take his mixture. The convention had got to take a stand on tobacco, for one thing. He 'd heard Giddings took snuff ; he 'd see. When we at length reached Buffalo he took his teacup and carpet-bag of resolutions and went ashore in a great hurry. I saw him once again in a cheap restaurant, whispering a resolution to another delegate, but he did n't appear in the convention. I have often wondered what became of him.

OUR NEXT DOOR. Probably he 's consul somewhere. They mostly are.

THE FIRE-TENDER. After all, it 's the easiest

thing in the world to sit and sneer at eccentricities. But what a dead and uninteresting world it would be if we were all proper, and kept within the lines! Affairs would soon be reduced to mere machinery. There are moments, even days, when all interests and movements appear to be settled upon some universal plan of equilibrium; but just then some restless and absurd person is inspired to throw the machine out of gear. These individual eccentricities seem to be the special providences in the general human scheme.

HERBERT. They make it very hard work for the rest of us, who are disposed to go along peaceably and smoothly.

MANDEVILLE. And stagnate. I'm not sure but the natural condition of this planet is war, and that when it is finally towed to its anchorage — if the universe has any harbor for worlds out of commission — it will look like the Fighting *Téméraire* in Turner's picture.

HERBERT. There is another thing I should like to understand: the tendency of people who take up one reform, perhaps a personal regeneration in regard to some bad habit, to run into a dozen other isms, and get all at sea in several vague and pernicious theories and practices.

MANDEVILLE. Herbert seems to think there is safety in a man's being anchored, even if it is to a bad habit.

HERBERT. Thank you. But what is it in human nature that is apt to carry a man who may take a step in personal reform into so many extremes?

OUR NEXT DOOR. Probably it's human nature.

HERBERT. Why, for instance, should a reformed drunkard (one of the noblest examples of victory over self) incline, as I have known the reformed to do, to spiritism, or a woman suffragist to "pantarchism" (whatever that is), and want to pull up all the roots of society, and expect them to grow in the air, like orchids; or a Graham-bread disciple become enamored of Communism?

MANDEVILLE. I know an excellent Conservative who would, I think, suit you; he says that he does not see how a man who indulges in the theory and practice of total abstinence can be a consistent believer in the Christian religion.

HERBERT. Well, I can understand what he means: that a person is bound to hold himself in conditions of moderation and control, using and not abusing the things of this world, practicing temperance, not retiring into a convent of artificial restrictions in order to escape the full responsibility of self-control. And yet his theory would certainly wreck most men and women. What does the Parson say?

THE PARSON. That the world is going crazy on the notion of individual ability. Whenever a man attempts to reform himself, or anybody else, without the aid of the Christian religion, he is sure to go adrift, and is pretty certain to be blown about by absurd theories, and shipwrecked on some pernicious ism.

THE FIRE-TENDER. I think the discussion has touched bottom.

III

I NEVER felt so much the value of a house with a backlog in it as during the late spring; for its lateness was its main feature. Everybody was grumbling about it, as if it were something ordered from the tailor, and not ready on the day. Day after day it snowed, night after night it blew a gale from the northwest; the frost sunk deeper and deeper into the ground; there was a popular longing for spring that was almost a prayer; the weather bureau was active; Easter was set a week earlier than the year before, but nothing seemed to do any good. The robins sat under the evergreens, and piped in a disconsolate mood, and at last the bluejays came and scolded in the midst of the snow-storm, as they always do scold in any weather. The crocuses could n't be coaxed to come up, even with a pickaxe. I'm almost ashamed now to recall what we said of the weather, only I think that people are no more accountable for what they say of the weather than for their remarks when their corns are stepped on.

We agreed, however, that, but for disappointed expectations and the prospect of late lettuce and peas, we were gaining by the fire as much as we were losing by the frost. And the Mistress fell to chanting the comforts of modern civilization.

THE FIRE-TENDER said he should like to know, by the way, if our civilization differed essentially from any other in anything but its comforts.

HERBERT. We are no nearer religious unity.

THE PARSON. We have as much war as ever.

MANDEVILLE. There was never such a social turmoil.

THE YOUNG LADY. The artistic part of our nature does not appear to have grown.

THE FIRE-TENDER. We are quarreling as to whether we are in fact radically different from the brutes.

HERBERT. Scarcely two people think alike about the proper kind of human government.

THE PARSON. Our poetry is made out of words, for the most part, and not drawn from the living sources.

OUR NEXT DOOR. And Mr. Cumming is uncorking his seventh phial. I never felt before what barbarians we are.

THE MISTRESS. Yet you won't deny that the life of the average man is safer and every way more comfortable than it was even a century ago.

THE FIRE-TENDER. But what I want to know is, whether what we call our civilization has done anything more for mankind at large than to increase the ease and pleasure of living? Science has multiplied wealth, and facilitated intercourse, and the result is refinement of manners and a diffusion of education and information. Are men and women essentially changed, however? I suppose the Parson would say we have lost faith, for one thing.

MANDEVILLE. And superstition; and gained toleration.

HERBERT. The question is, whether toleration is anything but indifference.

THE PARSON. Everything is tolerated now but Christian orthodoxy.

THE FIRE-TENDER. It's easy enough to make a brilliant catalogue of external achievements, but I take it that real progress ought to be in man himself. It is not a question of what a man enjoys, but what he can produce. The best sculpture was executed two thousand years ago. The best paintings are several centuries old. We study the finest architecture in its ruins. The standards of poetry are Shakespeare, Homer, Isaiah, and David. The latest of the arts, music, culminated in composition, though not in execution, a century ago.

THE MISTRESS. Yet culture in music certainly distinguishes the civilization of this age. It has taken eighteen hundred years for the principles of the Christian religion to begin to be practically incorporated in government and in ordinary business, and it will take a long time for Beethoven to be popularly recognized; but there is growth toward him, and not away from him, and when the average culture has reached his height, some other genius will still more profoundly and delicately express the highest thoughts.

HERBERT. I wish I could believe it. The spirit of this age is expressed by the Calliope.

THE PARSON. Yes, it remained for us to add church-bells and cannon to the orchestra.

OUR NEXT DOOR. It's a melancholy thought to me that we can no longer express ourselves with the bass-drum; there used to be the whole of the Fourth of July in its patriotic throbs.

MANDEVILLE. We certainly have made great progress in one art, — that of war.

THE YOUNG LADY. And in the humane alleviations of the miseries of war.

THE FIRE-TENDER. The most discouraging symptom to me in our undoubted advance in the comforts and refinements of society is the facility with which men slip back into barbarism, if the artificial and external accidents of their lives are changed. We have always kept a fringe of barbarism on our shifting western frontier ; and I think there never was a worse society than that in California and Nevada in their early days.

THE YOUNG LADY. That is because women were absent.

THE FIRE-TENDER. But women are not absent in London and New York, and they are conspicuous in the most exceptionable demonstrations of social anarchy. Certainly they were not wanting in Paris. Yes, there was a city widely accepted as the summit of our material civilization. No city was so beautiful, so luxurious, so safe, so well ordered for the comfort of living, and yet it needed only a month or two to make it a kind of pandemonium of savagery. Its citizens were the barbarians who destroyed its own monuments of civilization. I don't mean to say that there was no apology for what was done there in the deceit and fraud that preceded it, but I simply notice how ready the tiger was to appear, and how little restraint all the material civilization was to the beast.

THE MISTRESS. I can't deny your instances, and yet I somehow feel that pretty much all you have

been saying is in effect untrue. Not one of you would be willing to change our civilization for any other. In your estimate you take no account, it seems to me, of the growth of charity.

MANDEVILLE. And you might add a recognition of the value of human life.

THE MISTRESS. I don't believe there was ever before diffused everywhere such an element of goodwill, and never before were women so much engaged in philanthropic work.

THE PARSON. It must be confessed that one of the best signs of the times is woman's charity for woman. That certainly never existed to the same extent in any other civilization.

MANDEVILLE. And there is another thing that distinguishes us, or is beginning to. That is, the notion that you can do something more with a criminal than punish him; and that society has not done its duty when it has built a sufficient number of schools for one class, or of decent jails for another.

HERBERT. It will be a long time before we get decent jails.

MANDEVILLE. But when we do they will begin to be places of education and training as much as of punishment and disgrace. The public will provide teachers in the prisons as it now does in the common schools.

THE FIRE-TENDER. The imperfections of our methods and means of selecting those in the community who ought to be in prison are so great, that extra care in dealing with them becomes us. We are beginning to learn that we cannot draw arbitrary

lines with infallible justice. Perhaps half those who are convicted of crimes are as capable of reformation as half those transgressors who are not convicted, or who keep inside the statutory law.

HERBERT. Would you remove the odium of prison?

THE FIRE-TENDER. No; but I would have criminals believe, and society believe, that in going to prison a man or woman does not pass an absolute line and go into a fixed state.

THE PARSON. That is, you would not have judgment and retribution begin in this world.

OUR NEXT DOOR. Don't switch us off into theology. I hate to go up in a balloon, or see any one else go.

HERBERT. Don't you think there is too much leniency toward crime and criminals, taking the place of justice, in these days?

THE FIRE-TENDER. There may be too much disposition to condone the crimes of those who have been considered respectable.

OUR NEXT DOOR. That is, scarcely anybody wants to see his friend hung.

MANDEVILLE. I think a large part of the bitterness of the condemned arises from a sense of the inequality with which justice is administered. I am surprised, in visiting jails, to find so few respectable-looking convicts.

OUR NEXT DOOR. Nobody will go to jail nowadays who thinks anything of himself.

THE FIRE-TENDER. When society seriously takes hold of the reformation of criminals (say with as much

determination as it does to carry an election) this false leniency will disappear; for it partly springs from a feeling that punishment is unequal, and does not discriminate enough in individuals, and that society itself has no right to turn a man over to the Devil, simply because he shows a strong leaning that way. A part of the scheme of those who work for the reformation of criminals is to render punishment more certain, and to let its extent depend upon reformation. There is no reason why a professional criminal, who won't change his trade for an honest one, should have intervals of freedom in his prison life in which he is let loose to prey upon society. Criminals ought to be discharged, like insane patients, when they are cured.

OUR NEXT DOOR. It's a wonder to me, what with our multitudes of statutes and hosts of detectives, that we are any of us out of jail. I never come away from a visit to a State-prison without a new spasm of fear and virtue. The faculties for getting into jail seem to be ample. We want more organizations for keeping people out.

MANDEVILLE. That is the sort of enterprise the women are engaged in, the frustration of the criminal tendencies of those born in vice. I believe women have it in their power to regenerate the world morally.

THE PARSON. It's time they began to undo the mischief of their mother.

THE MISTRESS. The reason they have not made more progress is that they have usually confined their individual efforts to one man; they are now organizing for a general campaign.

THE FIRE-TENDER, I 'm not sure but here is where the ameliorations of the conditions of life, which are called the comforts of this civilization, come in, after all, and distinguish the age above all others. They have enabled the finer powers of women to have play as they could not in a ruder age. I should like to live a hundred years and see what they will do.

HERBERT. Not much but change the fashions, unless they submit themselves to the same training and discipline that men do.

I have no doubt that Herbert had to apologize for this remark afterwards in private, as men are quite willing to do in particular cases ; it is only in general they are unjust. The talk drifted off into general and particular depreciation of other times. Mandeville described a picture, in which he appeared to have confidence, of a fight between an Iguanodon and a Megalosaurus, where these huge iron-clad brutes were represented chewing up different portions of each other's bodies in a forest of the lower cretaceous period. So far as he could learn, that sort of thing went on unchecked for hundreds of thousands of years, and was typical of the intercourse of the races of man till a comparatively recent period. There was also that gigantic swan, the Plesiosaurus ; in fact, all the early brutes were disgusting. He delighted to think that even the lower animals had improved, both in appearance and disposition.

The conversation ended, therefore, in a very amicable manner, having been taken to a ground that nobody knew anything about.

NINTH STUDY

I

CAN you have a backlog in July? That depends upon circumstances.

In northern New England it is considered a sign of summer when the housewives fill the fireplaces with branches of mountain laurel, and, later, with the feathery stalks of the asparagus. This is often, too, the timid expression of a tender feeling, under Puritanic repression, which has not sufficient vent in the sweet-william and hollyhock at the front door. This is a yearning after beauty and ornamentation which has no other means of gratifying itself.

In the most rigid circumstances, the graceful nature of woman thus discloses itself in these mute expressions of an undeveloped taste. You may never doubt what the common flowers growing along the pathway to the front door mean to the maiden of many summers who tends them;—love and religion, and the weariness of an uneventful life. The sacredness of the Sabbath, the hidden memory of an unrevealed and unrequited affection, the slow years of gathering and wasting sweetness, are in the smell of the pink and the sweet-clover. These sentimental plants breathe something of the longing of the maiden who sits in the Sunday evenings of summer on the lonesome front door-stone, singing the hymns

of the saints, and perennial as the myrtle that grows thereby.

Yet not always in summer, even with the aid of unrequited love and devotional feeling, is it safe to let the fire go out on the hearth, in our latitude. I remember when the last almost total eclipse of the sun happened in August, what a bone-piercing chill came over the world. Perhaps the imagination had something to do with causing the chill from that temporary hiding of the sun to feel so much more penetrating than that from the coming on of night, which shortly followed. It was impossible not to experience a shudder as of the approach of the Judgment Day, when the shadows were flung upon the green lawn, and we all stood in the wan light, looking unfamiliar to each other. The birds in the trees felt the spell. We could in fancy see those spectral camp-fires which men would build on the earth, if the sun should slow its fires down to about the brilliancy of the moon. It was a great relief to all of us to go into the house, and, before a blazing wood-fire, talk of the end of the world.

In New England it is scarcely ever safe to let the fire go out; it is best to bank it, for it needs but the turn of a weather-vane at any hour to sweep the Atlantic rains over us, or to bring down the chill of Hudson's Bay. There are days when the steamship on the Atlantic glides calmly along under a full canvas, but its central fires must always be ready to make steam against head-winds and antagonistic waves. Even in our most smiling summer days one needs to have the materials of a cheerful fire at

hand. It is only by this readiness for a change that one can preserve an equal mind. We are made provident and sagacious by the fickleness of our climate. We should be another sort of people if we could have that serene, unclouded trust in nature which the Egyptian has. The gravity and repose of the Eastern peoples is due to the unchanging aspect of the sky, and the deliberation and regularity of the great climatic processes. Our literature, politics, religion, show the effect of unsettled weather. But they compare favorably with the Egyptian, for all that.

II

You cannot know, the Young Lady wrote, with what longing I look back to those winter days by the fire; though all the windows are open to this May morning, and the brown thrush is singing in the chestnut-tree, and I see everywhere that first delicate flush of spring, which seems too evanescent to be color even, and amounts to little more than a suffusion of the atmosphere. I doubt, indeed, if the spring is exactly what it used to be, or if, as we get on in years [no one ever speaks of "getting on in years" till she is virtually settled in life], its promises and suggestions do not seem empty in comparison with the sympathies and responses of human friendship, and the stimulation of society. Sometimes nothing is so tiresome as a perfect day in a perfect season.

I only imperfectly understand this. The Parson

says that woman is always most restless under the most favorable conditions, and that there is no state in which she is really happy except that of change. I suppose this is the truth taught in what has been called the "Myth of the Garden." Woman is perpetual revolution, and is that element in the world which continually destroys and re-creates. She is the experimenter and the suggester of new combinations. She has no belief in any law of eternal fitness of things. She is never even content with any arrangement of her own house. The only reason the Mistress could give, when she rearranged her apartment, for hanging a picture in what seemed the most inappropriate place, was that it had never been there before. Woman has no respect for tradition, and because a thing is as it is is sufficient reason for changing it. When she gets into law, as she has come into literature, we shall gain something in the destruction of all our vast and musty libraries of precedents, which now fetter our administration of individual justice. It is Mandeville's opinion that women are not so sentimental as men, and are not so easily touched with the unspoken poetry of nature; being less poetical, and having less imagination, they are more fitted for practical affairs, and would make less failures in business. I have noticed the almost selfish passion for their flowers which old gardeners have, and their reluctance to part with a leaf or a blossom from their family. They love the flowers for themselves. A woman raises flowers for their use. She is destruction in a conservatory. She wants the flowers for her lover, for the sick, for the

poor, for the Lord on Easter day, for the ornamentation of her house. She delights in the costly pleasure of sacrificing them. She never sees a flower but she has an intense but probably sinless desire to pick it.

It has been so from the first, though from the first she has been thwarted by the accidental superior strength of man. Whatever she has obtained has been by craft, and by the same coaxing which the sun uses to draw the blossoms out of the apple-trees. I am not surprised to learn that she has become tired of indulgences, and wants some of the original rights. We are just beginning to find out the extent to which she has been denied and subjected, and especially her condition among the primitive and barbarous races. I have never seen it in a platform of grievances, but it is true that among the Fijians she is not, unless a better civilization has wrought a change in her behalf, permitted to eat people, even her own sex, at the feasts of the men; the dainty enjoyed by the men being considered too good to be wasted on women. Is anything wanting to this picture of the degradation of woman? By a refinement of cruelty she receives no benefit whatever from the missionaries who are sent out by — what to her must seem a new name for Tan-talus — the American Board.

I suppose the Young Lady expressed a nearly universal feeling in her regret at the breaking up of the winter-fireside company. Society needs a certain seclusion and the sense of security. Spring opens the doors and the windows, and the noise and unrest of the world are let in. Even a winter thaw begets

a desire to travel, and summer brings longings innumerable, and disturbs the most tranquil souls. Nature is, in fact, a suggester of uneasiness, a promoter of pilgrimages and of excursions of the fancy which never come to any satisfactory haven. The summer in these latitudes is a campaign of sentiment and a season, for the most part, of restlessness and discontent. We grow now in hot-houses roses which, in form and color, are magnificent, and appear to be full of passion; yet one simple June rose of the open air has for the Young Lady, I doubt not, more sentiment and suggestion of love than a conservatory full of them in January. And this suggestion, leavened as it is with the inconstancy of nature, stimulated by the promises which are so often like the peach-blossom of the Judas-tree, unsatisfying by reason of its vague possibilities, differs so essentially from the more limited and attainable and home-like emotion born of quiet intercourse by the winter fire-side, that I do not wonder the Young Lady feels as if some spell had been broken by the transition of her life from in-doors to out-doors. Her secret, if secret she has, which I do not at all know, is shared by the birds and the new leaves and the blossoms on the fruit trees. If we lived elsewhere, in that zone where the poets pretend always to dwell, we might be content, perhaps I should say drugged, by the sweet influences of an unchanging summer; but not living elsewhere, we can understand why the Young Lady probably now looks forward to the hearthstone as the most assured center of enduring attachment.

If it should ever become the sad duty of this biographer to write of disappointed love, I am sure he would not have any sensational story to tell of the Young Lady. She is one of those women whose unostentatious lives are the chief blessing of humanity ; who, with a sigh heard only by herself and no change in her sunny face, would put behind her all the memories of winter evenings and the promises of May mornings, and give her life to some ministration of human kindness with an assiduity that would make her occupation appear like an election and a first choice. The disappointed man scowls, and hates his race, and threatens self-destruction, choosing oftener the flowing bowl than the dagger, and becoming a reeling nuisance in the world. It would be much more manly in him to become the secretary of a Dorcas society.

I suppose it is true that women work for others with less expectation of reward than men, and give themselves to labors of self-sacrifice with much less thought of self. At least, this is true unless woman goes into some public performance, where notoriety has its attractions, and mounts some cause, to ride it man-fashion, when I think she becomes just as eager for applause and just as willing that self-sacrifice should result in self-elevation as man. For her, usually, are not those unbought "presentations" which are forced upon firemen, philanthropists, legislators, railroad-men, and the superintendents of the moral instruction of the young. These are almost always pleasing and unexpected tributes to worth and modesty, and must be received with satisfaction when the

public service rendered has not been with a view to procuring them. We should say that one ought to be most liable to receive a "testimonial" who, being a superintendent of any sort, did not superintend with a view to getting it. But "testimonials" have become so common that a modest man ought really to be afraid to do his simple duty, for fear his motives will be misconstrued. Yet there are instances of very worthy men who have had things publicly presented to them. It is the blessed age of gifts and the reward of private virtue. And the presentations have become so frequent that we wish there were a little more variety in them. There never was much sense in giving a gallant fellow a big speaking-trumpet to carry home to aid him in his intercourse with his family; and the festive ice-pitcher has become a too universal sign of absolute devotion to the public interest. The lack of one will soon be proof that a man is a knave. The legislative cane with the gold head, also, is getting to be recognized as the sign of the immaculate public servant, as the inscription on it testifies, and the steps of suspicion must ere-long dog him who does not carry one. The "testimonial" business is, in truth, a little demoralizing, almost as much so as the "donation;" and the demoralization has extended even to our language, so that a perfectly respectable man is often obliged to see himself "made the recipient of" this and that. It would be much better, if testimonials must be, to give a man a barrel of flour or a keg of oysters, and let him eat himself at once back into the ranks of ordinary men.

III

WE may have a testimonial class in time, a sort of nobility here in America, made so by popular gift, the members of which will all be able to show some stick or piece of plated ware or massive chain, "of which they have been the recipients." In time it may be a distinction not to belong to it, and it may come to be thought more blessed to give than to receive. For it must have been remarked that it is not always to the cleverest and the most amiable and modest man that the deputation comes with the inevitable ice-pitcher (and "salver to match"), which has in it the magic and subtle quality of making the hour in which it is received the proudest of one's life. There has not been discovered any method of rewarding all the deserving people and bringing their virtues into the prominence of notoriety. And, indeed, it would be an unreasonable world if there had, for its chief charm and sweetness lie in the excellences in it which are reluctantly disclosed; one of the chief pleasures of living is in the daily discovery of good traits, nobilities, and kindness both in those we have long known and in the chance passenger whose way happens for a day to lie with ours. The longer I live the more I am impressed with the excess of human kindness over human hatred, and the greater willingness to oblige than to disoblige that one meets at every turn. The selfishness in politics, the jealousy in letters, the bickering in art, the bitterness in theology, are all as nothing compared to the sweet chari-

ties, sacrifices, and deferences of private life. The people are few whom to know intimately is to dislike. Of course you want to hate somebody, if you can, just to keep your powers of discrimination bright, and to save yourself from becoming a mere mush of good-nature; but perhaps it is well to hate some historical person who has been dead so long as to be indifferent to it. It is more comfortable to hate people we have never seen. I cannot but think that Judas Iscariot has been of great service to the world as a sort of buffer for moral indignation which might have made a collision nearer home but for his utilized treachery. I used to know a venerable and most amiable gentleman and scholar, whose hospitable house was always overrun with wayside ministers, agents, and philanthropists, who loved their fellow-men better than they loved to work for their living; and he, I suspect, kept his moral balance even by indulgence in violent but most distant dislikes. When I met him casually in the street, his first salutation was likely to be such as this: "What a liar that Alison was! Don't you hate him?" And then would follow specifications of historical inaccuracy enough to make one's blood run cold. When he was thus discharged of his hatred by such a conductor, I presume he had not a spark left for those whose mission was partly to live upon him and other generous souls.

Mandeville and I were talking of the unknown people, one rainy night by the fire, while the Mistress was fitfully and interjectionally playing with the piano-keys in an improvising mood. Mandeville has

a good deal of sentiment about him, and without any effort talks so beautifully sometimes that I constantly regret I cannot report his language. He has, besides, that sympathy of presence — I believe it is called magnetism by those who regard the brain as only a sort of galvanic battery — which makes it a greater pleasure to see him think, if I may say so, than to hear some people talk.

It makes one homesick in this world to think that there are so many rare people he can never know ; and so many excellent people that scarcely any one will know, in fact. One discovers a friend by chance, and cannot but feel regret that twenty or thirty years of life maybe have been spent without the least knowledge of him. When he is once known, through him opening is made into another little world, into a circle of culture and loving hearts and enthusiasm in a dozen congenial pursuits, and prejudices perhaps. How instantly and easily the bachelor doubles his world when he marries, and enters into the unknown fellowship of the to him continually increasing company which is known in popular language as “all his wife’s relations.”

Near at hand daily, no doubt, are those worth knowing intimately, if one had the time and the opportunity. And when one travels he sees what a vast material there is for society and friendship, of which he can never avail himself. Car-load after car-load of summer travel goes by one at any railway-station, out of which he is sure he could choose a score of life-long friends, if the conductor would introduce him. There are faces of refinement, of quick wit, of

sympathetic kindness, — interesting people, traveled people, entertaining people, — as you would say in Boston, “nice people you would admire to know,” whom you constantly meet and pass without a sign of recognition, many of whom are no doubt your long-lost brothers and sisters. You can see that they also have their worlds and their interests, and they probably know a great many “nice” people. The matter of personal liking and attachment is a good deal due to the mere fortune of association. More fast friendships and pleasant acquaintanceships are formed on the Atlantic steamships between those who would have been only indifferent acquaintances elsewhere, than one would think possible on a voyage which naturally makes one as selfish as he is indifferent to his personal appearance. The Atlantic is the only power on earth I know that can make a woman indifferent to her personal appearance.

Mandeville remembers, and I think without detriment to himself, the glimpses he had in the White Mountains once of a young lady of whom his utmost efforts could give him no further information than her name. Chance sight of her on a passing stage or amid a group on some mountain lookout was all he ever had, and he did not even know certainly whether she was the perfect beauty and the lovely character he thought her. He said he would have known her, however, at a great distance; there was to her form that ravishing mingling of grace and command of which we hear so much, and which turns out to be nearly all command after the “ceremony;”

or perhaps it was something in the glance of her eye or the turn of her head, or very likely it was a sweet inherited reserve or hauteur that captivated him, that filled his days with the expectation of seeing her, and made him hasten to the hotel-registers in the hope that her name was there recorded. Whatever it was, she interested him as one of the people he would like to know ; and it piqued him that there was a life, rich in friendships, no doubt, in tastes, in many noblenesses, — one of thousands of such, — that must be absolutely nothing to him, — nothing but a window into heaven momentarily opened and then closed. I have myself no idea that she was a countess *incognito*, or that she had descended from any greater heights than those where Mandeville saw her, but I have always regretted that she went her way so mysteriously and left no clew, and that we shall wear out the remainder of our days without her society. I have looked for her name, but always in vain, among the attendants at the rights' conventions, in the list of those good Americans presented at court, among those skeleton names that appear as the remains of beauty in the morning journals after a ball to the wandering prince, in the reports of railway collisions and steamboat explosions. No news comes of her. And so imperfect are our means of communication in this world that, for anything we know, she may have left it long ago by some private way.

IV

THE lasting regret that we cannot know more of the bright, sincere, and genuine people of the world is increased by the fact that they are all different from each other. Was it not Madame de Sévigné who said she had loved several different women for several different qualities? Every real person — for there are persons as there are fruits that have no distinguishing flavor, mere gooseberries — has a distinct quality, and the finding it is always like the discovery of a new island to the voyager. The physical world we shall exhaust some day, having a written description of every foot of it to which we can turn; but we shall never get the different qualities of people into a biographical dictionary, and the making acquaintance with a human being will never cease to be an exciting experiment. We cannot even classify men so as to aid us much in our estimate of them. The efforts in this direction are ingenious, but unsatisfactory. If I hear that a man is lymphatic or nervous-sanguine, I cannot tell therefrom whether I shall like and trust him. He may produce a phrenological chart showing that his knobby head is the home of all the virtues, and that the vicious tendencies are represented by holes in his cranium, and yet I cannot be sure that he will not be as disagreeable as if phrenology had not been invented. I feel sometimes that phrenology is the refuge of mediocrity. Its charts are almost as misleading concerning character as photographs. And photography may be described

as the art which enables commonplace mediocrity to look like genius. The heavy-jowled man with shallow cerebrum has only to incline his head so that the lying instrument can select a favorable focus, to appear in the picture with the brow of a sage and the chin of a poet. Of all the arts for ministering to human vanity the photographic is the most useful, but it is a poor aid in the revelation of character. You shall learn more of a man's real nature by seeing him walk once up the broad aisle of his church to his pew on Sunday, than by studying his photograph for a month.

