VARIETIES
IN
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WILLIAM
ALLINGHA

VOL. III

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BY

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM

VOLUME III

IRISH SKETCHES

ESSAYS

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CONTENTS

IRISH SKETCHES.

SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

An Historic Sketch.

(Fraser's Magazine, August, 1870.)

I.—SHIPS FROM WALES.

ONE day in May, seven hundred years ago,[1] three ships, which had sailed from South Wales a few hours earlier, came to anchor on the Wexford coast, and disembarked their freight of armed men, archers, soldiers in half-armour with their horses, and, lastly, a small body of men and steeds in panoply, with a red and white banner fluttering in their midst—red the colour of England, white of Wales. The men of the little army, numbering in all some 400, were of various races, simple and mixed—Welsh, Flemish, and Norman-English. Having encamped on the shore within hastily-formed entrenchments, and set careful watch, they awaited the effect of the messengers despatched inland, Irishmen who knew every track of the perilous district which they had to traverse.

The captain of this expedition is still a young man, of handsome face and strong body, somewhat above the middle

[1] Some authorities say 1169, others 1170. After comparison and consideration I take it that Fitzstephen came in May 1169, Earl Richard in August, 1170, and King Henry in October, 1171.

height, whom his friends describe as good-humoured, generous, and magnanimous, but over-fond of wine and women. His name is Robert Fitzstephen, son of Stephen, castellan of Abertivy (now Cardigan), and of Nesta, the daughter of Rhys-ap-Tudor, Prince of South Wales.[1] His companions, all volunteers, are thirty gentlemen-at-arms, of his own kindred and dependants, sixty others in half-armour, and about three hundred archers. With Robert comes Harvey de Montmaurice (a man of worship and uncle to Richard, Earl of Pembroke), not as fighter, but to make report to the earl, his nephew, as to what he finds in this Irish region. Tall and handsome is Harvey, with prominent gray eyes, of graceful figure, polished address, and witty speech, but a vicious man nevertheless (if we trust Gerald de Barri's report), wily and false; 'honey and milk mingled with poison are under his tongue.'

Next day arrive two other ships from Wales, sailing from Milford Haven, with ten gentlemen-at-arms and a body of archers, under Maurice de Prendergast, an honest and bold man, from the district of Ros, in South Wales.

Who are these, and why have they landed in arms on the coast of Wexford? They are a band of adventurers, soldiers of fortune, mustered under a sort of private half-sanction from the King of England, Henry the Second. Their direct and avowed aim is to help the King (or kinglet) of Leinster, Dermot MacMurrough, against Roderick O'Conor, King of Connaught and Monarch of Ireland, and other princes who are leagued against Dermot. They also, and still more earnestly, intend to help themselves.

People in general are perhaps rather vague as to what is sometimes called 'the invasion' and sometimes 'the conquest of Ireland,' having some floating notions (all more or less erroneous) connected with Dermot MacMurrough and the abduction of Dervorgil; Strongbow, *alias* Strigul; the

[1] Giraldus Cambrensis (cousin to Robert) in *Expugnatio Hibernica*.

Bull of Pope Adrian; along with a general impression as to 'Irish kings,' that they were pretty much on a level with the modern potentates of Central Africa, and that the island they lived in (notwithstanding some vague odour of sanctity and learning wafted from more ancient times) was little, if anything, better than Caffraria or Ashantee.

II.—THE DARK AGES.

THERE is a space in the history of Europe which people have agreed to call *The Dark Ages*. Its boundaries are variously set: we, perhaps, may think of the shadow (including each penumbra) as extending from the Emperor Constantine to Pope Innocent III.—more than nine hundred years—from the Three Hundreds (fourth century) to the Twelves (thirteenth century).[1] During these nine centuries, it might be said (were the fanciful analogy allowed), the wondrous new birth, Modern Society, was forming itself in the womb of time.

During most of this long period, we see every part of Central and Southern Europe swept by successive floods of invasion and conquest. Britain, abandoned by the Romans, is occupied by the Anglo-Saxons, otherwise English; the land is again overrun by the Danes, and finally subdued by the Normans—remaining England, however, and changing its later conquerors into Englishmen. The old Keltic Britons are hemmed in among the mountains of Wales and Cumbria and the rocks of Cornwall.

About the period when the Normans come upon the scene of history, the 'Dark Ages' are perhaps at their gloomiest; times of ignorance and of violence; 'times of great misery

[1] I venture (tentatively and apologetically) to name the centuries thus, as more comfortable for the memory and the imagination.

to the people, the worst perhaps that Europe has ever known.'[1]

Nor, after the Normans had settled on the banks of the Seine, and received Christian baptism, were matters much improved.

In 1035, little William the Bastard (then seven years old) succeeded his father as Duke of Normandy. The state of Normandy during his minority 'was fearful beyond expression.' The nobles were engaged in 'rebellion against their sovereign, ruthless oppression of those beneath them, and endless deadly feuds with one another.' 'Private murder was as familiar to them [the Norman nobles] as open war.' 'Probably no period of the same length in the history of Christendom contains the record of so many foul deeds of slaughter and mutilation as the early years of the reign of William. And they were constantly practised, not only against avowed and armed enemies, but against unarmed and unsuspecting guests.'[2]

As to the English Teutons, an English historian tells us, 'No people were so much addicted to robbery, to riotous frays, and to feuds arising out of family revenge, as the Anglo-Saxons.'[3]

Such was the general condition of Normandy, of England, and of Europe in general.

Erin, or Ireland, at the middle of the Dark Ages, was a country in which appeared, in the midst of rudeness and turbulence, certain remarkable indications of spirituality, refinement and culture. It had a regular and expressive language, with much written and oral literature, historic, legal, poetic, and imaginative (of which the numerous relics are only now beginning to be brought to light); it excelled

[1] Hallam, *Middle Ages*, vol. i. p. 19 (1857).

[2] Freeman's *Norman Conquest of England* vol. ii. pp. 191, 192.

[3] Hallam, *Middle Ages*, vol. ii. p. 291.

in certain arts of design, particularly book illumination and metal work'—and possessed a new and beautiful school of architecture. In music her people had 'an incomparable skill.'[1] They observed an elaborate and humane code of ancient laws (still extant, and now for the first time being translated into English).[2]

The Irish accepted Christianity almost by acclamation, finding in it a better teaching; and long before any other people in Western Europe, they applied themselves to the establishment of schools and colleges. Beda, writing his

[1] The *Book of Kells* and *Book of Dervor*, both copies of the Gospels, made, it is considered, *circa* A.D. 600, are in the Library of Trin. Coll. Dublin. Facsimiles in colours of some pages from these and other Irish MSS. are given in *Facsimiles, &c., of the Anglo-Saxon and Irish MSS.*, by J. O. Westwood, M.A. (London: Quaritch, 1868.) Mr. Digby Wyatt (quoted in the preface) says that 'in delicacy of handling and minute but faultless execution the whole range of palæography offers nothing comparable to these early Irish MSS., and those produced in the same style in England.' And the same artist, speaking elsewhere of Irish art (*Handbook to the Byzantine Court, Crystal Palace*), remarks: 'They [the Irish] appear in advance both in mechanical execution and originality of design of all Europe and the Anglo-Saxons in particular.' It is noticeable that the illuminated MSS., the stone carvings, and the metal work have in common a peculiar style of ornamentation, with interlacements and spirals—that which is now known as 'Celtic.' In the museum of the R. I. Academy, Dublin, are multifarious examples of ancient Irish art.

[2] Giraldus Cambrensis, *Topographia Hibernica* (Treasury Series, vol. v., p. 153). Gerald de Barri was born at Manorbeer, South Wales, *circa* 1147; went to Ireland 1183; again with Prince John 1185, staying each time about a year; wrote *Topographia Hibernica* and *Expugnatio Hibernica*, 1187-8—the chief, almost the sole authority, until quite lately, of all English writers on the state of Ireland in the Eleven Hundreds. He is brisk, curious, and sometimes acute; but vain, pompous, credulous, and unscrupulous, a babbler, a flatterer of the powerful: he saw but a small bit of Ireland, and was clearly 'humbugged' very often. Many grains of value, however, are to be picked out of his two books.

[3] *Ancient Laws of Ireland*, vols. i., ii. (Trans. Series).

Ecclesiastical History, *circa* A.D. 731, says, under the year 664:

> Many of the nobility and of the lower ranks of the English nation were there [in Ireland] at that time, who, in the days of the Bishops Finan and Colman, forsaking their native island, retired thither either for the sake of Divine studies or of a purer life; and some of them devoted themselves at once to a monastic life, others applied themselves to study, going about from one master's cell to another. The Irish willingly received them all, and took care to supply them with food, as also to furnish them with books to read and teaching, free of charge.

The Irish (alias 'Scots') also maintained constant intercourse with other countries, and indeed were noted travellers. They founded many famous monasteries in France, Germany, Italy, &c., and held the highest reputation as teachers and lecturers in all the learning of the time, profane as well as theological.[1]

There must have been something in the character of this people to make them so fit and fruitful a soil for the seeds of learning and piety. It was not by accident that Erin became known as the intellectual garden and nursery ground of Christendom.

But from the time that the Scandinavian sea-rovers effected settlements on her coasts, and often plundered the interior, the condition of the island deteriorated. Not until after some two hundred years of merciless conflicts and mutual treacheries did hope appear of an amalgamation of the races. Meanwhile, society had become disorganised all over the country, and the regular succession to the High-Kingship was broken up. In such condition, and after so long a period of sickness, did the new adventurers find the land.

They came at a time when 'the rear of darkness thin' over great part of Europe was being scattered and light was stealing upon the landscape. The wandering and half-barbarous life of 'the Dark Ages' had gradually changed.

[1] E.g. (for one) the famous Johannes Erigiena.

Powerful men had established themselves on their own domains, with their families and servitors. The 'feudal system' had arisen, visibly culminating in the strong castle on its hereditary land, village and church crouching at its feet. Its warlike and despotic lord, whose serfs and soldiers held goods and lives at his pleasure, seldom yielded save on force to any opposing will. It was a new stage in civilisation. But this state of society, which had prevailed in a large part of Western Europe, during some three centuries, was totally unknown, with all its good and evil, in the island of Erin. Neither Roman government, with its municipalities, nor Teutonic temper and customs (for the Norse invaders effected no apparent change in the general Irish character), nor finally the powerful and widespread Feudalism, had leavened this ancient Keltic people. Their history, character, and condition were altogether peculiar in Christendom.

A very early form of society, that of pastoral tribes, each tribe an expansion of a family and united by the bond of kinship, continued itself there; the land of each tribe being, in the main, common property of all the men of that tribe. It was a mode of living that allowed much health and happiness to individuals, and shared things more evenly than many other modes. Women, children, and the weak were well cared for; nobody was destitute or neglected. Moreover, letters and arts, as we have said, were cultivated and honoured.

But the various tribes were ill-bonded to each other. Notably one, all over the island, in language, laws, customs, traditions, and ideas, their general political and military organisation was miserably loose. They made no true nation; could neither resist as a nation nor be subdued as a nation. And a new and stronger form of civilisation had grown up in all the neighbouring countries.

The antique system of small communities holding their land mainly in common, remains to this day that of many

millions of the human race—in India, in Russia, as well as among the Arabs and others; and the ideas upon which it rests do still influence very strongly the mind of the Irish peasant.

III.—IRISH KINGS.

THE island of Erin—'Western Country,' called by the English Ira-land—received Christianity willingly about the middle of the Four Hundreds (fifth century). Paganism lingered in it some two centuries and then expired, say after the great battle of Magh Rath (Moira) A.D. 636. The people of this island at the time when we first catch any clear glimpse of them were undividedly Keltic. The Kelts of Erin and the Kelts of the neighbouring Inis-Prydain (Britain) were doubtless of the same stock; the testimonies of language, customs, tradition, and record, all lead to this conclusion. That many, at an early time, passed from the larger island to the smaller, is highly probable. It is not less probable, and it is affirmed by all tradition, that several successive tribes reached the Western Island direct from lands bordering on the Mediterranean Sea.

The history of the Eastern island and the history of its Western neighbour (it is necessary to emphasize this fact) are extremely different.

Britain, subjugated, most part of it, by the Romans, and held 450 years by their garrisons, was, some thirty years after their departure, invaded by certain heathen Low-Dutch tribes who, arriving in successive swarms, drove away, subdued, and superseded the Britons over the larger part of the country, making that larger part Teutonic in every way; their various small English kingdoms being at length coalesced into a kingdom of England. But, all this time, fifty miles of salt water kept Erin uninvaded; her generations of men and women were born and died, Keltic in race,

in speech, in manners, in laws. During the first 800 years, nearly, of the Christian era, while every other part of Europe felt the presence of hostile strangers, this Erin preserved an unparalleled seclusion. Then came the Scandinavian sea-rovers, who disturbed and harried the land, and at last made and held some strong settlements on the coasts.

But they did not change the character and system of the country.

Irish royalty had not passed out of the Barbaric type, *i.e.* the elective and mainly personal. The Anglo-Saxon Kings were Teuto-Barbaric; the Irish Kings Kelto-Barbaric. The tribes of Erin settled down into fixed domains and chose 'Kings' (*Riogh*); certain families rose above the rest, and the election customarily confined itself to these. Of opposition and conflict there was plenty, as elsewhere throughout Europe; but, on the whole, Irish Royalty was comparatively a settled institution, and pursued a regular course during many centuries.

This island was ruled by five kings, namely, of Ulster, Connaught, Munster, Leinster, and Meath,[1] one of these being always chosen as sovran or High-King (*Ard-Righ*) of Erin. During several centuries—say, broadly, between the years 400 and 1000—the High-Kingship rested in one family, the descendants of King Nial 'of the Nine Hostages.' From one of his sons, Conall Gulban, came the Northern branch of the O'Neills (*Ui-Niall*); from another son, Eogan or Owen, came the Southern O'Neills; and of these two branches of the great O'Neill family thirty High-Kings reigned. From A.D. 722 to 1022, 300 years, reigned seventeen High-Kings, average 17½ years each: one was killed by his countrymen, four fell in battle against the Scandinavian invaders, twelve died a natural death. This shows, for the time of the world, a remarkably well-settled succession.

[1] The territory of Meath seems to have been at first set apart as appanage of the High-Kingship, but not to have so continued.

The descendants of yet another son of the great King Niall, Cormac Cas, had settled in the parts about Limerick and Cashel, and called themselves *Dal-gCais*, 'Tribe of Cas,' or Dalcassians. The head of this tribe in A.D. 980 was a notable man, Brian son of Kennedy, eminent both in war and politics. Melaghlin[1] the Second, of the elder Southern O'Neills, was in that year chosen High-King; but Brian, first becoming King of Munster, aspired to the supreme power. Meanwhile he opposed the Danes and Norwegians (who from 795 had infested the country) with a vigour to which they were not accustomed, beat them (A.D. 968) in the bloody battle of Sulcoid (*Salicetum*, 'Willow Wood,' near Tipperary), and took their great town of Limerick. After this, joining forces with King Melaghlin, he took Dublin, the capital of the Scandinavians, and expelled Sitric. Brian also strengthened his family by marriages. He himself was married three times, his first and second wives the daughters of powerful Irish chieftains, his third the sister of the King of Leinster and widow of Olaf, Danish King of Dublin. Brian's second son, Donough, married a daughter of the most powerful man in England, under the king, Earl Godwine (her sister being the queen of Edward the Confessor and her brother Harold); one of his daughters was married to the Scandinavian Prince Sitric, another to Kenneth MacAlpin, King of Alba (Scotland); for Irish kings, princes, and chieftains were on a level with men of similar rank elsewhere.

The powerful Brian now openly claimed the High-Kingship from Melaghlin, who, after debates and delays yielded it to him A.D. 1002.

Then was Brian 'of the Cattle-Tribute' (*Brian Boroimhé* —'Brian Boru') monarch of Erin, a usurper doubtless, but

[1] Often, but incorrectly, called 'Malachi.' His name in full was 'Maelseachlin'—'Servant of St. Seachlin'—a usual way of honouring the Saints.

one who, like many usurpers, ruled strongly and well.[1] He made roads and bridges, founded schools and churches, sent over the sea 'to buy books,' was hospitable beyond measure, and enforced observance of the laws. The Scandinavians he strictly kept down, and drew from them a heavy tribute; therefore, in the year 1013, they made a great rising, aided by the Irish King of Leinster, and by ships and soldiers of their own countrymen, from Denmark under Prince Karl Knutson, from the Orkneys under Earl Sigurd, and from the Isle of Man under Brodar. On Good Friday, 1014, the Irish army of banded tribes (always hard, however, to keep together), commanded by King Brian, now seventy-three years old, and his six sons, met the Scandinavians with their Leinster allies on the plains of Clontarf, north shore of Dublin Bay—on each side some 20,000 men. The furious battle endured all day, and in the evening the Scandinavians broke and fled, and this day was the end of their independent power in Ireland. But the victors also suffered great slaughter—old King Brian and four of his sons were slain. The strength of the O'Brian family was exhausted. Then the deposed King Melaghlin resumed his Head-Kingship, and reigned nine years, keeping the Norse well down. After him (A.D. 1022) came times of personal and family rivalries and of general turmoil, no strong man rising to quell the stormy confusion. Scandinavian pressure and then Brian Boru's power and ambition had broken in pieces the orderly succession to the High-Kingship.

During the next 150 years the succession to the monarchy of Ireland caused incessant wars between the provincial kings of Connaught, Ulster, Munster, Leinster, and Meath, as rivals, or the allies of rivals, and he who for a time succeeded in getting to the highest place was only, in the

[1] An ancient triennial tribute, chiefly in cows (*bó*), to the High-King, was revived by Brian. See O'Curry, *Lectures on MS. Mater. of Ir. Hist.* (1861), p. 231.

legal phrase of the country, *Ard-Righ go fresabhra*, 'Monarch with opposition.' They pushed and pulled each other down, like children in the game called 'king of the castle.' From the O'Brians of Munster, the Head-Kingship passed to the O'Conors of Connaught, against whom strove the O'Melaghlins of Meath.

When Robert Fitzstephen landed on the Wexford coast the following were the reigning families in Ireland: in Ulster, O'Neill; in Munster, O'Brien; in Meath, O'Melaghlin; in Leinster, MacMurrough; in Connaught, O'Conor; this last being High-King of Erin, 'with opposition.' Of the MacMurroughs a fuller account will follow.

IV.—GREATER THAN ALL KINGS.

At the beginning of the Four Hundreds (fifth century) Christianity was no longer merely a creed or religion, it had become a powerful organised society. A constituted clergy had begun to rule. And, not merely strong in Church affairs or through priestly influences, the bishops and priests became the principal municipal magistrates. During successive generations, the aim of the ecclesiastic power was to predominate in society, to rule in matters spiritual and temporal. It allied itself with all princes who accepted the Church's supremacy, and encouraged them in every opportunity of making war on the unorthodox, deservers of death temporal and eternal. If the Church at times took the side of human freedom, it was either to increase her own general influence, or (more often) to check some rival to herself in the claim to absolute authority.