No, we do not get any certain standard of men by a chart of their temperaments ; it will hardly answer to select a wife by the color of her hair ; though it be by nature as red as a cardinal's hat, she may be no more constant than if it were dyed. The farmer who shuns all the lymphatic beauties in his neighborhood, and selects to wife the most nervous-sanguine, may find that she is unwilling to get up in the winter mornings and make the kitchen fire. Many a man, even in this scientific age which professes to label us all, has been cruelly deceived in this way. Neither the blondes nor the brunettes act according to the advertisement of their temperaments. The truth is that men refuse to come under the classifications of the pseudo-scientists, and all our new nomenclatures do not add much to our knowledge. You know what to expect — if the comparison will be pardoned — of a horse with certain points ; but you would n't dare go on a journey with a man merely upon the strength of knowing that his temperament

was the proper mixture of the sanguine and the phlegmatic. Science is not able to teach us concerning men as it teaches us of horses, though I am very far from saying that there are not traits of nobleness and of meanness that run through families and can be calculated to appear in individuals with absolute certainty ; one family will be trusty and another tricky through all its members for generations ; noble strains and ignoble strains are perpetuated. When we hear that she has eloped with the stable-boy and married him, we are apt to remark, "Well, she was a *Bogardus*." And when we read that she has gone on a mission and has died, distinguishing herself by some extraordinary devotion to the heathen at *Ujiji*, we think it sufficient to say, "Yes, her mother married into the *Smiths*." But this knowledge comes of our experience of special families, and stands us in stead no further.

If we cannot classify men scientifically and reduce them under a kind of botanical order, as if they had a calculable vegetable development, neither can we gain much knowledge of them by comparison. It does not help me at all in my estimate of their characters to compare *Mandeville* with the *Young Lady*, or *Our Next Door* with the *Parson*. The wise man does not permit himself to set up even in his own mind any comparison of his friends. His friendship is capable of going to extremes with many people, evoked as it is by many qualities. When *Mandeville* goes into my garden in June I can usually find him in a particular bed of strawberries, but he does not speak disrespectfully of the others. When Na-

ture, says Mandeville, consents to put herself into any sort of strawberry, I have no criticisms to make, I am only glad that I have been created into the same world with such a delicious manifestation of the Divine favor. If I left Mandeville alone in the garden long enough, I have no doubt he would impartially make an end of the fruit of all the beds, for his capacity in this direction is as all-embracing as it is in the matter of friendships. The Young Lady has also her favorite patch of berries. And the Parson, I am sorry to say, prefers to have them picked for him — the elect of the garden — and served in an orthodox manner. The strawberry has a sort of poetical precedence, and I presume that no fruit is jealous of it any more than any flower is jealous of the rose; but I remark the facility with which liking for it is transferred to the raspberry, and from the raspberry (not to make a tedious enumeration) to the melon, and from the melon to the grape, and the grape to the pear, and the pear to the apple. And we do not mar our enjoyment of each by comparisons.

Of course it would be a dull world if we could not criticise our friends, but the most unprofitable and unsatisfactory criticism is that by comparison. Criticism is not necessarily uncharitableness, but a wholesome exercise of our powers of analysis and discrimination. It is, however, a very idle exercise, leading to no results when we set the qualities of one over against the qualities of another, and disparage by contrast and not by independent judgment. And this method of procedure creates jealousies and heart-burnings innumerable.

Criticism by comparison is the refuge of incapables, and especially is this true in literature. It is a lazy way of disposing of a young poet to bluntly declare, without any sort of discrimination of his defects or his excellences, that he equals Tennyson, and that Scott never wrote anything finer. What is the justice of damning a meritorious novelist by comparing him with Dickens, and smothering him with thoughtless and good-natured eulogy? The poet and the novelist may be well enough, and probably have qualities and gifts of their own which are worth the critic's attention, if he has any time to bestow on them; and it is certainly unjust to subject them to a comparison with somebody else, merely because the critic will not take the trouble to ascertain what they are. If, indeed, the poet and novelist are mere imitators of a model and copyists of a style, they may be dismissed with such commendation as we bestow upon the machines who pass their lives in making bad copies of the pictures of the great painters. But the critics of whom we speak do not intend depreciation, but eulogy, when they say that the author they have in hand has the wit of Sydney Smith and the brilliancy of Macaulay. Probably he is not like either of them, and may have a genuine though modest virtue of his own; but these names will certainly kill him, and he will never be anybody in the popular estimation. The public finds out speedily that he is not Sydney Smith, and it resents the extravagant claim for him as if he were an impudent pretender. How many authors of fair ability to interest the world have we known in our own day who have been

thus sky-rocketed into notoriety by the lazy indiscrimination of the critic-by-comparison, and then have sunk into a popular contempt as undeserved! I never see a young aspirant injudiciously compared to a great and resplendent name in literature, but I feel like saying, My poor fellow, your days are few and full of trouble; you begin life handicapped, and you cannot possibly run a creditable race.

I think this sort of critical eulogy is more damaging even than that which kills by a different assumption, and one which is equally common, namely, that the author has not done what he probably never intended to do. It is well known that most of the trouble in life comes from our inability to compel other people to do what we think they ought, and it is true in criticism that we are unwilling to take a book for what it is, and credit the author with that. When the solemn critic, like a mastiff with a ladies' bonnet in his mouth, gets hold of a light piece of verse, or a graceful sketch which catches the humor of an hour for the entertainment of an hour, he tears it into a thousand shreds. It adds nothing to human knowledge, it solves none of the problems of life, it touches none of the questions of social science, it is not a philosophical treatise, and it is not a dozen things that it might have been. The critic cannot forgive the author for this disrespect to him. This is n't a rose, says the critic, taking up a pansy and rending it; it is not at all like a rose, and the author is either a pretentious idiot or an idiotic pretender. What business, indeed, has the author to send the critic a bunch of sweet-peas, when he knows that a

cabbage would be preferred,—something not showy, but useful?

A good deal of this is what Mandeville said, and I am not sure that it is devoid of personal feeling. He published, some years ago, a little volume giving an account of a trip through the Great West, and a very entertaining book it was. But one of the heavy critics got hold of it, and made Mandeville appear, even to himself, he confessed, like an ass, because there was nothing in the volume about geology or mining prospects, and very little to instruct the student of physical geography. With alternate sarcasm and ridicule, he literally basted the author, till Mandeville said that he felt almost like a depraved scoundrel, and thought he should be held up to less execration if he had committed a neat and scientific murder.

But I confess that I have a good deal of sympathy with the critics. Consider what these public tasters have to endure! None of us, I fancy, would like to be compelled to read all that they read, or to take into our mouths, even with the privilege of speedily ejecting it with a grimace, all that they sip. The critics of the vintage, who pursue their calling in the dark vaults and amid mouldy casks, give their opinion, for the most part, only upon wine, upon juice that has matured and ripened into development of quality. But what crude, unrestrained, unfermented, even raw and drugged liquor, must the literary taster put to his unwilling lips day after day!

TENTH STUDY

I

IT was my good fortune once to visit a man who remembered the rebellion of 1745. Lest this confession should make me seem very aged, I will add that the visit took place in 1851, and that the man was then one hundred and thirteen years old. He was quite a lad before Dr. Johnson drank Mrs. Thrale's tea. That he was as old as he had the credit of being, I have the evidence of my own senses (and I am seldom mistaken in a person's age), of his own family, and his own word; and it is incredible that so old a person, and one so apparently near the grave, would deceive about his age.

The testimony of the very aged is always to be received without question, as Alexander Hamilton once learned. He was trying a land-title with Aaron Burr, and two of the witnesses upon whom Burr relied were venerable Dutchmen, who had, in their youth, carried the surveying chains over the land in dispute, and who were now aged respectively one hundred and four years and one hundred and six years. Hamilton gently attempted to undervalue their testimony, but he was instantly put down by the Dutch justice, who suggested that Mr. Hamilton could not be aware of the age of the witnesses.

My old man (the expression seems familiar and

inelegant) had indeed an exaggerated idea of his own age, and sometimes said that he supposed he was going on four hundred, which was true enough, in fact; but for the exact date, he referred to his youngest son,—a frisky and humorsome lad of eighty years, who had received us at the gate, and whom we had at first mistaken for the veteran, his father. But when we beheld the old man, we saw the difference between age and age. The latter had settled into a grizzliness and grimness which belong to a very aged and stunted but sturdy oak-tree, upon the bark of which the gray moss is thick and heavy. The old man appeared hale enough, he could walk about, his sight and hearing were not seriously impaired, he ate with relish, and his teeth were so sound that he would not need a dentist for at least another century; but the moss was growing on him. His boy of eighty seemed a green sapling beside him.

He remembered absolutely nothing that had taken place within thirty years, but otherwise his mind was perhaps as good as it ever was, for he must always have been an ignoramus, and would never know anything if he lived to be as old as he said he was going on to be. Why he was interested in the rebellion of 1745 I could not discover, for he of course did not go over to Scotland to carry a pike in it, and he only remembered to have heard it talked about as a great event in the Irish market-town near which he lived, and to which he had ridden when a boy. And he knew much more about the horse that drew him, and the cart in which he rode, than he did about the rebellion of the Pretender.

I hope I do not appear to speak harshly of this amiable old man, and if he is still living I wish him well, although his example was bad in some respects. He had used tobacco for nearly a century, and the habit has very likely been the death of him. If so, it is to be regretted. For it would have been interesting to watch the process of his gradual disintegration and return to the ground: the loss of sense after sense, as decaying limbs fall from the oak; the failure of discrimination, of the power of choice, and finally of memory itself; the peaceful wearing out and passing away of body and mind without disease, the natural running down of a man. The interesting fact about him at that time was that his bodily powers seemed in sufficient vigor, but that the mind had not force enough to manifest itself through his organs. The complete battery was there, the appetite was there, the acid was eating the zinc; but the electric current was too weak to flash from the brain. And yet he appeared so sound throughout, that it was difficult to say that his mind was not as good as it ever had been. He had stored in it very little to feed on, and any mind would get enfeebled by a century's rumination on a hearsay idea of the rebellion of '45.

It was possible with this man to fully test one's respect for age, which is in all civilized nations a duty. And I found that my feelings were mixed about him. I discovered in him a conceit in regard to his long sojourn on this earth, as if it were somehow a credit to him. In the presence of his good opinion of himself, I could but question the real value of his continued life, to himself or to others. If he ever had

any friends he had outlived them, except his boy ; his wives — a century of them — were all dead ; the world had actually passed away for him. He hung on the tree like a frost-nipped apple, which the farmer has neglected to gather. The world always renews itself, and remains young. What relation had he to it ?

I was delighted to find that this old man had never voted for George Washington. I do not know that he had ever heard of him. Washington may be said to have played his part since his time. I am not sure that he perfectly remembered anything so recent as the American Revolution. He was living quietly in Ireland during our French and Indian wars, and he did not emigrate to this country till long after our revolutionary and our constitutional struggles were over. The Rebellion of '45 was the great event of the world for him, and of that he knew nothing.

I intend no disrespect to this man, — a cheerful and pleasant enough old person, — but he had evidently lived himself out of the world, as completely as people usually die out of it. His only remaining value was to the moralist, who might perchance make something out of him. I suppose if he had died young, he would have been regretted, and his friends would have lamented that he did not fill out his days in the world, and would very likely have called him back, if tears and prayers could have done so. They can see now what his prolonged life amounted to, and how the world has closed up the gap he once filled while he still lives in it.

A great part of the unhappiness of this world con-

sists in regret for those who depart, as it seems to us, prematurely. We imagine that if they would return, the old conditions would be restored. But would it be so? If they, in any case, came back, would there be any place for them? The world so quickly readjusts itself after any loss, that the return of the departed would nearly always throw it, even the circle most interested, into confusion. Are the Enoch Ardens ever wanted?

II

A POPULAR notion akin to this, that the world would have any room for the departed if they should now and then return, is the constant regret that people will not learn by the experience of others, that one generation learns little from the preceding, and that youth never will adopt the experience of age. But if experience went for anything, we should all come to a stand-still; for there is nothing so discouraging to effort. Disbelief in Ecclesiastes is the mainspring of action. In that lies the freshness and the interest of life, and it is the source of every endeavor.

If the boy believed that the accumulation of wealth and the acquisition of power were what the old man says they are, the world would very soon be stagnant. If he believed that his chances of obtaining either were as poor as the majority of men find them to be, ambition would die within him. It is because he rejects the experience of those who have preceded him, that the world is kept in the topsy-turvy condition which we all rejoice in, and which we call progress.

And yet I confess I have a soft place in my heart for that rare character in our New England life who is content with the world as he finds it, and who does not attempt to appropriate any more of it to himself than he absolutely needs from day to day. He knows from the beginning that the world could get on without him, and he has never had any anxiety to leave any result behind him, any legacy for the world to quarrel over.

He is really an exotic in our New England climate and society, and his life is perpetually misunderstood by his neighbors, because he shares none of their uneasiness about getting on in life. He is even called lazy, good-for-nothing, and "shiftless," — the final stigma that we put upon a person who has learned to wait without the exhausting process of laboring.

I made his acquaintance last summer in the country, and I have not in a long time been so well pleased with any of our species. He was a man past middle life, with a large family. He had always been from boyhood of a contented and placid mind, slow in his movements, slow in his speech. I think he never cherished a hard feeling toward anybody, nor envied any one, least of all the rich and prosperous about whom he liked to talk. Indeed, his talk was a good deal about wealth, especially about his cousin who had been down South and "got fore-handed" within a few years. He was genuinely pleased at his relation's good luck, and pointed him out to me with some pride. But he had no envy of him, and he evinced no desire to imitate him. I inferred from all

his conversation about "piling it up" (of which he spoke with a gleam of enthusiasm in his eye), that there were moments when he would like to be rich himself; but it was evident that he would never make the least effort to be so, and I doubt if he could even overcome that delicious inertia of mind and body called laziness, sufficiently to inherit.

Wealth seemed to have a far and peculiar fascination for him, and I suspect he was a visionary in the midst of his poverty. Yet I suppose he had hardly the personal property which the law exempts from execution. He had lived in a great many towns, moving from one to another with his growing family, by easy stages, and was always the poorest man in the town, and lived on the most niggardly of its rocky and bramble-grown farms, the productiveness of which he reduced to zero in a couple of seasons by his careful neglect of culture. The fences of his hired domain always fell into ruins under him, perhaps because he sat on them so much, and the hovels he occupied rotted down during his placid residence in them. He moved from desolation to desolation, but carried always with him the equal mind of a philosopher. Not even the occasional tart remarks of his wife, about their nomadic life and his serenity in the midst of discomfort, could ruffle his smooth spirit.

He was, in every respect, a most worthy man, truthful, honest, temperate, and, I need not say, frugal; and he had no bad habits, — perhaps he never had energy enough to acquire any. Nor did he lack the knack of the Yankee race. He could make a shoe,

or build a house, or doctor a cow; but it never seemed to him, in this brief existence, worth while to do any of these things. He was an excellent angler, but he rarely fished; partly because of the shortness of days, partly on account of the uncertainty of bites, but principally because the trout brooks were all arranged lengthwise and ran over so much ground. But no man liked to look at a string of trout better than he did, and he was willing to sit down in a sunny place and talk about trout-fishing half a day at a time, and he would talk pleasantly and well too, though his wife might be continually interrupting him by a call for firewood.

I should not do justice to his own idea of himself if I did not add that he was most respectably connected, and that he had a justifiable though feeble pride in his family. It helped his self-respect, which no ignoble circumstances could destroy. He was, as must appear by this time, a most intelligent man, and he was a well-informed man; that is to say, he read the weekly newspapers when he could get them, and he had the average country information about Beecher and Greeley and the Prussian war ("Napoleon is gettin' on 't, ain't he?"), and the general prospect of the election campaigns. Indeed, he was warmly, or rather luke-warmly, interested in politics. He liked to talk about the inflated currency, and it seemed plain to him that his condition would somehow be improved if we could get to a specie basis. He was, in fact, a little troubled by the national debt; it seemed to press on him somehow, while his own never did. He exhibited more animation over the

affairs of the government than he did over his own, — an evidence at once of his disinterestedness and his patriotism. He had been an old abolitionist, and was strong on the rights of free labor, though he did not care to exercise his privilege much. Of course he had the proper contempt for the poor whites down South. I never saw a person with more correct notions on such a variety of subjects. He was perfectly willing that churches (being himself a member), and Sunday-schools, and missionary enterprises should go on ; in fact, I do not believe he ever opposed anything in his life. No one was more willing to vote town taxes and road-repairs and schoolhouses than he. If you could call him spirited at all, he was public-spirited.

And with all this he was never very well ; he had, from boyhood, “enjoyed poor health.” You would say he was not a man who would ever catch anything, not even an epidemic ; but he was a person whom diseases would be likely to overtake, even the slowest of slow fevers. And he was n't a man to shake off anything. And yet sickness seemed to trouble him no more than poverty. He was not discontented ; he never grumbled. I am not sure but he relished a “spell of sickness” in haying-time.

An admirably balanced man, who accepts the world as it is, and evidently lives on the experience of others. I have never seen a man with less envy, or more cheerfulness, or so contented with as little reason for being so. The only drawback to his future is that rest beyond the grave will not be much change for him, and he has no works to follow him.

III

THIS Yankee philosopher, who, without being a Brahmin, had, in an uncongenial atmosphere, reached the perfect condition of Nirvâna, reminded us all of the ancient sages ; and we queried whether a world that could produce such as he, and could, beside, lengthen a man's years to one hundred and thirteen, could fairly be called an old and worn-out world, having long passed the stage of its primeval poetry and simplicity. Many an Eastern dervish has, I think, got immortality upon less laziness and resignation than this temporary sojourner in Massachusetts. It is a common notion that the world (meaning the people in it) has become tame and commonplace, lost its primeval freshness and epigrammatic point. Mandeville, in his argumentative way, dissents from this entirely. He says that the world is more complex, varied, and a thousand times as interesting as it was in what we call its youth, and that it is as fresh, as individual, and capable of producing odd and eccentric characters as ever. He thought the creative vim had not in any degree abated, that both the types of men and of nations are as sharply stamped and defined as ever they were.

Was there ever, he said, in the past, any figure more clearly cut and freshly minted than the Yankee? Had the Old World anything to show more positive and uncompromising in all the elements of character than the Englishman? And if the edges of these were being rounded off, was there not de-

veloping in the extreme West a type of men different from all preceding, which the world could not yet define? He believed that the production of original types was simply infinite.

Herbert urged that he must at least admit that there was a freshness of legend and poetry in what we call the primeval peoples that is wanting now; the mythic period is gone, at any rate.

Mandeville could not say about the myths. We could n't tell what interpretation succeeding ages would put upon our lives and history and literature when they have become remote and shadowy. But we need not go to antiquity for epigrammatic wisdom, or for characters as racy of the fresh earth as those handed down to us from the dawn of history. He would put Benjamin Franklin against any of the sages of the mythic or the classic period. He would have been perfectly at home in ancient Athens, as Socrates would have been in modern Boston. There might have been more heroic characters at the siege of Troy than Abraham Lincoln, but there was not one more strongly marked individually; not one his superior in what we call primeval craft and humor. He was just the man, if he could not have dislodged Priam by a writ of ejectment, to have invented the wooden horse, and then to have made Paris the hero of some ridiculous story that would have set all Asia in a roar.

Mandeville said further, that as to poetry, he did not know much about that, and there was not much he cared to read except parts of Shakespeare and Homer, and passages of Milton. But it did seem to him that we had men nowadays, who could, if they

would give their minds to it, manufacture in quantity the same sort of epigrammatic sayings and legends that our scholars were digging out of the Orient. He did not know why Emerson in antique setting was not as good as Saadi. Take for instance, said Mandeville, such a legend as this, and how easy it would be to make others like it : —

The son of an Emir had red hair, of which he was ashamed, and wished to dye it. But his father said : "Nay, my son, rather behave in such a manner that all fathers shall wish their sons had red hair."

This was too absurd. Mandeville had gone too far, except in the opinion of Our Next Door, who declared that an imitation was just as good as an original, if you could not detect it. But Herbert said that the closer an imitation is to an original, the more unendurable it is. But nobody could tell exactly why.

The Fire-Tender said that we are imposed on by forms. The nuggets of wisdom that are dug out of the Oriental and remote literatures would often prove to be only commonplace if stripped of their quaint setting. If you gave an Oriental twist to some of our modern thought, its value would be greatly enhanced for many people.

I have seen those, said the Mistress, who seem to prefer dried fruit to fresh ; but I like the strawberry and the peach of each season, and for me the last is always the best.

Even the Parson admitted that there were no signs of fatigue or decay in the creative energy of the world ; and if it is a question of Pagans, he preferred Mandeville to Saadi.

ELEVENTH STUDY

IT happened, or rather, to tell the truth, it was contrived, — for I have waited too long for things to turn up to have much faith in “happen,” — that we who have sat by this hearthstone before should all be together on Christmas eve. There was a splendid backlog of hickory just beginning to burn with a glow that promised to grow more fiery till long past midnight, which would have needed no apology in a loggers’ camp, — not so much as the religion of which a lady (in a city which shall be nameless) said, “If you must have a religion, this one will do nicely.”

There was not much conversation, as is apt to be the case when people come together who have a great deal to say, and are intimate enough to permit the freedom of silence. It was Mandeville who suggested that we read something, and the Young Lady, who was in a mood to enjoy her own thoughts, said, “Do.” And finally it came about that the Fire-Tender, without more resistance to the urging than was becoming, went to his library, and returned with a manuscript, from which he read the story of

MY UNCLE IN INDIA

Not that it is my uncle, let me explain. It is Polly’s uncle, as I very well know, from the many

times she has thrown him up to me, and is liable so to do at any moment. Having small expectations myself, and having wedded Polly when they were smaller, I have come to feel the full force, the crushing weight, of her lightest remark about "My Uncle in India." The words as I write them convey no idea of the tone in which they fall upon my ears. I think it is the only fault of that estimable woman, that she has an uncle in India, and does not let him quietly remain there. I feel quite sure that if I had an uncle in Botany Bay, I should never, never throw him up to Polly in the way mentioned. If there is any jar in our quiet life, he is the cause of it; all along of possible "expectations" on the one side calculated to overawe the other side not having expectations. And yet I know that if her uncle in India were this night to roll a barrel of "India's golden sands," as I feel that he any moment may do, into our sitting-room, at Polly's feet, that charming wife, who is more generous than the month of May, and who has no thought but for my comfort in two worlds, would straightway make it over to me, to have and to hold, if I could lift it, forever and forever. And that makes it more inexplicable that she, being a woman, will continue to mention him in the way she does.

In a large and general way I regard uncles as not out of place in this transitory state of existence. They stand for a great many possible advantages. They are liable to "tip" you at school, they are resources in vacation, they come grandly in play about the holidays, at which season my heart always did

warm towards them with lively expectations, which were often turned into golden solidities; and then there is always the prospect, sad to a sensitive mind, that uncles are mortal, and, in their timely taking off, may prove as generous in the will as they were in the deed. And there is always this redeeming possibility in a niggardly uncle. Still there must be something wrong in the character of the uncle *per se*, or all history would not agree that nepotism is such a dreadful thing.

But, to return from this unnecessary digression, I am reminded that the charioteer of the patient year has brought round the holiday time. It has been a growing year, as most years are. It is very pleasant to see how the shrubs in our little patch of ground widen and thicken and bloom at the right time, and to know that the great trees have added a layer to their trunks. To be sure, our garden, — which I planted under Polly's directions, with seeds that must have been patented, and I forgot to buy the right of, for they are mostly still waiting the final resurrection, — gave evidence that it shared in the misfortune of the Fall, and was never an Eden from which one would have required to have been driven. It was the easiest garden to keep the neighbor's pigs and hens out of I ever saw. If its increase was small, its temptations were smaller, and that is no little recommendation in this world of temptations. But, as a general thing, everything has grown, except our house. That little cottage, over which Polly presides with grace enough to adorn a palace, is still small outside and smaller inside; and if it has an air

of comfort and of neatness, and its rooms are cozy and sunny by day and cheerful by night, and it is bursting with books, and not unattractive with modest pictures on the walls, which we think do well enough until my uncle — (but never mind my uncle, now), — and if, in the long winter evenings, when the largest lamp is lit, and the chestnuts glow in embers, and the kid turns on the spit, and the house-plants are green and flowering, and the ivy glistens in the firelight, and Polly sits with that contented, far-away look in her eyes that I like to see, her fingers busy upon one of those cruel mysteries which have delighted the sex since Penelope, and I read in one of my fascinating law-books, or perhaps regale ourselves with a taste of Montaigne, — if all this is true, there are times when the cottage seems small; though I can never find that Polly thinks so, except when she sometimes says that she does not know where she should bestow her uncle in it, if he should suddenly come back from India.

There it is, again. I sometimes think that my wife believes her uncle in India to be as large as two ordinary men; and if her ideas of him are any gauge of the reality, there is no place in the town large enough for him except the Town Hall. She probably expects him to come with his bungalow, and his sedan, and his palanquin, and his elephants, and his retinue of servants, and his principalities, and his powers, and his ha — (no, not that), and his chow-chow, and his — I scarcely know what besides.

Christmas eve was a shiny cold night, a creaking cold night, a placid, calm, swingeing cold night.

Out-doors had gone into a general state of crystallization. The snow-fields were like the vast Arctic ice-fields that Kane looked on, and lay sparkling under the moonlight, crisp and Christmasy, and all the crystals on the trees and bushes hung glistening, as if ready, at a breath of air, to break out into metallic ringing, like a million silver joy-bells. I mentioned the conceit to Polly, as we stood at the window, and she said it reminded her of Jean Paul. She is a woman of most remarkable discernment.

Christmas is a great festival at our house in a small way. Among the many delightful customs we did not inherit from our Pilgrim Fathers, there is none so pleasant as that of giving presents at this season. It is the most exciting time of the year. No one is too rich to receive something, and no one too poor to give a trifle. And in the act of giving and receiving these tokens of regard, all the world is kin for once, and brighter for this transient glow of generosity. Delightful custom! Hard is the lot of childhood that knows nothing of the visits of Kriss Kringle, or the stockings hung by the chimney at night; and cheerless is any age that is not brightened by some Christmas gift, however humble. What a mystery of preparation there is in the preceding days, what planning and plottings of surprises! Polly and I keep up the custom in our simple way, and great is the perplexity to express the greatest amount of affection with a limited outlay. For the excellence of a gift lies in its appropriateness rather than in its value. As we stood by the window that night, we wondered what we should receive this year, and

indulged in I know not what little hypocrisies and deceptions.

“I wish,” said Polly, “that my uncle in India would send me a camel’s-hair shawl, or a string of pearls, each as big as the end of my thumb.”

“Or a white cow, which would give golden milk, that would make butter worth seventy-five cents a pound,” I added, as we drew the curtains, and turned to our chairs before the open fire.

It is our custom on every Christmas eve — as I believe I have somewhere said, or if I have not, I say it again, as the member from Erin might remark — to read one of Dickens’s Christmas stories. And this night, after punching the fire until it sent showers of sparks up the chimney, I read the opening chapter of “Mrs. Lirriper’s Lodgings,” in my best manner, and handed the book to Polly to continue; for I do not so much relish reading aloud the succeeding stories of Mr. Dickens’s annual budget, since he wrote them, as men go to war in these days, by substitute. And Polly read on, in her melodious voice, which is almost as pleasant to me as the Wasser-fluth of Schubert, which she often plays at twilight; and I looked into the fire, unconsciously constructing stories of my own out of the embers. And her voice still went on, in a sort of running accompaniment to my airy or fiery fancies.

“Sleep?” said Polly, stopping, with what seemed to me a sort of crash, in which all the castles tumbled into ashes.

“Not in the least,” I answered brightly; “never heard anything more agreeable.” And the reading

flowed on and on and on, and I looked steadily into the fire, the fire, fire, fi—

Suddenly the door opened, and into our cozy parlor walked the most venerable personage I ever laid eyes on, who saluted me with great dignity. Summer seemed to have burst into the room, and I was conscious of a puff of Oriental airs, and a delightful, languid tranquillity. I was not surprised that the figure before me was clad in full turban, baggy drawers, and a long loose robe, girt about the middle with a rich shawl. Followed him a swart attendant, who hastened to spread a rug upon which my visitor sat down, with great gravity, as I am informed they do in farthest Ind. The slave then filled the bowl of a long-stemmed chibouk, and, handing it to his master, retired behind him and began to fan him with the most prodigious palm-leaf I ever saw. Soon the fumes of the delicate tobacco of Persia pervaded the room, like some costly aroma which you cannot buy, now the entertainment of the Arabian Nights is discontinued.

Looking through the window I saw, if I saw anything, a palanquin at our door, and attendant on it four dusky, half-naked bearers, who did not seem to fancy the splendor of the night, for they jumped about on the snow crust, and I could see them shiver and shake in the keen air. Oho! thought I, this, then, is my uncle from India!

“Yes, it is,” now spoke my visitor extraordinary, in a gruff, harsh voice.

“I think I have heard Polly speak of you,” I rejoined, in an attempt to be civil, for I did n’t like

his face any better than I did his voice, — a red, fiery, irascible kind of face.

“Yes, I’ve come over to — O Lord, — quick, Jamsetzee, lift up that foot, — take care. There, Mr. Trimings, if that’s your name, get me a glass of brandy, stiff.”

I got him our little apothecary-labeled bottle and poured out enough to preserve a whole can of peaches. My uncle took it down without a wink, as if it had been water, and seemed relieved. It was a very pleasant uncle to have at our fireside on Christmas eve, I felt.

At a motion from my uncle, Jamsetzee handed me a parcel which I saw was directed to Polly, which I untied, and lo! the most wonderful camel’s-hair shawl that ever was, so fine that I immediately drew it through my finger-ring, and so large that I saw it would entirely cover our little room if I spread it out; a dingy red color, but splendid in appearance from the little white hieroglyphic worked in one corner, which is always worn outside, to show that it cost nobody knows how many thousands of dollars.

“A Christmas trifle for Polly. I have come home — as I was saying when that confounded twinge took me — to settle down; and I intend to make Polly my heir, and live at my ease and enjoy life. Move that leg a little, Jamsetzee.”

I meekly replied that I had no doubt Polly would be delighted to see her dear uncle, and as for inheriting, if it came to that, I did n’t know any one with a greater capacity for that than she.

“That depends,” said the gruff old smoker, “how

I like ye. A fortune, scraped up in forty years in Ingy, ain't to be thrown away in a minute. But what a house this is to live in!" the uncomfortable old relative went on, throwing a contemptuous glance round the humble cottage. "Is this all of it?"

"In the winter it is all of it," I said, flushing up; "but in the summer, when the doors and windows are open, it is as large as anybody's house. And," I went on, with some warmth, "it was large enough just before you came in, and pleasant enough. And besides," I said, rising into indignation, "you cannot get anything much better in this city short of eight hundred dollars a year, payable first days of January, April, July, and October, in advance, and my salary"—

"Hang your salary, and confound your impudence and your seven-by-nine hovel! Do you think *you* have anything to say about the use of *my* money, scraped up in forty years in Ingy? THINGS HAVE GOT TO BE CHANGED!" he burst out, in a voice that rattled the glasses on the sideboard.

I should think they were. Even as I looked into the little fireplace it enlarged, and there was an enormous grate, level with the floor, glowing with sea-coal; and a magnificent mantel carved in oak, old and brown; and over it hung a landscape, wide, deep, summer in the foreground with all the gorgeous coloring of the tropics, and beyond hills of blue and far mountains lying in rosy light. I held my breath as I looked down the marvelous perspective. Looking round for a second, I caught a glimpse of a Hindoo at each window, who vanished as if they had

been whisked off by enchantment; and the close walls that shut us in fled away. Had cohesion and gravitation given out? Was it the "Great Consummation" of the year 18—? It was all like the swift transformation of a dream, and I pinched my arm to make sure that I was not the subject of some diablerie.

The little house was gone; but that I scarcely minded, for I had suddenly come into possession of my wife's castle in Spain. I sat in a spacious, lofty apartment, furnished with a princely magnificence. Rare pictures adorned the walls, statues looked down from deep niches, and over both the dark ivy of England ran and drooped in graceful luxuriance. Upon the heavy tables were costly, illuminated volumes; luxurious chairs and ottomans invited to easy rest; and upon the ceiling Aurora led forth all the flower-strewing daughters of the dawn in brilliant frescoes. Through the open doors my eyes wandered into magnificent apartment after apartment. There to the south, through folding-doors, was the splendid library, with groined roof, colored light streaming in through painted windows, high shelves stowed with books, old armor hanging on the walls, great carved oaken chairs about a solid oaken table, and beyond a conservatory of flowers and plants with a fountain springing in the center, the splashing of whose waters I could hear. Through the open windows I looked upon a lawn, green with close-shaven turf, set with ancient trees, and variegated with parterres of summer plants in bloom. It was the month of June, and the smell of roses was in the air.

I might have thought it only a freak of my fancy, but there by the fireplace sat a stout, red-faced, puffy-looking man, in the ordinary dress of an English gentleman, whom I had no difficulty in recognizing as my uncle from India.

“One wants a fire every day in the year in this confounded climate,” remarked that amiable old person, addressing no one in particular.

I had it on my lips to suggest that I trusted the day would come when he would have heat enough to satisfy him, in permanent supply. I wish now that I had.

I think things *had* changed. For now into this apartment, full of the morning sunshine, came sweeping with the air of a countess born, and a maid of honor bred, and a queen in expectancy, my Polly, stepping with that lofty grace which I always knew she possessed, but which she never had space to exhibit in our little cottage, dressed with that elegance and richness that I should not have deemed possible to the most Dutch duchess that ever lived, and, giving me a complacent nod of recognition, approached her uncle, and said in her smiling, cheery way, “How is the dear uncle this morning?” And, as she spoke, she actually bent down and kissed his horrid old cheek, red-hot with currie and brandy and all the biting pickles I can neither eat nor name, — kissed him, and I did not turn into stone.

“Comfortable as the weather will permit, my darling!” — and again I did not turn into stone.

“Would n’t uncle like to take a drive this charming morning?” Polly asked.

Uncle finally grunted out his willingness, and Polly swept away again to prepare for the drive, taking no more notice of me than if I had been a poor assistant office lawyer on a salary. And soon the carriage was at the door, and my uncle, bundled up like a mummy, and the charming Polly drove gayly away.

How pleasant it is to be married rich, I thought, as I arose and strolled into the library, where everything was elegant and prim and neat, with no scraps of paper and piles of newspapers or evidences of literary slovenness on the table, and no books in attractive disorder, and where I seemed to see the legend staring at me from all the walls, "No smoking." So I uneasily lounged out of the house. And a magnificent house it was, a palace, rather, that seemed to frown upon and bully insignificant me with its splendor, as I walked away from it towards town.

And why town? There was no use of doing anything at the dingy office. Eight hundred dollars a year! It would n't keep Polly in gloves, let alone dressing her for *one* of those fashionable entertainments to which we went night after night. And so, after a weary day with nothing in it, I went home to dinner, to find my uncle quite chirruped up with his drive, and Polly regnant, sublimely engrossed in her new world of splendor, a dazzling object of admiration to me, but attentive and even tender to that hypochondriacal, gouty old subject from India.

Yes, a magnificent dinner, with no end of servants, who seemed to know that I could n't have paid the wages of one of them, and plate and courses endless. I say, a miserable dinner, on the edge of which I

seemed to sit by permission of somebody, like an invited poor relation, who wishes he had sent a regret, and longing for some of those nice little dishes that Polly used to set before me with beaming face, in the dear old days.

And after dinner, and proper attention to the comfort for the night of our benefactor, there was the Blibgims's party. No long, confidential interviews, as heretofore, as to what she should wear and what I should wear, and whether it would do to wear it again. And Polly went in one coach, and I in another. No crowding into the hired hack, with all the delightful care about tumbling dresses, and getting there in good order; and no coming home together to our little cozy cottage, in a pleasant, excited state of "flutteration," and sitting down to talk it all over, and "Was n't it nice?" and "Did I look as well as anybody?" and "Of course you did to me," and all that nonsense. We lived in a grand way now, and had our separate establishments and separate plans, and I used to think that a real separation could n't make matters much different. Not that Polly meant to be any different, or was, at heart; but, you know, she was so much absorbed in her new life of splendor, and perhaps I was a little old-fashioned.

I don't wonder at it now, as I look back. There was an army of dressmakers to see, and a world of shopping to do, and a houseful of servants to manage, and all the afternoon for calls, and her dear, dear friend, with the artless manners and merry heart of a girl, and the dignity and grace of a noble woman, —

the dear friend who lived in the house of the Seven Gables, to consult about all manner of important things. I could not, upon my honor, see that there was any place for me, and I went my own way, not that there was much comfort in it.

And then I would rather have had charge of a hospital ward than take care of that uncle. Such coddling as he needed, such humoring of whims. And I am bound to say that Polly could n't have been more dutiful to him if he had been a Hindoo idol. She read to him and talked to him, and sat by him with her embroidery, and was patient with his crossness, and wearied herself, that I could see, with her devoted ministrations.

I fancied sometimes she was tired of it, and longed for the old homely simplicity. I was. Nepotism had no charms for me. There was nothing that I could get Polly that she had not. I could surprise her with no little delicacies or trifles, delightedly bought with money saved for the purpose. There was no more coming home weary with office work and being met at the door with that warm, loving welcome which the King of England could not buy. There was no long evening when we read alternately from some favorite book, or laid our deep housekeeping plans, rejoiced in a good bargain or made light of a poor one, and were contented and merry with little. I recalled with longing my little den, where in the midst of the literary disorder I love, I wrote those stories for the "Antarctic" which Polly, if nobody else, liked to read. There was no comfort for me in my magnificent library. We were all rich and in splen-

dor, and our uncle had come from India. I wished, saving his soul, that the ship that brought him over had foundered off Barnegat Light. It would always have been a tender and regretful memory to both of us. And how sacred is the memory of such a loss!

Christmas? What delight could I have in long solicitude and ingenious devices touching a gift for Polly within my means, and hitting the border line between her necessities and her extravagant fancy? A drove of white elephants would n't have been good enough for her now, if each one carried a castle on his back.

"—and so they were married, and in their snug cottage lived happy ever after." — It was Polly's voice, as she closed the book.

"There, I don't believe you have heard a word of it," she said half complainingly.

"Oh, yes, I have," I cried, starting up and giving the fire a jab with the poker; "I heard every word of it, except a few at the close. I was thinking" — I stopped, and looked round.

"Why, Polly, where is the camel's-hair shawl?"

"Camel's-hair fiddlestick! Now I know you have been asleep for an hour."

And, sure enough, there was n't any camel's-hair shawl there, nor any uncle, nor were there any Hindoos at our windows.

And then I told Polly all about it; how her uncle came back, and we were rich and lived in a palace and had no end of money, but she did n't seem to have time to love me in it all, and all the comfort of the little house was blown away as by the winter

wind. And Polly vowed, half in tears, that she hoped her uncle never would come back, and she wanted nothing that we had not, and she would n't exchange our independent comfort and snug house, no, not for anybody's mansion. And then and there we made it all up, in a manner too particular for me to mention; and I never, to this day, heard Polly allude to My Uncle in India.

And then, as the clock struck eleven, we each produced from the place where we had hidden them the modest Christmas gifts we had prepared for each other, and what surprise there was! "Just the thing I needed." And, "It's perfectly lovely." And, "You should n't have done it." And, then, a question I never will answer, "Ten? fifteen? five? twelve?" "My dear, it cost eight hundred dollars, for I have put my whole year into it, and I wish it was a thousand times better."

And so, when the great iron tongue of the city bell swept over the snow the twelve strokes that announced Christmas day, if there was anywhere a happier home than ours, I am glad of it!

**BADDECK AND THAT SORT OF
THING**

PREFACE¹

TO JOSEPH H. TWICHELL

IT would be unfair to hold you responsible for these light sketches of a summer trip, which are now gathered into this little volume in response to the usual demand in such cases; yet you cannot escape altogether. For it was you who first taught me to say the name Baddeck; it was you who showed me its position on the map, and a seductive letter from a home missionary on Cape Breton Island, in relation to the abundance of trout and salmon in his field of labor. That missionary, you may remember, we never found, nor did we see his tackle; but I have no reason to believe that he does not enjoy good fishing in the right season. You understand the duties of a home missionary much better than I do, and you know whether he would be likely to let a couple of strangers into the best part of his preserve.

But I am free to admit that after our expedition was started you speedily relieved yourself of all responsibility for it, and turned it over to your comrade with a profound geographical indifference; you would as readily have gone to Baddeck by Nova Zembla as by Nova Scotia. The flight over the latter island was, you knew, however, no part of our ori-

¹ Appearing for the first time in this edition.

ginal plan, and you were not obliged to take any interest in it. You know that our design was to slip rapidly down, by the back way of Northumberland Sound, to the Bras d'Or, and spend a week fishing there; and that the greater part of this journey here imperfectly described is not really ours, but was put upon us by fate and by the peculiar arrangement of provincial travel.

It would have been easy after our return to have made up from libraries a most engaging description of the Provinces, mixing it with historical, legendary, botanical, geographical, and ethnological information, and seasoning it with adventure from your glowing imagination. But it seemed to me that it would be a more honest contribution if our account contained only what we saw, in our rapid travel; for I have a theory that any addition to the great body of print, however insignificant it may be, has a value in proportion to its originality and individuality, — however slight either is, — and very little value if it is a compilation of the observations of others. In this case I know how slight the value is; and I can only hope that as the trip was very entertaining to us, the record of it may not be wholly unentertaining to those of like tastes.

Of one thing, my dear friend, I am certain: if the readers of this little journey could have during its persual the companionship that the writer had when it was made, they would think it altogether delightful. There is no pleasure comparable to that of going about the world, in pleasant weather, with a good comrade, if the mind is distracted neither by

care, nor ambition, nor the greed of gain. The delight there is in seeing things, without any hope of pecuniary profit from them! We certainly enjoyed that inward peace which the philosopher associates with the absence of desire for money. For, as Plato says in the *Phædo*, "whence come wars and fightings and factions? whence but from the body and the lusts of the body? For wars are occasioned by the love of money." So also are the majority of the anxieties of life. We left these behind when we went into the Provinces with no design of acquiring anything there. I hope it may be my fortune to travel further with you in this fair world, under similar circumstances.

C. D. W.

NOOK FARM, HARTFORD, April 10, 1874.

BADDECK AND THAT SORT OF THING

I

“Ay, now I am in Arden: the more fool I; when I was at home,
I was in a better place; but travellers must be content.” —
TOUCHSTONE.

TWO comrades and travelers, who sought a better country than the United States in the month of August, found themselves one evening in apparent possession of the ancient town of Boston.

The shops were closed at early candle-light; the fashionable inhabitants had retired into the country, or into the second-story-back of their princely residences, and even an air of tender gloom settled upon the Common. The streets were almost empty, and one passed into the burnt district, where the scarred ruins and the uplifting piles of new brick and stone spread abroad under the flooding light of a full moon like another Pompeii, without any increase in his feeling of tranquil seclusion. Even the news-offices had put up their shutters, and a confiding stranger could nowhere buy a guide-book to help his wandering feet about the reposeful city, or to show him how to get out of it. There was, to be sure, a cheerful tinkle of horse-car bells in the air, and in the creeping vehicles

which created this levity of sound were a few lonesome passengers on their way to Scollay's Square ; but the two travelers, not having well-regulated minds, had no desire to go there. What would have become of Boston if the great fire had reached this sacred point of pilgrimage no merely human mind can imagine. Without it, I suppose the horse-cars would go continually round and round, never stopping, until the cars fell away piecemeal on the track, and the horses collapsed into a mere mass of bones and harness, and the brown-covered books from the Public Library, in the hands of the fading virgins who carried them, had accumulated fines to an incalculable amount.

Boston, notwithstanding its partial destruction by fire, is still a good place to start from. When one meditates an excursion into an unknown and perhaps perilous land, where the flag will not protect him and the greenback will only partially support him, he likes to steady and tranquilize his mind by a peaceful halt and a serene start. So we — for the intelligent reader has already identified us with the two travelers — resolved to spend the last night, before beginning our journey, in the quiet of a Boston hotel. Some people go into the country for quiet: we knew better. The country is no place for sleep. The general absence of sound which prevails at night is only a sort of background which brings out more vividly the special and unexpected disturbances which are suddenly sprung upon the restless listener. There are a thousand pokerish noises that no one can account for, which excite the nerves to acute watchfulness.

It is still early, and one is beginning to be lulled by the frogs and the crickets, when the faint rattle of a drum is heard,—just a few preliminary taps. But the soul takes alarm, and well it may, for a roll follows, and then a rub-a-dub-dub, and the farmer's boy who is handling the sticks and pounding the distended skin in a neighboring horse-shed begins to pour out his patriotism in that unending repetition of rub-a-dub-dub which is supposed to represent love of country in the young. When the boy is tired out and quits the field, the faithful watch-dog opens out upon the stilly night. He is the guardian of his master's slumbers. The howls of the faithful creature are answered by barks and yelps from all the farmhouses for a mile around, and exceedingly poor barking it usually is, until all the serenity of the night is torn to shreds. This is, however, only the opening of the orchestra. The cocks wake up if there is the faintest moonshine and begin an antiphonal service between responsive barn-yards. It is not the clear clarion of chanticleer that is heard in the morn of English poetry, but a harsh chorus of cracked voices, hoarse and abortive attempts, squawks of young experimenters, and some indescribable thing besides, for I believe even the hens crow in these days. Distracting as all this is, however, happy is the man who does not hear a goat lamenting in the night. The goat is the most exasperating of the animal creation. He cries like a deserted baby, but he does it without any regularity. One can accustom himself to any expression of suffering that is regular. The annoyance of the goat is in the dread-

ful waiting for the uncertain sound of the next wavering bleat. It is the fearful expectation of that, mingled with the faint hope that the last was the last, that aggravates the tossing listener until he has murder in his heart. He longs for daylight, hoping that the voices of the night will then cease, and that sleep will come with the blessed morning. But he has forgotten the birds, who at the first streak of gray in the east have assembled in the trees near his chamber-window, and keep up for an hour the most rasping dissonance, — an orchestra in which each artist is tuning his instrument, setting it in a different key and to play a different tune: each bird recalls a different tune, and none sings “Annie Laurie,” — to pervert Bayard Taylor’s song.

Give us the quiet of a city on the night before a journey. As we mounted skyward in our hotel, and went to bed in a serene altitude, we congratulated ourselves upon a reposeful night. It began well. But as we sank into the first doze, we were startled by a sudden crash. Was it an earthquake, or another fire? Were the neighboring buildings all tumbling in upon us, or had a bomb fallen into the neighboring crockery-store? It was the suddenness of the onset that startled us, for we soon perceived that it began with the clash of cymbals, the pounding of drums, and the blaring of dreadful brass. It was somebody’s idea of music. It opened without warning. The men composing the band of brass must have stolen silently into the alley about the sleeping hotel, and burst into the clamor of a rattling quick-step, on purpose. The horrible sound thus suddenly

let loose had no chance of escape ; it bounded back from wall to wall, like the clapping of boards in a tunnel, rattling windows and stunning all ears, in a vain attempt to get out over the roofs. But such music does not go up. What could have been the intention of this assault we could not conjecture. It was a time of profound peace through the country ; we had ordered no spontaneous serenade, if it was a serenade. Perhaps the Boston bands have that habit of going into an alley and disciplining their nerves by letting out a tune too big for the alley, and taking the shock of its reverberation. It may be well enough for the band, but many a poor sinner in the hotel that night must have thought the judgment day had sprung upon him. Perhaps the band had some remorse, for by and by it leaked out of the alley, in humble, apologetic retreat, as if somebody had thrown something at it from the sixth-story window, softly breathing as it retired the notes of "Fair Harvard."

The band had scarcely departed for some other haunt of slumber and weariness, when the notes of singing floated up that prolific alley, like the sweet tenor voice of one bewailing the prohibitory movement ; and for an hour or more a succession of young bacchanals, who were evidently wandering about in search of the Maine Law, lifted up their voices in song. Boston seems to be full of good singers ; but they will ruin their voices by this night exercise, and so the city will cease to be attractive to travelers who would like to sleep there. But this entertainment did not last the night out.

It stopped just before the hotel porter began to come around to rouse the travelers who had said the night before that they wanted to be awakened. In all well-regulated hotels this process begins at two o'clock and keeps up till seven. If the porter is at all faithful, he wakes up everybody in the house; if he is a shirk, he only rouses the wrong people. We treated the pounding of the porter on our door with silent contempt. At the next door he had better luck. Pound, pound. An angry voice, "What do you want?"

"Time to take the train, sir."

"Not going to take any train."

"Ain't your name Smith?"

"Yes."

"Well, Smith" —

"I left no order to be called." (Indistinct grumbling from Smith's room.)

Porter is heard shuffling slowly off down the passage. In a little while he returns to Smith's door, evidently not satisfied in his mind. Rap, rap, rap!

"Well, what now?"

"What's your initials?"

"A. T.; clear out!"

And the porter shambles away again in his slippers, grumbling something about a mistake. The idea of waking a man up in the middle of the night to ask him his "initials" was ridiculous enough to banish sleep for another hour. A person named Smith, when he travels, should leave his initials outside the door with his boots.

Refreshed by this reposeful night, and eager to

exchange the stagnation of the shore for the tumult of the ocean, we departed next morning for Baddeck by the most direct route. This we found, by diligent study of fascinating prospectuses of travel, to be by the boats of the International Steamship Company; and when, at eight o'clock in the morning, we stepped aboard one of them from Commercial Wharf, we felt that half our journey and the most perplexing part of it was accomplished. We had put ourselves upon a great line of travel, and had only to resign ourselves to its flow in order to reach the desired haven. The agent at the wharf assured us that it was not necessary to buy through tickets to Baddeck,—he spoke of it as if it were as easy a place to find as Swampscott,—it was a conspicuous name on the cards of the company, we should go right on from St. John without difficulty. The easy familiarity of this official with Baddeck, in short, made us ashamed to exhibit any anxiety about its situation or the means of approach to it. Subsequent experience led us to believe that the only man in the world, out of Baddeck, who knew anything about it lives in Boston, and sells tickets to it, or rather towards it.

There is no moment of delight in any pilgrimage like the beginning of it, when the traveler is settled simply as to his destination, and commits himself to his unknown fate and all the anticipations of adventure before him. We experienced this pleasure as we ascended to the deck of the steamboat and snuffed the fresh air of Boston Harbor. What a beautiful harbor it is, everybody says, with its irregularly indented shores and its islands. Being strangers, we

want to know the names of the islands, and to have Fort Warren, which has a national reputation, pointed out. As usual on a steamboat, no one is certain about the names, and the little geographical knowledge we have is soon hopelessly confused. We make out South Boston very plainly: a tourist is looking at its warehouses through his opera-glass, and telling his boy about a recent fire there. We find out afterwards that it was East Boston. We pass to the stern of the boat for a last look at Boston itself; and while there we have the pleasure of showing inquirers the Monument and the State House. We do this with easy familiarity; but where there are so many tall factory chimneys, it is not so easy to point out the Monument as one may think.

The day is simply delicious, when we get away from the unozoned air of the land. The sky is cloudless, and the water sparkles like the top of a glass of champagne. We intend by and by to sit down and look at it for half a day, basking in the sunshine and pleasing ourselves with the shifting and dancing of the waves. Now we are busy running about from side to side to see the islands, Governor's, Castle, Long, Deer, and the others. When, at length, we find Fort Warren, it is not nearly so grim and gloomy as we had expected, and is rather a pleasure-place than a prison in appearance. We are conscious, however, of a patriotic emotion as we pass its green turf and peeping guns. Leaving on our right Lovell's Island and the Great and Outer Brewster, we stand away north along the jagged Massachusetts shore. These outer islands look cold and wind-swept

even in summer, and have a hardness of outline which is very far from the aspect of summer isles in summer seas. They are too low and bare for beauty, and all the coast is of the most retiring and humble description. Nature makes some compensation for this lowness by an eccentricity of indentation which looks very picturesque on the map, and sometimes striking, as where Lynn stretches out a slender arm with knobby Nahant at the end, like a New Zealand war-club. We sit and watch this shore as we glide by with a placid delight. Its curves and low promontories are getting to be speckled with villages and dwellings, like the shores of the Bay of Naples; we see the white spires, the summer cottages of wealth, the brown farmhouses with an occasional orchard, the gleam of a white beach, and now and then the flag of some many-piazzaed hotel. The sunlight is the glory of it all; it must have quite another attraction — that of melancholy — under a gray sky and with a lead-colored water foreground.

There was not much on the steamboat to distract our attention from the study of physical geography. All the fashionable travelers had gone on the previous boat or were waiting for the next one. The passengers were mostly people who belonged in the Provinces and had the listless provincial air, with a Boston commercial traveler or two, and a few gentlemen from the republic of Ireland, dressed in their uncomfortable Sunday clothes. If any accident should happen to the boat, it was doubtful if there were persons on board who could draw up and pass the proper resolutions of thanks to the officers. I

heard one of these Irish gentlemen, whose satin vest was insufficient to repress the mountainous protuberance of his shirt-bosom, enlightening an admiring friend as to his idiosyncrasies. It appeared that he was that sort of a man that, if a man wanted anything of him, he had only to speak for it "wunst;" and that one of his peculiarities was an instant response of the deltoid muscle to the brain, though he did not express it in that language. He went on to explain to his auditor that he was so constituted physically that whenever he saw a fight, no matter whose property it was, he lost all control of himself. This sort of confidence poured out to a single friend, in a retired place on the guard of the boat, in an unexcited tone, was evidence of the man's simplicity and sincerity. The very act of traveling, I have noticed, seems to open a man's heart, so that he will impart to a chance acquaintance his losses, his diseases, his table preferences, his disappointments in love or in politics, and his most secret hopes. One sees everywhere this beautiful human trait, this craving for sympathy. There was the old lady, in the antique bonnet and plain cotton gloves, who got aboard the express train at a way-station on the Connecticut River Road. She wanted to go, let us say, to Peak's Four Corners. It seemed that the train did not usually stop there, but it appeared afterwards that the obliging conductor had told her to get aboard and he would let her off at Peak's. When she stepped into the car, in a flustered condition, carrying her large bandbox, she began to ask all the passengers, in turn, if this was the right train, and if it stopped

at Peak's. The information she received was various, but the weight of it was discouraging, and some of the passengers urged her to get off without delay, before the train should start. The poor woman got off, and pretty soon came back again, sent by the conductor; but her mind was not settled, for she repeated her questions to every person who passed her seat, and their answers still more discomposed her. "Sit perfectly still," said the conductor, when he came by. "You must get out and wait for a way train," said the passengers, who knew. In this confusion, the train moved off, just as the old lady had about made up her mind to quit the car, when her distraction was completed by the discovery that her hair trunk was not on board. She saw it standing on the open platform, as we passed, and after one look of terror, and a dash at the window, she subsided into her seat, grasping her handbox, with a vacant look of utter despair. Fate now seemed to have done its worst, and she was resigned to it. I am sure it was no mere curiosity, but a desire to be of service, that led me to approach her and say, "Madam, where are you going?"

"The Lord only knows," was the utterly candid response; but then, forgetting everything in her last misfortune and impelled to a burst of confidence, she began to tell me her troubles. She informed me that her youngest daughter was about to be married, and that all her wedding-clothes and all her summer clothes were in that trunk; and as she said this she gave a glance out of the window as if she hoped it might be following her. What would become of them

all now, all brand new, she did n't know, nor what would become of her or her daughter. And then she told me, article by article and piece by piece, all that that trunk contained, the very names of which had an unfamiliar sound in a railway-car, and how many sets and pairs there were of each. It seemed to be a relief to the old lady to make public this catalogue which filled all her mind; and there was a pathos in the revelation that I cannot convey in words. And though I am compelled, by way of illustration, to give this incident, no bribery or torture shall ever extract from me a statement of the contents of that hair trunk.