The flood of ecclesiastical power, gradually rising and spreading for some ten centuries, had its times of temporary abatement and recession. But beginning to swell anew

under Pope Alexander II. (with Hildebrand for prompter), it rose higher and spread wider than ever before. During many years, the successive Popes steadily kept in view the grand object of entirely subjecting to St. Peter's Chair all the national churches and all the princes and nations of Christendom.

England gave the Popes a deal of trouble. William the Conqueror, Rufus, Henry Beauclerc, Stephen, each in turn resisted, each more or less gave ground to the persistent encroachment of the Church. But during the energetic reign of Henry II. the contest for power between Tiara and Crown became fiercer than ever.

The story of Thomas à Becket needs no repetition here. Henry, sturdy king of stubborn England, must write imploring letter after letter, and strip his back to the scourge at Canterbury altar. And this humiliation befell the King some months after that day in May which saw the landing of Robert Fitzstephen and his men on the coast of Wexford.

They came there for their own ends; but, unseen, the mighty force of New Rome, of Ecclesiocracy, was watchful and ready at their back—a power that for yet another century continued to grow, and stood in fullest vigour about the middle of the Twelve Hundreds (thirteenth century). The Pope was then lord paramount of every land in Christendom, and the greatest kings trembled at the raising of his finger; the King of England was formally the Pope's vassal, and held his dominions as fiefs of the Holy See.

England, as we have said, was long time a troublesome son to the Holy Father, and little Ireland was another unruly child, whom it was necessary by some means or other to bring to obedience. The clergy of Erin noway differed in doctrine from the clergy of other Christian countries; but in some parts of their discipline they differed—notably in the important matters of the form of tonsure and the time of keeping Easter. Their real offence, the true

disease (whereof these were but symptoms), was contumacy they did not acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope, neither did they pay Peter's Pence.

Now, in the same year (namely 1154) that young Henry Plantagenet became Henry II. of England, Nicholas Brakespeare changed into Pope Adrian IV.—first and last Englishman that has ever sat in Saint Peter's Chair. Henry sent three bishops and the famous John of Salisbury (a personal friend of the new Pope) to Rome with congratulations.[1] The 'Irish question' (which has been going on ever since) was almost certainly mooted on that occasion. England and Rome had each longwhile cast glances at the strange island in the west; and now a private arrangement was made. Adrian sent to Henry a letter (not a bull),[2] which has been often quoted, saying in effect—Ireland and all islands belong to Blessed Peter and the Holy Roman

[1] Nicholas Hastifragus, or Brakespear; born at Langley near St. Albans; being refused admission to St. Albans' monastery, he made his way to Paris and studied as a poor scholar; thence to Spain and entered the monastery of St. Ruf, not far from Valentia, of which in time he was made abbot. Coming to Rome, he found favour with Pope Eugenius III., became bishop, cardinal, and finally, in the year 1154, Pope. He ruled three years, and then died, poisoned as some think. See *Catal. Mater. Br. Hist.* Hardy, vol. ii. p. 283. (Trans. Series, 1865.)

John of Salisbury, born there (*circa* A.D. 1115?); went to France and studied under Abelard; a teacher; a chaplain; secretary to Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury, and sent often to Rome on confidential business; then secretary to Archbishop à Becket, whose side he took against the King. After the murder, returned to France; made Bishop of Chartres; died at Chartres 1180. Author of *Epistolæ* (mainly on the public questions of the time—King *versus* à Becket, &c.), *Polycraticus* (on morality and philosophy), *Vita Thomæ Becket*, &c. See *Catal. Mater. Br. Hist.* Hardy, vol. ii. p. 419. (Trans. Series, 1865.)

[2] Adrian's letter is not, as commonly described, a Bull, but a less formal 'Privilegium.' It is given by Rymer (*Fœdera*, Lond. 1704, vol. i. p. 15), under date 1154, and in *Bullarum, Privilegiorum, ac Diplomatum Pontificum Amplissima Collectio* (ed. Cocquelines, Rome, 1739, vol. ii. p. 351), under date 1155, with some unimportant verbal differences from Rymer.

Church: you have signified to us, dearest son in Christ, your desire to enter into the island of Ireland, for the subduing of that people to laws, and extirpating their vices, and to make them pay an annual tribute to Blessed Peter of one penny from each house, and to conserve all the rights of the Church: go on and do so, in God's name.

At a Parliament held at Winchester, 1155, Henry consulted with his nobles of the conquest of Ireland, but the expedition was not resolved upon, and the letter was laid by for some fourteen years. Adrian was then out of this world; but his written words kept their magical vitality and strength, and were at last brought into play with much effect; supported by those of a new pope.

Whilst not as yet made public, the views it expressed, and the tenor of the document itself, were doubtless well known to many. The pro-papal part of the Irish clergy—'Ultramontanes' as they would now be called—did their best to enfeeble and suppress all opposition to the new intruders; agreeing that 'the rightful place of the Pontifical power is as that of the sun in our firmament.'[1]

V.—KING DERMOT.

Dermot MacMurrough, king of the small realm of Laighin or Leinster (a district which then included little more than the present counties of Wexford, Wicklow, Carlow, and Kildare, with part of Dublin), was great-great-grandson of a chief called Mael-na-mbo—'Mael of the Cattle'—for the use of surnames hereditary and permanent did not begin till the Ten Hundreds.

This Mael of the Cattle is described as 'lord of O'Kin-

[1] Saying of Innocent III. Muratori, quoted by Hallam.

shellagh,'[1] and was sixteenth in descent from Enna Kinshellagh, ancestor of that tribe.[2] When he was slain, by his own tribe, in 1006,[3] his son Dermot must have been a child, for of that Dermot (great-grandfather of our Dermot) we first hear in 1033, after which date his name often appears in the Annals, with foray and war.[4] In 1052 he defeated the Scandinavians of Dublin; Eachmarcach, lord of the foreigners 'went over seas,' and Dermot 'assumed the kingship of the foreigners after him.'[5] He was a warlike, impetuous man, of ruddy complexion, 'whose white teeth laughed at ill-fortune.'[6] In 1056 he is styled 'Lord of Leinster,' and appears at length to have been acknowledged in the sovereignty of Leinster, to the exclusion of the family in which it had anciently rested. In February, 1072, he met the King of Meath in battle (near Navan), was defeated, 'slain, and beheaded.'[7] This Dermot the first had a son Murrough (*Murchadh*, from whom *Mac Murchadha*—'MacMurrough'), who died before his father.[8] The son of Murrough was Donogh MacMurrough, whose son was our Dermot MacMurrough (*Diarmaid Mac Murchadha*), born the beginning of the Eleven Hundreds.

Dermot MacMurrough, King of Leinster, was a man of tall and strong body, a warrior and a tyrant. His voice, we are told, in later years, became hoarse from continual shouting in battle.[9] In 1137 he besieged Waterford, and took hostages from the Scandinavians.[10] In 1141 he killed,

[1] *Donegal Annals*, A.D. 1006; i.e. the body of Annals compiled A.D. 1632-36, at the monastery of Donegal, by the O'Clerys and others, from old MSS., and since named, quite wrongly, 'Annals of the Four Masters.'

[2] *Dun. Ans.* A.D. 1053. [3] Ibid. A.D. 1006.

[4] Ibid. A.D. 1037, 1040, 1041, 1048, 1052, &c. [5] Ibid. A.D. 1052.

[6] Ibid. A.D. 1072. [7] Ibid. A.D. 1072. [8] Ibid. A.D. 1072.

[9] Girald. Cambr. *Expugnatio Hibernica*, lib. i. cap. vi.

[10] *Donegal Annals* in anno.

treacherously, several chieftains of Leinster, and blinded others.[1] In 1149 he joined the Scandinavians of Dublin in a plundering expedition. In 1151, Turlogh O'Conor and Dermot MacMurrough met Turlogh O'Brian, King of Munster, in the battle of Moinmor, 'Great Marsh' (probably in Tipperary), wherein O'Brian was defeated with great slaughter. Among the allies of O'Brian was Tiernan O'Ruaire, Prince of Brefny (now Leitrim and Cavan); and next year O'Conor and MacMurrough attacked O'Ruaire, defeated him, and spoiled his territory. King Dermot at this time was about fifty years of age.

O'Ruaire's wife was Dervorgilla, daughter of the King of Meath, a woman now in her forty-fourth year.[2] She had been ill-treated by her husband,[3] and at length, with the advice of her brother, resolved to leave him. Taking her cattle and furniture, she voluntarily and deliberately went away into Leinster with King Dermot, with whom she had had some former acquaintance.

In 1153 we find Dermot releasing from fetters Niall O'Morda, lord of Lagis, after *blinding him*, contrary to guarantee.[4] And in the same year King Turlogh O'Conor led an army against Dermot, and forcibly took away Dervorgilla and her cattle—O'Ruaire now becoming ally of King Turlogh and giving him hostages.

In 1156 died Turlogh O'Conor, King of Connaught, and High-King, 'with opposition,' of all Ireland, succeeded in the former dignity by his son Rury, alias Roderic, who immediately blinded his own brother Brian.[5] A bad state of things, but nowise peculiar to Ireland.

After this we find O'Ruaire in alliance with King Roderic, prospering, and King Dermot's power on the decline. Dermot

[1] Ibid. [2] Ibid. A.D. 1193.

[3] Ibid. A.D. 1152. *Ann. of Clonmacn.* A.D. 1152. [4] *Dun. Ans.*

[5] Ibid.—'Turlogh' is properly *Toirdhealbach*, which means 'Tower-like.'

was always acknowledged as their lawful prince both by the natives of Leinster and the Scandinavian colonists there, whose chief seats were at Dublin and Wexford, and as a powerful leader in war men had been ready to follow him. But, personally, he was 'infestus suis, exosus aliens,' troublesome to his own people, detested by strangers, every man's hand against him and his against every man's.[1]

In 1166 Rury O'Conor, triumphing at last over the rival house of the O'Melaghlins of Meath, was inaugurated at Dublin as Monarch of Ireland, and at the head of his army took submission and hostages from the minor kings and chieftains. King Dermot, fearing an immediate attack, burned his own stronghold at Ferns,[2] and probably took refuge in the woods. He gave hostages to King Rury, but this could not save him. An army, including some of his own subjects, both Irish and Scandinavian,[3] and his old rival Tiernan O'Ruaire (whose wife he had carried off fifteen years before), overran the territory of Mac-Murrough, and the fierce old king (now about sixty-four years of age), hard pressed, fled across to Wales. This was in 1166.[4] They set up his son Murrough as king instead, 'he giving seventeen hostages to Rury O'Conor.'[5]

It seems clear, though little notice has been taken of the fact, that Dermot's first attempt to re-establish himself by foreign help was made in the next year, 1167.[6] He came

[1] Girald. Cambr. *Expug. Hib.* lib. i. cap. 6. [2] *Ann. Inis.* A.D. 1166.
[3] Ibid. [4] Ibid. [5] Ibid.

[6] The *Donegal Annals* in this same year of 1167 says: 'The Church of the Nuns at Clonmacnois was finished by Dervorgil, daughter of Murchad O'Melaghlin'—doubtless an act of contrition. She was now sixty years old. A quarter of a century later, in 1193, we find that 'Dervorgilla (*Derforghaill*) (i.e. the wife of Tiernan O'Rourke), daughter of Murrough O'Melaghlin, died in the monastery of Drughsela [Mellifont] in the eighty-fifth year of her age.'

So much for Dervorgilla, whose share in the invasion of Ireland has been erroneously made so much of by Giraldus, by Camden, by Ware, and by almost every historian down to the present day.

back to Ireland with a force of *Galls*, 'foreigners,' who were probably Welsh, and fought several times against Rury O'Conor and Tiernan O'Rorke. In the second conflict, according to the *Donegal Annals*, was slain 'the son of the King of Britain . . . who had come across the sea in the army of Mac Murchada.' This, O'Donovan thinks,[1] was probably a son of Rhys ap Gryffith, Robert Fitzstephen's prisoner, of whom we have more to hear. Dermot, getting the worst of it, made terms with O'Conor and was allowed again to leave Ireland. He sailed, with some sixty attendants, to Bristol, where he stayed at the house of Robert Herding,[2] or Fitzharding, and busied himself in planning a new expedition to recover his kingdom, this time turning his eyes to King Henry II. Henry was in Aquitaine, and thither hied Dermot in form of a suppliant.

Henry, now thirty-six years of age, was a man of powerful personality. He was of middle stature, broad-chested and brawny, large-headed, with square, florid, almost fiery face, and grey bloodshot eyes, which blazed terribly when he was angry; fleshy of body, with an enormous paunch, which his violent daily exercise on foot and on horseback could not subdue. His hands were coarse and uncared for, and his shins often wounded and discoloured by kicks from horses. Always busy, he never sat, save when on horseback and at meals. For the time he was well learned, and when in good temper eloquent, courteous, and facetious, but in anger his fury was beast-like and perilous. For the rest, he was prudent, plotting, dissimulative, and often broke his word—would hold to his purpose rather than his promise. He was hard in his own household, liberal to strangers, severe to his antagonists, clement to the subdued, cautious of entering into war, most energetic in carrying it on, self-possessed in

[1] Vol. ii. p. 1167.

[2] *Ang. Norm. Poem. On the Conquest of Ireland*, p. 16 (date Thirteen Hundreds?). London: Pickering, 1837.

danger, firm in adversity, a steady friend and steady hater.'

Ireland had long been in Henry's mind. He held the Pope's letter giving over that desired island to him on conditions. Here was very possibly a good opportunity. Dermot returned to Bristol to Robert Herding's house, carrying royal letters ordering the King of England's subjects to aid, favour, and abet the Irish refugee, and these he made publicly known, along with large offers from himself.

In a castle on the river Wye, Dermot found his man.

VI.—EARL RICHARD.

Richard de Clare was a Norman-English nobleman, head of the De Clares, proud and poor. Stripped of most part of the broad lands which his grandfather had possessed, he was living discontented in this nook within the Welsh border. A former Richard (son of a Norman Count Gislebert or Gilbert) came to England with the Conqueror, and to him were given Tunbridge, in Kent, and Clare, in Suffolk, from which latter place he and his descendants were named 'De Clare.'

Some forty years later, Gilbert (his eldest son) getting the usual King's licence 'to conquer the Welsh,' took possession of a large slice of the Pembroke district, in *Dyfed*, by help of a mixed force of Normans, English, and Flemings. Seafloods devastating their own land had driven in 1107 many Flemings to England (Queen Maud being their countrywoman), where at first they were scattered up and down, but King Henry I. collected them and sent them into South Wales, to be out of the way of quarrels with his English

[1] Gir. Camb. *Expug. Hib.* lib. i. cap. xlvi. Also Peter, Archdeacon of London, letter to Walter, Archbishop of Palermo; quoted in *Quarterly Review*, vol. lviii., from Upcott's *Private Collection of Original Letters, &c.*

subjects, and at the same time to check the quarrelsome Welsh. These men furnished Gilbert de Clare with many stout soldiers. His little army slaughtered and expelled the Welsh from their south-western peninsula; the land was divided among the adventurers and became known as 'Little England beyond Wales.' It was this Gilbert, it would appear, who was styled by his followers 'Strongbow,' and who was also known as Earl Strigul from his castle of that name, otherwise called Chepstow.[1] Gilbert Strongbow left three sons, Richard, Gilbert, and Robert. Richard, the eldest, now head of the De Clares, journeying with his son Gilbert, probably from Chepstow to another of his castles near Aberystwith, was set upon by the Welsh, and both father and son, with many of their followers, were slain. This befell in the first year of Stephen, 1135; and the place, a wood in the vale of the River Gronwy, not far from Abergavenny, is to this day called *Coed Dias*, 'the Wood of Revenge.' Gilbert de Clare, brother of the slain Richard, was now head of the family. He appears to have been called 'Earl of Pembroke,' sometimes 'Earl of Strigul,' and sometimes familiarly by the inherited epithet of 'Strongbow.' The family had opposed King Stephen, who therefore seized their castles in Kent and Sussex; and Henry II. also distrusting the De Clares, deprived Richard, grand-

[1] Strigul (or Strigoil, Estrigul, &c.) was another name for Chepstow Castle—built, it would seem [Dugdale: Camden], by William Fitz-Osborne, Lord of Breteuil, made Earl of Hereford, a leading man in the Norman Conquest; and taken from his son Roger for rebellion and given to the De Clares. It is called in Doom-Book 'Castellum de Estrigholel.' The De Clares, lords of Strigul, built a smaller castle on the border of Wentwood, eight or nine miles to the west, which from them was named also Strigul, and by degrees took this name to itself, the older castle getting called by its Anglo-Saxon alias of Chepestowe. This later Strigul is commonly, but erroneously, accepted as the source of the title. *Domesday Book* (Record Commission, 1783), vol. i. fo. 162; Camden; Leland; Tanner, *Notitia Monastica*; Coxe's *Historical Tour in Monmouthshire* (London: 1801).

son of the first Gilbert Strongbow, of most of his Welsh lands.

Therefore sat Richard poor and moody in his Castle of Strigul (otherwise Chepstow), and turned a greedy ear to the fugitive Irish King Dermot MacMurrough and his offers.

We may add this of the De Clares, that in the reign of Edward III., their male issue failing, King Edward's third son, Lionel, married for his second wife the heiress of the family, and then received the new title of Duke of Clarence —an expanded form of 'Clare.'

Of Earl Richard we have this portrait from an eye-witness, Gerald de Barri: 'A reddish man, freckled, with grey eyes, feminine face, thin voice, small neck [*collo contracto*], for the rest, mostly long in body. A liberal and mild man. What he could not by action, he settled by suavity of words. When in garb of peace, readier to obey than command. . . . Daring all things after counsel with his companions, presuming or venturing nothing from himself. His post in battle was a sure refuge and rallying-point for his men. In either fortune of war stable and constant; neither despairing in adversity nor light-headed in success.'[1]

Dermot promised Earl Richard his daughter Eva in marriage, and (what were by no means his to give) large lands in possession, with the kingdom of Leinster in reversion; and the earl on his side bound himself to come over to Ireland next spring with a sufficient army.

Dermot then went on to St. David's, and was well received by the king, Rhys ap Gryffith, and the Bishop of St. David's, while ships were made ready for his voyage to Ireland. King Rhys held now in prison his own kinsman, Robert Fitzstephen, on some political quarrel, but at the intercession of several, Robert was promised his release on consenting

[1] *Expug. Hib.* cap. xxvii.

to join the Irish expedition projected for next spring; his half-brother Maurice Fitzgerald to go with him. They (bargaining on feudal notions) were to have the town of Wexford with two adjoining 'cantreds' of land for their share.

These arrangements made, Dermot sailed to Ireland, taking with him (according to the French rhymer) some soldiers led by Richard Fitzgodeberd, 'un chevaler de Penbrocsire.'[1] But these were found useless, the time not being ripe, and were sent back to Wales; whither also went Maurice Regan, King Dermot's 'latiner' (secretary and interpreter), to observe things and to keep the preparations going.

When May came, Robert Fitzstephen, impatient probably and anxious to get away from Rhys, was ready and started, with his own kinsmen and followers, accompanied by Harvey de Montmaurice, Earl Richard's uncle: Earl Richard himself to follow more deliberately.

VII.—OF CERTAIN WELSH AND HALF-WELSH PERSONAGES.

The Princes of North and of South Wales, though for centuries they had ruled under nominal submission to the Kings of England, were extremely insubordinate vassals, and the Norman-English castellans on and within the border had a busy time of it, never safe from siege or sudden attack. Even the not rare intermarriages of Welsh and English nobles had little effect in keeping peace between them; nor did the English kings desire such peace, which would be likely to tell against their own plans. They were jealous of all private pacts with the Welsh, and used force and guile to break them up when formed. William the

[1] *Anq. Norm. Poem.* p. 21.

Conqueror had made Walter Fitzother castellan of Windsor, one of whose sons, called Gerald de Windsor, became castellan of Pembroke, 'a slender fortress' made by Arnulph de Montgomery in the reign of Henry I. This Gerald married Nesta, daughter of Rhys, Prince of South Wales, a beautiful woman, who had been concubine to King Henry I. and borne him a son, called Fitzhenry (whose sons were Meiler Fitzhenry and Robert Fitzhenry). To her husband Gerald, Nesta bore three sons—William, Maurice, and David Fitzgerald (ancestors of the famous Irish 'Geraldines') —and two daughters. One of the daughters afterwards married a De Cogan, and bore Richard and Milo de Cogan; the other daughter married William de Barri,[2] and became mother of Philip and Robert de Barri, and also Gerald de Barri, better known as Giraldus Cambrensis. Gerald de Windsor being dead, his widow Nesta (a good match) was married to Stephen,[3] castellan of Abertivy (now Cardigan), another strong place of the De Clare family,[4] and bore Robert Fitzstephen, whom we have left encamped on the Wexford headland. Thus, these adventurers — Fitzhenrys, Fitzgeralds, De Barris, De Cogans, and Fitzstephens—were close relatives, and all had a strong dash of Keltic blood; in fact, they reckoned themselves quite distinct from both

[1] Close to the Glamorgan shore (space wadeable at low water) is Barry Island, of some 300 acres, so called from the Irish Saint Barroc (*Bairrí eg*, 'Little Barry'), who formerly dwelt upon it, 'and whose remains rest there in a chapel overgrown with ivy.' 'From this island certain nobles of West Cambria, who ruled the isle and adjacent coasts, took their name.' Giraldus, vol. v. *Itin. Kambriæ*, cap. vi. (Record Series.) Sir R. Colt Hoare, (in ed. of said *Itin.* published 1806) says: 'A few stones mark the site of an old chapel; and there is a holy well, to which, on Holy Thursday, a number of women resort, and having washed their eyes at the spring, each drops a pin into it.' (Vol. i. p. 132.)

[2] Probably a De Clare.

[3] Abertivy, strongly fortified by Gilbert, son of Richard de Clare.—Camden, *in loco*.

English and Norman.[1] They spoke Welsh and probably Irish. They had much intercourse, commercial and other, with Ireland. Henry II. looked upon them as very dangerous and untrustworthy subjects, and when he gave a cunning half-leave to their mixing in the quarrels of Irish kings, he thought that it might possibly prove a shoeing-horn to his own Irish plots. If they failed, he was no way publicly responsible; if they were all killed, he could very well bear the loss of such troublesome, unruly borderers.

VIII.—BAGANBUN.

We have left Robert Fitzstephen and Maurice Prendergast with their archers and men-at-arms entrenched on the south coast of Wexford waiting for their Irish allies. Where were they encamped? On the shore of Bannow Bay is the answer usually given; but popular tradition points steadily, and in my own opinion (after visiting the place) rightly, to the headland called Baganbun, on the westward curve of Bannow Bay. The name Baganbun is obviously corrupt. The name of the neighbouring bay (Bannow) Camden took to mean 'blessed,' which is far from the truth, for in Irish it is *Cuan-an-Bhainbh*, 'Bay of the Sucking-pig;' and Baganbun is not unlikely to be a corruption of *Beann-an-Bhainbh*, 'Pigling Head;' but whatever may be the story of the Little Pig, it lies buried in the night of antiquity.

This part of Wexford is mostly a sheepwalk of rough

[1] Gerald de Barri (one of them), writing of Prince John's unlucky expedition to Ireland in 1185, says, 'Denique tripartita nobis in primis familia fuerat: Normanni, Angli, *nostri*, in Hibernia reperti;' and goes on to express the jealousy with which the last-mentioned, 'cujus aggressu via nobis in insulam data fuerat,' saw the favouritism with which the Normans (whom he terms 'novi') were treated, getting the best pay, lands, &c.—*Expugnatio Hibernica*, cap. xxxvii.

greensward, sloping southward in swells and hollows, all treeless, with cottages few and scattered; the lonely green country ending abruptly in a long line of cliff, perhaps some seventy or eighty feet high on the average, notched with rugged little creeks, and jutting into grass-topped headlands; a zigzag path here and there, known to fisherman, seaweed-gatherer, and coast-guard, descending to the lower rocks or to some little half-moon floor of yellow sand smoothed by the restless tides. One promontory, the most conspicuous, is 'Baganbun,' fifty miles due west from Milford Haven. In front, as you go out upon it, stretches the sea-line unbroken from east to west; on your left the cliff (which is of the kind that geologists term 'Lower Silurian') sinks away and shows the wide Bay of Bannow with expanse of low indefinite shores to the eastward; and on your right juts one rough green headland behind another. Below, the surf breaks round a large dark rock in the sea and several smaller rocks between it and your promontory's base; and a sloping little beach of smooth sand fills the angle between this base and the general line of cliff to the westward.

The space between two of the smaller rocks is called 'Fitzstephen's Stride'; and in this sheltered little creek, tradition says, he drew up his three ships, encamping his men on the level top of the headland above, where they were joined the next day by Maurice de Prendergast and his force out of two ships. This headland is in a manner double in shape, being of two masses joined by a broad neck, the outer and lesser bending to the eastward. Both are flat-topped and carpeted with coarse greensward, a surface of some forty English acres. Across the isthmus joining the lesser and the larger platforms runs a deep fosse between two mounds, all now coated with grass, and towards the middle of the lesser platform is an oblong hollow shown as the site of 'Fitzstephen's tent.' Where the larger platform joins to the mainland runs a double fosse, deeper

than the other, from edge to edge, a space of some 250 yards.

Such is the place which popular tradition has always pointed to as the scene of a famous historic event. The Irish annalists are silent on the subject. Giraldus merely says the landing was 'apud Bannam,' and again that they were posted 'in insula Bannensi.' He calls the distance from 'Banna' to the town of Wexford about twelve miles ('millia passuum quasi duodecim'), which certainly makes against the claim of Baganbun, since that is nearer double the distance; but this was not a point on which Giraldus was likely to be very exact.

While Robert Fitzstephen, Maurice de Prendergast, and Hervey de Montmaurice are anxiously awaiting the return of the messengers sent inland to tell Dermot Mac-Murrough of their arrival, let us consider if we can have any distinct notion of what the country was like in which these bold adventurers have landed.

It was an island of moist and mild air, washed with floods of rain from the Atlantic clouds; its interior mostly a great plain, its sea-borders mountainous, except fifty miles of the east coast. In its thick woods a squirrel, they say, could have travelled from the Giant's Causeway to Mizen Head without touching ground. Oaks were very numerous, and Gerald de Barri never saw so many yews elsewhere.[1] Ash, birch, alder, likewise abounded, and thick growths of holly, hazel, sloe, and hawthorn. These wide woodlands were full of animal life: small wild pigs, hares and rabbits, and often a fat stag rewarded the hunter; martens, badgers, and foxes were often seen, and countless weasels; and it was needful to be on one's guard against wolves. Many hawks, and in

[1] *Dair*, 'oak,' is found in Derry, Kildare, and countless other names; *Eo* or *Iubhar*, 'yew,' in Mayo, Toughal, Newry, and many more. At Aughanure ('field of yews') in County Galway a venerable yew survives, which is believed to be at least 1,600 years old.

the mountainous regions no few eagles soared above the forest, and pounced on their plentiful prey; the marsh swarmed with snipes, the open fields with quails; while in the numerous fishful waters of lakes and rivers the wild duck swam and the heron watched, in the estuaries the swift osprey darted on the salmon, flocks of wild geese and wild swans came and went; and along the ocean border clouds of seabirds flitted and screamed, and built innumerable nests on the shelves of the lofty cliff. There were no harmful reptiles; and it was firmly believed that no venomous creature could live for a day on Irish soil. Semi-wild human life incurred few natural dangers and found its food easily.

But all was not wilderness. Grassy slopes fed numerous flocks of sheep; rich pastures fattened a multitude of beeves, watched by the herdsman from his wattled 'boolie,' and shifted according to season from level mead to upland. No hay was made, the soft and rainy climate seldom failing to give grass all through the winter. The owner of flocks and herds lived in his *rath*, set when possible on a hill. Fosse and palisaded mound, usually several of them, one outside the other, made an enclosure wherein were built the houses, mostly wattled and wooden, the kitchen, the stables and byres of the well-to-do man, his family and retainers. The granary was generally underground, walled, flagged and arched with stone, and in this land of springs a well was seldom wanting. The milch cows from the nearer pastures were driven home to milking, and when (not unfrequent) a predatory attack was feared as many as possible found shelter in the enclosure. The swineherds also had their duties, and there was no lack of beef, mutton, and pork in the rath. Beehives were many and carefully kept, and honey and mead abounded.[1] No vine could ripen its bunches

[1] Bees were valuable property, and are often mentioned in the Laws.

then more than now, but the wealthier chieftains had plenty of wine, imported from France and paid for in great part with hides.[1] These raths were very numerous, and the remains of thousands of them—grassy trench and mound, in most cases with name and in many with history surviving—are visible to this day throughout Ireland. Each tribesman of property paid a regular tribute, and the Kings and minor Chiefs made frequent 'progresses,' drawing supplies from the districts through which they passed.

The poorer people lived chiefly in huts of turf or woven boughs. But it must be remembered that every man, woman, and child belonged to some tribe and possessed, in greater or lesser share, certain definite tribal rights. Careful provision was made by law for the aid of poor, infirm, and old people, and imbeciles, as well as for all strangers and travellers. Nothing can be more thoughtfully provident and humane on these heads than the ancient Laws,[2] which prevailed in all parts of Erin without distinction; and, though violence and treachery were common between foes, and foeship was everywhere too ready to spring up, all who were not foes were reckoned as brothers and most generously entreated. Hospitality to friend and to stranger was an indispensable private virtue; and in all parts of the country there were houses where food and shelter were provided gratis, free hotels, kept by men of honourable position, called Biatachs,[3] to whom public allowances were assigned for the purpose.

We have spoken of the wattled houses which from of old and still in the Eleven Hundreds were usual in Erin. These, however, were not necessarily rude or mean edifices. The kind of building, not unknown in other countries, but which

[1] Gir. *Topog. Hiber.* (Treas. Series, vol. v. p. 28.) From this work of Giraldus many of the details are taken.

[2] Ancient Laws of Ireland: *Senchus Mor.* Parts i. & ii. Treas. Series.

[3] From *Biadh*, viand (cf. *Bia*, *cibus*).

here attained such perfection as to excite the admiration of foreigners, and to be described as *more Scotico*, was of sawn oaken posts, with woven osier-work between, coated with a cement and probably limewashed; the roof of wooden beams, thatched with straw or reeds. The better dwellings of this sort were, in all probability, light, airy, and wholesome, and they must have been spacious, considering the number of relatives, retainers, and guests to whom every such house was open. Such commonly were the residences within the palisaded circles of the rath—not human pigsties by any means. Giraldus was struck by the healthiness of the Irish, their tall and handsome figures, and ruddy complexions.[1] The men's common dress was a long mantle and hood of black wool, a shirt died saffron-colour, tight-fitting breeches (*breachd*, spotted, chequered, or vari-coloured), which were trowsers and stockings in one, brogues of hide bound on the feet with thongs, and a tall conical cap. Their hair and beards, often of a yellow tinge, were worn long. They rode boldly and without saddles, and used no defensive armour, reckoning it a sign of cowardice. Their ancient weapons were bronze, and precisely Greek in design. Later, perhaps from the Norse, they learned to prefer iron, and now usually went into battle with a short spear, two darts, a long dagger, and a two-edged steel battle-axe with a long handle, which was their most dreadful weapon. Wielding this in one hand with great skill and strength, they were often able to cleave the best coat of mail. Giraldus complains much of the common practice of carrying about these deadly axes by way of walking sticks. Wheeled vehicles were in use (limited by the scarcity of roads) from very early times.

The men and women of the better class wore rich and fanciful robes, of colours indicating their rank, with finely designed ornaments of gold, silver, bronze, and *niello* work

[1] *Topog. Hib.*, p. 150.

(which the modern jeweller is fain to imitate but cannot rival).[1] The men were expert hunters and ever ready for defensive or offensive warfare; the women were skilled in weaving cloth and linen and in needlework. Their home amusements were not of a low kind. The family historians and genealogists, the poets and story-tellers, were in constant request. To possess manuscript books was one of the chief glories of the wealthy. Chess was a favourite game; and skilful music, especially of the harp and voice, was heard everywhere and keenly enjoyed. The education of the children was provided for, and a certain cultivation of intellect and taste, creditable for that age of the world, was widely diffused. Giraldus (no way partial to the Irish) says, 'what they have from nature is of the best,' but he complains of their general idleness and their want of manufactures and commerce. True, no doubt. They hated trouble, disregarded gathering money, had no turn for sailoring, made brooches and bracelets and green cloaks to please themselves; hunted and fished, drank mead and wine, enjoyed story-telling and music, and fought and made peace with all the sudden vehemence and variability of temper which characterised them, and made them capable of everything save steady industry or lasting combination.[2]

More permanent architecture than that of woodwork and wattles was by no means unknown. Of the numerous buildings of uncemented stones which belong to the early and pagan times of the island, many specimens still remain (especially on the west coast), some very impressive in their massiveness, like the great fortress of Dun Aenghus,[3] others being small houses of beehive shape. To the same ancient

[1] Thousands of copies of the ancient 'Tara brooch' (so called) have been made by Messrs. Waterhouse.

[2] See Ancient Laws of Ireland (Trans. Series) *passim*; O'Curry's *Lectures on MS. Materials of Anc. Ir. Hist.* (1861); Giraldus, *Topog.*

[3] On Aran Island, in Galway Bay.

dim era or eras belong the huge cairns (New Grange, Dowth, &c.) and the lesser ones that still crown many a hill, and the pillar-stones and monumental stone circles, of which a great number are yet standing. These objects must have been far more numerous in Robert Fitzstephen's day than in ours, and were then already gray with the weathering of many centuries, and awful with the obscure shadows of perished generations and forgotten races.

The first Christian anchorites built their cells of dry stones much in the shape and manner of the prehistoric beehive houses. Some of the first churches were also built of dry stones; but afterwards many or most of the churches were built of stone and lime. The monastic buildings of Erin as well as most of the oratories (for private devotion) were, it is probable, erected after 'the Scotic manner' with wood and wattles till the Eleven Hundreds. The abbey and cathedral churches were all of cemented stone; and of these, at the time when Fitzstephen landed, a great number were dotted over the face of the island; some of them, though not competing in size and splendour with the best buildings of richer and more populous lands, exhibiting in their remarkable beauty many germs of a new and distinct school of architecture, which would perhaps have proved no less peculiar and fine than the work of Irish metal workers and manuscript illuminators, some of whose books, croziers, shrines, &c., remain to us (a few, alas! out of many) in testimony of their exquisite skill.[1] On the ruin-crowned

[1] Mr. James Fergusson says of ancient Irish art and architecture (*Illustrated Handbook of Architecture*, 1855): 'At a very early period the Irish showed themselves not only capable of inventing a style for themselves, but perfectly competent to carry it to a successful issue, had an opportunity ever been afforded them. . . . Their metal work showed a true apprehension of the nature of the material, and an artistic feeling equal in kind, if not in degree, to anything in the best ages of Greece or Italy; and their manuscripts and paintings exhibit an amount of taste which was evidently capable of anything.' (Vol. ii. p. 104.) 'Ireland possesses

Rock of Cashel still remains Cormac's Chapel and among the hovels of Tuam rises the chancel-arch of O'Conor's Cathedral, to bear similar witness to the state of art among those 'meere Irish'—the first built in A.D. 1127, the second *circa* A.D. 1140.[1] These were still almost new edifices at the date of the expedition from Wales—a proof, among other proofs, that the country was returning to a comparatively settled and prosperous condition. Numerous Round-Towers, and Stone Crosses[2] richly carved (some of gigantic size), erected at various dates extending over several centuries, stood up in all parts of the island, an army of witnesses to the artistic skill of Irish workers in stone.

IX.—OF THE NORSE-FOLK IN ERIN.

THE sturdy, indomitable men of Norway and Denmark—Fingalls and Dhugalls as the Irish named them (i.e. White Foreigners and Dark Foreigners)—who, as pagan marauders, forced themselves into the island by the strong hand, harried it with fire and sword, and formed settlements in a few places on the east and south coasts, were at last, after nearly four centuries of battles and treaties, becoming mingled into one people with the natives. Nothing, I am convinced, can be less founded than the ordinary notions as to the 'Danes' in Ireland. It was usual not long ago to call the thousands of remains of mounded residences throughout the island

what may be called a Celtic style of architecture, which is as interesting in itself as any of the minor local styles of any part of the world, and, so far as at present known, is quite peculiar to the island. None of the buildings in this style are large; they, however, are many of them of great beauty and elegance.' (P. 107.)

[1] See Petrie's *Round Towers, &c.*, pp. 288-314, for descriptions and woodcuts of these.

[2] See *Sculptured Crosses of Ireland*, by H. O'Neill. 1857.

'*Danish* raths. The Danes have been described by antiquaries as carrying civilisation to the Irish. But the incontrovertible fact is, that the state of civilisation in the year 800 was very much higher in Erin than in Scandinavia. The pagan sea-rovers learned Christianity in the southern island, and many other things (including, as our best antiquary holds, the art of coining). They had at home *no stone architecture* whatever. No relics of the Scandinavian occupation of any artistic merit have been found in Ireland. Not a single Norse inscription (so far as I know) has ever been discovered.[1] The Scandinavians, however, were far superior to the Irish in arms and discipline, and in seafaring both for war and trade. They organised and fortified, if they did not found, the seaboard settlements of Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Wexford and Waterford (the two last names only are Norse); made frequent warlike expeditions through the interior, especially along the course of navigable rivers and lakes, and had evidently a scheme, which more than once appeared likely to be realised, of placing all Erin under Scandinavian rule. But this scheme was finally given up after their defeat at Clontarf (1014); fresh bands of immigrants from the north, hitherto many and strong, became fewer and fewer, and at length ceased to arrive; the settlers made treaties with the natives, and the peaceful ties between them were multiplied.[2] Dermot MacMurrough, in his good days, had been the acknowledged chief of the *Gaill* as well as the Gaedhil (foreigners and natives) in Leinster. In short, these sturdy, solid, dogged, seafaring Norsemen were now becoming amal-

[1] Main authority for all this is Petrie, *Round Towers*, &c. (Dublin: 1855.) *Essay on Tara Hill* (Trans. of R. I. Acad. vol. xviii.), Life, &c., by Dr. Stokes (1868).