We were now passing Nahant, and we should have seen Longfellow's cottage and the waves beating on the rocks before it, if we had been near enough. As it was, we could only faintly distinguish the headland and note the white beach of Lynn. The fact is, that in travel one is almost as much dependent upon imagination and memory as he is at home. Somehow, we seldom get near enough to anything. The interest of all this coast which we had come to inspect was mainly literary and historical. And no country is of much interest until legends and poetry have draped it in hues that mere nature cannot produce. We looked at Nahant for Longfellow's sake; we strained our eyes to make out Marblehead on account of Whittier's ballad; we scrutinized the entrance to Salem Harbor because a genius once sat in its decaying custom-house and made of it a throne of the imagination. Upon this low shore line, which lies blinking in the midday sun, the waves of history have

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beaten for two centuries and a half, and romance has had time to grow there. Out of any of these coves might have sailed Sir Patrick Spens "to Noroway, to Noroway," —

"They hadna sailed upon the sea
A day but barely three,
Till loud and boisterous grew the wind,
And gurly grew the sea."

The sea was anything but gurly now; it lay idle and shining in an August holiday. It seemed as if we could sit all day and watch the suggestive shore and dream about it. But we could not. No man, and few women, can sit all day on those little round penitential stools that the company provide for the discomfort of their passengers. There is no scenery in the world that can be enjoyed from one of those stools. And when the traveler is at sea, with the land falling away in his horizon, and has to create his own scenery by an effort of the imagination, these stools are no assistance to him. The imagination, when one is sitting, will not work unless the back is supported. Besides, it began to be cold; notwithstanding the shiny, specious appearance of things, it was cold, except in a sheltered nook or two where the sun beat. This was nothing to be complained of by persons who had left the parching land in order to get cool. They knew that there would be a wind and a draught everywhere, and that they would be occupied nearly all the time in moving the little stools about to get out of the wind, or out of the sun, or out of something that is inherent in a steamboat. Most people enjoy riding on a steamboat, shaking and trem-

bling and chow-chowing along in pleasant weather out of sight of land ; and they do not feel any ennui, as may be inferred from the intense excitement which seizes them when a poor porpoise leaps from the water half a mile away. " Did you see the porpoise ? " makes conversation for an hour. On our steamboat there was a man who said he saw a whale, saw him just as plain, off to the east, come up to blow ; appeared to be a young one. I wonder where all these men come from who always see a whale. I never was on a sea-steamer yet that there was not one of these men.

We sailed from Boston Harbor straight for Cape Ann, and passed close by the twin lighthouses of Thacher, so near that we could see the lanterns and the stone gardens, and the young barbarians of Thacher all at play ; and then we bore away, straight over the trackless Atlantic, across that part of the map where the title and the publisher's name are usually printed, for the foreign city of St. John. It was after we passed these lighthouses that we did n't see the whale, and began to regret the hard fate that took us away from a view of the Isles of Shoals. I am not tempted to introduce them into this sketch, much as its surface needs their romantic color, for truth is stronger in me than the love of giving a deceitful pleasure. There will be nothing in this record that we did not see, or might not have seen. For instance, it might not be wrong to describe a coast, a town, or an island that we passed while we were performing our morning toilets in our state-rooms. The traveler owes a duty to his readers, and

if he is now and then too weary or too indifferent to go out from the cabin to survey a prosperous village where a landing is made, he has no right to cause the reader to suffer by his indolence. He should describe the village.

I had intended to describe the Maine coast, which is as fascinating on the map as that of Norway. We had all the feelings appropriate to nearness to it, but we could n't see it. Before we came abreast of it night had settled down, and there was around us only a gray and melancholy waste of salt water. To be sure it was a lovely night, with a young moon in its sky, —

“ I saw the new moon late yestreen
Wi' the auld moon in her arms, ” —

and we kept an anxious lookout for the Maine hills that push so boldly down into the sea. At length we saw them, — faint, dusky shadows in the horizon, looming up in an ashy color and with a most poetical light. We made out clearly Mt. Desert, and felt repaid for our journey by the sight of this famous island, even at such a distance. I pointed out the hills to the man at the wheel, and asked if we should go any nearer to Mt. Desert.

“ Them ! ” said he, with the merited contempt which officials in this country have for inquisitive travelers, — “ them 's Camden Hills. You won't see Mt. Desert till midnight, and then you won't.”

One always likes to weave in a little romance with summer travel on a steamboat ; and we came aboard this one with the purpose and the language to do so. But there was an absolute want of material, that would

hardly be credited if we went into details. The first meeting of the passengers at the dinner-table revealed it. There is a kind of female plainness which is pathetic, and many persons can truly say that to them it is homelike ; and there are vulgarities of manner that are interesting ; and there are peculiarities, pleasant or the reverse, which attract one's attention : but there was absolutely nothing of this sort on our boat. The female passengers were all neutrals, incapable, I should say, of making any impression whatever even under the most favorable circumstances. They were probably women of the Provinces, and took their neutral tint from the foggy land they inhabit, which is neither a republic nor a monarchy, but merely a languid expectation of something undefined. My comrade was disposed to resent the dearth of beauty, not only on this vessel but throughout the Provinces generally, — a resentment that could be shown to be unjust, for this was evidently not the season for beauty in these lands, and it was probably a bad year for it. Nor should an American of the United States be forward to set up his standard of taste in such matters ; neither in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, nor Cape Breton have I heard the inhabitants complain of the plainness of the women.

On such a night two lovers might have been seen, but not on our boat, leaning over the taffrail, — if that is the name of the fence around the cabin-deck, — looking at the moon in the western sky and the long track of light in the steamer's wake with unutterable tenderness. For the sea was perfectly smooth, so smooth as not to interfere with the most perfect

tenderness of feeling; and the vessel forged ahead under the stars of the soft night with an adventurous freedom that almost concealed the commercial nature of her mission. It seemed — this voyaging through the sparkling water, under the scintillating heavens, this resolute pushing into the opening splendors of night — like a pleasure trip. “It is the witching hour of half past ten,” said my comrade, “let us turn in.” (The reader will notice the consideration for her feelings which has omitted the usual description of “a sunset at sea.”)

When we looked from our state-room window in the morning we saw land. We were passing within a stone’s throw of a pale-green and rather cold-looking coast, with few trees or other evidences of fertile soil. Upon going out I found that we were in the harbor of Eastport. I found also the usual tourist who had been up, shivering in his winter overcoat, since four o’clock. He described to me the magnificent sunrise, and the lifting of the fog from islands and capes, in language that made me rejoice that he had seen it. He knew all about the harbor. That wooden town at the foot of it, with the white spire, was Lubec; that wooden town we were approaching was Eastport. The long island stretching clear across the harbor was Campobello. We had been obliged to go round it, a dozen miles out of our way, to get in, because the tide was in such a stage that we could not enter by the Lubec Channel. We had been obliged to enter an American harbor by British waters.

We approached Eastport with a great deal of

curiosity and considerable respect. It had been one of the cities of the imagination. Lying in the far east of our great territory, a military and even a sort of naval station, a conspicuous name on the map, prominent in boundary disputes and in war operations, frequent in telegraphic dispatches, — we had imagined it a solid city, with some Oriental, if decayed, peculiarity, a port of trade and commerce. The tourist informed me that Eastport looked very well at a distance, with the sun shining on its white houses. When we landed at its wooden dock we saw that it consisted of a few piles of lumber, a sprinkling of small cheap houses along a sidehill, a big hotel with a flag-staff, and a very peaceful-looking arsenal. It is doubtless a very enterprising and deserving city, but its aspect that morning was that of cheapness, newness, and stagnation, with no compensating picturesqueness. White paint always looks chilly under a gray sky and on naked hills. Even in hot August the place seemed bleak. The tourist, who went ashore with a view to breakfast, said that it would be a good place to stay in and go a-fishing and picnicking on Campobello Island. It has another advantage for the wicked over other Maine towns. Owing to the contiguity of British territory, the Maine Law is constantly evaded, in spirit. The thirsty citizen or sailor has only to step into a boat and give it a shove or two across the narrow stream that separates the United States from Deer Island and land, when he can ruin his breath, and return before he is missed.

This might be a cause of war with England, but it is not the most serious grievance here. The pos-

session by the British of the island of Campobello is an insufferable menace and impertinence. I write with the full knowledge of what war is. We ought to instantly dislodge the British from Campobello. It entirely shuts up and commands our harbor,—one of our chief Eastern harbors and war stations, where we keep a flag and cannon and some soldiers, and where the customs officers look out for smuggling. There is no way to get into our own harbor, except in favorable conditions of the tide, without begging the courtesy of a passage through British waters. Why is England permitted to stretch along down our coast in this straggling and inquisitive manner? She might almost as well own Long Island. It was impossible to prevent our cheeks mantling with shame as we thought of this, and saw ourselves, free American citizens, land-locked by alien soil in our own harbor.

We ought to have war, if war is necessary to possess Campobello and Deer Islands; or else we ought to give the British Eastport. I am not sure but the latter would be the better course.

With this war spirit in our hearts, we sailed away into the British waters of the Bay of Fundy, but keeping all the morning so close to the New Brunswick shore that we could see there was nothing on it; that is, nothing that would make one wish to land. And yet the best part of going to sea is keeping close to the shore, however tame it may be, if the weather is pleasant. A pretty bay now and then, a rocky cove with scant foliage, a lighthouse, a rude cabin, a level land, monotonous and without noble

forests,— this was New Brunswick as we coasted along it under the most favorable circumstances. But we were advancing into the Bay of Fundy ; and my comrade, who had been brought up on its high tides in the district school, was on the lookout for this phenomenon. The very name of Fundy is stimulating to the imagination, amid the geographical wastes of youth, and the young fancy reaches out to its tides with an enthusiasm that is given only to Fingal's Cave and other pictorial wonders of the text-book. I am sure the district schools would become what they are not now, if the geographers would make the other parts of the globe as attractive as the sonorous Bay of Fundy. The recitation about that is always an easy one ; there is a lusty pleasure in the mere shouting out of the name, as if the speaking it were an innocent sort of swearing. From the Bay of Fundy the rivers run uphill half the time, and the tides are from forty to ninety feet high. For myself, I confess that, in my imagination, I used to see the tides of this bay go stalking into the land like gigantic waterspouts ; or, when I was better instructed, I could see them advancing on the coast like a solid wall of masonry eighty feet high. "Where," we said, as we came easily, and neither uphill nor downhill, into the pleasant harbor of St. John, — "where are the tides of our youth?"

They were probably out, for when we came to the land we walked out upon the foot of a sloping platform that ran into the water by the side of the piles of the dock, which stood up naked and blackened high in the air. It is not the purpose of this paper

to describe St. John, nor to dwell upon its picturesque situation. As one approaches it from the harbor it gives a promise which its rather shabby streets, decaying houses, and steep plank sidewalks do not keep. A city set on a hill, with flags flying from a roof here and there, and a few shining spires and walls glistening in the sun, always looks well at a distance. St. John is extravagant in the matter of flag-staffs; almost every well-to-do citizen seems to have one on his premises, as a sort of vent for his loyalty, I presume. It is a good fashion, at any rate, and its more general adoption by us would add to the gayety of our cities when we celebrate the birthday of the President. St. John is built on a steep sidehill, from which it would be in danger of sliding off, if its houses were not mortised into the solid rock. This makes the house-foundations secure, but the labor of blasting out streets is considerable. We note these things complacently as we toil in the sun up the hill to the Victoria Hotel, which stands well up on the backbone of the ridge, and from the upper windows of which we have a fine view of the harbor, and of the hill opposite, above Carleton, where there is the brokenly truncated ruin of a round stone tower. This tower was one of the first things that caught our eyes as we entered the harbor. It gave an antique picturesqueness to the landscape which it entirely wanted without this. Round stone towers are not so common in this world that we can afford to be indifferent to them. This is called a Martello tower, but I could not learn who built it. I could not understand the indifference, almost amounting

to contempt, of the citizens of St. John in regard to this their only piece of curious antiquity. "It is nothing but the ruins of an old fort," they said; "you can see it as well from here as by going there." It was, however, the one thing at St. John I was determined to see. But we never got any nearer to it than the ferry-landing. Want of time and the *vis inertia* of the place were against us. And now, as I think of that tower and its perhaps mysterious origin, I have a longing for it that the possession of nothing else in the Provinces could satisfy.

But it must not be forgotten that we were on our way to Baddeck; that the whole purpose of the journey was to reach Baddeck; that St. John was only an incident in the trip; that any information about St. John, which is here thrown in or mercifully withheld, is entirely gratuitous, and is not taken into account in the price the reader pays for this volume. But if any one wants to know what sort of a place St. John is, we can tell him: it is the sort of a place that if you get into it after eight o'clock on Wednesday morning, you cannot get out of it in any direction until Thursday morning at eight o'clock, unless you want to smuggle goods on the night train to Bangor. It was eleven o'clock Wednesday forenoon when we arrived at St. John. The Intercolonial railway train had gone to Shediac; it had gone also on its roundabout Moncton, Missaquat River, Truro, Stewiack, and Shubenacadie way to Halifax; the boat had gone to Digby Gut and Annapolis to catch the train that way for Halifax; the boat had gone up the river to Frederick, the capital. We could go to none

of these places till the next day. We had no desire to go to Frederick, but we made the fact that we were cut off from it an addition to our injury. The people of St. John have this peculiarity : they never start to go anywhere except early in the morning.

The reader to whom time is nothing does not yet appreciate the annoyance of our situation. Our time was strictly limited. The active world is so constituted that it could not spare us more than two weeks. We must reach Baddeck Saturday night or never. To go home without seeing Baddeck was simply intolerable. Had we not told everybody that we were going to Baddeck? Now, if we had gone to Shediac in the train that left St. John that morning, we should have taken the steamboat that would have carried us to Port Hawkesbury, whence a stage connected with a steamboat on the Bras d'Or, which (with all this profusion of relative pronouns) would land us at Baddeck on Friday. How many times had we been over this route on the map and the prospectus of travel! And now, what a delusion it seemed! There would not another boat leave Shediac on this route till the following Tuesday, — quite too late for our purpose. The reader sees where we were, and will be prepared, if he has a map (and any feelings), to appreciate the masterly strategy that followed.

II

During the pilgrimage everything does not suit the tastes of the pilgrim. — **TURKISH PROVERB.**

ONE seeking Baddeck, as a possession, would not like to be detained a prisoner even in Eden, — much less in St. John, which is unlike Eden in several important respects. The tree of knowledge does not grow there, for one thing; at least St. John's ignorance of Baddeck amounts to a feature. This encountered us everywhere. So dense was this ignorance, that we, whose only knowledge of the desired place was obtained from the prospectus of travel, came to regard ourselves as missionaries of geographical information in this dark provincial city.

The clerk at the Victoria was not unwilling to help us on our journey, but if he could have had his way, we would have gone to a place on Prince Edward Island which used to be called Bedeque, but is now named Summerside, in the hope of attracting summer visitors. As to Cape Breton, he said the agent of the Intercolonial could tell us all about that, and put us on the route. We repaired to the agent. The kindness of this person dwells in our memory. He entered at once into our longings and perplexities. He produced his maps and time-tables, and showed us clearly what we already knew. The Port Hawkesbury steamboat from Shediac for that week had gone,

to be sure, but we could take one of another line which would leave us at Pictou, whence we could take another across to Port Hood, on Cape Breton. This looked fair, until we showed the agent that there was no steamer to Port Hood.

“Ah, then you can go another way. You can take the Intercolonial railway round to Pictou, catch the steamer for Port Hawkesbury, connect with the steamer on the Bras d’Or, and you are all right.”

So it would seem. It was a most obliging agent; and it took us half an hour to convince him that the train would reach Pictou half a day too late for the steamer, that no other boat would leave Pictou for Cape Breton that week, and that even if we could reach the Bras d’Or, we should have no means of crossing it, except by swimming. The perplexed agent thereupon referred us to Mr. Brown, a shipper on the wharf, who knew all about Cape Breton, and could tell us exactly how to get there. It is needless to say that a weight was taken off our minds. We pinned our faith to Brown, and sought him in his warehouse. Brown was a prompt business man, and a traveler, and would know every route and every conveyance from Nova Scotia to Cape Breton.

Mr. Brown was not in. He never is in. His store is a rusty warehouse, low and musty, piled full of boxes of soap and candles and dried fish, with a little glass cubby in one corner, where a thin clerk sits at a high desk, like a spider in his web. Perhaps he is a spider, for the cubby is swarming with flies, whose hum is the only noise of traffic; the glass of the window-sash has not been washed since it was put

in, apparently. The clerk is not writing, and has evidently no other use for his steel pen than spearing flies. Brown is out, says this young votary of commerce, and will not be in till half past five. We remark upon the fact that nobody ever is "in" these dingy warehouses, wonder when the business is done, and go out into the street to wait for Brown.

In front of the store is a dray, its horse fast asleep, and waiting for the revival of commerce. The travelers note that the dray is of a peculiar construction, the body being dropped down from the axles so as nearly to touch the ground, — a great convenience in loading and unloading; they propose to introduce it into their native land. The dray is probably waiting for the tide to come in. In the deep slip lie a dozen helpless vessels, coasting schooners mostly, tipped on their beam ends in the mud, or propped up by side-pieces as if they were built for land as well as for water. At the end of the wharf is a long English steamboat unloading railroad iron, which will return to the Clyde full of Nova Scotia coal. We sit down on the dock, where the fresh sea-breeze comes up the harbor, watch the lazily swinging crane on the vessel, and meditate upon the greatness of England and the peacefulness of the drowsy afternoon. One's feeling of rest is never complete unless he can see somebody else at work, — but the labor must be without haste, as it is in the Provinces.

While waiting for Brown, we had leisure to explore the shops of King's Street, and to climb up to the grand triumphal arch which stands on top of the hill and guards the entrance to King's Square.

Of the shops for dry-goods I have nothing to say, for they tempt the unwary American to violate the revenue laws of his country ; but he may safely go into the book-shops. The literature which is displayed in the windows and on the counters has lost that freshness which it once may have had, and is, in fact, if one must use the term, fly-specked, like the cakes in the grocery windows on the side streets. There are old illustrated newspapers from the States, cheap novels from the same, and the flashy covers of the London and Edinburgh sixpenny editions. But this is the dull season for literature, we reflect.

It will always be matter of regret to us that we climbed up to the triumphal arch, which appeared so noble in the distance, with the trees behind it. For when we reached it, we found that it was built of wood, painted and sanded, and in a shocking state of decay ; and the grove to which it admitted us was only a scant assemblage of sickly locust-trees, which seemed to be tired of battling with the unfavorable climate, and had, in fact, already retired from the business of ornamental shade trees. Adjoining this square is an ancient cemetery, the surface of which has decayed in sympathy with the mouldering remains it covers, and is quite a model in this respect. I have called this cemetery ancient, but it may not be so, for its air of decay is thoroughly modern, and neglect, and not years, appears to have made it the melancholy place of repose it is. Whether it is the fashionable and favorite resort of the dead of the city we did not learn, but there were some old men sitting in its damp shades, and the nurses appeared to

make it a rendezvous for their baby-carriages, — a cheerful place to bring up children in, and to familiarize their infant minds with the fleeting nature of provincial life. The park and burying-ground, it is scarcely necessary to say, added greatly to the feeling of repose which stole over us on this sunny day. And they made us long for Brown and his information about Baddeck.

But Mr. Brown, when found, did not know as much as the agent. He had been in Nova Scotia; he had never been in Cape Breton; but he presumed we would find no difficulty in reaching Baddeck by so and so, and so and so. We consumed valuable time in convincing Brown that his directions to us were impracticable and valueless, and then he referred us to Mr. Cope. An interview with Mr. Cope discouraged us; we found that we were imparting everywhere more geographical information than we were receiving, and as our own stock was small, we concluded that we should be unable to enlighten all the inhabitants of St. John upon the subject of Baddeck before we ran out. Returning to the hotel, and taking our destiny into our own hands, we resolved upon a bold stroke.

But to return for a moment to Brown. I feel that Brown has been let off too easily in the above paragraph. His conduct, to say the truth, was not such as we expected of a man in whom we had put our entire faith for half a day, — a long while to trust anybody in these times, — a man whom we had exalted as an encyclopedia of information, and idealized in every way. A man of wealth and liberal views and

courtly manners we had decided Brown would be. Perhaps he had a suburban villa on the heights overlooking Kennebeckasis Bay, and, recognizing us as brothers in a common interest in Baddeck, notwithstanding our different nationality, would insist upon taking us to his house, to sip provincial tea with Mrs. Brown and Victoria Louise, his daughter. When, therefore, Mr. Brown whisked into his dingy office, and, but for our importunity, would have paid no more attention to us than to up-country customers without credit, and when he proved to be willingly, it seemed to us, ignorant of Baddeck, our feelings received a great shock. It is incomprehensible that a man in the position of Brown — with so many boxes of soap and candles to dispose of — should be so ignorant of a neighboring province. We had heard of the cordial unity of the Provinces in the New Dominion. Heaven help it, if it depends upon such fellows as Brown! Of course, his directing us to Cope was a mere fetch. For, as we have intimated, it would have taken us longer to have given Cope an idea of Baddeck, than it did to enlighten Brown. But we had no bitter feelings about Cope, for we never had reposed confidence in him.

Our plan of campaign was briefly this: To take the steamboat at eight o'clock, Thursday morning, for Digby Gut and Annapolis; thence to go by rail through the poetical Acadia down to Halifax; to turn north and east by rail from Halifax to New Glasgow, and from thence to push on by stage to the Gut of Canso. This would carry us over the entire length of Nova Scotia, and, with good luck, land us

on Cape Breton Island Saturday morning. When we should set foot on that island, we trusted that we should be able to make our way to Baddeck, by walking, swimming, or riding, whichever sort of locomotion should be most popular in that province. Our imaginations were kindled by reading that the "most superb line of stages on the continent" ran from New Glasgow to the Gut of Canso. If the reader perfectly understands this programme, he has the advantage of the two travelers at the time they made it.

It was a gray morning when we embarked from St. John, and in fact a little drizzle of rain veiled the Martello tower, and checked, like the cross-strokes of a line engraving, the hill on which it stands. The miscellaneous shipping of such a harbor appears best in a golden haze, or in the mist of a morning like this. We had expected days of fog in this region; but the fog seemed to have gone out with the high tides of the geography. And it is simple justice to these possessions of her Majesty, to say that in our two weeks' acquaintance of them they enjoyed as delicious weather as ever falls on sea and shore, with the exception of this day when we crossed the Bay of Fundy. And this day was only one of those cool interludes of low color, which an artist would be thankful to introduce among a group of brilliant pictures. Such a day rests the traveler, who is overstimulated by shifting scenes played upon by the dazzling sun. So the cool gray clouds spread a grateful umbrella above us as we ran across the Bay of Fundy, sighted the headlands of the Gut of Digby,

and entered into the Annapolis Basin, and into the region of a romantic history. The white houses of Digby, scattered over the downs like a flock of washed sheep, had a somewhat chilly aspect, it is true, and made us long for the sun on them. But as I think of it now, I prefer to have the town and the pretty hillsides that stand about the basin in the light we saw them ; and especially do I like to recall the high wooden pier at Digby, deserted by the tide and so blown by the wind that the passengers who came out on it, with their tossing drapery, brought to mind the windy Dutch harbors that Backhüysen painted. We landed a priest here, and it was a pleasure to see him as he walked along the high pier, his broad hat flapping, and the wind blowing his long skirts away from his ecclesiastical legs.

It was one of the coincidences of life, for which no one can account, that when we descended upon these coasts, the Governor-General of the Dominion was abroad in his Provinces. There was an air of expectation of him everywhere, and of preparation for his coming ; his lordship was the subject of conversation on the Digby boat, his movements were chronicled in the newspapers, and the gracious bearing of the Governor and Lady Dufferin at the civic receptions, balls, and picnics was recorded with loyal satisfaction ; even a literary flavor was given to the provincial journals by quotations from his lordship's condescension to letters in the "High Latitudes." It was not without pain, however, that even in this un-American region we discovered the old Adam of journalism in the disposition of the newspapers of

St. John toward sarcasm touching the well-meant attempts to entertain the Governor and his lady in the provincial town of Halifax, — a disposition to turn, in short, upon the demonstrations of loyal worship the faint light of ridicule. There were those upon the boat who were journeying to Halifax to take part in the civic ball about to be given to their excellencies, and as we were going in the same direction, we shared in the feeling of satisfaction which proximity to the Great often excites.

We had other if not deeper causes of satisfaction. We were sailing along the gracefully moulded and tree-covered hills of the Annapolis Basin, and up the mildly picturesque river of that name, and we were about to enter what the provincials all enthusiastically call the Garden of Nova Scotia. This favored vale, skirted by low ranges of hills on either hand, and watered most of the way by the Annapolis River, extends from the mouth of the latter to the town of Windsor on the river Avon. We expected to see something like the fertile valleys of the Connecticut or the Mohawk. We should also pass through those meadows on the Basin of Minas which Mr. Longfellow has made more sadly poetical than any other spot on the Western Continent. It is, — this valley of the Annapolis, — in the belief of provincials, the most beautiful and blooming place in the world, with a soil and climate kind to the husbandman ; a land of fair meadows, orchards, and vines. It was doubtless our own fault that this land did not look to us like a garden, as it does to the inhabitants of Nova Scotia ; and it was not until

we had traveled over the rest of the country, that we saw the appropriateness of the designation. The explanation is, that not so much is required of a garden here as in some other parts of the world. Excellent apples, none finer, are exported from this valley to England, and the quality of the potatoes is said to approach an ideal perfection here. I should think that oats would ripen well also in a good year, and grass, for those who care for it, may be satisfactory. I should judge that the other products of this garden are fish and building-stone. But we anticipate. And have we forgotten the "murmuring pines and the hemlocks"? Nobody, I suppose, ever travels here without believing that he sees these trees of the imagination, so forcibly has the poet projected them upon the universal consciousness. But we were unable to see them, on this route.

It would be a brutal thing for us to take seats in the railway train at Annapolis, and leave the ancient town, with its modern houses and remains of old fortifications, without a thought of the romantic history which saturates the region. There is not much in the smart, new restaurant, where a tidy waiting-maid skillfully depreciates our currency in exchange for bread and cheese and ale, to recall the early drama of the French discovery and settlement. For it is to the French that we owe the poetical interest that still invests, like a garment, all these islands and bays, just as it is to the Spaniards that we owe the romance of the Florida coast. Every spot on this continent that either of these races has touched has a color that is wanting in the prosaic settlements of the English.

Without the historical light of French adventure upon this town and basin of Annapolis, or Port Royal, as they were first named, I confess that I should have no longing to stay here for a week ; notwithstanding the guide-book distinctly says that this harbor has " a striking resemblance to the beautiful Bay of Naples." I am not offended at this remark, for it is the one always made about a harbor, and I am sure the passing traveler can stand it, if the Bay of Naples can. And yet this tranquil basin must have seemed a haven of peace to the first discoverers.

It was on a lovely summer day in 1604, that the *Sieur de Monts* and his comrades, *Champlain* and the *Baron de Poutrincourt*, beating about the shores of Nova Scotia, were invited by the rocky gateway of the Port Royal Basin. They entered the small inlet, says *Mr. Parkman*, when suddenly the narrow strait dilated into a broad and tranquil basin, compassed with sunny hills, wrapped with woodland verdure and alive with waterfalls. *Poutrincourt* was delighted with the scene, and would fain remove thither from France with his family. Since *Poutrincourt's* day, the hills have been somewhat denuded of trees, and the waterfalls are not now in sight ; at least, not under such a gray sky as we saw.