[2] Brian Boru himself, victor over the Norse at Limerick and Clontarf, had for his second wife Gormlay, daughter of the King of Leinster and a widow. Her first husband was Anlaf the Dane, by whom she had two sons, Sitric 'Silkbeard' and Olaf. Sitric married Savé, daughter of Brian Boru by his first wife, and Olaf became Danish King of Dublin.

gamated with the brisk, bright, variable, inconstant Irish Kelts, to the advantage of both; not rapidly, for the two races were very distinct in character and manners, but inevitably and thoroughly. When Fitzstephen landed at Baganbun, however, the process of absorption was still far from complete; and Wexford, Dublin, and other places, though no longer looked on by the Irish as hostile fortresses in their midst, and in fact usually accepting the Irish King of the territory as their lord paramount,[1] were mainly Norse in population and government. These towns were enclosed with fortifications, partly, I imagine, of palisaded mound and trench, partly of stone walls, with here and there a bastion or tower. To this day on the quay of Waterford stands 'Reginald's Tower,'[2] a large circular structure, its date assigned by inscription to the year 1003, and one of the chief points of attack and defence in 1170.

These fortified Norse-Irish towns gave the new soldiers of fortune a good deal of trouble. But it must always be recollected that the bands of adventurers from Wales came over avowedly as a mere reinforcement of Dermot, Prince of Leinster, to aid his recovery of his lawful principality, and that both the Irish and the Norse of this district had been accustomed for many years to regard the MacMurroughs as their chiefs. The question was not of repelling foreign invaders, but of siding with their old Prince, out of luck for a time, but quite possibly about to get back into full power and to treat his opponents as vanquished rebels, or resisting him and his allies in favour of certain other Irish claimants

[1] While this paper was going through the press, I met, for the first time, Mr. Richey's valuable *Lectures on Irish History* (1st Series, 1869; 2nd, 1870), with most of whose conclusions I entirely agree, though differing on some minor points (as here upon the position of the Norsemen), and desiring more references. Could Mr. Richey be induced to give us the long desired History of Ireland?

[2] The old black tower is strong and weathertight, and used now as a prison.

of authority. That the men from Wales were for themselves likely to set up any claim or attain any power no one dreamed. Of the Irish annal-writers, those who take any, take very slight notice of their presence. No one knew what a tremendous strength lay behind this small compact body of knights and archers—the physical force of England and the spiritual force of Rome.

Ireland, with a brave, hardy, and pugnacious population, had always been weak as a whole, whether for attack or resistance. Every petty chieftain of a tribe had a voice in declaring war and in deciding on the subsequent movements. The chieftain himself was chosen by his clan with some, though not strict, attention to hereditary claims, but very frequently there was furious competition of several almost equal rivals. When a king made a hosting, his army 'was in fact a rope of sand. It consisted of a number of minor clans, each commanded by its own petty chieftain, receiving no pay and bound by no oath or any other obligation of allegiance to the king or chief commander. Each clan, no doubt, adhered with unshaken loyalty to its immediate chieftain, but the chieftain, on the smallest offence, could dismiss his followers to their homes, even at the very eve of a decisive battle.'[1]

Fierce rivalries, jealousies, contentions, rising often to bloodshed, were common between competitors for power in the same family, between one chief or one clan and another, and between the five kings, especially in cases of disputed succession, which were endless. Neither the High-King nor any other authority was capable of directing the forces of the country to any one end.

In brief, in that month of May, seven centuries ago, Dermot MacMurrough, with five hundred of his Irish followers, joyfully joined Fitzstephen and De Prendergast

[1] Dr. Todd's introduction to *War of the Gaedhil with the Gaill*, p. cxix. Treasury Series, 1867.

on the shore of Bannow; and after renewing their compacts and exchanging many oaths for mutual security, the bands of dissimilar peoples, united for the moment in intention and cordiality, marched on the town of Wexford.[1]

X.—A NEW LORD OF IRELAND.

The Wexford men (Norse and Irish, mainly Norse) boldly sallied forth to meet them, but daunted by the novel array of the strangers and the troop of horsemen with breastplates, shields, and shining helmets, set their suburbs on fire and retreated within their walls. An assault was made by the men in armour, the archers shooting meanwhile at the prominent points of defence; but it was repulsed by the townsmen, who cast down beams of wood and large stones. The assailants withdrew to the shore and set fire to all the ships which they found there. One merchant ship, lately arrived from Britain, and laden with corn and wine, was moored in the harbour; this some chosen youths rowed out to and boarded, but the cables being cut by the sailors (who probably made their escape in good time) she drifted toward the open sea, and the bold youths had to take to their boats again and let her go. Next morning, mass having been solemnly heard through the army, preparations were made for a new and more systematic assault on Wexford; but the townsfolk, distrusting their means of defence, and *reflecting that they were unjustly resisting their own lawful prince*,[2] sent messengers to treat. By the mediation of *two bishops*, and other good and pacific men, peace was made, and the

[1] Giral. Cambr. *Expugnatio Hiberniæ*, cap. iii.

[2] 'Suoque principi se injuste resistere considerantes.'—Giral. Camb. *Expugnatio Hiberniæ*, cap. iii.

citizens submitted to Dermot, giving four chosen hostages to assure him of their fidelity.

Reinforced by the Wexfordians, Dermot and his allies, now about 3,000 men in all, marched westward into the district called Ossory. In the passes and woods they generally got the worst of the fighting, but when the natives attacked them in open field, Fitzstephen's horsemen broke, pursued, and slaughtered them. Roderic, the High-King, advanced with a large force, but instead of war, negotiation began between him on one part and Dermot and Fitzstephen on the other, and closed in a treaty—not a very faithful or very lasting one. Fitzstephen built a fort on a steep rock at the side of Wexford Harbour, and his half-brother Maurice Fitzgerald came over with two ships to that harbour, at the head of ten men-at-arms, thirty mounted retainers, and about one hundred archers. The district of Dublin was ravaged with fire and sword, till the townsmen sued for peace and renewed their allegiance to Dermot.

He now, elated with success, sent repeated messages and warm promises to Earl Richard, who had all the while been prudently watching and waiting on events; and at length, after many and various consultations, and taking courage (where at the beginning he had shrunk back) from Fitzstephen's success, the Earl set to work in earnest about his Irish expedition, first petitioning King Henry either to restore him to his forfeited ancestral estates or to give him a license to seek his fortune in Ireland. The King, no less cautious and forethoughted than himself, gave the discontented Earl a kind of ironical permission (which it would be easy afterwards to disown in any case), *quasi licentia, ironice namque magis quam vera*.[1] So Earl Richard, when May was come, a twelvemonth after Fitzstephen, sent over a young knight of his household, Raymond Fitzgerald by name—

[1] *Expugnatio Hibernica*, cap. xiii.

from his bulk of body called Raymond le Gros—with ten men and seventy archers, who landed near Waterford, fought fiercely and held their ground; and on the Eve of St. Bartholomew (August 23, most probably in 1170) the Earl himself, sailing from Milford Haven with about two hundred men-at-arms and 1,000 other troops, landed near Waterford, and, joined by Raymond, carried that city by assault.

After this, took place the covenanted marriage of Earl Richard and Eva MacMurrough; and after many fights and many vicissitudes the Earl's star was in the ascendant.

But now King Henry of England, hearing many and, as usual, much exaggerated reports of Earl Richard's successful progress in Ireland—that, in fact, he is aiming at the sovereignty of that country, and has perhaps even some chance of winning it—thinks it high time to interfere. From Aquitaine, where he is, King Henry issues proclamation forbidding all transit of his subjects into Ireland, and ordering all those already there to return before Easter, on pain of forfeiting their lands and being banished the kingdom. Earl Richard, in great straits, sends over Raymond Fitzgerald to Aquitaine with a letter of most humble submission; but the King receives it coldly and defers his reply.

About this time a general synod of clergy, held at Armagh, debated on the foreign invasion, determined that it was sent by Heaven in punishment of the sins of the Irish nation, especially for their practice of buying English folk from merchants, and also from robbers and pirates, and making slaves of them, and decreed or recommended that all the English slaves throughout Ireland be set at liberty; a move showing, one may guess, the leaning of the clerical party, and their expectation of a shifting of the lay centre of power.

But one of them at least, Laurence, Archbishop of Leinster[1] (since canonised), made a determined effort

[1] *Lorcan O'Tuathail*, 'Laurence O'Toole.'

against the foreigners, whose tough valour and persistence had now begun to appear really alarming to the patriotic mind. Partly or mainly under the Archbishop's advice, an Irish army, under King Roderic, assisted by a fleet (probably from Man, then under Norse rule) of sixty ships 'full of Norwegians and men of the isles,' led by Asculf, lately chief of the Norse of Dublin, assaulted the City of Dublin where Earl Richard abode, and not winning it by storm encompassed it with a leaguer. The Earl, after two months' siege, and provisions running very short, compacted his brave comrades and soldiers into a sallying party, and taking the besiegers by surprise cut his way through them and made to Wexford. There they found the town burnt by the Irish and Fitzstephen a prisoner, and with heavy hearts marched on to Waterford, which received them into refuge. Hervey de Montmaurice, who had gone over to plead with King Henry (now in the west of England), had just returned to Waterford with important letters and messages; and so Earl Richard with the first fair wind sailed out of Waterford harbour in no very cheerful mood, and hastened to the King at Newnham, near Gloucester.

Henry was getting an army ready for Ireland; would not at first even see Earl Richard, whose head seemed in great danger; but at last accepted his humble submission. Marching to Pembroke, Henry assembled his large fleet in the port of Milford. He thundered threats against the chieftains of South Wales for allowing Earl Richard's transit to Ireland, but forbore punishment on condition of their receiving royal custodians into their strong places.[1] At length (much to the joy of the locality) the royal fleet of 400 ships with about 4,500 men sailed with a fair wind and safely reached 'Croch' (now Crook), near the mouth of Waterford Harbour, on Saint Luke's Day (October 18, 1171). It is also on record that 'when the King himself landed

[1] *Expugnatio Hibernica*, cap. xxix.

from his ship, a white hare leapt from the thicket, and was forthwith caught and presented to him as an omen of victory.'[1]

The King of England at the head of such an army made for the time an irresistible effect on the fears, hopes, and imaginations of the Irish people and chieftains. While he rested a few days at Waterford, the Wexfordians came to sue his favour, bringing with them in fetters Robert Fitzstephen, as a culprit who had presumed to take upon himself command and authority without due license from his King. Henry, violently upbraiding and menacing the unlucky Fitzstephen, ordered him to be chained to another prisoner and locked up in Reginald's Tower.

Moreover, 'to the King at Waterford came all the archbishops, bishops, and abbots of the whole of Ireland, and acknowledged him as king and lord of Ireland, taking the oath of fealty to him and to his heirs, and admitting his and their right to reign over them for all time to come.'[2]

Then, marching circuitously to Dublin, King Henry received the ephemeral submission of many awe-struck Irish chieftains and princes, and at Dublin passed his Christmas, with much feasting and splendour, in a palace built 'with wonderful skill,' in the Scotic (i.e. Irish) fashion, namely of oaken posts and wicker-work.

Then, a most important move, he caused to be convoked at Cashel a synod of the clergy of the whole of Ireland. The Pope's Legate, by name Christian, Bishop of Lismore, presided, and eight decrees were made: the first against concubinage; the second providing for baptisms, &c.; the third, 'that all good Christians shall pay tithes'; the fourth, 'that all lands and possessions of the Church shall be entirely free from all exactions of secular men' [much Church property, including the income of several bishopries,

[1] Roger de Hovedon, ed. Stubbs (Treas. Series), vol. ii. p. 29.

[2] De Hovedon (Treas. Series), vol. ii. p. 30.

had passed into the hands of lay chieftains], and that neither princes, chiefs, nor others shall any longer 'exact provisions and lodgings on any ecclesiastical territories, as the custom is'; fifth, that in cases of homicide the clergy, though of kin to the slayer, shall not be liable to any part of the eric or blood-fine; the sixth provides that every good Christian shall make his will 'in presence of his confessor or neighbours,' &c.; the seventh, that those who die after good confession shall have masses, vigils, &c.; eighth and final, that all divine offices shall be performed after the manner of the Anglican Church, both the Church and the kingdom of Ireland being indebted to the magnificent King, Henry, for the spread of peace and the encouragement of religion. Which constitutions King Henry approved and made as public as possible. He still, however, kept back Pope Adrian's letter, probably being unwilling, if he could help it, to take Ireland precisely as a gift of the Church, tho' he was now striving hard to make atonement for the unfortunate affair of à Becket.

On Easter Monday 1172 (April 17) King Henry sailed from Wexford, landed at St. David's, hurried across England, and crossed to Normandy. In the Cathedral of Avranches, before the barons, bishops, and two Papal Legates, he swore on the Gospels and relics that he neither commanded nor desired the death of à Becket. Moreover, he bound himself to various concessions and services in favour of the Papacy, and was thereupon absolved by the Legates and taken back into the bosom of Holy Church. A few months after this (September 20, 1172) Pope Alexander III. wrote three letters,[1] namely, to the King of England, to Christian, Bishop of Lismore (Legate), and the four Archbishops of Ireland, and to the kings and princes of Ireland. The second letter, after stating that the Apostolic See had

[1] Rymer enlarged (Record edition, Lond., 1816), vol. i. p. 45.

been ofttimes informed of the disordered state of Ireland, rejoices to hear of its subjection, by the power of our very dear son in Christ, Henry, the illustrious King of the English, who, moved by Divine inspiration, &c.

The letter to the kings and princes of Ireland commends them for having sworn fealty, 'of your own free will, to so powerful and magnificent a king, and to so devoted a son of the Church . . . no small benefits may thence be hoped for, to you and to the Church and to all the people of that land. We therefore command that you keep firm and unshaken the fealty you have sworn to so great a king,' &c.

The letters of Adrian and Alexander were formally published for the first time in Ireland, at a synod of bishops at Waterford in 1175, three years after the date of Alexander's, and twenty after the date of Adrian's; the publication being then at last made in consequence, most likely, of the renewed fighting in Ireland, and the critical condition of the English power in that land. Several of the Irish kings and many of the minor territorial chieftains had done homage to King Henry of England and acknowledged him as their feudal lord—a minority had refused. Such oaths were often made in that age and often broken. These melted from the minds of their takers with the immediate effect of King Henry's presence. In any case, the leaders, from the smallest chief to the Ard-Righ, being only elected for life, could scarcely be supposed to have the power of binding their people and successors. The body of the people, individually and tribally, took no political part in these transactions, and took little note of them.[1]

But the clergy of Ireland, a powerful, numerous, ubiquitous, subtle, indefatigable force, forming but one small limb of a vast European organisation, with its head at Rome—all

[1] It is a curious fact that Henry's Will (Rymer, *sub anno*), dated 1182, and beginning 'Henricus, Dei gratiâ Rex Angliæ, Dux Normanniæ et Aquitaniæ, Comes Andegaviæ,' says not a word of Ireland anywhere.

the clergy, from the archbishop to the eremite on his lonely islet, acknowledged the sovereignty of Henry, King of England—Henry long time opposed to the Head of the Church, but now submissive and reconciled. Without the instigation and help of Rome that disastrous piece of the World's history, the English occupation of Ireland, could never have been transacted.

As to the people of Ireland, of whose existence we so seldom have a hint—those 'meere Irish,' mere nuisances and obstructions to the new comers—they had a hard enough time of it, between native lords and foreign, Keltic ideas and habits and Feudal (diametrically opposed), Brehon laws and English laws, ancient religious customs and new Romish rules. An alien power, without taking any notice of their existence, granted their lands, on principles of tenure entirely strange, to foreign adventurers, who treated the natives like other *fera natura* of the region. They knew not whither to turn for safety. Capable of much under good guidance, they were very ill guided and very ill treated. In Queen Elizabeth's time, after four centuries of English occupation, during which the weaker people, instead of advancing with the rest of Europe, had alone in Europe been continually deteriorating and growing more miserable, English statesmen and English writers—all profoundly ignorant of the language and the laws, the history and the character of the Irish people—looked upon them as savages, fit only to be extirpated. The arts, except music, had decayed and died out among them. They retained their love of learning and literature, but their language, though ancient, elaborate, and expressive, was as alien to England and to the most of Europe as Chinese. They had no national life of their own, yet they were not conquered. Extraordinary fate! Inexpugnable among their mountains, lakes, and marshes, they kept up their antique tribal ideas and habits from generation to generation.

It is strictly true to say that the prevalent English ignorance as to Irish history and character is only now beginning to be dispelled, seven full centuries after the landing of Robert Fitzstephen on the coast of Wexford.

The Irish, on their part, must learn the fact that their country has never possessed any political nationality whatsoever. That it had the 'makings' of it (to use an Irishism) seems abundantly clear. Whether it can still hope for a place of its own in the comity of modern civilisation, and on what terms, are interesting but most difficult questions hitherto found insoluble.

AN IRISH RIVER.

In Three Chapters.

I.—LAKE AND STREAM.

ERNE has been defrauded of its just rank among rivers by the accidental prevalence of one word rather than another in speaking of it. Shannon, for all its chain of lakes, is still and everywhere called *river*; Erne, though its waters run continuously and ceaselessly from source to sea, bears for the greater part of its journey the name of *lough*; and lough or lake, thrice famous as some are, is a lower title than river. The River Erne (for I would fain so call it as a whole) has a course of some seventy miles, from Lough Gowna to Donegal Bay, and pours more fresh water into the sea than any other Irish stream except the Shannon.

Lough Gowna, a lake of many creeks and twisted arms, greatest length some four miles, breadth perhaps half a mile, lies (something like a cuttle-fish on the map) not very far from the middle of Ireland, spreading and turning hither and thither among quiet fields and pastoral slopes, the boundary line of the counties Longford and Cavan invisibly dividing its clear water. Into this lake at one point of its shore, there belonging to the parish of Abbeylara, runs a rill or water-vein out of the old and famous well-named Tubber Gowna (*Tobar na Gamhnaigh*), 'The Well of the Calf' (or

'Young Cow,' perhaps); for out of this well, saith the legend, arose one day in ancient time a marvellous magical Calf, and as it galloped down the field the waters followed it, nor ceased to pursue until Calf and torrent plunged into the tide at Ballyshannon. The rising of a lake out of a well, usually with miraculous circumstances, is one of the commonest events in Irish legendary history. The lakes and rivers of the country were very important objects to the earliest dwellers in the island, affording the safest and pleasantest dwelling-places, in islands and lake-huts (*crannoges*), the readiest ways of moving, an abundance of fish and fowl. Perennial spring-wells, too, were notable things in the rude and simple life of hunter and herd and savage-cottager, and easily acquired a character of sacredness. The natural mysteriousness and beauty of living water, ever stimulating to the fancy, added to these associations, and, with perhaps the memory of some remarkable inundations to help, soon produced stories enough of marvellous animals, wells that the sun should never be let shine upon, submerged cities, and imaginary origins for lake and river. There is scarcely a noted lake in Ireland which has not some such legend.

Out of the north-east corner of the Lake of the Calf runs a brisk stream, which is, and is called, the River Erne; this flows some ten miles among the swelling green hills of Cavan, expands, intertwining among islands and promontories, into *Lough Oughter* (Upper Lake), contracts again to 'River Erne' for another ten miles or twelve, carrying at Belturbet the dignity of an important stream, clear, rapid, and of good width; and then, once more breaking bounds, forms a watery labyrinth of countless creeks and winding channels, called Upper Lough Erne. From Belturbet to Belleek, which is four miles from Ballyshannon Harbour, the Erne is navigable by vessels of light draught. A canal eastward connects it with Lough Neagh, and thus with the

Lagan and the Bann; a canal westward links it to the Shannon, but these liquid ways are now little used.

Rich woods adorn the Earl of Erne's promontory and castle of Crum, nearly encircled by the beautiful windings of Upper Lough Erne. Near the more modern mansion are the ruins of the famous old castle of Crum, 'frontier fortress of the Protestants' in the war of William and James. In the summer of 1689, while Derry was undergoing its 105 days' siege, the Enniskilleners, under Gustavus Hamilton, held their own little town for William and Mary, and embarrassed the Jacobeans as much as they could; while at Crum, David Creighton (our Earl's ancestor), with his servants, tenants, and neighbours, stood stoutly to his defences. Lord Galmoy appeared before Crum; having no cannon ready, he got two mock pieces made of tin and painted brown, caused them to be dragged up and placed in position with great show of labour, and then summoned the garrison to surrender. But he mistook the temper of the Fermanagh men, who soon made a sally, beat off his lordship's troops, and captured the pair of tin cannon. General Macarthy, lately made 'Lord Mountcashel' by James, now marched from Belturbet on Enniskillen with a force of several thousand men, and invested Crum on his way. After some skirmishes, the main body of Enniskilleners, under Worseley, went out against Macarthy (two thousand against five, it is said), who, leaving Crum, met them at Newtown-Butler. The Jacobeans were entirely smashed to pieces, and some 2,000 of them slain, of whom about 500 were pursued into the lake and there drowned, all but one man, who escaped by strong swimming, though many shots were fired at him. The General, fighting at the head of a few horsemen, was captured and carried into Enniskillen, severely wounded. This was on the 31st of July (O. S.), 1689. During the night following this day, the besiegers of Derry broke up their camp, and marched away disorderly, hearing probably next day of this new defeat of their side. The Enniskilleners had but twenty men killed. These English and Scottish 'Undertakers' (ancestors of most of the present leading and wealthy families of Ulster) were certainly a tough set of fellows, not ready to lightly relinquish their undertakings.

But we are gliding peacefully down Upper Lough Erne, and a score of grassy woody isles and green promontories with the blue mountain-tops that peer above them, change places, and slip away behind us as we move.

A few miles below Crum we reach an island whose ancient name is *Seanadh-Mic-Manus* (pronounced 'Shanat'), now by old-fashioned folk usually called Ballymacmanus, while others use the modern fancy name of 'Belle-isle.' This 'Belle-isle,' by the way, is one of those names that indicate the perfect disregard and contempt of Irish archæology and history which has always characterised the wealthier classes of Ireland; in these matters, after many generations, they remain foreigners. Old Catholic families, and here and there a liberal-minded Protestant, form the rare exceptions.

In this island were written and compiled the 'Annals of Ulster,' by Cathal Maguire, whose clan-name was Mac-Manus. He was sixth in descent from Manus, second son of Donn Maguire, who died 1302, first chief of Fermanagh of that family. From Donn's eldest son, Gilla-Isa, descended Conor Maguire, second 'Baron of Enniskillen' under the English *régime*, beheaded at Whitehall in 1642 for his part in the Irish insurrection of the preceding year. The senior representative of this chieftain family was in 1856 'a common sailor.'[1] Several attempts of the English Government to transform the chieftains of Ulster into 'Barons' and 'Earls' proved failures: the Saxonised nobles hankered after their old Keltic titles and rude supremacy; English

[1] Note in the so-called *Annals of the Four Masters* (O'Donovan), iv. p. 1242.

officials, courtiers, and adventurers hankered after the lands of these absurd Irishmen, were not sorry when some new piece of 'treason' came to light, and took care to make the most of it. The new Kelto-Saxon titles quickly fell extinct, and various English and Scottish settlers became established as the territorial Lords of Ulster.

Their titles of nobility mostly date from the last century, great number of them being traceable to the political exigencies of the latter years of the Irish Parliament. These are not 'Union Peers' (a well-known phrase in Ireland), but penultimate and ante-penultimate, so to speak. Most of them have mounted rather rapidly to this or that higher step from the lowest one of Baron; for example, 'Baron Erne 1768, Viscount Erne 1781, Earl of Erne 1789.' There used to be much promotion in the peerage; nor could one object to this in principle, when properly managed, provided that a peer could be moved *down* as well as up; but when the successor of the meritorious new Duke or Marquis proves to be a fool, a gambler, a scoundrel, there appear to be no means of reducing him to the rank of Earl or Viscount by way of punishment, not to speak of drumming him out of the regiment.

To return to Cathal Maguire, cousin to The Maguire, then Chieftain of Fermanagh. He was born in 1438, resided in his island of Shanst, was a Biatach, i.e., official keeper of a House of Hospitality, to which purpose a portion of the tribe-lands was appropriated, a Canon-chorister of Armagh, Dean of Lough Erne, Parson of Inis-Caein in Lough Erne, and the representative of a bishop for fifteen years before his death. We are told that 'he had several legitimate sons, though apparently in Holy Orders,'—a remark which opens up several curious questions.

His annals (sometimes called 'Annales Senatenses'),

[1] Dr. O'Donovan (a Catholic), in note to *Annals of the Four Masters*, A.D. 1498.

written in mixed Irish and Latin, begin with Saint Patrick, and come down to the year of the writer's death; thence continued by other hands to 1604. There are five MS. copies known, and the work is printed in Dr. O'Conor's 'Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores Veteres.'

The Annals were continued by Rury O'Cassidy, who thus entered the death of his predecessor at the pen (*translation*):—

'Anno Domini 1498. A great mournful news throughout all Erin this year, namely, the following: MacManus Maguire died this year, i.e., *Cathal óg* ["Cathal the younger"], the son of Cathal, &c. He was a Biatach, &c., [as stated] . . . He was a precious stone, a bright gem, a luminous star, a casket of wisdom; a purified branch of the canons, and a fountain of charity, meekness, and mildness, a dove in purity of heart, and a turtledove in chastity; the person to whom the learned, the poor, and the destitute of Erin were most thankful; one who was full of grace and of wisdom in every science to the time of his death, in law, divinity, physic, and philosophy, and in all the Gaelic sciences; and one who made, gathered, and collected this book from many other books. He died of the *Galar breac* ["spotted disease," small-pox] on the tenth of the calends of the month of April, being Friday, in the sixtieth year of his age. And let every person who shall read and profit by this book pray for a blessing on the soul of MacManus.'[1]

These obituary notices, severally touching, but found vague when you read many of them, being cut upon a pattern, are extremely frequent in the Irish Annals.

'Upper Lough Erne' is some twelve miles long, and perhaps four wide at widest, measured into opposite bays: the scenery everywhere of nearly the same character—broken ranges of mountains forming the distant horizon to

[1] O'Curry's *Lectures*, i. 85.

the westward, between which and the shore lie meadows, woods, and sylvan lawns; on the other hand, a tract of cultivated country, with numerous mansions of gentry. Among soft islands, over ninety in count, the water winds through many intricate channels.

Below Shanat the Erne again narrows to a definite river, makes several loops, gathers them together to glide by Lord Belmore's domain of Castle-Coole with its stately porticoed mansion of Portland stone and great beech-trees, then embraces with two liquid arms the fish-shaped island of Enniskillen, entirely built over with the town of that name; beyond it, flowing single by the hill and ruined castle of Portora, and expanding into 'Lower Lough Erne.' The town of Enniskillen, stretching from bridge to bridge and a little beyond each bridge, mainly in one long street of fair width which bends in two or three places, dips into a hollow and rises again, is neatly built for an Irish town, and has a brisk and bustling look. It used in former years to be alive with mail-coaches; now you travel by rail to or from Dublin, Belfast, Derry, or Bundoran, and on the Lower Lake there is a pretty and comfortable steamboat. In the eyes of all Enniskilleners, Enniskillen is, next to Dublin, the most important place in Ireland. It is *par excellence* 'the Protestant Town,' inhabited and supported by a sturdy, downright practical, and blunt-mannered race.

You find much the same kind of folk northwards all the way to Derry, but it is in the farmers of Fermanagh that you have their characteristics in the strongest development. It is worth while to see a gathering of them at a cattle-fair, or afterwards at the market-inn, or railway-station, big, burly, surly, broad-shouldered, deep-voiced, large-handed men, who drink deep draughts, swear great oaths, and relish a strong-flavoured joke, laughing hugely, and calling each other by their Christian names. Neither roses nor toads seem to drop from their lips, but loads of hay, fat

oxen, and cart-wheels. Much of Ulster is Scoto-Hibernian; these people are more English than Scotch, and might be called the Yorkshiremen of Ulster. They are all Protestants, and most of them Orangemen. They are as tolerant of 'a papist' (any papist whomsoever) as a dog is of a rat. The Protestant landowners, millers, tradesmen, &c., of the region are of the same stuff, with class modifications; the descendants of the men who held Crum, and won the battle of Newtown-Butler.

'Enniskillen' is the English form of *Innis-Kethleann*, the Island of Kethlenn, wife of the famous gigantic warrior Balor, of the legendary period of Irish history. Whether *Feara-Firi* means Men of the Monks (from the sanctity of Devenish?) or Men of the Marshes, or something else, appears doubtful. *Erne* received that name, say some, in place of the older one *Saimer*, when Erna, the favourite waiting-woman of Meav, Queen of Connaught, was drowned therein; while others derive it from the Ernai, who dwelt hereabouts, a sept of the Fir-Bolgs.

The Chieftainship of Fermanagh rested in the Maguire family from the thirteenth century down to its extinction under English rule. We find in the Donegal Annals (usually but wrongly named 'of the Four Masters') the death of 'Donn Carragh Maguire, first Lord of the Sil Uidhir in Fermanagh,' recorded under the year 1302. Of the *Sil Uidhir*, i.e., seed or progeny of Ivir, an ancient chief, there were several branch-families, of which the *Mac Uidhers* ('Macivers'—'Maguires') thus took the lead. This first Chieftain Maguire is described as 'the best of all Ireland for hospitality, liberality, and prowess,'[1] but this description is so often used that it goes for little. It was in dispute whether this Donn Maguire or Donnell Roe MacCarthy of Desmond was the more excellent in 'bounties and

[1] *Annals of Clonmacnoise*, &c., A.D. 1302, translated by Mageoghan.

hospitalities;' but 'Donn Maguire by the judgment of a certain learned Irish poet (who remained for a long space in the houses of the said Donn and Donnell covertly, in the habit of a *karrogh* or common gamester, to know which of them surpassed the other), was counted to excel Donnell in all good parts, as by this verse, made by the said poet, you may know'—a verse to this effect, that Donnell MacCarthy's lands are far wider, but that Donn Maguire has always twice as many folk in his house.[1] The Maguires were usually inaugurated as chieftains on the top of Cuilcagh, that conspicuous mountain with a long horizontal sky-line, as of a gigantic barn or turf stack, which we see southwards from various points on the Erne. In the limestone bowels of that mountain are the perennial springs of the River Shannon, definitely rising to light in a very deep round pool among the meadows below, called 'Shannon Pot,' whence flows the infant stream in a brisk clear little current. 'Maguire's country' included the greater part of the shores and islands of the Upper and Lower Loughs Erne, and the chieftain's main fortress was on Innis-Kethlenn, near the south-western end of the island, where a more modern though still venerably gray ruined castle now stands.

Cheerfully in the summer sunshine do these green rounded hills about Enniskillen (the stately edifice of Portora Royal School conspicuous on one of them) watch the calm waters of the labyrinthine lake, bright-glittering, or spreading soft reflections of sky and green slope, cornfield or meadow, or clump of heavy foliage, and enlivened with gliding sail-boats and the measured beat of oars. The roads and lanes near Enniskillen are more like England than Ireland; the fields bordered with hedgerows and tall trees, the cottages trim and white, with flowery porches and neat gardens. But let us step on board a sailing-boat at the west bridge, and slip

[1] *Annals of Clonmacnoi*, &c.

down the water with a light summer breeze. We pass Portora Hill, and the ruins of Portora Castle, that once guarded the narrow entrance of the Channel—*Port Ora*, 'Port of Lamentation,' they say, since from hereabout started most of the boats conveying funerals to Devenish. And now we glide into opener water, steering for the tall Round Tower which rises before us a little to the right.

Devenish (*Daimh-inis*, 'Ox-Isle') is a bare, grassy island of some 150 statute acres, oval-shaped, rising in two gentle swells, on the eastern of which stands the ruined Priory, a building finished in 1449, and the Round Tower, which is one of the oldest, most perfect, and most shapely buildings of its class in Ireland. In the sixth century of the Christian era, the holy man called Laisren, otherwise Molaise (*mo*, 'my,' a prefix of endearment), the son of Nadfraech (for there was another Molaise, who died A.D. 638), established a monastery on this fertile Ox-Island—'Beatissimus Lasreanus ad aquilonalem partem Hiberniæ exivit, et construxit clarissimum monasterium in stagno *Herne* nomine Diamh-inis, quod sonat latine Bovis Insula.'[1] The abbot died, as recorded by the Donegal annalists on September 12, A.D. 563, and his body was buried on the island. This early Irish monastery was, in all probability, a collection of detached cells, little hovels of rough stones, of earth, of clay, according to circumstances, each for one monk, with a church for common worship, and a round tower, serving at once for belfry, watch, and signal-tower, and place of refuge in case of sudden attack. Not many years ago among the ruins on Devenish stood some bits of ancient much-crumbled stone-work, known as 'Molaise's House,' and looked upon as the oratory, and perhaps also the dwelling, of the saint himself; but through general neglect, and contempt in some, this relic is now obliterated. The establishment on

[1] *Life of St. Aidan*, quoted by O'Donovan, *Annals of the Four Masters*, p. 203 note.

Devenish was first an Augustinian Abbey; subsequently it became a Priory of the Culdees, an obscure monastic order, which seems to have arisen in the eighth century, and to have been composed of secular canons, living in special communities; their chief seat being Armagh. Five centuries later arose the Priory, whose pointed doorway and low square tower, shattered and ivied, stands solitary to-day among the weedy grass and tombstones old and recent, for the island is still a favourite burial-ground of the Catholics.

Far over grass and water falls the shadow of the graceful Round Tower, built 1,300 years ago, if our George Petrie be right, and we trust him well. It tapers with fine proportion to the height of some seventy feet, perfect in every gray stone, and lifts its conical cap above a rich carved cornice (a decoration peculiar to this tower) dimly visible from below, with its four sculptured human faces, one looking to each cardinal point of the compass. Under each face is a window or opening; and the several storeys of the tower, once floored across, are marked by other apertures, the lowest and largest being about twelve feet from the ground, into which the monks would scramble on occasion, and pull up the ladder after them. The stones are the brown sandstone of the neighbourhood, now hard and dark with time, cut nicely to the curve of the tower, and bonded with a very thin cement of fine mortar. A few years ago an elder-bush, planted by some bird, split and threatened to destroy the conical cap, built smoothly layer after layer till it diminishes to a single conical stone for pinnacle; but the intruding plant was at last removed, and the disturbed stones being replaced, the tower, save its floors and ladders, stands perfect now as on the first day that it looked across Lough Erne, and sent abroad the voice of its bell—a square tongueless bell (such as those of the time which are preserved in museums) struck probably with a wooden mallet. These bits of mossy weedy wall near the tower's base may be

fragments of Laisren's antique little church. That here, in this grassy island, he lived and prayed and ruled his monks, died and was buried, so many centuries ago, is certain sure, and not uninteresting—little or nothing as we can gather now to distinguish the old saint from many another.

Leaving Devenish, we open one blue reach after another, sailing past woody island after island—Trasna, Carr, Ferny, White, and Long Islands, Big Paris, and Little Paris, Inisdacairn ('of the Two Cairns'), Inisfree, Inis Davon, Inis Daony, Inis Garru, ('rough'), Islenamanfin ('of the Fair Woman'), Horse Island, Hay Island, Goat Island, Owl Island, and Inismacsaint (properly *Inis moy samh*, Island of the Plain of Sorrel'), which has given name to the large parish extending to Bundoran. In this island, amidst a tangle of old thorns and elder-trees, are an old rude stone cross and the ruins of the little church of St. Nennid, from whom is named the Hill of Knock-Ninny on the Upper Lake. More than 100 islands are scattered among the clear waters of the Lower Lake—Rabbit, Heron, Gull, Duck, Eagle, Hare Islands, an Allingham Island, and many another, small and large, from the Otter Rock to Boa Island (perhaps Island of the *Botha*, i.e., bothies, *booths*, huts, being more inhabited than the rest), which has 1,300 acres of pasture.

There is Boa Island, that long green ridge to the northward, as we now glide into the sea-like expanse of 'the Broad Lake,' seven miles wide at its widest, and in front of it stands the richly wooded Lusteamore and Lusteabeg. The scene is a very fine one; behind the line of Boa rise confusedly the dark bare hills that surround the purgatorial Lough Derg, some six miles north of Lough Erne; on the other, or southern shore, is the bold, almost precipitous, range of the Tura hills, with the steep rock of *Poul-a-Phooka* ('the Cave of the Fairy Horse') standing out of the thick green coppice that hangs on their lower slopes. On a

promontory below stand the tall ivied ruins of Tully Castle, built by the Hume family, Scottish 'Undertakers.'

We find from Pynnar's Survey of Ulster, in 1618-19, 'Sir John Humes' (second son of Patrick, fifth Baron of Polwarth in Scotland) then in possession of 3,500 acres hereabouts, with a 'bawn of lime and stone an hundred feet square, fourteen feet high, having four flankers for the defence. There are also a fair strong castle, fifty feet long and twenty-one feet broad,' and 'a village near unto the bawn, in which are dwelling twenty-four families.' The castle (as may still be seen) was a fortified residence of the kind usually built by the wealthier Scottish Undertakers, a tall square keep, turreted at the angles, surrounded by a bawn or outer wall enclosing a courtyard. James I. had 'settled' six Ulster counties after a plan of his own. Conor Roe Maguire, Chief of Fermanagh, was allowed to retain a large tract, under grant from the Crown, and received the title of Baron of Enniskillen. But these new arrangements were unsatisfactory to all concerned. The second Baron, usually spoken of as 'Lord Maguire,' took part in the conspiracy of 1641, and was arrested in Dublin; while his brother Rury headed the insurgents in Fermanagh. On Christmas-eve, Rury appeared in force before Tully Castle, in which a number of the English and Scotch settlers of the vicinity with their wives and children, had refuged. Sir John Hume himself was absent. A surrender being agreed upon, the people in the castle to be allowed safe conduct to Monea or Enniskillen, the gate of Tully was opened to the wild soldiery of Rury Maguire. Lady Hume and her household were allowed to depart by boat; but the others, to the number it is reported of fifteen men and sixty women and children were detained; and next day, which was Christmas-day, these were all massacred, the castle plundered and set on fire. Such, at least, is the story as one finds it. Similar transactions occurred (if the Protestant statements

are correct) at Monea Castle on the other side of Lower Lough Erne, and at Lisgoole on the Upper Lake.[1] That some such things did happen is not to be doubted, but for the details we should be sorry to vouch. The insurrection quelled, and the last Lord Maguire beheaded at Whitehall, the Humes did not re-edify Tully, but built another Mansion called Castle Hume nearer to Enniskillen. Sir Gustavus Hume died without male heir in 1731, and the Fermanagh estate passed, by the female line, to the Loftus family. The title of Baron Loftus (1785) was raised into Viscount Loftus (1789), Earl of Ely 1794, Marquis of Ely 1800. The Loftus family's original settlement in Ireland was in the county Wexford, and their 'Ely' is not an English but an Irish word. Their mansion shows its top over the thick woods between Tully and Enniskillen.