The reader who once begins to look into the French occupancy of Acadia is in danger of getting into a sentimental vein, and sentiment is the one thing to be shunned in these days. Yet I cannot but stay, though the train should leave us, to pay my respectful homage to one of the most heroic of

women, whose name recalls the most romantic incident in the history of this region. Out of this past there rises no figure so captivating to the imagination as that of Madame de la Tour. And it is noticeable that woman has a curious habit of coming to the front in critical moments of history, and performing some exploit that eclipses in brilliancy all the deeds of contemporary men; and the exploit usually ends in a pathetic tragedy, that fixes it forever in the sympathy of the world. I need not copy out of the pages of De Charlevoix the well-known story of Madame de la Tour; I only wish he had told us more about her. It is here at Port Royal that we first see her with her husband. Charles de St. Etienne, the Chevalier de la Tour, — there is a world of romance in these mere names, — was a Huguenot nobleman who had a grant of Port Royal and of La Hève, from Louis XIII. He ceded La Hève to Razilli, the governor-in-chief of the provinces, who took a fancy to it, for a residence. He was living peacefully at Port Royal in 1647, when the Chevalier d'Aunay Charnisé, having succeeded his brother Razilli at La Hève, tired of that place and removed to Port Royal. De Charnisé was a Catholic; the difference in religion might not have produced any unpleasantness, but the two noblemen could not agree in dividing the profits of the peltry trade, — each being covetous, if we may so express it, of the hide of the savage continent, and determined to take it off for himself. At any rate, disagreement arose, and De la Tour moved over to the St. John, of which region his father had enjoyed a

grant from Charles I. of England, — whose sad fate it is not necessary now to recall to the reader's mind, — and built a fort at the mouth of the river. But the differences of the two ambitious Frenchmen could not be composed. De la Tour obtained aid from Governor Winthrop at Boston, thus verifying the Catholic prediction that the Huguenots would side with the enemies of France on occasion. De Charnisé received orders from Louis to arrest De la Tour; but a little preliminary to the arrest was the possession of the fort of St. John, and this he could not obtain, although he sent all his force against it. Taking advantage, however, of the absence of De la Tour, who had a habit of roving about, he one day besieged St. John. Madame de la Tour headed the little handful of men in the fort, and made such a gallant resistance that De Charnisé was obliged to draw off his fleet with the loss of thirty-three men, — a very serious loss, when the supply of men was as distant as France. But De Charnisé would not be balked by a woman; he attacked again; and this time, one of the garrison, a Swiss, betrayed the fort, and let the invaders into the walls by an unguarded entrance. It was Easter morning when this misfortune occurred, but the peaceful influence of the day did not avail. When Madame saw that she was betrayed, her spirits did not quail; she took refuge with her little band in a detached part of the fort, and there made such a bold show of defense, that De Charnisé was obliged to agree to the terms of her surrender, which she dictated. No sooner had this unchivalrous fellow obtained possession of the

fort and of this Historic Woman, than, overcome with a false shame that he had made terms with a woman, he violated his noble word, and condemned to death all the men, except one, who was spared on condition that he should be the executioner of the others. And the poltroon compelled the brave woman to witness the execution, with the added indignity of a rope round her neck, — or as De Charlevoix much more neatly expresses it, “*obligea sa prisonnière d’assister à l’exécution, la corde au cou.*”

To the shock of this horror the womanly spirit of Madame de la Tour succumbed; she fell into a decline and died soon after. De la Tour, himself an exile from his province, wandered about the New World in his customary pursuit of peltry. He was seen at Quebec for two years. While there, he heard of the death of De Charnisé, and straightway repaired to St. John. The widow of his late enemy received him graciously, and he entered into possession of the estate of the late occupant with the consent of all the heirs. To remove all roots of bitterness, De la Tour married Madame de Charnisé, and history does not record any ill of either of them. I trust they had the grace to plant a sweetbrier on the grave of the noble woman to whose faithfulness and courage they owe their rescue from obscurity. At least the parties to this singular union must have agreed to ignore the lamented existence of the Chevalier d’Aunay.

With the Chevalier de la Tour, at any rate, it all went well thereafter. When Cromwell drove the French from Acadia, he granted great territorial

rights to De la Tour, which that thrifty adventurer sold out to one of his co-grantees for £16,000; and he no doubt invested the money in peltry for the London market.

As we leave the station at Annapolis, we are obliged to put Madame de la Tour out of our minds to make room for another woman whose name, and we might say presence, fills all the valley before us. So it is that woman continues to reign, where she has once got a foothold, long after her dear frame has become dust. Evangeline, who is as real a personage as Queen Esther, must have been a different woman from Madame de la Tour. If the latter had lived at Grand Pré, she would, I trust, have made it hot for the brutal English who drove the Acadians out of their salt-marsh paradise, and have died in her heroic shoes rather than float off into poetry. But if it should come to the question of marrying the De la Tour or the Evangeline, I think no man who was not engaged in the peltry trade would hesitate which to choose. At any rate, the women who love have more influence in the world than the women who fight, and so it happens that the sentimental traveler who passes through Port Royal without a tear for Madame de la Tour, begins to be in a glow of tender longing and regret for Evangeline as soon as he enters the valley of the Annapolis River. For myself, I expected to see written over the railway crossings the legend, —

“Look out for Evangeline while the Bell rings.”

When one rides into a region of romance he does

not much notice his speed or his carriage ; but I am obliged to say that we were not hurried up the valley, and that the cars were not too luxurious for the plain people, priests, clergymen, and belles of the region, who rode in them. Evidently the latest fashions had not arrived in the Provinces, and we had an opportunity of studying anew those that had long passed away in the States, and of remarking how inappropriate a fashion is when it has ceased to be the fashion.

The river becomes small shortly after we leave Annapolis and before we reach Paradise. At this station of happy appellation we looked for the satirist who named it, but he has probably sold out and removed. If the effect of wit is produced by the sudden recognition of a remote resemblance, there was nothing witty in the naming of this station. Indeed, we looked in vain for the "garden" appearance of the valley. There was nothing generous in the small meadows or the thin orchards ; and if large trees ever grew on the bordering hills, they have given place to rather stunted evergreens ; the scraggy firs and balsams, in fact, possess Nova Scotia generally as we saw it, — and there is nothing more uninteresting and wearisome than large tracts of these woods. We are bound to believe that Nova Scotia has somewhere, or had, great pines and hemlocks that murmur, but we were not blessed with the sight of them. Slightly picturesque this valley is with its winding river and high hills guarding it, and perhaps a person would enjoy a foot-tramp down it ; but I think he would find little peculiar or inter-

esting after he left the neighborhood of the Basin of Minas.

Before we reached Wolfville we came in sight of this basin and some of the estuaries and streams that run into it ; that is, when the tide goes out ; but they are only muddy ditches half the time. The Acadia College was pointed out to us at Wolfville by a person who said that it is a feeble institution, a remark we were sorry to hear of a place described as "one of the foremost seats of learning in the Province." But our regret was at once extinguished by the announcement that the next station was Grand Pré ! We were within three miles of the most poetic place in North America.

There was on the train a young man from Boston, who said that he was born in Grand Pré. It seemed impossible that we should actually be near a person so felicitously born. He had a justifiable pride in the fact, as well as in the bride by his side, whom he was taking to see for the first time his old home. His local information, imparted to her, overflowed upon us ; and when he found that we had read "Evangeline," his delight in making us acquainted with the scene of that poem was pleasant to see. The village of Grand Pré is a mile from the station ; and perhaps the reader would like to know exactly what the traveler, hastening on to Baddeck, can see of the famous locality.

We looked over a well-grassed meadow, seamed here and there by beds of streams left bare by the receding tide, to a gentle swell in the ground upon which is a not heavy forest growth. The trees partly

conceal the street of Grand Pré, which is only a road bordered by common houses. Beyond is the Basin of Minas, with its sedgy shore, its dreary flats ; and beyond that projects a bold headland, standing perpendicular against the sky. This is the Cape Blomidon, and it gives a certain dignity to the picture.

The old Normandy picturesqueness has departed from the village of Grand Pré. Yankee settlers, we were told, possess it now, and there are no descendants of the French Acadians in this valley. I believe that Mr. Cozzens found some of them in humble circumstances in a village on the other coast, not far from Halifax, and it is there, probably, that the

“ Maidens still wear their Norman caps and their kirtles of homespun,

And by the evening fire repeat Evangeline’s story,
While from its rocky caverns the deep-voiced, neighboring ocean
Speaks, and in accents disconsolate answers the wail of the forest.”

At any rate, there is nothing here now except a faint tradition of the French Acadians ; and the sentimental traveler who laments that they were driven out, and not left behind their dikes to rear their flocks, and cultivate the rural virtues, and live in the simplicity of ignorance, will temper his sadness by the reflection that it is to the expulsion he owes “ Evangeline ” and the luxury of his romantic grief. So that if the traveler is honest, and examines his own soul faithfully, he will not know what state of mind to cherish as he passes through this region of sorrow.

Our eyes lingered as long as possible and with all eagerness upon these meadows and marshes which

the poet has made immortal, and we regretted that inexorable Baddeck would not permit us to be pilgrims for a day in this Acadian land. Just as I was losing sight of the skirt of trees at Grand Pré, a gentleman in the dress of a rural clergyman left his seat, and complimented me with this remark: "I perceive, sir, that you are fond of reading."

I could not but feel flattered by this unexpected discovery of my nature, which was no doubt due to the fact that I held in my hand one of the works of Charles Reade on social science, called "Love me Little, Love me Long," and I said, "Of some kinds, I am."

"Did you ever see a work called 'Evangeline'?"

"Oh, yes, I have frequently seen it."

"You may remember," continued this Mass of Information, "that there is an allusion in it to Grand Pré. That is the place, sir!"

"Oh, indeed, is that the place? Thank you."

"And that mountain yonder is Cape Blomidon, — blow me down, you know."

And under cover of this pun, the amiable clergyman retired, unconscious, I presume, of his prosaic effect upon the atmosphere of the region. With this intrusion of the commonplace, I suffered an eclipse of faith as to Evangeline, and was not sorry to have my attention taken up by the river Avon, along the banks of which we were running about this time. It is really a broad arm of the basin, extending up to Windsor, and beyond in a small stream, and would have been a charming river if there had been a drop of water in it. I never knew before how much water

adds to a river. Its slimy bottom was quite a ghastly spectacle, an ugly gash in the land that nothing could heal but the friendly returning tide. I should think it would be confusing to dwell by a river that runs first one way and then the other, and then vanishes altogether.

All the streams about this basin are famous for their salmon and shad, and the season for these fish was not yet passed. There seems to be an untraced affinity between the shad and the strawberry; they appear and disappear in a region simultaneously. When we reached Cape Breton, we were a day or two late for both. It is impossible not to feel a little contempt for people who do not have these luxuries till July and August; but I suppose we are in turn despised by the Southerners because we do not have them till May and June. So, a great part of the enjoyment of life is in the knowledge that there are people living in a worse place than that you inhabit.

Windsor, a most respectable old town round which the railroad sweeps, with its iron bridge, conspicuous King's College, and handsome church spire, is a great place for plaster and limestone, and would be a good location for a person interested in these substances. Indeed, if a man can live on rocks, like a goat, he may settle anywhere between Windsor and Halifax. It is one of the most sterile regions in the Province. With the exception of a wild pond or two, we saw nothing but rocks and stunted firs, for forty-five miles, a monotony unrelieved by one picturesque feature. Then we longed for the "Garden of Nova Scotia," and understood what is meant by the name.

A member of the Ottawa government, who was on his way to the Governor-General's ball at Halifax, informed us that this country is rich in minerals, in iron especially, and he pointed out spots where gold had been washed out. But we do not covet it. And we were not sorry to learn from this gentleman, that since the formation of the Dominion, there is less and less desire in the Provinces for annexation to the United States. One of the chief pleasures in traveling in Nova Scotia now is in the constant reflection that you are in a foreign country; and annexation would take that away.

It is nearly dark when we reach the head of the Bedford Basin. The noble harbor of Halifax narrows to a deep inlet for three miles along the rocky slope on which the city stands, and then suddenly expands into this beautiful sheet of water. We ran along its bank for five miles, cheered occasionally by a twinkling light on the shore, and then came to a stop at the shabby terminus, three miles out of town. This basin is almost large enough to float the navy of Great Britain, and it could lie here, with the narrows fortified, secure from the attacks of the American navy, hovering outside in the fog. With these patriotic thoughts we enter the town. It is not the fault of the railroad, but its present inability to climb a rocky hill, that it does not run into the city. The suburbs are not impressive in the night, but they look better then than they do in the daytime; and the same might be said of the city itself. Probably there is not anywhere a more rusty, forlorn town, and this in spite of its magnificent situation.

It is a gala-night when we rattle down the rough streets, and have pointed out to us the somber government buildings. The Halifax Club House is a blaze of light, for the Governor-General is being received there, and workmen are still busy decorating the Provincial Building for the great ball. The city is indeed pervaded by his lordship, and we regret that we cannot see it in its normal condition of quiet; the hotels are full, and it is impossible to escape the festive feeling that is abroad. It ill accords with our desires, as tranquil travelers, to be plunged into such a vortex of slow dissipation. These people take their pleasures more gravely than we do, and probably will last the longer for their moderation. Having ascertained that we can get no more information about Baddeck here than in St. John, we go to bed early, for we are to depart from this fascinating place at six o'clock.

If any one objects that we are not competent to pass judgment on the city of Halifax by sleeping there one night, I beg leave to plead the usual custom of travelers, — where would be our books of travel, if more was expected than a night in a place? — and to state a few facts. The first is, that I saw the whole of Halifax. If I were inclined, I could describe it building by building. Cannot one see it all from the citadel hill, and by walking down by the horticultural garden and the Roman Catholic cemetery? and did not I climb that hill through the most dilapidated rows of brown houses, and stand on the greensward of the fortress at five o'clock in the morning, and see the whole city, and the British navy

riding at anchor, and the fog coming in from the Atlantic Ocean? Let the reader go to! and if he would know more of Halifax, go there. We felt that if we remained there through the day, it would be a day of idleness and sadness. I could draw a picture of Halifax. I could relate its century of history; I could write about its free-school system, and its many noble charities. But the reader always skips such things. He hates information; and he himself would not stay in this dull garrison town any longer than he was obliged to.

There was to be a military display that day in honor of the Governor.

“Why,” I asked the bright and light-minded colored boy who sold papers on the morning train, “don’t you stay in the city and see it?”

“Pho,” said he, with contempt, “I’m sick of ’em. Halifax is played out, and I’m going to quit it.”

The withdrawal of this lively trader will be a blow to the enterprise of the place.

When I returned to the hotel for breakfast—which was exactly like the supper, and consisted mainly of green tea and dry toast—there was a commotion among the waiters and the hack-drivers over a nervous little old man, who was in haste to depart for the morning train. He was a specimen of provincial antiquity such as could not be seen elsewhere. His costume was of the oddest: a long-waisted coat reaching nearly to his heels, short trousers, a flowered silk vest, and a napless hat. He carried his baggage tied up in meal-bags, and his attention was divided between that and two buxom daughters, who were evidently enjoying

their first taste of city life. The little old man, who was not unlike a petrified Frenchman of the last century, had risen before daylight, roused up his daughters, and had them down on the sidewalk by four o'clock, waiting for hack, or horse-car, or something to take them to the station. That he might be a man of some importance at home was evident, but he had lost his head in the bustle of this great town, and was at the mercy of all advisers, none of whom could understand his mongrel language. As we came out to take the horse-car, he saw his helpless daughters driven off in one hack, while he was raving among his meal-bags on the sidewalk. Afterwards we saw him at the station, flying about in the greatest excitement, asking everybody about the train; and at last he found his way into the private office of the ticket-seller. "Get out of here!" roared that official. The old man persisted that he wanted a ticket. "Go round to the window; clear out!" In a very flustered state he was hustled out of the room. When he came to the window and made known his destination, he was refused tickets, because his train did not start for two hours yet!

This mercurial old gentleman only appears in these records because he was the only person we saw in this Province who was in a hurry to do anything, or to go anywhere.

We cannot leave Halifax without remarking that it is a city of great private virtue, and that its banks are sound. The appearance of its paper-money is not, however, inviting. We of the United States lead the world in beautiful paper-money; and when I ex-

changed my crisp, handsome greenbacks for the dirty, flimsy, ill-executed notes of the Dominion, at a dead loss of value, I could not be reconciled to the transaction. I sarcastically called the stuff I received "Confederate money;" but probably no one was wounded by the severity; for perhaps no one knew what a resemblance in badness there is between the "Confederate" notes of our civil war and the notes of the Dominion; and, besides, the Confederacy was too popular in the Provinces for the name to be a reproach to them. I wish I had thought of something more insulting to say.

By noon on Friday we came to New Glasgow, having passed through a country where wealth is to be won by hard digging if it is won at all; through Truro, at the head of the Cobequid Bay, a place exhibiting more thrift than any we have seen. A pleasant enough country, on the whole, is this which the road runs through up the Salmon and down the East River. New Glasgow is not many miles from Pictou, on the great Cumberland Strait; the inhabitants build vessels, and strangers drive out from here to see the neighboring coal mines. Here we were to dine and take the stage for a ride of eighty miles to the Gut of Canso.

The hotel at New Glasgow we can commend as one of the most unwholesome in the Province; but it is unnecessary to emphasize its condition, for if the traveler is in search of dirty hotels, he will scarcely go amiss anywhere in these regions. There seems to be a fashion in diet which endures. The early travelers as well as the later in these Atlantic provinces

all note the prevalence of dry, limp toast and green tea; they are the staples of all the meals; though authorities differ in regard to the third element for discouraging hunger: it is sometimes boiled salt-fish and sometimes it is ham. Toast was probably an inspiration of the first woman of this part of the New World, who served it hot; but it has become now a tradition blindly followed, without regard to temperature; and the custom speaks volumes for the non-inventiveness of woman. At the inn in New Glasgow those who choose dine in their shirt-sleeves, and those skilled in the ways of this table get all they want in seven minutes. A man who understands the use of edged tools can get along twice as fast with a knife and fork as he can with a fork alone.

But the stage is at the door; the coach and four horses answer the advertisement of being "second to none on the continent." We mount to the seat with the driver. The sun is bright; the wind is in the southwest; the leaders are impatient to go; the start for the long ride is propitious.

But on the back seat in the coach is the inevitable woman, young and sickly, with the baby in her arms. The woman has paid her fare through to Guysborough, and holds her ticket. It turns out, however, that she wants to go to the district of Guysborough, to St. Mary's Cross Roads, somewhere in it, and not to the village of Guysborough, which is away down on Chedabucto Bay. (The reader will notice this geographical familiarity.) And this stage does not go in the direction of St. Mary's. She will not get out, she will not surrender her ticket, nor pay her fare

again. Why should she? And the stage proprietor, the stage-driver, and the hostler mull over the problem, and sit down on the woman's hair trunk in front of the tavern to reason with her. The baby joins its voice from the coach window in the clamor of the discussion. The baby prevails. The stage company comes to a compromise, the woman dismounts, and we are off, away from the white houses, over the sandy road, out upon a hilly and not cheerful country. And the driver begins to tell us stories of winter hardships, drifted highways, a land buried in snow, and great peril to men and cattle.

III

“ It was then summer, and the weather very fine ; so pleased was I with the country, in which I had never travelled before, that my delight proved equal to my wonder.” — **BENVENUTO CELLINI.**

THERE are few pleasures in life equal to that of riding on the box-seat of a stage-coach, through a country unknown to you, and hearing the driver talk about his horses. We made the intimate acquaintance of twelve horses on that day's ride, and learned the peculiar disposition and traits of each one of them, their ambition of display, their sensitiveness to praise or blame, their faithfulness, their playfulness, the readiness with which they yielded to kind treatment, their daintiness about food and lodging.

May I never forget the spirited little jade, the off-leader in the third stage, the petted belle of the route, the nervous, coquettish, mincing mare of Marshy Hope. A spoiled beauty she was ; you could see that as she took the road with dancing step, tossing her pretty head about, and conscious of her shining black coat and her tail done up “ in any simple knot,” — like the back hair of Shelley's Beatrice Cenci. How she ambled and sidled and plumed herself, and now and then let fly her little heels high in air in mere excess of larkish feeling.

“ So ! girl ; so ! Kitty,” murmurs the driver in the

softest tones of admiration ; she don't mean anything by it, she's just like a kitten."

But the heels keep flying above the traces, and by and by the driver is obliged to "speak hash" to the beauty. The reproof of the displeased tone is evidently felt, for she settles at once to her work, showing perhaps a little impatience, jerking her head up and down, and protesting by her nimble movements against the more deliberate trot of her companion. I believe that a blow from the cruel lash would have broken her heart ; or else it would have made a little fiend of the spirited creature. The lash is hardly ever good for the sex.

For thirteen years, winter and summer, this coachman had driven this monotonous, uninteresting route, with always the same sandy hills, scrubby firs, occasional cabins, in sight. What a time to nurse his thought and feed on his heart ! How deliberately he can turn things over in his brain ! What a system of philosophy he might evolve out of his consciousness ! One would think so. But, in fact, the stage-box is no place for thinking. To handle twelve horses every day, to keep each to its proper work, stimulating the lazy and restraining the free, humoring each disposition, so that the greatest amount of work shall be obtained with the least friction, making each trip on time, and so as to leave each horse in as good condition at the close as at the start, taking advantage of the road, refreshing the team by an occasional spurt of speed, — all these things require constant attention ; and if the driver was composing an epic, the coach might go into the ditch, or, if no

accident happened, the horses would be worn out in a month, except for the driver's care.

I conclude that the most delicate and important occupation in life is stage-driving. It would be easier to "run" the Treasury Department of the United States than a four-in-hand. I have a sense of the unimportance of everything else in comparison with this business in hand. And I think the driver shares that feeling. He is the autocrat of the situation. He is lord of all the humble passengers, and they feel their inferiority. They may have knowledge and skill in some things, but they are of no use here. At all the stables the driver is king; all the people on the route are deferential to him; they are happy if he will crack a joke with them, and take it as a favor if he gives them better than they send. And it is his joke that always raises the laugh, regardless of its quality.

We carry the royal mail, and as we go along drop little sealed canvas bags at way offices. The bags would not hold more than three pints of meal, and I can see that there is nothing in them. Yet somebody along here must be expecting a letter, or they would not keep up the mail facilities. At French River we change horses. There is a mill here, and there are half a dozen houses, and a cranky bridge, which the driver thinks will not tumble down this trip. The settlement may have seen better days, and will probably see worse.

I preferred to cross the long, shaky wooden bridge on foot, leaving the inside passengers to take the risk, and get the worth of their money; and while

the horses were being put to, I walked on over the hill. And here I encountered a veritable foot-pad, with a club in his hand and a bundle on his shoulder, coming down the dusty road, with the wild-eyed aspect of one who travels into a far country in search of adventure. He seemed to be of a cheerful and sociable turn, and desired that I should linger and converse with him. But he was more meagerly supplied with the media of conversation than any person I ever met. His opening address was in a tongue that failed to convey to me the least idea. I replied in such language as I had with me, but it seemed to be equally lost upon him. We then fell back upon gestures and ejaculations, and by these I learned that he was a native of Cape Breton, but not an aborigine. By signs he asked me where I came from, and where I was going; and he was so much pleased with my destination, that he desired to know my name; and this I told him with all the injunction of secrecy I could convey; but he could no more pronounce it than I could speak his name. It occurred to me that perhaps he spoke a French patois, and I asked him; but he only shook his head. He would own neither to German nor Irish. The happy thought came to me of inquiring if he knew English. But he shook his head again, and said,—

“No English, plenty garlic.”

This was entirely incomprehensible, for I knew that garlic is not a language, but a smell. But when he had repeated the word several times, I found that he meant Gaelic; and when we had come to this understanding, we cordially shook hands and will-

ingly parted. One seldom encounters a wilder or more good-natured savage than this stalwart wanderer. And meeting him raised my hopes of Cape Breton.

We change horses again, for the last stage, at Marshy Hope. As we turn down the hill into this place of the mournful name, we dash past a procession of five country wagons, which makes way for us: everything makes way for us; even death itself turns out for the stage with four horses. The second wagon carries a long box, which reveals to us the mournful errand of the caravan. We drive into the stable, and get down while the fresh horses are put to. The company's stables are all alike, and open at each end with great doors. The stable is the best house in the place; there are three or four houses besides, and one of them is white, and has vines growing over the front door, and hollyhocks by the front gate. Three or four women, and as many bare-legged girls, have come out to look at the procession, and we lounge towards the group.

"It had a winder in the top of it, and silver handles," says one.

"Well, I declare; and you could 'a' looked right in?"

"If I 'd been a mind to."

"Who has died?" I ask.

"It's old woman Larue; she lived on Gilead Hill, mostly alone. It's better for her."

"Had she any friends?"

"One darter. They're takin' her over Eden way, to bury her where she come from."

“Was she a good woman?” The traveler is naturally curious to know what sort of people die in Nova Scotia.

“Well, good enough. Both her husbands is dead.”

The gossips continued talking of the burying. Poor old woman Larue! It was mournful enough to encounter you for the only time in this world in this plight, and to have this glimpse of your wretched life on lonesome Gilead Hill. What pleasure, I wonder, had she in her life, and what pleasure have any of these hard-favored women in this doleful region? It is pitiful to think of it. Doubtless, however, the region is n't doleful, and the sentimental traveler would not have felt it so if he had not encountered this funereal fitting.

But the horses are in. We mount to our places; the big doors swing open.

“Stand away,” cries the driver.

The hostler lets go Kitty's bridle, the horses plunge forward, and we are off at a gallop, taking the opposite direction from that pursued by old woman Larue.

This last stage is eleven miles, through a pleasanter country, and we make it in a trifle over an hour, going at an exhilarating gait, that raises our spirits out of the Marshy Hope level. The perfection of travel is ten miles an hour, on top of a stage-coach; it is greater speed than forty by rail. It nurses one's pride to sit aloft, and rattle past the farmhouses, and give our dust to the cringing foot tramps. There is something royal in the swaying

of the coach body, and an excitement in the patter of the horses' hoofs. And what an honor it must be to guide such a machine through a region of rustic admiration!

The sun has set when we come thundering down into the pretty Catholic village of Antigonish, — the most home-like place we have seen on the island. The twin stone towers of the unfinished cathedral loom up large in the fading light, and the bishop's palace on the hill — the home of the Bishop of Arichat — appears to be an imposing white barn with many staring windows. At *Antigonish* — with the emphasis on the last syllable — let the reader know there is a most comfortable inn, kept by a cheery landlady, where the stranger is served by the comely handmaidens, her daughters, and feels that he has reached a home at last. Here we wished to stay. Here we wished to end this weary pilgrimage. Could Baddeck be as attractive as this peaceful valley? Should we find any inn on Cape Breton like this one?

“Never was on Cape Breton,” our driver had said; “hope I never shall be. Heard enough about it. Taverns? You'll find 'em occupied.”

“Fleas?”

“Wus.”

“But it is a lovely country?”

“I don't think it.”

Into what unknown dangers were we going? Why not stay here and be happy? It was a soft summer night. People were loitering in the street; the young beaux of the place going up and down with the belles,

after the leisurely manner in youth and summer ; perhaps they were students from St. Xavier College, or visiting gallants from Guysborough. They look into the post-office and the fancy store. They stroll and take their little provincial pleasure and make love, for all we can see, as if Antigonish were a part of the world. How they must look down on Marshy Hope and Addington Forks and Tracadie ! What a charming place to live in is this !

But the stage goes on at eight o'clock. It will wait for no man. There is no other stage till eight the next night, and we have no alternative but a night ride. We put aside all else except duty and Baddeck. This is strictly a pleasure-trip.

The stage establishment for the rest of the journey could hardly be called the finest on the continent. The wagon was drawn by two horses. It was a square box, covered with painted cloth. Within were two narrow seats, facing each other, affording no room for the legs of passengers, and offering them no position but a strictly upright one. It was a most ingeniously uncomfortable box in which to put sleepy travelers for the night. The weather would be chilly before morning, and to sit upright on a narrow board all night, and shiver, is not cheerful. Of course, the reader says that this is no hardship to talk about. But the reader is mistaken. Anything is a hardship when it is unpleasantly what one does not desire or expect. These travelers had spent wakeful nights in the forests, in a cold rain, and never thought of complaining. It is useless to talk about the Polar sufferings of Dr. Kane to a guest at

a metropolitan hotel, in the midst of luxury, when the mosquito sings all night in his ear, and his mutton-chop is overdone at breakfast. One does not like to be set up for a hero in trifles, in odd moments, and in inconspicuous places.

There were two passengers besides ourselves, inhabitants of Cape Breton Island, who were returning from Halifax to Plaster Cove, where they were engaged in the occupation of distributing alcoholic liquors at retail. This fact we ascertained incidentally, as we learned the nationality of our comrades by their brogue, and their religion by their lively ejaculations during the night. We stowed ourselves into the rigid box, bade a sorrowing good-night to the landlady and her daughters, who stood at the inn door, and went jingling down the street towards the open country.

The moon rises at eight o'clock in Nova Scotia. It came above the horizon exactly as we began our journey, a harvest-moon, round and red. When I first saw it, it lay on the edge of the horizon as if too heavy to lift itself, as big as a cart-wheel, and its disk cut by a fence-rail. With what a flood of splendor it deluged farmhouses and farms, and the broad sweep of level country! There could not be a more magnificent night in which to ride towards that geographical mystery of our boyhood, the Gut of Canso.

A few miles out of town the stage stopped in the road before a post-station. An old woman opened the door of the farmhouse to receive the bag which the driver carried to her. A couple of sprightly

little girls rushed out to "interview" the passengers, climbing up to ask their names and, with much giggling, to get a peep at their faces. And upon the handsomeness or ugliness of the faces they saw in the moonlight they pronounced with perfect candor. We are not obliged to say what their verdict was. Girls here, no doubt, as elsewhere, lose this trustful candor as they grow older.

Just as we were starting, the old woman screamed out from the door, in a shrill voice, addressing the driver, "Did you see ary a sick man 'bout 'Tigonish?"

"Nary."

"There's one been round here for three or four days, pretty bad off; 's got the St. Vitus's. He wanted me to get him some medicine for it up to Antigonish. I've got it here in a vial, and I wished you could take it to him."

"Where is he?"

"I dunno. I heern he'd gone east by the Gut. Perhaps you'll hear of him." All this screamed out into the night.

"Well, I'll take it."

We took the vial aboard and went on; but the incident powerfully affected us. The weird voice of the old woman was exciting in itself, and we could not escape the image of this unknown man, dancing about this region without any medicine, fleeing perchance by night and alone, and finally flitting away down the Gut of Canso. This fugitive mystery almost immediately shaped itself into the following simple poem:—

AND THAT SORT OF THING 399

“There was an old man of Canso,
Unable to sit or stan’ so.
When I asked him why he ran so,
Says he, ‘I’ve St. Vitus’ dance so,
All down the Gut of Canso.’”

This melancholy song is now, I doubt not, sung by the maidens of Antigonish.

In spite of the consolations of poetry, however, the night wore on slowly, and soothing sleep tried in vain to get a lodgment in the jolting wagon. One can sleep upright, but not when his head is every moment knocked against the framework of a wagon-cover. Even a jolly young Irishman of Plaster Cove, whose nature it is to sleep under whatever discouragement, is beaten by these circumstances. He wishes he had his fiddle along. We never know what men are on casual acquaintance. This rather stupid-looking fellow is a devotee of music, and knows how to coax the sweetness out of the unwilling violin. Sometimes he goes miles and miles on winter nights to draw the seductive bow for the Cape Breton dancers, and there is enthusiasm in his voice, as he relates exploits of fiddling from sunset till the dawn of day. Other information, however, the young man has not; and when this is exhausted, he becomes sleepy again, and tries a dozen ways to twist himself into a posture in which sleep will be possible. He doubles up his legs, he slides them under the seat, he sits on the wagon bottom; but the wagon swings and jolts and knocks him about. His patience under this punishment is admirable, and there is something pathetic in his restraint from profanity.

It is enough to look out upon the magnificent night; the moon is now high, and swinging clear and distant; the air has grown chilly; the stars cannot be eclipsed by the greater light, but glow with a chastened fervor. It is on the whole a splendid display for the sake of four sleepy men, banging along in a coach, — an insignificant little vehicle with two horses. No one is up at any of the farmhouses to see it; no one appears to take any interest in it, except an occasional baying dog, or a rooster that has mistaken the time of night. By midnight we come to Tracadie, an orchard, a farmhouse, and a stable. We are not far from the sea now, and can see a silver mist in the north. An inlet comes lapping up by the old house with a salty smell and a suggestion of oyster-beds. We knock up the sleeping hostlers, change horses, and go on again, dead sleepy, but unable to get a wink. And all the night is blazing with beauty. We think of the criminal who was sentenced to be kept awake till he died.

The fiddler makes another trial. Temperately remarking, "I am very sleepy," he kneels upon the floor and rests his head on the seat. This position for a second promises repose; but almost immediately his head begins to pound the seat, and beat a lively rat-a-plan on the board. The head of a wooden idol could n't stand this treatment more than a minute. The fiddler twisted and turned, but his head went like a trip-hammer on the seat. I have never seen a devotional attitude so deceptive, or one that produced less favorable results. The young man rose from his knees, and meekly said, —

“It’s dam hard.”

If the recording angel took down this observation, he doubtless made a note of the injured tone in which it was uttered.

How slowly the night passes to one tipping and swinging along in a slowly moving stage! But the harbinger of the day came at last. When the fiddler rose from his knees, I saw the morning-star burst out of the east like a great diamond, and I knew that Venus was strong enough to pull up even the sun, from whom she is never distant more than an eighth of the heavenly circle. The moon could not put her out of countenance. She blazed and scintillated with a dazzling brilliance, a throbbing splendor, that made the moon seem a pale, sentimental invention. Steadily she mounted, in her fresh beauty, with the confidence and vigor of new love, driving her more domestic rival out of the sky. And this sort of thing, I suppose, goes on frequently. These splendors burn and this panorama passes night after night down at the end of Nova Scotia, and all for the stage-driver, dozing along on his box, from Antigonish to the strait.

“Here you are,” cries the driver, at length, when we have become wearily indifferent to where we are. We have reached the ferry. The dawn has not come, but it is not far off. We step out and find a chilly morning, and the dark waters of the Gut of Canso flowing before us, lighted here and there by a patch of white mist. The ferryman is asleep, and his door is shut. We call him by all the names known among men. We pound upon his house, but he makes no

sign. Before he awakes and comes out, growling, the sky in the east is lightened a shade, and the star of the dawn sparkles less brilliantly. But the process is slow. The twilight is long. There is a surprising deliberation about the preparation of the sun for rising, as there is in the movements of the boatman. Both appear to be reluctant to begin the day.

The ferryman and his shaggy comrade get ready at last, and we step into the clumsy yawl, and the slowly moving oars begin to pull us upstream. The strait is here less than a mile wide; the tide is running strongly, and the water is full of swirls, — the little whirlpools of the rip-tide. The morning-star is now high in the sky; the moon, declining in the west, is more than ever like a silver shield; along the east is a faint flush of pink. In the increasing light we can see the bold shores of the strait, and the square projection of Cape Porcupine below.

On the rocks above the town of Plaster Cove, where there is a black and white sign, — *Telegraph Cable*, — we set ashore our companions of the night, and see them climb up to their station for retailing the necessary means of intoxication in their district, with the mournful thought that we may never behold them again.

As we drop down along the shore, there is a white sea-gull asleep on the rock, rolled up in a ball, with his head under his wing. The rock is dripping with dew, and the bird is as wet as his hard bed. We pass within an oar's length of him, but he does not heed us, and we do not disturb his

morning slumbers. For there is no such cruelty as the waking of anybody out of a morning nap.

When we land, and take up our bags to ascend the hill to the white tavern of Port Hastings (as Plaster Cove now likes to be called), the sun lifts himself slowly over the tree-tops, and the magic of the night vanishes.

And this is Cape Breton, reached after almost a week of travel. Here is the Gut of Canso, but where is Baddeck? It is Saturday morning; if we cannot make Baddeck by night, we might as well have remained in Boston. And who knows what we shall find if we get there? A forlorn fishing-station, a dreary hotel? Suppose we cannot get on, and are forced to stay here? Asking ourselves these questions, we enter the Plaster Cove tavern. No one is stirring, but the house is open, and we take possession of the dirty public room, and almost immediately drop to sleep in the fluffy rocking-chairs; but even sleep is not strong enough to conquer our desire to push on, and we soon rouse up and go in pursuit of information.

No landlord is to be found, but there is an unkempt servant in the kitchen, who probably does not see any use in making her toilet more than once a week. To this fearful creature is intrusted the dainty duty of preparing breakfast. Her indifference is equal to her lack of information, and her ability to convey information is fettered by her use of Gaelic as her native speech. But she directs us to the stable. There we find a driver hitching his horses to a two-horse stage-wagon.

“ Is this stage for Baddeck? ”

“ Not much.”

“ Is there any stage for Baddeck? ”

“ Not to-day.”

“ Where does this go, and when? ”

“ St. Peter’s. Starts in fifteen minutes.”

This seems like “ business,” and we are inclined to try it, especially as we have no notion where St. Peter’s is.

“ Does any other stage go from here to-day anywhere else? ”

“ Yes. Port Hood. Quarter of an hour.”

Everything was about to happen in fifteen minutes. We inquire further. St. Peter’s is on the east coast, on the road to Sydney. Port Hood is on the west coast. There is a stage from Port Hood to Baddeck. It would land us there some time Sunday morning; distance, eighty miles.

Heavens! what a pleasure-trip. To ride eighty miles more without sleep! We should simply be delivered dead on the Bras d’Or; that is all. Tell us, gentle driver, is there no other way?

“ Well, there’s Jim Hughes, come over at midnight with a passenger from Baddeck; he’s in the hotel now; perhaps he’ll take you.”

Our hope hung on Jim Hughes. The frowzy servant piloted us up to his sleeping-room. “ Go right in,” said she; and we went in, according to the simple custom of the country, though it was a bedroom that one would not enter except on business. Mr. Hughes did not like to be disturbed, but he proved himself to be a man who could wake

up suddenly, shake his head, and transact business, — a sort of Napoleon, in fact. Mr. Hughes stared at the intruders for a moment, as if he meditated an assault.

“Do you live in Baddeck?” we asked.

“No; Hogamah, — half-way there.”

“Will you take us to Baddeck to-day?”

Mr. Hughes thought. He had intended to sleep till noon. He had then intended to go over the Judique Mountain and get a boy. But he was disposed to accommodate. Yes, for money — sum named — he would give up his plans, and start for Baddeck in an hour. Distance, sixty miles. Here was a man worth having; he could come to a decision before he was out of bed. The bargain was closed.

We would have closed any bargain to escape a Sunday in the Plaster Cove hotel. There are different sorts of hotel uncleanliness. There is the musty old inn, where the dirt has accumulated for years, and slow neglect has wrought a picturesque sort of dilapidation, the mouldiness of time, which has something to recommend it. But there is nothing attractive in new nastiness, in the vulgar union of smartness and filth. A dirty modern house, just built, a house smelling of poor whiskey and vile tobacco, its white paint grimy, its floors unclean, is ever so much worse than an old inn that never pretended to be anything but a rookery. I say nothing against the hotel at Plaster Cove. In fact, I recommend it. There is a kind of harmony about it that I like. There is a harmony between the breakfast

and the frowzy Gaelic cook we saw "sozzling" about in the kitchen. There is a harmony between the appearance of the house and the appearance of the buxom young housekeeper who comes upon the scene later, her hair saturated with the fatty matter of the bear. The traveler will experience a pleasure in paying his bill and departing.

Although Plaster Cove seems remote on the map, we found that we were right in the track of the world's news there. It is the transfer station of the Atlantic Cable Company, where it exchanges messages with the Western Union. In a long wooden building, divided into two main apartments, twenty to thirty operators are employed. At eight o'clock the English force was at work receiving the noon messages from London. The American operators had not yet come on, for New York business would not begin for an hour. Into these rooms is poured daily the news of the world, and these young fellows toss it about as lightly as if it were household gossip. It is a marvelous exchange, however, and we had intended to make some reflections here upon the *en rapport* feeling, so to speak, with all the world, which we experienced while there; but our conveyance was waiting. We telegraphed our coming to Baddeck, and departed. For twenty-five cents one can send a dispatch to any part of the Dominion, except the region where the Western Union has still a foothold.

Our conveyance was a one-horse wagon, with one seat. The horse was well enough, but the seat was narrow for three people, and the entire establish-

ment had in it not much prophecy of Baddeck for that day. But we knew little of the power of Cape Breton driving. It became evident that we should reach Baddeck soon enough, if we could cling to that wagon-seat. The morning sun was hot. The way was so uninteresting that we almost wished ourselves back in Nova Scotia. The sandy road was bordered with discouraged evergreens, through which we had glimpses of sand-drifted farms. If Baddeck was to be like this, we had come on a fool's errand. There were some savage, low hills, and the Judique Mountain showed itself as we got away from the town. In this first stage, the heat of the sun, the monotony of the road, and the scarcity of sleep during the past thirty-six hours were all unfavorable to our keeping on the wagon-seat. We nodded separately, we nodded and reeled in unison. But asleep or awake, the driver drove like a son of Jehu. Such driving is the fashion on Cape Breton Island. Especially downhill, we made the most of it; if the horse was on a run, that was only an inducement to apply the lash; speed gave the promise of greater possible speed. The wagon rattled like a bark-mill; it swirled and leaped about, and we finally got the exciting impression that if the whole thing went to pieces, we should somehow go on, — such was our impetus. Round corners, over ruts and stones, and uphill and down, we went jolting and swinging, holding fast to the seat, and putting our trust in things in general. At the end of fifteen miles, we stopped at a Scotch farmhouse, where the driver kept a relay, and changed horse.

The people were Highlanders, and spoke little

English ; we had struck the beginning of the Gaelic settlement. From here to Hogamah we should encounter only the Gaelic tongue ; the inhabitants are all Catholics. Very civil people, apparently, and living in a kind of niggardly thrift, such as the cold land affords. We saw of this family the old man, who had come from Scotland fifty years ago, his stalwart son, six feet and a half high, maybe, and two buxom daughters, going to the hay-field, — good solid Scotch lassies, who smiled in English, but spoke only Gaelic. The old man could speak a little English, and was disposed to be both communicative and inquisitive. He asked our business, names, and residence. Of the United States he had only a dim conception, but his mind rather rested upon the statement that we lived “near Boston.” He complained of the degeneracy of the times. All the young men had gone away from Cape Breton ; might get rich if they would stay and work the farms. But no one liked to work nowadays. From life, we diverted the talk to literature. We inquired what books they had.

“Of course you all have the poems of Burns?”

“What’s the name o’ the mon?”

“Burns, Robert Burns.”

“Never heerd tell of such a mon. Have heard of Robert Bruce. He was a Scotchman.”

This was nothing short of refreshing, to find a Scotchman who had never heard of Robert Burns ! It was worth the whole journey to take this honest man by the hand. How far would I not travel to talk with an American who had never heard of George Washington !

The way was more varied during the next stage ; we passed through some pleasant valleys and picturesque neighborhoods, and at length, winding around the base of a wooded range, and crossing its point, we came upon a sight that took all the sleep out of us. This was the famous Bras d'Or.

The Bras d'Or is the most beautiful salt-water lake I have ever seen, and more beautiful than we had imagined a body of salt water could be. If the reader will take the map, he will see that two narrow estuaries, the Great and the Little Bras d'Or, enter the island of Cape Breton, on the ragged northeast coast, above the town of Sydney, and flow in, at length widening out and occupying the heart of the island. The water seeks out all the low places, and ramifies the interior, running away into lovely bays and lagoons, leaving slender tongues of land and picturesque islands, and bringing into the recesses of the land, to the remote country farms and settlements, the flavor of salt, and the fish and mollusks of the briny sea. There is very little tide at any time, so that the shores are clean and sightly for the most part, like those of fresh-water lakes. It has all the pleasantness of a fresh-water lake, with all the advantages of a salt one. In the streams which run into it are the speckled trout, the shad, and the salmon ; out of its depths are hooked the cod and the mackerel, and in its bays fattens the oyster. This irregular lake is about a hundred miles long, if you measure it skillfully, and in some places ten miles broad ; but so indented is it, that I am not sure but one would need, as we were informed, to ride a thousand miles

to go round it, following all its incursions into the land. The hills about it are never more than five or six hundred feet high, but they are high enough for reposeful beauty, and offer everywhere pleasing lines.

What we first saw was an inlet of the Bras d'Or, called, by the driver, Hogamah Bay. At its entrance were long, wooded islands, beyond which we saw the backs of graceful hills, like the capes of some poetic sea-coast. The bay narrowed to a mile in width where we came upon it, and ran several miles inland to a swamp, round the head of which we must go. Opposite was the village of Hogamah. I had my suspicions from the beginning about this name, and now asked the driver, who was liberally educated for a driver, how he spelled "Hogamah."

"Why-ko-ko-magh. Hogamah."

Sometimes it is called Wykogamah. Thus the innocent traveler is misled. Along the Whykokomagh Bay we come to a permanent encampment of the Micmac Indians, — a dozen wigwams in the pine woods. Though lumber is plenty, they refuse to live in houses. The wigwams, however, are more picturesque than the square frame houses of the whites. Built up conically of poles, with a hole in the top for the smoke to escape, and often set up a little from the ground on a timber foundation, they are as pleasing to the eye as a Chinese or Turkish dwelling. They may be cold in winter, but blessed be the tenacity of barbarism, which retains this agreeable architecture. The men live by hunting in the season, and the women support the family by making moccasins and baskets. These Indians are most

of them good Catholics, and they try to go once a year to mass and a sort of religious festival held at St. Peter's, where their sins are forgiven in a yearly lump.

At Whykokomagh, a neat fishing village of white houses, we stopped for dinner at the Inverness House. The house was very clean, and the tidy landlady gave us as good a dinner as she could of the inevitable green tea, toast, and salt fish. She was Gaelic, but Protestant, as the village is, and showed us with pride her Gaelic Bible and hymn-book. A peaceful place, this Whykokomagh ; the lapsing waters of Bras d'Or made a summer music all along the quiet street ; the bay lay smiling with its islands in front, and an amphitheater of hills rose behind. But for the line of telegraph poles one might have fancied he could have security and repose here.

We put a fresh pony into the shafts, a beast born with an everlasting uneasiness in his legs, and an amount of "go" in him which suited his reckless driver. We no longer stood upon the order of our going ; we went. As we left the village, we passed a rocky hay-field, where the Gaelic farmer was gathering the scanty yield of grass. A comely Indian girl was stowing the hay and treading it down on the wagon. The driver hailed the farmer, and they exchanged Gaelic repartee which set all the hay-makers in a roar, and caused the Indian maid to darkly and sweetly beam upon us. We asked the driver what he had said. He had only inquired what the man would take for the load as it stood ! A joke is a joke down this way.

I am not about to describe this drive at length, in order that the reader may skip it; for I know the reader, being of like passion and fashion with him. From the time we first struck the Bras d'Or for thirty miles we rode in constant sight of its magnificent water. Now we were two hundred feet above the water, on the hillside, skirting a point or following an indentation; and now we were diving into a narrow valley, crossing a stream, or turning a sharp corner, but always with the Bras d'Or in view, the afternoon sun shining on it, softening the outlines of its embracing hills, casting a shadow from its wooded islands. Sometimes we opened on a broad water plain bounded by the Watchabaktchkt hills, and again we looked over hill after hill receding into the soft and hazy blue of the land beyond the great mass of the Bras d'Or. The reader can compare the view and the ride to the Bay of Naples and the Cornice Road; we did nothing of the sort; we held on to the seat, prayed that the harness of the pony might not break, and gave constant expression to our wonder and delight. For a week we had schooled ourselves to expect nothing more of this wicked world, but here was an enchanting vision.

The only phenomenon worthy the attention of any inquiring mind, in this whole record, I will now describe. As we drove along the side of a hill, and at least two hundred feet above the water, the road suddenly diverged and took a circuit higher up. The driver said that was to avoid a sink-hole in the old road,—a great curiosity, which it was worth while to examine. Beside the old road was a circular hole,

which nipped out a part of the road-bed, some twenty-five feet in diameter, filled with water almost to the brim, but not running over. The water was dark in color, and I fancied had a brackish taste. The driver said that a few weeks before, when he came this way, it was solid ground where this well now opened, and that a large beech-tree stood there. When he returned next day, he found this hole full of water, as we saw it, and the large tree had sunk in it. The size of the hole seemed to be determined by the reach of the roots of the tree. The tree had so entirely disappeared, that he could not with a long pole touch its top. Since then the water had neither subsided nor overflowed. The ground about was compact gravel. We tried sounding the hole with poles, but could make nothing of it. The water seemed to have no outlet nor inlet; at least, it did not rise or fall. Why should the solid hill give way at this place, and swallow up a tree? and if the water had any connection with the lake, two hundred feet below and at some distance away, why did n't the water run out? Why should the unscientific traveler have a thing of this kind thrown in his way? The driver did not know.

This phenomenon made us a little suspicious of the foundations of this island, which is already invaded by the jealous ocean, and is anchored to the continent only by the cable.

The drive became more charming as the sun went down, and we saw the hills grow purple beyond the Bras d'Or. The road wound around lovely coves and across low promontories, giving us new beau-

ties at every turn. Before dark we had crossed the Middle River and the Big Baddeck, on long wooden bridges, which straggled over sluggish waters and long reaches of marsh, upon which Mary might have been sent to call the cattle home. These bridges were shaky and wanted a plank at intervals, but they are in keeping with the enterprise of the country. As dusk came on, we crossed the last hill, and were bowling along by the still gleaming water. Lights began to appear in infrequent farmhouses, and under cover of the gathering night the houses seemed to be stately mansions; and we fancied we were on a noble highway, lined with elegant suburban seaside residences, and about to drive into a town of wealth and a port of great commerce. We were, nevertheless, anxious about Baddeck. What sort of haven were we to reach after our heroic (with the reader's permission) week of travel? Would the hotel be like that at Plaster Cove? Were our thirty-six hours of sleepless staging to terminate in a night of misery and a Sunday of discomfort?

We came into a stragglng village; *that* we could see by the starlight. But we stopped at the door of a very unhotel-like appearing hotel. It had in front a flower-garden; it was blazing with welcome lights; it opened hospitable doors, and we were received by a family who expected us. The house was a large one, for two guests; and we enjoyed the luxury of spacious rooms, an abundant supper, and a friendly welcome; and, in short, found ourselves at home. The proprietor of the Telegraph House is the superintendent of the land lines of Cape Breton, a Scotch-

man, of course; but his wife is a Newfoundland lady. We cannot violate the sanctity of what seemed like private hospitality by speaking freely of this lady and the lovely girls, her daughters, whose education has been so admirably advanced in the excellent school at Baddeck; but we can confidently advise any American who is going to Newfoundland, to get a wife there, if he wants one at all. It is the only new article he can bring from the Provinces that he will not have to pay duty on. And here is a suggestion to our tariff-mongers for the "protection" of New England women.

The reader probably cannot appreciate the delicious sense of rest and of achievement which we enjoyed in this tidy inn, nor share the anticipations of undisturbed, luxurious sleep, in which we indulged as we sat upon the upper balcony after supper, and saw the moon rise over the glistening Bras d'Or and flood with light the islands and headlands of the beautiful bay. Anchored at some distance from the shore was a slender coasting vessel. The big red moon happened to come up just behind it, and the masts and spars and ropes of the vessel came out, distinctly traced on the golden background, making such a night picture as I once saw painted of a ship in a fiord of Norway. The scene was enchanting. And we respected then the heretofore seemingly insane impulse that had driven us on to Baddeck.

IV

“ He had no ill-will to the Scotch ; for, if he had been conscious of that, he never would have thrown himself into the bosom of their country, and trusted to the protection of its remote inhabitants with a fearless confidence.” — BOSWELL’S JOHNSON.

ALTHOUGH it was an open and flagrant violation of the Sabbath day as it is kept in Scotch Baddeck, our kind hosts let us sleep late on Sunday morning, with no reminder that we were not sleeping the sleep of the just. It was the charming Maud, a flitting sunbeam of a girl, who waited to bring us our breakfast, and thereby lost the opportunity of going to church with the rest of the family, — an act of gracious hospitality which the tired travelers appreciated.

The travelers were unable, indeed, to awaken into any feeling of Sabbatical straitness. The morning was delicious, — such a morning as never visits any place except an island ; a bright, sparkling morning, with the exhilaration of the air softened by the sea. What a day it was for idleness, for voluptuous rest, after the flight by day and night from St. John ! It was enough, now that the morning was fully opened and advancing to the splendor of noon, to sit upon the upper balcony, looking upon the Bras d’Or and the peaceful hills beyond, reposeful and yet sparkling with the air and color of summer, and inhale the balmy air. (We greatly need another word to describe

good air, properly heated, besides this overworked "balmy.") Perhaps it might in some regions be considered Sabbath-keeping, simply to rest in such a soothing situation, — rest, and not incessant activity, having been one of the original designs of the day.

But our travelers were from New England, and they were not willing to be outdone in the matter of Sunday observances by such an out-of-the-way and nameless place as Baddeck. They did not set themselves up as missionaries to these benighted Gaelic people, to teach them by example that the notion of Sunday which obtained two hundred years ago in Scotland had been modified, and that the sacredness of it had pretty much disappeared with the unpleasantness of it. They rather lent themselves to the humor of the hour, and probably by their demeanor encouraged the respect for the day on Cape Breton Island. Neither by birth nor education were the travelers fishermen on Sunday, and they were not moved to tempt the authorities to lock them up for dropping here a line and there a line on the Lord's day.

In fact, before I had finished my second cup of Maud-mixed coffee, my companion, with a little show of haste, had gone in search of the kirk, and I followed him, with more scrupulousness, as soon as I could without breaking the day of rest. Although it was Sunday, I could not but notice that Baddeck was a clean-looking village of white wooden houses, of perhaps seven or eight hundred inhabitants; that it stretched along the bay for a mile or more, strag-

gling off into farmhouses at each end, lying for the most part on the sloping curve of the bay. There were a few country-looking stores and shops, and on the shore three or four rather decayed and shaky wharves ran into the water, and a few schooners lay at anchor near them; and the usual decaying warehouses leaned about the docks. A peaceful and perhaps a thriving place, but not a bustling place. As I walked down the road, a sail-boat put out from the shore and slowly disappeared round the island in the direction of the Grand Narrows. It had a small pleasure party on board. None of them were drowned that day, and I learned at night that they were Roman Catholics from Whykokomagh.

The kirk, which stands near the water, and at a distance shows a pretty wooden spire, is after the pattern of a New England meeting-house. When I reached it, the house was full and the service had begun. There was something familiar in the bareness and uncompromising plainness and ugliness of the interior. The pews had high backs, with narrow, uncushioned seats. The pulpit was high, — a sort of theological fortification, — approached by wide, curving flights of stairs on either side. Those who occupied the near seats to the right and left of the pulpit had in front of them a blank board partition, and could not by any possibility see the minister, though they broke their necks backwards over their high coat-collars. The congregation had a striking resemblance to a country New England congregation of say twenty years ago. The clothes they wore had been Sunday clothes for at least that length of time.

Such clothes have a look of I know not what devout and painful respectability, that is in keeping with the worldly notion of rigid Scotch Presbyterianism. One saw with pleasure the fresh and rosy-cheeked children of this strict generation, but the women of the audience were not in appearance different from newly arrived and respectable Irish immigrants. They wore a white cap with long frills over the forehead, and a black handkerchief thrown over it and hanging down the neck, — a quaint and not unpleasing disguise.

The house, as I said, was crowded. It is the custom in this region to go to church, — for whole families to go, even the smallest children; and they not unfrequently walk six or seven miles to attend the service. There is a kind of merit in this act that makes up for the lack of certain other Christian virtues that are practiced elsewhere. The service was worth coming seven miles to participate in! — it was about two hours long, and one might well feel as if he had performed a work of long-suffering to sit through it. The singing was strictly congregational. Congregational singing is good (for those who like it) when the congregation can sing. This congregation could not sing, but it could grind the Psalms of David powerfully. They sing nothing else but the old Scotch version of the Psalms, in a patient and faithful long meter. And this is regarded, and with considerable plausibility, as an act of worship. It certainly has small element of pleasure in it. Here is a stanza from Psalm xlv., which the congregation, without any instrumental nonsense, went through in

a dragging, drawling manner, and with perfect individual independence as to time : —

“Thine arrows sharply pierce the heart of th’ enemies of the king,
And under thy sub-jec-shi-on the people down do bring.”