Now come in view, on our right, the long promontories of Castle-Caldwell, well clothed with oak, ash, holly, sycamore, and birch, Breesie Hill rising beyond; while on our left the blue chain of the Dartry mountains in Leitrim begins to dominate the south-western horizon. This is Roscor Bay, and now the water suddenly narrows to river form, and bears us some few miles between low grassy slopes to the quay of Belleek, a steady rushing sound giving warning of the termination of our voyage, and the commencement of the Rapids of the Erne, down which the river dashes, step after step, till it rolls into the tide over the falls of Ballyshannon. At Belleek the first rush of the water turns the wheel of a porcelain manufactory, a new enterprise founded on the presence of quartz and felspar in the neighbourhood.

The upper waters, of which we are now taking leave, abound with salmon, trout, pike, bream, eels, and many

[1] *History of the Attempts of the Irish Papists to Extirpate the Protestants*, &c., by Sir J. Temple, Master of the Rolls; a violently prejudiced witness, however. See also 'P.' [Petrie] in *Irish Penny Journal*, i. p. 177.

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unlike the typical Enniskillener as possible. But in the population of this town there is an important, though diminishing proportion, too, of the last-mentioned race.

Ugly as most of the houses in Ballyshannon are (as in what Irish town are they not, whether prosperous or declining?), there is something cheerful in your not feeling shut in; glimpses of the river, the blue Dartry mountains, the harbour and its sandhills, being visible at many points as we traverse the ragged streets. The sanitary conditions, too, are much better than a stranger would guess, nature supplying brisk air, clean water, and a soil that soon absorbs the frequent rains.

Both in salubrity, and in variety of interest, Ballyshannon far excels the trimmer and richer Enniskillen. The country round is in great part moory and rocky, with a multitude of lakes and tarns of all sizes, and many a rapid brook. Warm little vales, too, lie hidden here and there; and the circles of ancient raths are frequent on the greener hills. From the higher points northward of the town, the long range of the Donegal mountains stands in view, a wavy blue line from Barnasmore to Slieve-League, that great ocean-cliff, an almost perpendicular precipice of 1,800 feet. Southward, between the Dartry mountains (which have their name from the Clan Dartry, of whom the MacClancys were chiefs), the Erne and the sea, spreads a broken plain, almost treeless, of some fifteen miles by seven, *Magh Kedne*, 'the Plain of Treaty,' a locality of note in ancient Irish history, which includes much good pasture and arable land, and also some large tracts of bog.

This, the south side of Ballyshannon, is for the most part a limestone country, but on the other side of the Erne begin those vast beds of 'primary' rocks—granitic, gneissose, schistous, and micaceous, which are characteristic of this country, and the most extensive of the kind in Ireland. The limestone forms the greater part of the north bank, also, of

this part of the River Erne, but at a short distance from the water's edge the primitive rocks appear, chiefly gneiss and mica-schist, occupying the whole of the moory, barren, and rocky district of Dhubally, Breesie, &c., and joining edge with the limestone formation at the pool below Asaroe Fall, of which the west bank is mica-schist, and the east bank encrinitic limestone. The limestone, especially along the Bundoran shore, is remarkably rich in fossils. Indications of mineral wealth are abundant; copper and lead ores have been found in many spots; and mining has been attempted, but with inadequate means. A ship-canal from Belleek to the sea was also begun in the last century, one lock remaining as monument of the scheme, and endeavours have since been made to improve the entrance to Ballyshannon Harbour, with some but no very great practical effect, and the business of the country has found itself other channels. Moreover, the military garrison, once numerous, is removed, the moneyed people have mostly gone to live in Dublin or elsewhere, and thus Ballyshannon is left in its corner poor and idle, with scarce anything but its grain market and its salmon fishery. There is also the winter eel-fishing, which produces largely in bulk, but the value of this is comparatively small.

The pool below the Fall is the place where most of the salmon are caught, and the scene there of a fine summer's evening, when the nets are at work, is lively and pleasant. Gray cliffs, verdant here and there with ivy and briar, half enclose this large deep pool. Let us sit on the close green-sward, opposite the Cataract of King Hugh. The low amber torrent pours into the tide with continuous murmur, heard day and night, summer and winter, throughout the town, like the voice of the past. More than two thousand five hundred years ago, say the oldest histories, the sovereignty of Erin was committed to Aedh Ruadh (Red Hugh) son of Badharn, and to Dithorba son of Deman, and to Kimbaeth

son of Fintan, who were the sons of three brothers; and each took his turn to reign for seven years. Red Hugh's turn was first, and came round twice again, and towards the end of his third period of sovereignty, being then an old man, the king (attempting, it would seem, to cross by one of the fords) was swept away and drowned in this river. He 'was buried in the mound over the margin of the cataract.'[1] Hence *Eas-Aedha-Ruaidh*, pronounced As-a-roe, 'Waterfall of Red Hugh.' This name was long subsequently applied to the Abbey, and was also often used as a general name for the locality. The name of 'Ballyshannon' is corrupt, both in the 'Bally' and the 'Shannon'; the Irish form, as I have said, is *Bel-atha-Seanaigh*, and the people call it, properly, 'Bel-a-shānie.' *Bel atha* means literally 'Mouth or Opening of the Ford,' but the compound seems to have no other significance than *Ath* by itself, and merely to signify 'ford.' *Seanach* would seem to be a man's name (forgotten man), and if so Seanach's Ford—Shanasford—the English equivalent of the place-name. *Ath-seanaigh* was a ford a little above the present bridge, and by this name the town and castle are usually designated in the Annals.

But see, after all these centuries, King Hugh's Fall rolling down with low steady thunder, and sending whirls of sailing foam to run circling into the broad pool at our feet, its green depths full of quivering reflexes of variegated cliff and summer evening sky. On the grassy banks are lounging groups and children at play, who point the finger now and again, as a salmon, 'itself at once the arrow and the bow,' shoots up with a curve into sunlight from the bubbling abyss below the Fall, and struggling one moment on the edge of the swift-descending water wins his upward way, or is swept down like driftwood. Sometimes two spring at once and touch in air, sometimes an unlucky fish alights

[1] *Donegal Annals*, Anno Mundi 4518.

on that corner of rock, and has to struggle off as best he can.

The salmon-boat is going to 'make a shot;' let us watch the process from point to point. The word given, with deliberate speed the fishermen enter their boat, one rope being left with a man on shore; the skipper stands up, the five large oars sweep together, the net is cast out fold after fold over the stern, and its corks bob in their wake; they pass the cliff-point, cross the current, glide close to the pouring Fall—each man in turn shortening his oar—and again bend towards the starting-point their eccentric orbit, marked with floating corks. Now comes the tug: the skipper gives his net-rope a turn round the sternpost, the whole weight of the net is dragged at every pull, the rowers strain, the boat creaks, and advances inch by inch, till at last, the rope being suddenly cast off—'Give way, my boys!' she darts forward and rounds nicely into her birth, the oars are slid over and project on one side, on the other the net is already being hauled in. At stem and at stern stands a fisherman, pulling determinately on the heavy main rope with its corks, twisting a hand in it, leaning back as it slowly yields, and shaking the wet festoons into the boat behind; at the centre of the boat another stoops low over the gunwale, closing and lifting the two bottom-ropes or *skunks*, while a comrade beside him keeps plashing with balanced oar, to scare the fish from the opening; at intermediate places others of the crew are gathering in handfuls of meshes, and so, by degrees, the whole compass of the net swims up, and is absorbed into the boat. Three-fourths of it is aboard: the oar no longer plashes, but is darted down and twirled with a turn of the wrist, for the salmon, if any, are close by, and too violent a commotion might urge them to overleap their corded prison. The *tail* once in, the net forms a bag, and all plashing ceases; fish, perhaps, like other short-sighted creatures, congratulating themselves on

the cessation of danger, just when it has grown imminent. The corks are in; the people on the banks move to better places for seeing; the fishermen are all stooping, the meshes rise; 'Fish, or no fish?' say the people on the banks, and suddenly, if the luck be good, a great splashing churns up along the boat's side, spray flies into the men's faces, but they haul steadily, and after a short struggle the mass of scaly treasure climbs and rolls like a silver surge over the dipping gunwale. Flapping and splashing continues at the bottom of the boat, but the men merely proceed to shift their net and refold it in the stern, ready for the next *shot*, and meanwhile glides up a small boat, known as 'the collector,' which receives the salmon just caught, and with them vanishes round a corner. The fishermen have now some sweet moments of repose; but if the pool appears full of fish, their vacation is short. Besides daily wages, they receive an allowance proportioned to the number caught.

In this fishery there are three large boats employed for the draught nets, each with a regular crew of seven men, and these fish the pool described and other good places in the tidal channel between the Fall and the main sea, from before break of summer dawn (when the tide serves) to twilight of summer evening. The total take may probably be averaged at 500 salmon a day, during the latter half of the season (which closes in August); but as many as 2,000 have been taken in a day, and above 400 in a single haul. The average weight is nine pounds, but at times there is a plentiful run of fish over fifteen.

Round the corner, where the collector's boat disappeared, stands the fish-house, where piles of empty and full fish-coffins form a rude colonnade. An amphibious carpenter (half fisherman) is sawing, boring, and hammering, making and repairing; and at its gable a tired old boat lies asleep on the grass, as her crew used sometimes to lie asleep when she floated. Within the fish-house we inhale a curious

combined aroma of fresh fish, dried fish, turf and tobacco-smoke, cordage and tar; a fire of two or three coals burns on the hearth; in a corner beyond it is a man stretched in deep slumber, and near him a net-maker sits on the floor, adding mesh to mesh with rapidity.

The collector touches the bank below; the weighing scales are mopped; one creel (a deep wicker basket) after another is swung off plodding shoulders, and salmon after salmon is lifted by a grasp near the tail and slid into the balance, where they lie passive that so lately cleft the river-deeps with quick fin and nervy tail; though some still twitch, and the delicate hues of the water, gleaming and melting from the dark spotted back through purplish and pale green into silver and clouded white, are not yet obscured by terrestrial handling. 'Six; 109 pounds,' is booked by the clerk at his desk: and these are old fish, as may be inferred not only from their bulk but from the shape of their tails; for the tail, which is much forked in the young salmon, becomes less and less so, from the central caudal rays growing faster than the rest, till, in the fourth year, its extreme edge is nearly or quite straight. A card is marked and nailed on its box, two men swing the salmon from the scales, a third mops them; and there they lie stretched, alternate heads and tails, with white bellies up, in their box (measuring about five feet by two, and one foot deep), which a couple of men immediately hook to a shoulder-pole, and trot off with to the ice-house close by.

From hot sunshine into the ice-house is a sudden transition. One blear tallow candle is fastened there, like a weeping prisoner, to the wall of the crooked passage, through which you come to the bottom of a pit of frozen snow mixed with glassy lumps, in some corner of which a white bear might comfortably lodge. We follow our salmon-box, rapidly shovelled full of ice and nailed down, towards daylight again, and feel the outer air striking on our faces like the breath of

a stove. In half an hour, perhaps, this, with a pile of similar boxes, will be on its way to Liverpool, either direct in a swift-sailing smack, or by cart to some of the neighbouring steamer-ports, and so to Billingsgate and Bond Street and the West End dinner-tables.

The salmon that evades the dangers of the ocean and the lower river may either face the Fall or choose the side stream that runs between an irregular rocky island and the shore. If the latter, he is a gone fish: he ascends the current, enters a minor rapid, pierces a very narrow strait—in reality, the entrance of a trap—and next finds his nose knocked against a wooden grating, and can merely poke about amongst some fellow-prisoners until their hour shall come. The stream through the box is swift, and drifts him to the lower corners, and he cannot *swim* down it to seek the narrow opening (like an entering V opened at the angle), for the water would pour into his gills and drown him. No creature is absolute even in that element where strongest: the fish conquers the water, and the water rules the fish.

The fishes' hour has struck—though the poor creatures know nothing of clocks. The men are, as they term it, 'robbing the boxes.' A hand-net on the end of a long pole sweeps down and rummages every nook, and by ones or twos, or when the box is full, by threes and fours, lifts the strong creatures struggling into air, and disgorges them on the causeway, or into a dry stone basin built for the purpose, where a knock on the nose with a short stick is their speedy quietus.

These lucky salmon that surmount the Fall by agility, or by advantage of a high tide, are free of the upper waters, which are carefully guarded from poaching by numerous 'water-keepers.' Here they gradually change colour, the females growing dark, the males golden orange, and are then called respectively 'black fish' and 'red fish.' Their spawn

is deposited in furrows or *redds*,[1] which they make in the gravel with their noses. This usually occurs in November, and about five months afterwards the fry appear in the shallows as inch-long fishes. They are now marked across with narrow patches of dusky gray, in common with the young of trout, Welsh charr, and some other fish; but the salmon soon changes this coat. The similarity, however, remains long enough to supply ground for discussions, especially as to the identity of the parr, or *jinkin*, with the young salmon; and on this the most experienced persons hold opposite opinions. The fry descend as spring advances, at first keeping in slack water, then venturing towards mid-stream. On meeting the tide they wait two or three days to grow used to the salt water, and then go direct to sea. There they get quit of certain small fresh-water parasites that cling to them, but only to be saddled with substitutes peculiar to the salt water; and the reverse effect occurs on their return to the fresh. It is during the summer or autumn that they return to the estuary; those that come in June weighing two to four pounds; in July or August three to seven pounds—for their growth is chiefly in the sea, and very rapid, their appetite being proportionately ravenous. They are believed to feed on sand-eels and other small fish and marine animals, and a good deal on the ova of crabs and lobsters—a rich diet, which in turn enhances their own flavour.

While in the estuary, the salmon generally move up somewhat with the flood-tide, and retire with the ebb. They are supposed to return, in most instances, to their native rivers; but if they have roved far in the ocean, the probability is that, after the season has arrived, they enter the nearest congenial stream. In most cases, probably the warmest rivers have the earliest fisheries; but there appear to be

[1] *Redd* (from *rid*, *riddance*), a clearance; in this instance a place cleared.

many exceptions to this, and the difference in time, and also in quality of fish, between fisheries only a few miles apart, is remarkable.

Those 'grilse' or 'grawls' (fish returning up for the first time) that escape the hazards their parents escaped, pursue in turn the same course; and after spawning, head again for the sea as 'kelts' or 'keeves'; at which time they are unfit for table. They descend in the floods at the end of winter and beginning of spring, from pool to pool, and once in the sea, begin quickly to grow plump, firm, and weighty. Salmon *can* live wholly in fresh water, but poorer in size and quality.

Once in the waters above the Fall, the salmon, no longer legally assailable with physical force, become peculiarly subject to the seductive arts of the angler, and are tempted with monstrous flies of every glaring colour and unnatural shape; for, in fly-tying, as in some other departments of the fine arts, it is found that the most catching article is not that which keeps closest to the modesty of nature.

From boat, wall, or field on the river-verge, often from the old bridge, the angler, wielding the heavy rod with both hands, bids his fly fall softly into a particular ripple or eddy, and swim up-stream with wavering motion. To the spectator not a brother of the craft, it seems slow work; yet yonder rich idle man, to whom the world is an oyster ready opened, with a whole cruetful of relishes soliciting his hands, finds this the most desirable occupation for six summer weeks; and yon other, among professional cares and toils in the city smoke, has comforted himself with memories and anticipations of such angling holidays as he is now enjoying.

Your true angler will not interpose other pursuits; he does not qualify his water; soon and late he is at work amusing himself. Had you visited the river-side at half-past two this morning, you might, at that early hour, have observed the dim figure of an old gentleman thus engaged, his nightcap glimmering in the dawn; and about 8 A.M., if

the fish were rising, you might have seen the same old gentleman hastily consuming a mess of porridge at some rock or low wall, while his attendant kept the rod in vibration; and evening dusk will perhaps find the veteran on duty, at this or another of his favourite 'throws.'

Angling, indeed, has attractions for people of every class and age, as there is plenty of evidence along the pools and rapids of the Erne on a favourable evening. The child dips his thread and crooked pin; the lad, with clumsy but serviceable home-made rod, and line woven of horse-hairs hazardously filched from the living tail, turns trouser above knee, and wades sturdily. The grave old pensioner handles his rod with military precision; the unshaven, sedentary shoemaker has thrown by the lapstone, spat out the piece of leather he was chewing, and twisted his apron to one side, to seek an hour's happiness by the margin of the cool flowing waters, while, above or below him, the comfortable shopkeeper or householder swings his sober line from a station where wet feet are impossible.

But most of these people, observe, are fishing for trout, some few for perch, bream, and the like; none for salmon. That is a lofty privilege, requiring not only a government licence but permission from the lessee of the 'several fishery,' which is accorded only to particular friends, or on payment of a smart sum; and all the salmon caught must be given up, except two in the season for each angler. Angling for salmon is therefore chiefly the occupation of 'Nobs'—who from distant cities repair hither, donning waterproof boots, jackets with special pockets, and wide-awake hats embowered in artificial flies, engage an attendant, and fish, or pretend to fish, all day long, smoking continuous cigars. Old hands there are, tho', such as our early rising friend, who, in less ambitious rig, angle seriously and knowingly, and seldom suffer the rod to quit their own hands—unlike the more fickle amateur, who oft enjoys the indolent Havannah while

his man keeps the rod going, and who will even play chess with a comrade till either's proxy gives check to a salmon.

The fish, being struck, rapidly dives or darts away, then succeed the incidents of holding and giving out, wading, running sideways, stepping backwards, the brass wheel whirring, rod bent like a hoop, the last struggle, the gaff, the repose after victory, the calm triumph of the spring-balance and memorandum-book.

The angler's attendant belongs to a peculiar class, which is small but unfailing. He lives near the river, and is usually a native of the locality, where it is very likely his father and grandfather before him lived their lives in the same element of sporting. He understands shooting and coursing, and is seasonably occupied therein; but fishing is his stronghold. He perpetually ties flies; for each lake, pool, river, rivulet, and every change of season, weather, and time of day, requires to be studied and suited in its peculiarities; and, above all, the capricious fancy of the salmon—to-day ready to rush at something which yesterday he would not look at. Perhaps after the most renowned flies have been cast in vain, something tied hurriedly on the river bank, with a new shade of colour in it, will be seized ere it can touch the water. The attendant therefore wears next his heart an old pocket-book stuffed with brilliant silk-threads, tinsel, gold-twist, pig's wool variously dyed, feathers of the mallard, peacock, pheasant, American duck, guinea-hen, and declares to you that a fish will criticise a single fibre or bristle in the wing or body of the work of art submitted to his examination.

Droll fellows many of these attendants are, with quaint stories and humours to lighten the tedious hours when fish are too dull or too wide-awake to be persuaded; and help to flavour the piscatory episode in the rich man's year. They are deeply versed in the characteristics of fish, and scarcely less so in those of the fishing rich man, between whose

natures they seem to form a necessary middle term—their hands touched, now and again, with silvery traces of their contact with each.

The salmon boat's last 'shot' has been made for this evening, the big boats ride silent and deserted at their moorings, the fishermen have wended homewards by field-path or by water to their cottages. The tide is half-ebb, the windless sky holds a soft deep blue between the stars; let us step into this punt and pull down the harbour, hearing ever 'the music of the water-fall' sounding through the stillness.

This one small island, a rock thinly coated with sward, bearing a single long low house, is Inis-Saimer, and owns a legendary fame stretching back centuries beyond even the time of Hugh, son of Badharn, who gave his name to the cataract. Do you remember Wordsworth's fine sonnet upon the influence of twilight, or dim nightlight, in obliterating *modernness* from a landscape? That era of the world in which Parthalon lived was 300 years after the Deluge, he being descended from Magog, son of Japhet, son of Noah. This Parthalon sailed from Greece, or, as some assert, from the Euxine Sea, with his wife, his three sons and their wives, and a body of soldiers; and at last, in the month of May (the 14th of the moon, and a Tuesday,[1] if you are fond of precise information), they reached the mild and fertile island of thick woods wherein they resolved to stay, and which was afterwards called Eiré, or Erin—that is to say, 'western'—and at length by the Saxons, 'Eiré-land,' Ireland. First they landed at Inverskene, now Kenmare, in Kerry (but all places were as yet lonely and nameless), and thence coasted northwards to the estuary of a rapid river—this river upon which we float. Here entering, they fixed their dwelling on the small island in mid-channel; a clearly

[1] O'Flaherty's *Ogygia*, part 3, chap. ii.

advantageous position; close to the mainland but on every side protected by deep water; near the ocean, yet well sheltered; the climate soft, fish and wild-fowl abundant, forests good for chase spreading to the water's edge, and, full in view, the copious cataract rolling with murmur, as to-night it rolls with murmur, into the salt creek, from far-spreading inland waters. Here, and perhaps on the adjacent river-banks, dwelt Parthalon and his people; and this was in the time of Abram and Lot.

One day Parthalon was hunting through the forest where the Moy now is, and part of his household people were with him, and part were left behind in the river-island. He hunted up into a glen of the blue mountain-range beyond the plain, and there a messenger overtook him, whose message carried suspicion and jealousy; whereupon Parthalon turned hastily homewards. So that valley was called *Glen-eda*, 'the Glen of Jealousy,' now Glenade. When the chief stepped out of boat upon his island in the river, his wife received him kindly, and offered him a goblet of refreshing drink; but after approaching it to his mouth Parthalon took it down again, and, looking at her sternly, said, 'I perceive another man's breath upon my goblet.' To this his wife replied impudently, repeating certain verses of a poet that it is unwise to shut up a cat along with a pan of cream, or a young man with a fair woman. At the same moment Saimer, the favourite greyhound of Parthalon, ran up fawning upon his master, who in his anger smote the dog and killed him.

In the old narratives no more is said of Parthalon's wife, but it is recorded that he buried his hound on the island, calling it Inis-Saimer, and so it is called to this day. Hence the river, too, was anciently called Saimer. The tidal part of this river was also named Lough Rury, because Rury, the son of Parthalon, was drowned therein.

After a time, Parthalon and his people moved away from

this place to the eastern coast, to the high promontory of Howth; and there Parthalon died, after being twenty years in Erin. In his time burst forth the lakes Conn and Mask, also Lough Laighlin, from the grave dug for his son Laighlin, and several other lakes burst forth, and four plains were cleared of forest. When 300 years had passed from the arrival of the Parthalonians, there came a pestilence among them; 9,000 died at Howth in one week, and at last there was not one left alive. Then Erin remained void of inhabitants for thirty years.[1] How was the record transmitted across this interval? Perhaps by inscriptions on stones and rocks, of the nature of that writing called 'Ogham'; but, moreover, the Parthalonians could hardly have lived three centuries in Erin without communication by sea with other inhabitants of the world. Some say that along with Parthalon came a number of giants, strong but stupid, 'plures gigantes ex stirpe Cham, viribus admirabiles, sed stolidi,' one of whom, named Ruan, hid himself in a cave, and thus escaping the pestilence, lived till the time of Saint Patrick, a space of 2,400 years, told the saint many things of ancient times, and was baptized before death. This giant's lifetime (remarks one chronicler) 'longius est bis quam ætas Mathusalem, sed nihil impossibile Deo.'[2] And this is a fair specimen of the very ancient legendary part of Irish history.

In later times there was a residence of the chieftains of Tirconnell on Inis-Saimer. A.D. 1184, the monastery of Asaroe 'was granted to God and Saint Bernard by Flaherty O'Muldorry, Lord of Kinel-Connell, for the good of his soul';[3] and in 1197 this O'Muldorry, a powerful and blood-thirsty warrior in his day, 'died on Inis-Saimer on the

[1] *Donegal Annals* (wrongly called '*Annals of the Four Masters*'); also Keating's *History of Ireland*.

[2] *Annales Hiberniæ*, Timotheus Dowling. (Irish Archæol. Soc. 1849.)

[3] *Donegal Annals*.

second day of February, after long and patient suffering, in the thirtieth year of his reign and fifty-ninth of his life, and was interred at Drumhome with due honour.'[1] In the year 1200 the chieftainship came to the O'Donnell family, with whom it remained till Irish laws gave way to English. Neal Garv O'Donnell, Lord of Tirconnell in 1423, built the castle of Ballyshannon, near the ford above the present bridge, which castle, 'a long-desired place,' says Sir Henry Dockwra, was taken by Captain Digges, one of Dockwra's officers, in the spring af 1602, being first battered and broken by a great gun. Only a bit of the wall of that castle remains, built into the wall of the grain-market.

This creek on our right running up among the dim hills, is the Abbey Bay, round whose headland in old years rowed many a boat with supplies of salmon and eels for the monks' refectory, for there were both salmon and eel-weirs on the river appertaining to this Abbey. Some of the fishermen whom we saw at work this evening live under the shadow of the old walls, on a slope not far from the water. The building is now utterly ruined, the windows are shapeless gaps; weeds and old ragged bushes grow in the aisle; many of the stones are built into the walls of the fishermen's huts, or help to fence their scanty potato patches, while pieces of archivolts, mullions, and other carved work, are more reverently set for headstones in the neighbouring graveyard, crowded with tombstones and mounds, ancient and recent—for these burial-grounds of old sanctity are much desired resting-places. Under rugged banks, grown with hawthorn and bramble, and through the arches of a rude little stone bridge, perhaps coeval with the monastery—

> A little rocky rivulet runs murmuring to the tide,
> Singing a song of ancient days, in sorrow, not in pride;
> The boortree and the lightsome ash across the portal grow,
> And heaven itself is now the roof of Abbey Asaroe.

[1] *Donegal Annals.*

'Boortree' (perhaps bore-tree, the pith being easy to take out) is a provincial name for the elder, which grows abundantly in this locality. And so we drift by on the current towards Coolnargit and the sandhills that guard the mouth of the Erne.

In this deep curve of the river, where it sweeps under sandhills before rushing seaward across the Bar, we rest on our oars under the starlight, and hear, now close at hand, the constant run and dash of waves on Tullan Strand, and under this the general basso of the Atlantic roaring along leagues of sandy and rocky shore. Outside there, is broad Donegal Bay, a wilderness of heaving water, its northern and southern mountain-walls dimly visible in the summer night sky. On the left, beyond Tullan, haunt of sea-fowl, runs the ragged coast-line of black rock,—tufted with scurvy-grass and thrift, tide-worn into caves and 'fairy bridges,' and topped with downs of smooth thymy sward,—leading to the sands and the rock-creeks and pools of Bundoran, delightful bathing-place. On the right, the fragment of Kilbarron Castle, once home of the O'Clerys, historians of the Clan Connell, and counting among them the chief of Irish annalists, hangs solitary on its cliff, bemurmured by ceaseless waves, the cormorants perched on the dark ledges waiting for daylight. But neither Bundoran nor Kilbarron is at present in view.

We see before us the white surf where Erne loses itself in the great Atlantic water. The spark of the lighthouse on St. John's Point seems to beckon us seaward, but we go no farther. The tide flows; and, half-drifting, half-rowing back by Asaroe and Inis-Saimer to Ballyshannon Quay, we find the dash and roar of the ocean gradually supplanted by the steadier sound of the waterfall.

III.—THE BAY.

We lie on a rocky headland overlooking a wide, lonely bay, whose two horns are dark blue mountain-ranges; on the ledge below, and among the great stones shaggy with seaweed, rises and sinks the great Atlantic water, peaceful to-day, with a sighing murmur. The solitary floor of ocean is lighted with a tempered cloudy radiancy of sunlight, changing with the decline of day, to ruddier glow on these ranges of cliff, and on the few sad remnants beside us of an ancient castle. One gray wall, some twelve feet high, tufted with coarse grass and fern (*Blechnum boreale*), still resists the western gales which blow heavily on this coast; and near it, partly in the trench on the landward side, lies a fallen mass of masonry held together by its mortar. Other fragments stand on the verge of the cliff, and dim foundations are traceable among the grass of the little promontory, nibbled by a few hardy sheep and swept by the seagull's wing. Behind these ruins is a stretch of bleak, stony hills, where the poor thatched cabins of the peasantry lurk scarce distinguished, unless the peat-smoke draws your eye; and in front, due west, is the ocean line, and America for next neighbour. The only human being visible is a poor woman at the tide-edge picking laver (here called 'sloak') off the rocks uncovered by the ebb. The district altogether has a wild, unsheltered, and somehow an *ancient* look. Geologically it is 'primary' (schistose and gneissose), broken with whin, bescattered with dark, heavy boulders of *trapp*. The fences are of loose, gray stones; a venerable stooping hawthorn here and there almost the only tree. Flat stones lie on the cottage roofs to keep the thatch from being blown away bodily. Often you come to something that was a cottage, or cluster of cottages, now roofless walls, smokestained, unsightly. The people

have a sad and grave demeanour; if you address them, you are received with simple and refined politeness, and an anxiety to please; should you enter one of their poor cabins, for shelter or inquiry, you will find courteous and gentle manners, and a cheerfulness which is considered due to the visitor. If you question with tact, there is generally but one story from all: the increasing poverty of the country, the progress of depopulation, their hope of sooner or later following their brothers, sons, cousins, &c., to America, or if no hope, an earnest sighing wish that they too had this resource before them in an otherwise hopeless world. America is a kind of *heaven on the level* to them. As to politics or religion you will receive no answers but such as are entirely cautious and colourless.

The landscapes here, wide, wild and lonely, have a charm of their own. Look seawards over the great bay, between its mountain-horns. On your left hand are the blue limestone Dartry mountains, the dark cliffs of Bundoran, the tawny strands and sandhills of Finner. That line of breakers marks the bar of Ballyshannon, inside of which is the harbour, with the ruins of Asaroe Abbey near one of its creeks, the island of Inis-Saimer further up; and further still, on a threshold between harbour and river, the ever-humming cataract of Red Hugh, otherwise the Salmon-Leap.

Here at Kilbarron we are just outside of Ballyshannon harbour. Northwards stretch more strands, green hills, Donegal harbour with the ruined monastery and castle; then, westwards again, runs the long mountain-range from Barnas-mor to the great sea-cliff of Slieve-League, nearly 1,900 feet in height. Few and far between are the ships in this broad bay of Donegal; few even the fishing boats. You may lie on this promontory for hours and see no sail or oar.

Kilbarron Castle, now so nearly demolished, was the residence of the Chief *Ollav* (hereditary historian) of the

O'Donnells, Princes of Tir Connell. The office was filled by men of the family of O'Clery, from about A.D. 1400 till the final overthrow of the Keltic chieftainship. After this overthrow one of the O'Clerys became the principal compiler of that famous Chronicle of Ireland, upon which the name of 'Annals of the Four Masters' has been accidentally and not very happily fastened, but really called *Annala Rioghachta Eireann*, 'Annals of the Kingdom of Erin.'

The chief business of an Ollav was history, but he was usually more or less of a poet. There were also Bards, special for poetry, and Shanachies, special for genealogy; but often one man was something of each. The narratives and songs of these official literary men were the books and dramas of the native Irish. These were widely diffused. Few kernes, probably, or peasants, few horseboys or cowherds even, were ignorant of the exploits of Finn MacCuhil, of the miracles of St. Patrick, of the Danish wars, of a number of tales and poems of the bygone, or failed to taste the power and sweetness of native story.

The name 'Kilbarron' belongs to the earliest Christian centuries of Ireland. It is the name first of an early church, secondly of the parish surrounding it,—*Cill* [cella] *Barraine* otherwise written *Cill Bar Finn*.[1] The *C* is always hard—in fact, Irish C is English K. Bairre or Bar, called *Finn*, 'the Fair,' founded in the seventh century his little church near the River Lee in Munster, in or close to a lowlying ground called *Corcagh*, 'The Marsh,' where the city of Cork now stands, with its cathedral of Saint Finbarr. The saint (like Columba and others) travelled far on his pious business; he is patron of Dornoch, and also of the island of Barra in the Hebrides, which is called after him. That he founded

[1] Thus on map of 'Scotia seu Hibernia ex Adamnano Patriisque Scriptis,' in Reeves's *Adamnan's Columba*, 1857. Adamnan was born A.D. 624.

the little church here in Tir Connell is noway unlikely. About a mile inland from Kilbarron Castle, among the rocky fields, are the walls of Kilbarron church, a very small and ancient edifice, long roofless and filled with weeds and brambles, which may as easily as not be the original building.

Before giving some account of the 'Annals of the Four Masters,' let us briefly enumerate all the principal native Annals of Erin which are known to remain at this day. Each and all of them are the work of pens in the service of the Catholic church, of which fact they of course bear traces throughout, showing very numerous entries on matters clerical. Many of the monasteries, in Ireland as elsewhere, had each a scribe or scribes who wrote down some kind of annals. The earlier statements contained in them, at first orally transmitted by Bards and *Shanachies* (recounters of old things) were taken by these clerical recorders mainly from old Gaelic manuscripts, now lost, which were lent by one religious house to another; or sometimes the transcriber travelled from place to place for his materials. He was often rather a compiler than a copyist, selecting and recombining the materials before him; and he usually continued the chronicle to his own time. The book of a monastery, when it has any speciality, is naturally fuller upon events connected with its own part of the country, and especially its own neighbourhood and community. In some cases the annalist was a high ecclesiastic, abbot or dean.

The earliest *contemporary* information given by the Irish Annals is of the ten hundreds (eleventh century). This is in Tiernagh's. The others were composed say between A.D. 1200 and 1650. It seems there is no known MS. copy now extant of any of the annals, or any part of them, made before A.D. 1500.

And now here is a compendious list of the principal Annals, under the titles by which they are usually designated.

1. The Annals of Tighernach, or Tiernagh (pronounce him 'Teernagh,' the second syllable guttural). He was Abbot of Clonmacnois: compiled from old annals and continued them through his own time: 'quievit' A.D. 1088. These are the earliest written of all the Irish Annals now known to be extant, and have a high reputation for accuracy. They extend from Ante Christum 305 to A.D. 1088, and are continued by another hand to A.D. 1407. They are printed in Dr. O'Conor's *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores Veteres*, from the Bodleian MS. with a Latin translation which is not always correct.[1] These Annals, and the five others next enumerated, written in Gaelic (that is, Irish) characters, are composed in an odd mixture of Irish and Latin, now a sentence of one, now of the other, now of both mingled.

2. The Annals of Inisfallen (monastery on the island of that name in Killarney Lower Lake) give a short account of general history, very little of Ireland till A.D. 430, thenceforward a short chronicle of Ireland to 1319. The date of the first compilation (afterwards extended) is placed by some *circa* A.D. 1215, by others earlier. The few notices of Pagan Ireland (says Dr. O'Conor, to whose account we are trusting[2]) are evidently from the same source as those in Tighernach. These Annals (MS. mixed Irish and Latin, in the Bodleian library), are given in Dr. O'Conor's collection.

3. The Annals of Boyle (monastery in Roscommon), treat of general history to Saint Patrick, then of Irish affairs—meagrely and with confusion of dates—to A.D. 1257. The designation 'of Boyle' is of doubtful accuracy, and the date of compilation uncertain. These Annals are given in Dr. O'Conor's collection. The MS., mixed Irish and Latin, is now in the British Museum.

4. The Annals of Ulster, or of *Senait Mac Maghnuss* (pronounced Shanat Mac Manus). This is an island in Upper

[1] So say O'Donovan and O'Curry. [2] *Stowe Catalogue*, vol. i.

Lough Erne (now called Bell Isle) a few miles from Enniskillen, where Cathal MacGuire, whose clan name was MacManus, 'made, gathered, and collected this book from many other books.' He was Dean of Lough Erne, and also a *Biatach*, or hospitaller—one appointed to give shelter and succour to all persons in need thereof. He died in 1498, aged sixty, 'a precious stone, a bright gem, a luminous star, a casket of wisdom,' &c., as recorded in the annals by his first continuator.[1] They are continued by various hands to 1604. There are five MS. copies, mixed Irish and Latin, one in the Bodleian, two in the British Museum, two in Trinity College, Dublin; and the British Museum has also a manuscript English translation of them. They begin with Saint Patrick, and are very meagre up to the ninth century. They appear in Dr. O'Conor's collection.

5. The Annals of Connaught, as now accessible, are contained in two paper copies (Trinity College, Dublin, and Royal Irish Academy), mixed Irish and Latin—extending from A.D. 1224 to 1562 (except 1394–7) and treat more particularly of the affairs of Connaught. The original vellum MS. is in the hands of Lord Ashburnham, who refuses to let it be examined.[2] Here let us note that the titles, 'Annals of Connaught,' 'of Ulster,' 'of Boyle,' are not the original designations, but arbitrary and comparatively modern, and have not been always uniformly used. Those Annals which Ware calls 'of Connaught' are now known as 'The Annals of Boyle.'

6. The Annals of Lough Ke (or Key, in Roscommon)—wrongly called 'of Kilronan'[3]—were compiled A.D. 1580–1588, and extend from A.D. 1014 to 1541. They commence with a detailed account of the battle of Clontarf, when the Danes

[1] O'Curry's *Lectures on the MS. Materials of Irish History*, p. 84.

[2] Those hands have relaxed their grasp, and the MS. is now fully accessible.

[3] O'Curry.

were overthrown, and the victor slain, old King Brian Boru (*Boroimhé*, 'of the Tribute'). They treat with fulness of the affairs of Connaught. The only known copy is one on vellum in Trinity College, Dublin, mixed Irish and Latin.

7. The so-called 'Annals of Clonmacnois,' reaching to A.D. 1408, are still extant in form of a manuscript English translation made in 1627, from an Irish manuscript which has disappeared. There is a copy of the translation in the British Museum, and one in Trinity College, Dublin.