The sermon was extempore, and in English with Scotch pronunciation ; and it filled a solid hour of time. I am not a good judge of sermons, and this one was mere chips to me ; but my companion, who knows a sermon when he hears it, said that this was strictly theological, and Scotch theology at that, and not at all expository. It was doubtless my fault that I got no idea whatever from it. But the adults of the congregation appeared to be perfectly satisfied with it ; at least they sat bolt upright and nodded assent continually. The children all went to sleep under it, without any hypocritical show of attention. To be sure, the day was warm and the house was unventilated. If the windows had been opened so as to admit the fresh air from the Bras d’Or, I presume the hard-working farmers and their wives would have resented such an interference with their ordained Sunday naps, and the preacher’s sermon would have seemed more musty than it appeared to be in that congenial and drowsy air. Considering that only half of the congregation could understand the preacher, its behavior was exemplary.

After the sermon, a collection was taken up for the minister ; and I noticed that nothing but pennies rattled into the boxes, — a melancholy sound for the pastor. This might appear niggardly on the part of these Scotch Presbyterians, but it is on principle that

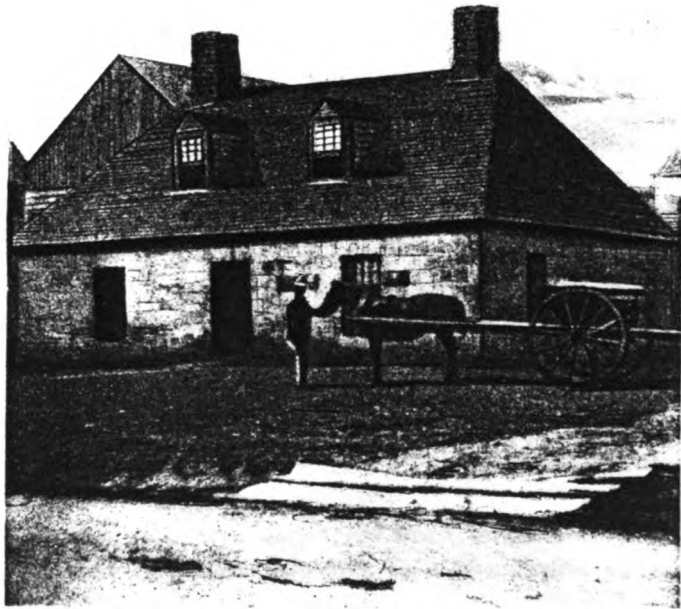
they put only a penny into the box ; they say that they want a free gospel, and so far as they are concerned they have it. Although the farmers about the Bras d'Or are well-to-do, they do not give their minister enough to keep his soul in his Gaelic body, and his poor support is eked out by the contributions of a missionary society. It was gratifying to learn that this was not from stinginess on the part of the people, but was due to their religious principle. It seemed to us that everybody ought to be good in a country where it costs next to nothing.

When the service was over, about half of the people departed ; the rest remained in their seats, and prepared to enter upon their Sabbath exercises. These latter were all Gaelic people, who had understood little or nothing of the English service. The minister turned himself at once into a Gaelic preacher, and repeated in that language the long exercises of the morning. The sermon and perhaps the prayers were quite as enjoyable in Gaelic as in English, and the singing was a great improvement. It was of the same Psalms, but the congregation chanted them in a wild and weird tone and manner, as wailing and barbarous to modern ears as any Highland devotional outburst of two centuries ago. This service also lasted about two hours ; and as soon as it was over the faithful minister, without any rest or refreshment, organized the Sunday-school, and it must have been half past three o'clock before that was over. And this is considered a day of rest.

These Gaelic Christians, we were informed, are of a very old pattern ; and some of them cling more

closely to religious observances than to morality. Sunday is nowhere observed with more strictness. The community seems to be a very orderly and thrifty one, except upon solemn and stated occasions. One of these occasions is the celebration of the Lord's Supper; and in this the ancient Highland traditions are preserved. The rite is celebrated not oftener than once a year by any church. It then invites the neighboring churches to partake with it, — the celebration being usually in the summer and early fall months. It has some of the characteristics of a "camp-meeting." People come from long distances, and as many as two thousand and three thousand assemble together. They quarter themselves without special invitation upon the members of the inviting church. Sometimes fifty people will pounce upon one farmer, overflowing his house and his barn and swarming all about his premises, consuming all the provisions he has laid up for his family, and all he can raise money to buy, and literally eating him out of house and home. Not seldom a man is almost ruined by one of these religious raids, — at least he is left with a debt of hundreds of dollars. The multitude assembles on Thursday and remains over Sunday. There is preaching every day, but there is something besides. Whatever may be the devotion of a part of the assembly, the four days are, in general, days of license, of carousing, of drinking, and of other excesses, which our informant said he would not particularize; we could understand what they were by reading St. Paul's rebuke of the Corinthians for similar offenses. The evil has become so great and bur-

The dreadful Prison-House



densome that the celebration of this sacred rite will have to be reformed altogether.

Such a Sabbath quiet pervaded the street of Baddeck, that the fast driving of the Gaels in their rattling, one-horse wagons, crowded full of men, women, and children, — released from their long sanctuary privileges, and going home, — was a sort of profanation of the day; and we gladly turned aside to visit the rural jail of the town.

Upon the principal street or road of Baddeck stands the dreadful prison-house. It is a story and a quarter edifice, built of stone and substantially whitewashed; retired a little from the road, with a square of green turf in front of it, I should have taken it for the residence of the Dairyman's Daughter, but for the iron gratings at the lower windows. A more inviting place to spend the summer in, a vicious person could not have. The Scotch keeper of it is an old, garrulous, obliging man, and keeps codfish tackle to loan. I think that if he had a prisoner who was fond of fishing, he would take him with him on the bay in pursuit of the mackerel and the cod. If the prisoner were to take advantage of his freedom and attempt to escape, the jailer's feelings would be hurt, and public opinion would hardly approve the prisoner's conduct.

The jail door was hospitably open, and the keeper invited us to enter. Having seen the inside of a good many prisons in our own country (officially), we were interested in inspecting this. It was a favorable time for doing so, for there happened to be a man confined there, a circumstance which seemed to

increase the keeper's feeling of responsibility in his office. The edifice had four rooms on the ground-floor, and an attic sleeping-room above. Three of these rooms, which were perhaps twelve feet by fifteen feet, were cells; the third was occupied by the jailer's family. The family were now also occupying the front cell,—a cheerful room commanding a view of the village street and of the bay. A prisoner of a philosophic turn of mind, who had committed some crime of sufficient magnitude to make him willing to retire from the world for a season and rest, might enjoy himself here very well.

The jailer exhibited his premises with an air of modesty. In the rear was a small yard, surrounded by a board fence, in which the prisoner took his exercise. An active boy could climb over it, and an enterprising pig could go through it almost anywhere. The keeper said that he intended at the next court to ask the commissioners to build the fence higher and stop up the holes. Otherwise the jail was in good condition. Its inmates were few; in fact, it was rather apt to be empty: its occupants were usually prisoners for debt, or for some trifling breach of the peace, committed under the influence of the liquor that makes one "unco happy." Whether or not the people of the region have a high moral standard, crime is almost unknown; the jail itself is an evidence of primeval simplicity. The great incident in the old jailer's life had been the rescue of a well-known citizen who was confined on a charge of misuse of public money. The keeper showed me a place in the outer wall of the front cell, where an attempt

had been made to batter a hole through. The Highland clan and kinsfolk of the alleged defaulter came one night and threatened to knock the jail in pieces if he was not given up. They bruised the wall, broke the windows, and finally smashed in the door and took their man away. The jailer was greatly excited at this rudeness, and went almost immediately and purchased a pistol. He said that for a time he did n't feel safe in the jail without it. The mob had thrown stones at the upper windows, in order to awaken him, and had insulted him with cursing and offensive language.

Having finished inspecting the building, I was unfortunately moved by I know not what national pride and knowledge of institutions superior to this at home, to say, —

“This is a pleasant jail, but it does n't look much like our great prisons; we have as many as a thousand to twelve hundred men in some of our institutions.”

“Ay, ay, I have heard tell,” said the jailer, shaking his head in pity, “it's an awfu' place, an awfu' place, — the United States. I suppose it's the wickedest country that ever was in the world. I don't know, — I don't know what is to become of it. It's worse than Sodom. There was that dreadful war on the South; and I hear now it's very unsafe, full of murders and robberies and corruption.”

I did not attempt to correct this impression concerning my native land, for I saw it was a comfort to the simple jailer, but I tried to put a thorn into him by saying, —

“Yes, we have a good many criminals, but the majority of them, the majority of those in jails, are foreigners; they come from Ireland, England, and the Provinces.”

But the old man only shook his head more solemnly, and persisted, “It’s an awfu’ wicked country.”

Before I came away I was permitted to have an interview with the sole prisoner, a very pleasant and talkative man, who was glad to see company, especially intelligent company who understood about things, he was pleased to say. I have seldom met a more agreeable rogue, or one so philosophical,—a man of travel and varied experiences. He was a lively, robust Provincial of middle age, bullet-headed, with a mass of curly black hair, and small, round black eyes, that danced and sparkled with good-humor. He was by trade a carpenter, and had a work-bench in his cell, at which he worked on week-days. He had been put in jail on suspicion of stealing a buffalo-robe, and he lay in jail eight months, waiting for the judge to come to Baddeck on his yearly circuit. He did not steal the robe, as he assured me, but it was found in his house, and the judge gave him four months in jail, making a year in all,—a month of which was still to serve. But he was not at all anxious for the end of his term; for his wife was outside.

Jock, for he was familiarly so called, asked me where I was from. As I had not found it very profitable to hail from the United States, and had found, in fact, that the name United States did not convey

any definite impression to the average Cape Breton mind, I ventured upon the bold assertion, for which I hope Bostonians will forgive me, that I was from Boston. For Boston is known in the eastern Provinces.

“Are you?” cried the man, delighted. “I’ve lived in Boston, myself. There’s just been an awful fire near there.”

“Indeed!” I said; “I heard nothing of it.” And I was startled with the possibility that Boston had burned up again while we were crawling along through Nova Scotia.

“Yes, here it is, in the last paper.” The man bustled away and found his late paper, and thrust it through the grating, with the inquiry, “Can you read?”

Though the question was unexpected, and I had never thought before whether I could read or not, I confessed that I could probably make out the meaning, and took the newspaper. The report of the fire “near Boston” turned out to be the old news of the conflagration in Portland, Oregon!

Disposed to devote a portion of this Sunday to the reformation of this lively criminal, I continued the conversation with him. It seemed that he had been in jail before, and was not unaccustomed to the life. He was not often lonesome; he had his workbench and newspapers, and it was a quiet place; on the whole, he enjoyed it, and should rather regret it when his time was up, a month from then.

Had he any family?

“Oh, yes. When the census was round, I con-

tributed more to it than anybody in town. Got a wife and eleven children."

"Well, don't you think it would pay best to be honest, and live with your family, out of jail? You surely never had anything but trouble from dishonesty."

"That's about so, boss. I mean to go on the square after this. But, you see," and here he began to speak confidentially, "things are fixed about so in this world, and a man's got to live his life. I'll tell you how it was. It all came about from a woman. I was a carpenter, had a good trade, and went down to St. Peter's to work. There I got acquainted with a Frenchwoman, — you know what Frenchwomen are, — and I had to marry her. The fact is, she was rather low family; not so very low, you know, but not so good as mine. Well, I wanted to go to Boston to work at my trade, but she would n't go; and I went, but she would n't come to me, so in two or three years I came back. A man can't help himself, you know, when he gets in with a woman, especially a Frenchwoman. Things did n't go very well, and never have. I can't make much out of it, but I reckon a man's got to live his life. Ain't that about so?"

"Perhaps so. But you'd better try to mend matters when you get out. Won't it seem rather good to get out and see your wife and family again?"

"I don't know. I have peace here."

The question of his liberty seemed rather to depress this cheerful and vivacious philosopher, and I wondered what the woman could be from whose

companionship the man chose to be protected by jail-bolts. I asked the landlord about her, and his reply was descriptive and sufficient. He only said, "She 's a yelper."

Besides the church and the jail there are no public institutions in Baddeck to see on Sunday, or on any other day; but it has very good schools, and the examination-papers of Maud and her elder sister would do credit to Boston scholars even. You would not say that the place was stuffed with books, or overrun by lecturers, but it is an orderly, Sabbath-keeping, fairly intelligent town. Book-agents visit it with other commercial travelers, but the flood of knowledge, which is said to be the beginning of sorrow, is hardly turned in that direction yet. I heard of a feeble lecture-course in Halifax, supplied by local celebrities, some of them from St. John; but so far as I can see, this is a virgin field for the platform philosophers under whose instructions we have become the well-informed people we are.

The peaceful jail and the somewhat tiresome church exhaust one's opportunities for doing good in Baddeck on Sunday. There seemed to be no idlers about, to reprove; the occasional loungee on the skeleton wharves was in his Sunday clothes, and therefore within the statute. No one, probably, would have thought of rowing out beyond the island to fish for cod, — although, as that fish is ready to bite, and his associations are more or less sacred, there might be excuses for angling for him on Sunday, when it would be wicked to throw a line for another sort of fish. My earliest recollections are

of the codfish on the meeting-house spires in New England, — his sacred tail pointing the way the wind went. I did not know then why this emblem should be placed upon a house of worship, any more than I knew why codfish-balls appeared always upon the Sunday breakfast-table. But these associations invested this plebeian fish with something of a religious character, which he has never quite lost, in my mind.

Having attributed the quiet of Baddeck on Sunday to religion, we did not know to what to lay the quiet on Monday. But its peacefulness continued. I have no doubt that the farmers began to farm, and the traders to trade, and the sailors to sail ; but the tourist felt that he had come into a place of rest. The promise of the red sky the evening before was fulfilled in another royal day. There was an inspiration in the air that one looks for rather in the mountains than on the sea-coast ; it seemed like some new and gentle compound of sea-air and land-air, which was the perfection of breathing material. In this atmosphere, which seemed to flow over all these Atlantic isles at this season, one endures a great deal of exertion with little fatigue ; or he is content to sit still, and has no feeling of sluggishness. Mere living is a kind of happiness, and the easy-going traveler is satisfied with little to do and less to see. Let the reader not understand that we are recommending him to go to Baddeck. Far from it. The reader was never yet advised to go to any place, which he did not growl about if he took the advice and went there. If he discovers it himself, the case is different. We

know too well what would happen. A shoal of travelers would pour down upon Cape Breton, taking with them their dyspepsia, their liver-complaints, their "lights" derangements, their discontent, their guns and fishing-tackle, their big trunks, their desire for rapid travel, their enthusiasm about the Gaelic language, their love for nature; and they would very likely declare that there was nothing in it. And the traveler would probably be right, so far as he is concerned. There are few whom it would pay to go a thousand miles for the sake of sitting on the dock at Baddeck when the sun goes down, and watching the purple lights on the islands and the distant hills, the red flush in the horizon and on the lake, and the creeping on of gray twilight. You can see all that as well elsewhere? I am not so sure. There is a harmony of beauty about the Bras d'Or at Baddeck which is lacking in many scenes of more pretension.

No. We advise no person to go to Cape Breton. But if any one does go, he need not lack occupation. If he is there late in the fall or early in the winter, he may hunt, with good luck, if he is able to hit anything with a rifle, the moose and the caribou on that long wilderness peninsula between Baddeck and Aspy Bay, where the old cable landed. He may also have his fill of salmon fishing in June and July, especially on the Marjorie River. As late as August, at the time of our visit, a hundred people were camped in tents on the Marjorie, wiling the salmon with the delusive fly, and leading him to death with a hook in his nose. The speckled trout lives in all the streams, and can be caught whenever he will bite.

The day we went for him appeared to be an off-day, a sort of holiday with him.

There is one place, however, which the traveler must not fail to visit. That is St. Ann's Bay. He will go light of baggage, for he must hire a farmer to carry him from the Bras d'Or to the branch of St. Ann's harbor, and a part of his journey will be in a row-boat. There is no ride on the continent, of the kind, so full of picturesque beauty and constant surprises as this around the indentations of St. Ann's harbor. From the high promontory where rests the fishing village of St. Ann, the traveler will cross to English Town. High bluffs, bold shores, exquisite sea-views, mountainous ranges, delicious air, the society of a member of the Dominion Parliament, — these are some of the things to be enjoyed at this place. In point of grandeur and beauty it surpasses Mt. Desert, and is really the most attractive place on the whole line of the Atlantic Cable. If the traveler has any sentiment in him, he will visit here, not without emotion, the grave of the Nova Scotia Giant, who recently laid his huge frame along this, his native shore. A man of gigantic height and awful breadth of shoulders, with a hand as big as a shovel, there was nothing mean or little in his soul. While the visitor is gazing at his vast shoes, which now can be used only as sledges, he will be told that the Giant was greatly respected by his neighbors as a man of ability and simple integrity. He was not spoiled by his metropolitan successes, bringing home from his foreign triumphs the same quiet and friendly demeanor he took away ; he is almost the only example

of a successful public man, who did not feel bigger than he was. He performed his duty in life without ostentation, and returned to the home he loved unspoiled by the flattery of constant public curiosity. He knew, having tried both, how much better it is to be good than to be great. I should like to have known him. I should like to know how the world looked to him from his altitude. I should like to know how much food it took at one time to make an impression on him ; I should like to know what effect an idea of ordinary size had in his capacious head. I should like to feel that thrill of physical delight he must have experienced in merely closing his hand over something. It is a pity that he could not have been educated all through, beginning at a high school, and ending in a university. There was a field for the multifarious new education ! If we could have annexed him with his island, I should like to have seen him in the Senate of the United States. He would have made foreign nations respect that body, and fear his lightest remark like a declaration of war. And he would have been at home in that body of great men. Alas ! he has passed away, leaving little influence except a good example of growth, and a grave which is a new promontory on that ragged coast swept by the winds of the untamed Atlantic.

I could describe the Bay of St. Ann more minutely and graphically, if it were desirable to do so ; but I trust that enough has been said to make the traveler wish to go there. I more unreservedly urge him to go there, because we did not go, and we should feel no responsibility for his liking or disliking. He

will go upon the recommendation of two gentlemen of taste and travel whom we met at Baddeck, residents of Maine and familiar with most of the odd and striking combinations of land and water in coast scenery. When a Maine man admits that there is any place finer than Mt. Desert, it is worth making a note of.

On Monday we went a-fishing. Davie hitched to a rattling wagon something that he called a horse, a small, rough animal with a great deal of "go" in him, if he could be coaxed to show it. For the first half-hour he went mostly in a circle in front of the inn, moving indifferently backwards or forwards, perfectly willing to go down the road, but refusing to start along the bay in the direction of Middle River. Of course a crowd collected to give advice and make remarks, and women appeared at the doors and windows of adjacent houses. Davie said he did n't care anything about the conduct of the horse, — he could start him after a while, — but he did n't like to have all the town looking at him, especially the girls; and besides, such an exhibition affected the market value of the horse. We sat in the wagon circling round and round, sometimes in the ditch and sometimes out of it, and Davie "whaled" the horse with his whip and abused him with his tongue. It was a pleasant day, and the spectators increased.

There are two ways of managing a balky horse. My companion knew one of them and I the other. His method is to sit quietly in the wagon, and at short intervals throw a small pebble at the horse. The theory is that these repeated sudden annoyances

will operate on a horse's mind, and he will try to escape them by going on. The spectators supplied my friend with stones, and he pelted the horse with measured gentleness. Probably the horse understood this method, for he did not notice the attack at all. My plan was to speak gently to the horse, requesting him to go, and then to follow the refusal by one sudden, sharp cut of the lash ; to wait a moment, and then repeat the operation. The dread of the coming lash after the gentle word will start any horse. I tried this, and with a certain success. The horse backed us into the ditch, and would probably have backed himself into the wagon, if I had continued. When the animal was at length ready to go, Davie took him by the bridle, ran by his side, coaxed him into a gallop, and then, leaping in behind, lashed him into a run, which had little respite for ten miles, uphill or down. Remonstrance on behalf of the horse was in vain, and it was only on the return home that this specimen Cape Breton driver began to reflect how he could erase the welts from the horse's back before his father saw them.

Our way lay along the charming bay of the Bras d'Or, over the sprawling bridge of the Big Baddeck, a black, sedgy, lonesome stream, to Middle River, which debouches out of a scraggy country into a bayou with ragged shores, about which the Indians have encampments, and in which are the skeleton stakes of fish-weirs. Saturday night we had seen trout jumping in the still water above the bridge. We followed the stream up two or three miles to a Gaelic settlement of farmers. The river here flows

through lovely meadows, sandy, fertile, and sheltered by hills, — a green Eden, one of the few peaceful inhabited spots in the world. I could conceive of no news coming to these Highlanders later than the defeat of the Pretender. Turning from the road, through a lane and crossing a shallow brook, we reached the dwelling of one of the original McGregors, or at least as good as an original. Mr. McGregor is a fiery-haired Scotchman and brother, cordial and hospitable, who entertained our wayward horse, and freely advised us where the trout on his farm were most likely to be found at this season of the year.

It would be a great pleasure to speak well of Mr. McGregor's residence, but truth is older than Scotchmen, and the reader looks to us for truth and not flattery. Though the McGregor seems to have a good farm, his house is little better than a shanty, — a rather cheerless place for the "woman" to slave away her uneventful life in, and bring up her scantily clothed and semi-wild flock of children. And yet I suppose there must be happiness in it, — there always is where there are plenty of children, and milk enough for them. A white-haired boy who lacked adequate trousers, small though he was, was brought forward by his mother to describe a trout he had recently caught, which was nearly as long as the boy himself. The young Gael's invention was rewarded by a present of real fish-hooks. We found here in this rude cabin the hospitality that exists in all remote regions where travelers are few. Mrs. McGregor had none of that reluctance, which wo-

men feel in all more civilized agricultural regions, to "break a pan of milk," and Mr. McGregor even pressed us to partake freely of that simple drink. And he refused to take any pay for it, in a sort of surprise that such a simple act of hospitality should have any commercial value. But travelers themselves destroy one of their chief pleasures. No doubt we planted the notion in the McGregor mind that the small kindnesses of life may be made profitable, by offering to pay for the milk; and probably the next travelers in that Eden will succeed in leaving some small change there, if they use a little tact.

It was late in the season for trout. Perhaps the McGregor was aware of that when he freely gave us the run of the stream in his meadows, and pointed out the pools where we should be sure of good luck. It was a charming August day, just the day that trout enjoy lying in cool, deep places, and moving their fins in quiet content, indifferent to the skimming fly or to the proffered sport of rod and reel. The Middle River gracefully winds through this Vale of Tempe, over a sandy bottom, sometimes sparkling in shallows, and then gently reposing in the broad bends of the grassy banks. It was in one of these bends, where the stream swirled around in seductive eddies, that we tried our skill. We heroically waded the stream and threw our flies from the highest bank; but neither in the black water nor in the sandy shallows could any trout be coaxed to spring to the deceitful leaders. We enjoyed the distinction of being the only persons who had ever failed to strike trout in that pool, and this was some-

thing. The meadows were sweet with the newly cut grass, the wind softly blew down the river, large white clouds sailed high overhead and cast shadows on the changing water; but to all these gentle influences the fish were insensible, and sulked in their cool retreats. At length in a small brook flowing into the Middle River we found the trout more sociable; and it is lucky that we did so, for I should with reluctance stain these pages with a fiction; and yet the public would have just reason to resent a fish-story without any fish in it. Under a bank, in a pool crossed by a log and shaded by a tree, we found a drove of the speckled beauties at home,—dozens of them a foot long, each moving lazily a little, their black backs relieved by their colored fins. They must have seen us, but at first they showed no desire for a closer acquaintance. To the red ibis and the white miller and the brown hackle and the gray fly they were alike indifferent. Perhaps the love for made flies is an artificial taste and has to be cultivated. These at any rate were uncivilized trout, and it was only when we took the advice of the young McGregor and baited our hooks with the angle-worm, that the fish joined in our day's sport. They could not resist the lively wiggle of the worm before their very noses, and we lifted them out one after another, gently, and very much as if we were hooking them out of a barrel, until we had a handsome string. It may have been fun for them, but it was not much sport for us. All the small ones the young McGregor contemptuously threw back into the water. The sportsman will perhaps learn from this incident

that there are plenty of trout in Cape Breton in August, but that the fishing is not exhilarating.

The next morning the semi-weekly steamboat from Sydney came into the bay, and drew all the male inhabitants of Baddeck down to the wharf; and the two travelers, reluctant to leave the hospitable inn, and the peaceful jail, and the double-barreled church, and all the loveliness of this reposeful place, prepared to depart. The most conspicuous person on the steamboat was a thin man, whose extraordinary height was made more striking by his very long-waisted black coat and his very short pantaloons. He was so tall that he had a little difficulty in keeping his balance, and his hat was set upon the back of his head to preserve his equilibrium. He had arrived at that stage when people affected as he was are oratorical, and overflowing with information and good-nature. With what might in strict art be called an excess of expletives, he explained that he was a civil engineer, that he had lost his rubber coat, that he was a great traveler in the Provinces, and he seemed to find a humorous satisfaction in reiterating the fact of his familiarity with Painsec Junction. It evidently hovered in the misty horizon of his mind as a joke, and he contrived to present it to his audience in that light. From the deck of the steamboat he addressed the town, and then, to the relief of the passengers, he decided to go ashore. When the boat drew away on her voyage we left him swaying perilously near the edge of the wharf, good-naturedly resenting the grasp of his coat-tail by a friend, addressing us upon the topics of the day, and wishing us prosperity and

the Fourth of July. His was the only effort in the nature of a public lecture that we heard in the Provinces, and we could not judge of his ability without hearing a "course."

Perhaps it needed this slight disturbance, and the contrast of this hazy mind with the serene clarity of the day, to put us into the most complete enjoyment of our voyage. Certainly, as we glided out upon the summer waters and began to get the graceful outlines of the widening shores, it seemed as if we had taken passage to the Fortunate Islands.

V

“One town, one country, is very like another; . . . there are indeed minute discriminations both of places and manners, which, perhaps, are not wanting of curiosity, but which a traveller seldom stays long enough to investigate and compare.” — DR. JOHNSON.

THERE was no prospect of any excitement or of any adventure on the steamboat from Baddeck to West Bay, the southern point of the Bras d'Or. Judging from the appearance of the boat, the dinner might have been an experiment, but we ran no risks. It was enough to sit on deck forward of the wheel-house, and absorb, by all the senses, the delicious day. With such weather perpetual and such scenery always present, sin in this world would soon become an impossibility. Even towards the passengers from Sydney, with their imitation English ways and little insular gossip, one could have only charity and the most kindly feeling.

The most electric American, heir of all the nervous diseases of all the ages, could not but find peace in this scene of tranquil beauty, and sail on into a great and deepening contentment. Would the voyage could last for an age, with the same sparkling but tranquil sea, and the same environment of hills, near and remote! The hills approached and fell away in lines of undulating grace, draped with a tender color which helped to carry the imagination

beyond the earth. At this point the narrative needs to flow into verse, but my comrade did not feel like another attempt at poetry so soon after that on the Gut of Canso. A man cannot always be keyed up to the pitch of production, though his emotions may be highly creditable to him. But poetry-making in these days is a good deal like the use of profane language, — often without the least provocation.

Twelve miles from Baddeck we passed through the Barra Strait, or the Grand Narrows, a picturesque feature in the Bras d'Or, and came into its widest expanse. At the Narrows is a small settlement with a flag-staff and a hotel, and roads leading to farm-houses on the hills. Here is a Catholic chapel; and on shore a fat padre was waiting in his wagon for the inevitable priest we always set ashore at such a place. The missionary we landed was the young father from Arichat, and in appearance the pleasing historical Jesuit. Slender is too corpulent a word to describe his thinness, and his stature was primeval. Enveloped in a black coat, the skirts of which reached his heels, and surmounted by a black hat with an enormous brim, he had the form of an elegant toadstool. The traveler is always grateful for such figures, and is not disposed to quarrel with the faith which preserves so much of the ugly picturesque. A peaceful farming country this, but an unremunerative field, one would say, for the colporteur and the book-agent; and winter must inclose it in a lonesome seclusion.

The only other thing of note the Bras d'Or offered us before we reached West Bay was the finest

show of medusæ or jelly-fish that could be produced. At first there were dozens of these disk-shaped, transparent creatures, and then hundreds, starring the water like marguerites sprinkled on a meadow, and of sizes from that of a teacup to a dinner-plate. We soon ran into a school of them, a convention, a herd as extensive as the vast buffalo droves on the plains, a collection as thick as clover-blossoms in a field in June, miles of them, apparently ; and at length the boat had to push its way through a mass of them which covered the water like the leaves of the pond-lily, and filled the deeps far down with their beautiful contracting and expanding forms. I did not suppose there were so many jelly-fishes in all the world. What a repast they would have made for the Atlantic whale we did not see, and what inward comfort it would have given him to have swum through them once or twice with open mouth ! Our delight in this wondrous spectacle did not prevent this generous wish for the gratification of the whale. It is probably a natural human desire to see big corporations swallow up little ones.

At the West Bay landing, where there is nothing whatever attractive, we found a great concourse of country wagons and clamorous drivers, to transport the passengers over the rough and uninteresting nine miles to Port Hawkesbury. Competition makes the fare low, but nothing makes the ride entertaining. The only settlement passed through has the promising name of River Inhabitants, but we could see little river and less inhabitants ; country and people seem to belong to that commonplace order out of

which the traveler can extract nothing amusing, instructive, or disagreeable; and it was a great relief when we came over the last hill and looked down upon the straggling village of Port Hawkesbury and the winding Gut of Canso.

One cannot but feel a respect for this historical strait, on account of the protection it once gave our British ancestors. Smollett makes a certain Captain C—— tell this anecdote of George II. and his enlightened minister, the Duke of Newcastle: "In the beginning of the war this poor, half-witted creature told me, in a great fright, that thirty thousand French had marched from Acadie to Cape Breton. 'Where did they find transports?' said I. 'Transports!' cried he; 'I tell you, they marched by land.' 'By land to the island of Cape Breton?' 'What! is Cape Breton an island?' 'Certainly.' 'Ha! are you sure of that?' When I pointed it out on the map, he examined it earnestly with his spectacles; then taking me in his arms, 'My dear C——!' cried he, 'you always bring us good news. I'll go directly and tell the king that Cape Breton is an island.'"

Port Hawkesbury is not a modern settlement, and its public house is one of the irregular, old-fashioned, stuffy taverns, with low rooms, chintz-covered lounges, and fat-cushioned rocking-chairs, the decay and untidiness of which are not offensive to the traveler. It has a low back porch looking towards the water and over a mouldy garden, damp and unseemly. Time was, no doubt, before the rush of travel rubbed off the bloom of its ancient hospitality and set a vigilant man at the door of the dining-

room to collect pay for meals, that this was an abode of comfort and the resort of merry-making and frolicsome provincials. On this now decaying porch no doubt lovers sat in the moonlight, and vowed by the Gut of Canso to be fond of each other forever. The traveler cannot help it if he comes upon the traces of such sentiment. There lingered yet in the house an air of the hospitable old time; the swift willingness of the waiting-maids at table, who were eager that we should miss none of the home-made dishes, spoke of it; and as we were not obliged to stay in the hotel and lodge in its six-by-four bedrooms, we could afford to make a little romance about its history.

While we were at supper the steamboat arrived from Pictou. We hastened on board, impatient for progress on our homeward journey. But haste was not called for. The steamboat would not sail on her return till morning. No one could tell why. It was not on account of freight to take in or discharge; it was not in hope of more passengers, for they were all on board. But if the boat had returned that night to Pictou, some of the passengers might have left her and gone west by rail, instead of wasting two or three days lounging through Northumberland Sound and idling in the harbors of Prince Edward Island. If the steamboat would leave at midnight, we could catch the railway train at Pictou. Probably the officials were aware of this, and they preferred to have our company to Shediac. We mention this so that the tourist who comes this way may learn to possess his soul in patience, and know that steamboats are

not run for his accommodation, but to give him repose and to familiarize him with the country. It is almost impossible to give the unscientific reader an idea of the slowness of travel by steamboat in these regions. Let him first fix his mind on the fact that the earth moves through space at a speed of more than sixty-six thousand miles an hour. This is a speed eleven hundred times greater than that of the most rapid express trains. If the distance traversed by a locomotive in an hour is represented by one tenth of an inch, it would need a line nine feet long to indicate the corresponding advance of the earth in the same time. But a tortoise, pursuing his ordinary gait without a wager, moves eleven hundred times slower than an express train. We have here a basis of comparison with the provincial steamboats. If we had seen a tortoise start that night from Port Hawkesbury for the west, we should have desired to send letters by him.

In the early morning we stole out of the romantic strait, and by breakfast-time we were over St. George's Bay and round his cape, and making for the harbor of Pictou. During the forenoon something in the nature of an excursion developed itself on the steamboat, but it had so few of the bustling features of an American excursion that I thought it might be a pilgrimage. Yet it doubtless was a highly developed provincial lark. For a certain portion of the passengers had the unmistakable excursion air: the half-jocular manner towards each other, the local facetiousness which is so offensive to uninterested fellow-travelers, that male obsequiousness about

ladies' shawls and reticules, the clumsy pretense of gallantry with each other's wives, the anxiety about the company luggage and the company health. It became painfully evident presently that it was an excursion, for we heard singing of that concerted and determined kind that depresses the spirits of all except those who join in it. The excursion had assembled on the lee guards out of the wind, and was enjoying itself in an abandon of serious musical enthusiasm. We feared at first that there might be some levity in this performance, and that the unrestrained spirit of the excursion was working itself off in social and convivial songs. But it was not so. The singers were provided with hymn-and-tune books, and what they sang they rendered in long meter and with a most doleful earnestness. It is agreeable to the traveler to see that the provincials disport themselves within bounds, and that an hilarious spree here does not differ much in its exercises from a prayer-meeting elsewhere. But the excursion enjoyed its staid dissipation amazingly.

It is pleasant to sail into the long and broad harbor of Pictou on a sunny day. On the left is the Halifax railway terminus, and three rivers flow into the harbor from the south. On the right the town of Pictou, with its four thousand inhabitants, lies upon the side of the ridge that runs out towards the Sound. The most conspicuous building in it as we approach is the Roman Catholic church; advanced to the edge of the town and occupying the highest ground, it appears large, and its gilt cross is a beacon miles away. Its builders understood the value of a strik-

ing situation, a dominant position ; it is a part of the universal policy of this church to secure the commanding places for its houses of worship. We may have had no prejudices in favor of the Papal temporality when we landed at Pictou, but this church was the only one which impressed us, and the only one we took the trouble to visit. We had ample time, for the steamboat after its arduous trip needed rest, and remained some hours in the harbor. Pictou is said to be a thriving place, and its streets have a cindery appearance, betokening the nearness of coal mines and the presence of furnaces. But the town has rather a cheap and rusty look. Its streets rise one above another on the hillside, and, except a few comfortable cottages, we saw no evidences of wealth in the dwellings. The church, when we reached it, was a commonplace brick structure, with a raw, unfinished interior, and weedy and untidy surroundings, so that our expectation of sitting on the inviting hill and enjoying the view was not realized ; and we were obliged to descend to the hot wharf and wait for the ferry-boat to take us to the steamboat which lay at the railway terminus opposite. It is the most unfair thing in the world for the traveler, without an object or any interest in the development of the country, on a sleepy day in August, to express any opinion whatever about such a town as Pictou. But we may say of it, without offense, that it occupies a charming situation, and may have an interesting future ; and that a person on a short acquaintance can leave it without regret.

By stopping here we had the misfortune to lose

our "excursion," a loss that was soothed by no knowledge of its destination or hope of seeing it again, and a loss without a hope is nearly always painful. Going out of the harbor we encounter Pictou Island and Light, and presently see the low coast of Prince Edward Island, — a coast indented and agreeable to those idly sailing along it, in weather that seemed let down out of heaven, and over a sea that sparkled but still slept in a summer quiet. When fate puts a man in such a position and relieves him of all responsibility, with a book and a good comrade, and liberty to make sarcastic remarks upon his fellow-travelers, or to doze, or to look over the tranquil sea, he may be pronounced happy. And I believe that my companion, except in the matter of the comrade, was happy. But I could not resist a worrying anxiety about the future of the British Provinces, which not even the remembrance of their hostility to us during our mortal strife with the Rebellion could render agreeable. For I could not but feel that the ostentatious and unconcealable prosperity of "the States" overshadows this part of the continent. And it was for once in vain that I said, "Have we not a common language and a common literature, and no copyright, and a common pride in Shakespeare and Hannah More and Colonel Newcome and Pepys's Diary?" I never knew this sort of consolation to fail before; it does not seem to answer in the Provinces as well as it does in England.

New passengers had come on board at Pictou, new and hungry, and not all could get seats for dinner at the first table. Notwithstanding the supposed tra-

ditionary advantage of our birthplace, we were unable to dispatch this meal with the celerity of our fellow-voyagers, and consequently, while we lingered over our tea, we found ourselves at the second table. And we were rewarded by one of those pleasing sights that go to make up the entertainment of travel. There sat down opposite to us a fat man whose noble proportions occupied at the board the space of three ordinary men. His great face beamed delight the moment he came near the table. He had a low forehead and a wide mouth and small eyes, and an internal capacity that was a prophecy of famine to his fellow-men. But a more good-natured, pleased animal you may never see. Seating himself with unrepressed joy, he looked at us, and a great smile of satisfaction came over his face, that plainly said, "Now my time has come." Every part of his vast bulk said this. Most generously, by his friendly glances, he made us partners in his pleasure. With a Napoleonic grasp of his situation, he reached far and near, hauling this and that dish of fragments towards his plate, giving orders at the same time, and throwing into his cheerful mouth odd pieces of bread and pickles in an unstudied and preliminary manner. When he had secured everything within his reach, he heaped his plate and began an attack upon the contents, using both knife and fork with wonderful proficiency. The man's good-humor was contagious, and he did not regard our amusement as different in kind from his enjoyment. The spectacle was worth a journey to see. Indeed, its aspect of comicality almost overcame its grossness, and even when the

hero loaded in faster than he could swallow, and was obliged to drop his knife for an instant to arrange matters in his mouth with his finger, it was done with such a beaming smile that a pig would not take offense at it. The performance was not the merely vulgar thing it seems on paper, but an achievement unique and perfect, which one is not likely to see more than once in a lifetime. It was only when the man left the table that his face became serious. We had seen him at his best.

Prince Edward Island, as we approached it, had a pleasing aspect, and nothing of that remote friendlessness which its appearance on the map conveys to one ; a warm and sandy land, in a genial climate, without fogs, we are informed. In the winter it has ice communication with Nova Scotia, from Cape Traverse to Cape Tormentine, — the route of the submarine cable. The island is as flat from end to end as a floor. When it surrendered its independent government and joined the Dominion, one of the conditions of the union was that the government should build a railway the whole length of it. This is in process of construction, and the portion that is built affords great satisfaction to the islanders, a railway being one of the necessary adjuncts of civilization ; but that there was great need of it, or that it would pay, we were unable to learn.

We sailed through Hillsborough Bay and a narrow strait to Charlottetown, the capital, which lies on a sandy spit of land between two rivers. Our leisurely steamboat tied up here in the afternoon and spent the night, giving the passengers an opportu-

nity to make thorough acquaintance with the town. It has the appearance of a place from which something has departed; a wooden town, with wide and vacant streets, and the air of waiting for something. Almost melancholy is the aspect of its freestone colonial building, where once the colonial legislature held its momentous sessions, and the colonial governor shed the delightful aroma of royalty. The mansion of the governor — now vacant of pomp, because that official does not exist — is a little withdrawn from the town, secluded among trees by the water-side. It is dignified with a winding approach, but is itself only a cheap and decaying house. On our way to it we passed the drill-shed of the local cavalry, which we mistook for a skating-rink, and thereby excited the contempt of an old lady of whom we inquired. Tasteful residences we did not find, nor that attention to flowers and gardens which the mild climate would suggest. Indeed, we should describe Charlottetown as a place where the hollyhock in the doorway is considered an ornament. A conspicuous building is a large market-house shingled all over (as many of the public buildings are), and this and other cheap public edifices stand in the midst of a large square, which is surrounded by shabby shops for the most part. The town is laid out on a generous scale, and it is to be regretted that we could not have seen it when it enjoyed the glory of a governor and court and ministers of state, and all the paraphernalia of a royal parliament. That the productive island, with its system of free schools, is about to enter upon a prosperous career, and that Charlottetown is soon

to become a place of great activity, no one who converses with the natives can doubt; and I think that even now no traveler will regret spending an hour or two there; but it is necessary to say that the rosy inducements to tourists to spend the summer there exist only in the guide-books.

We congratulated ourselves that we should at least have a night of delightful sleep on the steam-boat in the quiet of this secluded harbor. But it was wisely ordered otherwise, to the end that we should improve our time by an interesting study of human nature. Towards midnight, when the occupants of all the state-rooms were supposed to be in profound slumber, there was an invasion of the small cabin by a large and loquacious family, who had been making an excursion on the island railway. This family might remind an antiquated novel-reader of the delightful Brangtons in "Evelina;" they had all the vivacity of the pleasant cousins of the heroine of that story, and the same generosity towards the public in regard to their family affairs. Before they had been in the cabin an hour, we felt as if we knew every one of them. There was a great squabble as to where and how they should sleep; and when this was over, the revelations of the nature of their beds and their peculiar habits of sleep continued to pierce the thin deal partitions of the adjoining state-rooms. When all the possible trivialities of vacant minds seemed to have been exhausted, there followed a half-hour of "Good-night, pa; good-night, ma;" "Good-night, pet;" and "Are you asleep, ma?" "No." "Are you asleep, pa?" "No; go to sleep, pet." "I'm

going. Good-night, pa ; good-night, ma." " Good-night, pet." " This bed is too short." " Why don't you take the other ?" " I 'm all fixed now." " Well, go to sleep ; good-night." " Good-night, ma ; good-night, pa," —no answer. " Good-night, *pa*." " Good-night, pet." " Ma, are you asleep ?" " 'Most." " This bed is all lumps ; I wish I 'd gone downstairs." " Well, pa will get up." " Pa, are you asleep ?" " Yes." " It 's better now ; good-night, pa." " Good-night, pet." " Good-night, ma." " Good-night, pet." And so on in an exasperating repetition, until every passenger on the boat must have been thoroughly informed of the manner in which this interesting family habitually settled itself to repose.

Half an hour passes with only a languid exchange of family feeling, and then : " Pa ?" " Well, pet." " Don't call us in the morning ; we don't want any breakfast ; we want to sleep." " I won't." " Good-night, pa ; good-night, ma. Ma ?" " What is it, dear ?" " Good-night, ma." " Good-night, pet." Alas for youthful expectations ! Pet shared her state-room with a young companion, and the two were carrying on a private dialogue during this public performance. Did these young ladies, after keeping all the passengers of the boat awake till near the summer dawn, imagine that it was in the power of pa and ma to insure them the coveted forenoon slumber, or even the morning snooze ? The travelers, tossing in their state-room under this domestic infliction, anticipated the morning with grim satisfaction ; for they had a presentiment that it would be impossible for them to arise and make their toilet without

waking up every one in their part of the boat, and aggravating them to such an extent that they would stay awake. And so it turned out. The family grumbling at the unexpected disturbance was sweeter to the travelers than all the exchange of family affection during the night.

No one, indeed, ought to sleep beyond breakfast-time while sailing along the southern coast of Prince Edward Island. It was a sparkling morning. When we went on deck we were abreast Cape Traverse; the faint outline of Nova Scotia was marked on the horizon, and New Brunswick thrust out Cape Tormentine to greet us. On the still, sunny coasts and the placid sea, and in the serene, smiling sky, there was no sign of the coming tempest which was then raging from Hatteras to Cape Cod; nor could one imagine that this peaceful scene would, a few days later, be swept by a fearful tornado, which should raze to the ground trees and dwelling-houses, and strew all these now inviting shores with wrecked ships and drowning sailors,—a storm which has passed into literature in “The Lord’s-Day Gale” of Mr. Stedman.

Through this delicious weather why should the steamboat hasten, in order to discharge its passengers into the sweeping unrest of continental travel? Our eagerness to get on, indeed, almost melted away, and we were scarcely impatient at all when the boat lounged into Halifax Bay, past Salutation Point, and stopped at Summerside. This little seaport is intended to be attractive, and it would give these travelers great pleasure to describe it, if they could

at all remember how it looks. But it is a place that, like some faces, makes no sort of impression on the memory. We went ashore there, and tried to take an interest in the ship-building, and in the little oysters which the harbor yields; but whether we did take an interest or not has passed out of memory. A small, unpicturesque, wooden town, in the languor of a provincial summer; why should we pretend an interest in it which we did not feel? It did not disturb our reposeful frame of mind, nor much interfere with our enjoyment of the day.

On the forward deck, when we were under way again, amid a group reading and nodding in the sunshine, we found a pretty girl with a companion and a gentleman, whom we knew by intuition as the "pa" of the pretty girl and of our night of anguish. The pa might have been a clergyman in a small way, or the proprietor of a female boarding-school; at any rate, an excellent and improving person to travel with, whose willingness to impart information made even the travelers long for a pa. It was no part of his plan of this family summer excursion, upon which he had come against his wish, to have any hour of it wasted in idleness. He held an open volume in his hand, and was questioning his daughter on its contents. He spoke in a loud voice, and without heeding the timidity of the young lady, who shrank from this public examination, and begged her father not to continue it. The parent was, however, either proud of his daughter's acquirements, or he thought it a good opportunity to shame her out of her ignorance. Doubtless, we said, he is instructing her upon the

geography of the region we are passing through, its early settlement, the romantic incidents of its history, when French and English fought over it, and so is making this a tour of profit as well as pleasure. But the excellent and pottering father proved to be no disciple of the new education. Greece was his theme, and he got his questions, and his answers too, from the ancient school history in his hand. The lesson went on : —

“ Who was Alcibiades ? ”

“ A Greek.”

“ Yes. When did he flourish ? ”

“ I can't think.”

“ Can't think? What was he noted for? ”

“ I don't remember.”

“ Don't remember? I don't believe you studied this.”

“ Yes, I did.”

“ Well, take it now, and study it hard, and then I'll hear you again.”

The young girl, who is put to shame by this open persecution, begins to study, while the peevish and small tyrant, her pa, is nagging her with such soothing remarks as, “ I thought you'd have more respect for your pride ; ” “ Why don't you try to come up to the expectations of your teacher? ” By and by the student thinks she has “ got it,” and the public exposition begins again. The date at which Alcibiades “ flourished ” was ascertained, but what he was “ noted for ” got hopelessly mixed with what Themistocles was “ noted for.” The momentary impression that the battle of Marathon was fought

by Salamis was soon dissipated, and the questions continued.

“What did Pericles do to the Greeks?”

“I don’t know.”

“Elevated ’em, did n’t he? Did n’t he elevate ’em?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Always remember that; you want to fix your mind on leading things. Remember that Pericles elevated the Greeks. Who was Pericles?”

“He was a” —

“Was he a philosopher?”

“Yes, sir.”

“No, he was n’t. Socrates was a philosopher. When did *he* flourish?” And so on, and so on.

O my charming young countrywomen, let us never forget that Pericles elevated the Greeks; and that he did it by cultivating the national genius, the national spirit, by stimulating art and oratory and the pursuit of learning, and infusing into all society a higher intellectual and social life! Pa was this day sailing through seas and by shores that had witnessed some of the most stirring and romantic events in the early history of our continent. He might have had the eager attention of his bright daughter if he had unfolded these things to her in the midst of this most living landscape, and given her an “object lesson” that she would not have forgotten all her days, instead of this pottering over names and dates that were as dry and meaningless to him as they were uninteresting to his daughter. At least, O Pa, Educator of Youth, if you are insensible to the beauty

of these summer isles and indifferent to their history, and your soul is wedded to ancient learning, why do you not teach your family to go to sleep when they go to bed, as the classic Greeks used to?

Before the travelers reached Shediac, they had leisure to ruminate upon the education of American girls in the schools set apart for them, and to conjecture how much they are taught of the geography and history of America, or of its social and literary growth; and whether, when they travel on a summer tour like this, these coasts have any historical light upon them, or gain any interest from the daring and chivalric adventurers who played their parts here so long ago. We did not hear pa ask when Madame de la Tour "flourished," though "flourish" that determined woman did, in Boston as well as in the French provinces. In the present woman revival, may we not hope that the heroic women of our colonial history will have the prominence that is their right, and that woman's achievements will assume their proper place in affairs? When women write history, some of our popular men heroes will, we trust, be made to acknowledge the female sources of their wisdom and their courage. But at present women do not much affect history, and they are more indifferent to the careers of the noted of their own sex than men are.

We expected to approach Shediac with a great deal of interest. It had been, when we started, one of the most prominent points in our projected tour. It was the pivot upon which, so to speak, we expected to swing around the Provinces. Upon the map it was so attractive, that we once resolved to go no farther

than there. It once seemed to us that, if we ever reached it, we should be contented to abide there, in a place so remote, in a port so picturesque and foreign. But returning from the real east, our late interest in Shediac seemed unaccountable to us. Firmly resolved as I was to note our entrance into the harbor, I could not keep the place in mind; and while we were in our state-room and before we knew it, the steamboat lay at the wharf. Shediac appeared to be nothing but a wharf with a railway train on it, and a few shanty buildings, a part of them devoted to the sale of whiskey and to cheap lodgings. This landing, however, is called Point du Chêne, and the village of Shediac is two or three miles distant from it; we had a pleasant glimpse of it from the car windows, and saw nothing in its situation to hinder its growth. The country about it is perfectly level, and stripped of its forests. At Painsec Junction we waited for the train from Halifax, and immediately found ourselves in the whirl of intercolonial travel. Why people should travel here, or why they should be excited about it, we could not see; we could not overcome a feeling of the unreality of the whole thing; but yet we humbly knew that we had no right to be otherwise than awed by the extraordinary intercolonial railway enterprise and by the new life which it is infusing into the Provinces. We are free to say, however, that nothing can be less interesting than the line of this road until it strikes the Kennebeckasis River, when the traveler will be called upon to admire the Sussex Valley and a very fair farming region, which he would like to praise if it were not for exciting the jealousy of the

“Garden of Nova Scotia.” The whole land is in fact a garden, but differing somewhat from the Isle of Wight.

In all travel, however, people are more interesting than land, and so it was at this time. As twilight shut down upon the valley of the Kennebeckasis, we heard the strident voice of pa going on with the Grecian catechism. Pa was unmoved by the beauties of Sussex or by the colors of the sunset, which for the moment made picturesque the scraggy evergreens on the horizon. His eyes were with his heart, and that was in Sparta. Above the roar of the car-wheels we heard his nagging inquiries.

“What did Lycurgus do *then*?”

Answer not audible.

“No. He made laws. Who did he make laws for?”

“For the Greeks.”

“He made laws for the Lacedemonians. Who was another great lawgiver?”

“It was — it was — Pericles.”

“No, it was n’t. It was Solon. Who was Solon?”

“Solon was one of the wise men of Greece.”

“That’s right. When did he flourish?”

When the train stops at a station the classics continue, and the studious group attracts the attention of the passengers. Pa is well pleased, but not so the young lady, who beseechingly says, —

“Pa, everybody can hear us.”

“You would n’t care how much they heard, if you knew it,” replies this accomplished devotee of learning.

In another lull of the car-wheels we find that pa has skipped over to Marathon; and this time it is the daughter who is asking a question.

“Pa, what *is* a phalanx?”

“Well, a phalanx — it’s a — it’s difficult to define a phalanx. It’s a stretch of men in one line, — a stretch of anything in a line. When did Alexander flourish?”

This domestic tyrant had this in common with the rest of us, that he was much better at asking questions than at answering them. It certainly was not our fault that we were listeners to his instructive struggles with ancient history, nor that we heard his petulant complaining to his cowed family, whom he accused of dragging him away on this summer trip. We are only grateful to him, for a more entertaining person the traveler does not often see. It was with regret that we lost sight of him at St. John.

Night has settled upon New Brunswick and upon ancient Greece before we reach the Kennebeckasis Bay, and we only see from the car windows dimly a pleasant and fertile country, and the peaceful homes of thrifty people. While we are running along the valley and coming under the shadow of the hill whereon St. John sits, with a regal outlook upon a most variegated coast and upon the rising and falling of the great tides of Fundy, we feel a twinge of conscience at the injustice the passing traveler must perforce do any land he hurries over and does not study. Here is picturesque St. John, with its couple of centuries of history and tradition, its commerce, its enterprise felt all along the coast and through

the settlements of the territory to the northeast, with its no doubt charming society and solid English culture; and the summer tourist, in an idle mood regarding it for a day, says it is naught! Behold what "travels" amount to! Are they not for the most part the records of the misapprehensions of the misinformed? Let us congratulate ourselves that in this flight through the Provinces we have not attempted to do any justice to them, geologically, economically, or historically, only trying to catch some of the salient points of the panorama as it unrolled itself. Will Halifax rise up in judgment against us? We look back upon it with softened memory, and already see it again in the light of history. It stands, indeed, overlooking a gate of the ocean, in a beautiful morning light; and we can hear now the repetition of that profane phrase, used for the misdirection of wayward mortals, — "Go to Halifax!" — without a shudder.

We confess to some regret that our journey is so near its end. Perhaps it is the sentimental regret with which one always leaves the east, for we have been a thousand miles nearer Ireland than Boston is. Collecting in the mind the detached pictures given to our eyes in all these brilliant and inspiring days, we realize afresh the variety, the extent, the richness of these northeastern lands which the Gulf Stream pets and tempers. If it were not for attracting speculators, we should delight to speak of the beds of coal, the quarries of marble, the mines of gold. Look on the map and follow the shores of these peninsulas and islands, the bays, the penetrating arms of the sea, the harbors

filled with islands, the protected straits and sounds. All this is favorable to the highest commercial activity and enterprise. Greece itself and its islands are not more indented and inviting. Fish swarm about the shores and in all the streams. There are, I have no doubt, great forests which we did not see from the car windows, the inhabitants of which do not show themselves to the travelers at the railway-stations. In the dining-room of a friend, who goes away every autumn into the wilds of Nova Scotia at the season when the snow falls, hang trophies — enormous branching antlers of the caribou, and heads of the mighty moose — which I am assured came from there; and I have no reason to doubt that the noble creatures who once carried these superb horns were murdered by my friend at long range. Many people have an insatiate longing to kill, once in their life, a moose, and would travel far and endure great hardships to gratify this ambition. In the present state of the world it is more difficult to do it than it is to be written down as one who loves his fellow-men.

We received everywhere in the Provinces courtesy and kindness, which were not based upon any expectation that we would invest in mines or railways, for the people are honest, kindly, and hearty by nature. What they will become when the railways are completed that are to bind St. John to Quebec, and make Nova Scotia, Cape Breton, and Newfoundland only stepping-stones to Europe, we cannot say. Probably they will become like the rest of the world, and furnish no material for the kindly persiflage of the traveler.

Regretting that we could see no more of St. John, that we could scarcely see our way through its dimly lighted streets, we found the ferry to Carleton, and a sleeping-car for Bangor. It was in the heart of the negro porter to cause us alarm by the intelligence that the customs officer would search our baggage during the night. A search is a blow to one's self-respect, especially if one has anything dutiable. But as the porter might be an agent of our government in disguise, we preserved an appearance of philosophical indifference in his presence. It takes a sharp observer to tell innocence from assurance. During the night, awaking, I saw a great light. A man, crawling along the aisle of the car, and poking under the seats, had found my traveling-bag and was "going through" it.

I felt a thrill of pride as I recognized in this crouching figure an officer of our government, and knew that I was in my native land.

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