8. The Annals of Donegal (commonly 'of the Four Masters') is by far the most extensive and on the whole most important of these works: compiled and written in Irish by Friar Michael O'Clery and his associates, 1632–36, published, with English translation and notes, by John O'Donovan, 1851, &c., 7 vols., 4to. It extends from the Deluge to Anno Domini 1616.

9. Finally, the *Chronicon Scotorum* (Chronicle of the Irish), a compilation in mixed Irish and Latin, from old MSS., by Duald MacFirbis, the last of the Irish hereditary historiographers; a translation of which, by Mr. Hennessy, appeared in 1866. This chronicle is brought down to A.D. 1135, with a supplement extending from 1141 to 1150.

There are also several short annals of Ireland in Latin, compiled in the monasteries of Kilkenny, Ross, Multifernan, Clonmel, &c.; some in the fourteenth century, some later.

Besides the Annals, there are many literary remains in the Irish tongue, most of them now in Trinity College, Dublin, and the Royal Irish Academy, some in the British Museum, the oldest being in vellum MS. known as *Labor na Lillidre*, 'The Book of the Dun Cow,' written about the year 1100. The contents of these MSS. include law books, genealogies and pedigrees, topographies, histories (e.g. 'The Wars of the Danes and Irish'), historic tales, imaginative tales, poems, also lives of saints, martyrologies, prophecies,

and ecclesiastical tracts. Also, there are in Trinity College, Dublin, many paper MSS. transcribed A.D. 1700–1750, from Gaelic MSS. now lost. At Rome, Milan, St. Gall are other ancient Irish MSS., to be better known by and by through the learned labours of Mr. Whitley Stokes.

And now let us look at the chief writer of the Donegal Book of Annals, a short account of whose family will include many hints as to out-of-the-way Irish manners and incidents.

Seven centuries ago, or thereabouts, when the Second Henry ruled in England, certain of his adventurous Anglo-Norman nobles sailed with a small force from South Wales to Ireland, invited to the aid of Macmurrough, Prince of Leinster against Roderick O'Conor, King of Ireland. This was in May, 1169.[1] They held their ground, and were followed next year by a large body of knights and men-at-arms under Richard Earl of Pembroke, who inherited the surname of 'Strongbow;' and the year after that by King Henry himself, with a fleet and army, who landed at Waterford, claiming the lordship of Ireland under *privilegium* (not *bulla*, as commonly said) of Pope Adrian the Fourth.

During four subsequent centuries of almost continual strife, the English held their 'Pale' in the eastern portion of the island, pushing, with constant risk and much vicissitude, their advanced posts into the south and west. Most of the north and north-west kept free, the while, of foreign occupation and rule.

Now the De Burgos, *alias* Burkes, after much fighting, held a tight grip in the south part of Connaught, Hy-Fiachra-Aidne (now the Catholic diocese of Kilmacduagh, in which stand the towns of Gort and Loughrea) a dreary expanse of gray limestone, gray stones everywhere, thin soil, a lonely

[1] Some say 1170.

little lake here and there lighting it up with melancholy gleams,—and from this district the old Keltic families were forced to flee away, lamenting their accustomed stony landscape, with its little churches and standing crosses of old native saints.

The district of Hy-Fiachra-Aidne took its designation from its occupying tribe, who claimed descent from Fiachra, son of Eochy Moyvaine, monarch of Ireland in the fourth century: about A.D. 950–1000 many families of this tribe assumed distinguishing surnames, each from some noted man in its own line of descent, and henceforth were known as O'Clerys, O'Heynes, O'Shaughnessys, MacGiolla Kellys, &c. The name of the O'Clery family was perhaps connected with *claireach*, 'clerus,' and may have implied an hereditary devotion to learning. Ousted by the De Burgos, one division of the O'Clerys went to the neighbourhood of Kilkenny, another to Brefny O'Reilly (Cavan). A third settled in Tir-Awley in Mayo, a wild windy country overlooked by the mountain-cone of Nephin, and lying between Lough Conn and the rocks and sands of the Atlantic. Years went on, and generations of these O'Clerys lived and died in Tir-Awley.

About the year 1380 (in the times of Chaucer and his pilgrims) one of this Irish family, Cormac MacDermot O'Clery by name, young (it would seem), but 'a wise and intelligent man, and a proficient in both civil and canon law,' went from Tir-Awley into Tir-Connell (land—*terra*—of Connell), ruled by the Chieftains O'Donnell, whose extreme westward boundary was the river Drowas. This district, the common property of the Kinel (or Clan) Connell, included most part of what is now Donegal county. The wild Atlantic waves rushed upon the western border of Tir-Connell; on other sides it was barriered from the Lords of the Pale by territories owned also by native clans and ruled by their elected chiefs—Brefny (Leitrim and Cavan);

Fermanagh; and Tir-Owen, ruled by The O'Neill, land of the Kinel-Owen, sometimes allies, oftener furious rivals and opponents of the men of Tir-Connell.

The inhabitants of all these parts were unmixed Gaelic, living under laws transmitted by their ancestors from time immemorial. As to English laws, the people were not only alien to these in habit and will, but were formally excluded by statute from any share of legal protection or benefit. Unmixed Catholics too, their Catholicism made them no better friends of the Catholic English settlers. There existed in Ireland two rival branches of the Church, the one in its clergy exclusively Irish, the other admitting no Irishmen. The native Irish Church had always been a sort of wild outlier, too disregardful of papal authority, and neglecting to pay Peter's Pence. Hence the papal documents handing over Ireland, for 'spiritual' reasons, to the English Crown, and the support from Rome usually given to the English bishops, abbots, and clergy in Ireland in preference to the Irish ones.

In a little vale by an estuary of green hills and yellow sand (now Ballyshannon harbour), near a rocky brook running into the tide-mingled water of the River Erne, stood in the time of O'Clery's journey from Tir-Awley, the Cistercian Abbey of Asaroe. A residence of The O'Donnell occupied the neighbouring harbour-island of Inis-Saimer, near the famous cataract of Asaroe. On the hill above rose the ancient earn of King Hugh the Red, whose drowning gave his name to the waterfall, *Eas-Aedha-Ruaidh*. At *Ath-Seanaigh* (Ballyshannon) 'Ford of Seanagh,' above the cataract, was perhaps some rude fort or defence-work. Enclosures of earth, stone, wattles, palisading, or mixed construction, with huts and sheds within, topped several of the neighbouring eminences. Numerous cattle, if it was summer time, roamed far on the hills or in the woods bent

eastward by the sea wind, watched by their herdsmen; some of the clan perhaps cutting and carrying peat from the bogs, others drawing salmon or trout from the 'fishful river:' tillage scantly visible, and none elsewhere so careful as that of the home-fields and kitchen-gardens of the monks of Asaroe.

Cormac O'Clery, who doubtless came not unrecommended, took up his abode in this new neighbourhood; became, through his learning and character, a great favourite at the Abbey; and married the only daughter of O'Sgingin, chief *ollav* or historian to The O'Donnell. O'Sgingin dwelt on the land assigned to him in his house on the seaside cliff of Kilbarron. The sacredness of office, however, did not hinder O'Conor of Sligo from demolishing the ollav's house,—probably in a foray by boat.[1] O'Sgingin's only son, *Gilla-Bhrighde*, or Gilbride (servant of Saint Bridget), was to have succeeded his father as ollav of the Clan Connell, but the youth died (1382); and O'Clery on his marriage promised that if heaven sent *him* a son, he should be trained up for that office, which, so far as possible, was hereditary, and was supported by a grant of land. A son was born, and was christened Gilbride (these hints of human feeling glimmer faintly to us from the dead and dark centuries), who in due time became Historian of the Clan. To him succeeded his son Gillareagh O'Clery, who died 'after a good life' in 1421, and was succeeded by his son Dermot, surnamed 'of the Three Schools,' because he kept a school, or perhaps class, for general literature, one for history, and another for poetry. On account of his learning and distinction, The O'Donnell who then ruled gave to Dermot and his family an increased portion of land. He was succeeded by his son, whose death is recorded in 1492, 'O'Clery (Teige Cam), Ollav to O'Donnell in literature, poetry, and history, a man who had kept a house of general

[1] Annals of the Kingdom of Erin.

hospitality for the mighty and the needy, died, victorious over the devil and the world.'[1] The three sons of Teige Cam,—Tuathal, Dermot, and Gillareagh,—are all described as men of learning and wealth; and by them (it would appear) the castle, now in ruins, was built on the rock of Kilbarron, some time in the beginning of the sixteenth century. Tuathal [pr. 'Tual'] died in 1512, 'after unction and penance,' 'a man learned in history and poetry.' On June 11, 1522, 'The O'Neill took the castle and town of Ballyshannon, and two of The O'Donnell's ollavs were slain, namely, Dermot, son of Teige Cam O'Clery, a learned historian and poet, a man who kept an open house of general hospitality for the great and for the poor; and Hugh MacWard, son of Hugh.' In March, 1527, Gillareagh, son of Teige Cam, 'a scientific adept in history, poetry, and literature, and a man of consideration, wealth, property, and great power, died in the habit of St. Francis.'

Tuathal left two sons, one of whom, the second Teige Cam, died without heirs, at a venerable age, in 1566—'Ollav to O'Donnell in history, a man learned in poetry and chronology, a prop, who kept a house of hospitality for the learned, the exiled, and the literary men of the neighbouring territories, . . . and was buried with great respect and honour in the monastery of St. Francis at Donegal.' Tuathal's second son, William, was father of Donough, who was father of Conary and Teige (afterwards Friar Michael) O'Clery, two of the Annalists, and also of Bernardine.

Dermot (Tuathal's brother, he who was slain by the O'Neill in 1522) also left at least two sons: one, Cormac, died in 1542, 'a worthy friar-minor of the convent of Donegal:' the eldest, Cucogry, left a son named Maccon, who became head of the O'Clery family on the death of

[1] This, and the subsequent extracts, not otherwise noted, are from the same Annals.

his cousin, Teigne Cam the second, in 1586. Here let it be noted that the eldest living male of a family was commonly, but not *invariably* its head; and this applies also to chieftainship and kingship. Maccon died in 1565, 'Ollav to O'Donnell in history, an erudite and ingenious man, professed in history and poetry, a fluent orator, . . . a pious and charitable man.' His son and successor was Lewy, the last Ollav.

We have traced these O'Clerys of Kilbarron, as befitting a family of historians and genealogists. Let us look more particularly at one of them, a Teige O'Clery mentioned above, brother of Conary and Bernardine, who was born about 1575, and died in 1643. He was first called 'Teige of the Mountain,' but when he became a Franciscan lay-brother he took the name of 'Michael.'

There lived once at Assisi, in Umbria, a certain dissolute youth, son of a merchant or tradesman; which youth, being, we know not how, 'converted' at the age of 24 (this was in A.D. 1206), turned himself to solitude and mortification. His father, misliking this other extreme, imprisoned and disinherited him; but Francis was thereby only confirmed in his religious enthusiasm, took a vow of poverty, (how now could disinheritance pretend to hurt him?) and resolved to found a new monastic order. His rules, of which poverty was chief, were approved by the Pope in 1210, and so arose the privileged and powerful order of Franciscans, *alias* Gray Friars, *alias* Cordeliers, *alias* Minor Friars (from their humility)—their dress a gray robe and cowl, a cord, with bare feet. Francis died in 1226, age 44, and in due time his name was canonised.

A little monastery of 'the Seraphic Order of St. Francis' was founded by The O'Donnell (Hugh Roe), and his wife Finola, near to his new castle of Donegal, in 1474, 'for the prosperity of their own souls, and for a burial-place

for themselves and their descendants.' The learned family of the O'Clerys of Kilbarron (some twelve miles distant) furnished a share of monks, and now and again a prior, to this monastery, which was of the discipline of the 'Observantines,' or 'Brothers of the Strict Observance;' and in 1636 we find Bernardine O'Clery at its head. At this latter date, and for a little while longer, though miserably reduced by war, plunder, and burning, the confraternity still held together; finally suppressed in the course of the next troublous twenty years, or perhaps dissolving from total failure of the means of subsistence, mere inanition,—a step beyond even the utmost strictness of St. Francis. Sir James Ware, in 1654,[1] describes it as 'heretofore famous for a well-stored library.' Such perishing from inanition was, I imagine, the fate of many of the obscurer Irish monasteries. There was no formal 'suppression,' but,—native lands confiscated and all Catholic inhabitants impoverished, and the monastic buildings fallen to decay or tumbled in destruction,—the monks wandered about, looking for a poor casual sustenance, or, when they were able, fled to France, Flanders, or some other continental country. Such fraternities as preserved humbly any local habitation and name into the Cromwellian era, were then finished off.

These evil times for the monks of Asaroe, of Donegal, and their brethren elsewhere, were approaching, but not yet arrived, when Teige O'Clery was born at Kilbarron (castle or parish) about 1575.[2] The O'Donnell still ruled in Tirconnell, and hanged his own culprits, but English power trod on his kibes. In 1584, Queen Elizabeth's viceroy, Sir John Perrot, divided a part of Ulster into seven new counties, of which Donegal

[1] Ware's *Antiquities of Ireland*.

[2] O'Donovan, *Introduction to Annals*. O'Curry (*Lectures*) says about 1580.

and Fermanagh were two; but not for a good many years after were the queen's judge, sheriff, and coroner, safe in venturing upon this 'shire-ground.' 'Your sheriff is welcome,' said MacGuire of Fermanagh to the Deputy Fitzwilliam, 'but let me know his *eric* [the fine for his death, an impost of the old Irish code], so that if my people kill him I may levy it on the country.' This part of Ireland was still entirely Catholic. It would appear that the English Church Reformation took no effect in the northern parts of Ireland; Catholic bishops continued to hold the dioceses; up to 1607, there was perhaps no Protestant service in Ulster, save in the English garrisons. *Religion* (misused word!) was now the favourite war-cry on the Irish side. The English were always 'the heretics,' sometimes 'the Pagan Beast.' There were plenty of Jesuits and Spanish priests in Ireland busy keeping up the spirit. The chieftains were in frequent communication with the Holy See, and the Court of Spain. Irish—Papal—Spanish—English—each party worked and plotted for ends of its own.

Of Teige O'Clery's early years we have no record. His locality was at that period the scene of some memorable transactions. Hugh Roe, or Red Hugh O'Donnell, in 1587 (being then about fifteen years old) was kidnapped from Lough Swilly in an English ship, imprisoned three years in Dublin Castle, escaped and was recaptured, escaped again in the winter of 1592, and fled northward to his father's castle of Ballyshannon. Though his feet were frost-bitten, the brave youth immediately hastened with a force to Donegal, and compelled an English garrison who were occupying the monastery there to retire into Connaught. After this he remained a long time under cure, losing both his great toes.

In that year his father resigned the chieftainship to him, and Hugh, about twenty years old, was made 'O'Donnell,' with due ceremonies, at the rock of Kilmacrenan. He soon distinguished himself as one of the principal leaders of the northern Irish against the forces of Queen Elizabeth. In 1597 Sir Conyers Clifford, the English governor of Connaught, with about 4,000 men, assailed Red Hugh in his castle of Ballyshannon, but, after five days' attack, was forced to retreat by the ford above the cataract, with loss of many men drowned.

The soldiers of the Irish chieftains of this time were some of them armed with matchlocks, some with bows and arrows, some had battle-axes, most had swords. They wore close-fitting jerkins and hose, and conical caps; some had steel-caps or morions, and some plate-armour. The best armed of them were equipped much like their opponents the English; and they marched with drums and banners. But no doubt many of the men who assembled at 'a hosting' were ill-armed and dressed, and worse disciplined. The peculiar and most common weapon was the pike; *skians*, or short knives (for close fighting,—sometimes for flinging) were in general use, and targets were numerous. The horseman usually carried a pike, with a sword and skian, and often a javelin, with a cord or thong to draw it back; he was attended by one or more horseboys. Of artillery the Irish had little—commonly none but what they took from the enemy; and the possession of even a single culverin or demi-cannon was often sufficient to give victory to the English side. The O'Donnell in this day would usually take the field on a powerful horse, wearing over his plate-armour a rich mantle (to be cast aside in close fighting), and a plumed hat; his arms, a sword, javelin, skian, with perhaps a target.

In 1601 Red Hugh's cousin, Niall Garv (Rugged) O'Donnell, a bold fighter, with 500 English soldiers, by whose alliance he sought the chieftainship, occupied the monastery of Donegal. The monasteries, for strength of walls and con-

venience of lodging, were often used as military posts. Niall (pr. Nee-al[1]) was not only cousin to Hugh, but husband of Hugh's sister; and he had so much claim to the chieftainship as belonged to his descent from an *elder* brother. At this time he was about thirty-two years of age, Hugh's senior by some three years. There is an interesting account of what followed from the Sacristan of the convent: 'In the year 1600 there were there, namely in the convent of Donegal, forty brethren in the family, who performed the divine services daily and nightly, with singing and great solemnities. I myself had care of the sacristy, in which I kept forty sacred vestments, with everything belonging thereto, and many were of gold and silver texture, some interwoven and wrought with gold; the rest all silk. There were also sixteen cups of silver, and large, of which only two were not gilt, and two *ciboria* for the most Holy Sacrament. A furnishing respectable enough [especially for minor brethren 'of the strict observance']: nor was the convent without glassware. But war growing heavy, and the heretics prevailing in other parts, at last they grew so strong that, the Prince O'Donnell being occupied with other affairs, they came with an army to the town of Donegal, and in the year 1601, at the feast of St. Lawrence the Martyr, they placed a military garrison in the monastery. The brethren, forewarned, fled to the woods some miles off, and carried away in a ship to a safer place the valuables of the monastery. I myself was among the last who quitted the convent, and I took refuge in this ship. Now this is what followed: the convent, occupied by that military garrison, was immediately besieged by the prince, and the English were closely shut up. But a wonderful accident befel them; at one and the same hour, fire, thought to be sent from heaven, seized the buildings of the convent, and consumed many of the soldiers,

[1] In 'O'Neill,' the 'Neill' is possessive case to Niall.

and the ship which was coming into harbour with their supplies struck upon a rock: was this accident? ['casu?'] The English who survived remained within the trenches they had made, and treated on articles and conditions of surrender.

'News now came to the prince that the Spanish auxiliaries had arrived at Kinsale in Munster, under D. Juan de Aguila, and having occupied the town, were besieged by the heretics; wherefore, without delay, and leaving the Donegal business unfinished, he hastened to Munster, intending to join O'Neill and others on the way, so that all together should come to the aid of the Spaniards. But neither did things go well at Kinsale, and the Spaniards were compelled to surrender; and the affairs of the Catholics being thus ruined, Prince O'Donnell went to Spain [where he soon after died], and in the following year, 1602, all parts of his dominion [sui dominii] came into the power of the heretics; and among other things which perished there, that ecclesiastical furniture of the convent of Donegal became the prey of Oliver Lambert, governor of Connaught on the part of the heretics, who turned the chalices into profane drinking goblets, and directed the sacred vestments to be cut up and mutilated for various profane uses; and thus both that convent and all its furnishing perished.'[1] Some few brethren, however, as we shall see, continued to live beside the ruins. There is no mention of books, so that the 'library' of which Ware heard tell was gone before this time, or else it meant the books afterwards gathered hither by the Annalists.

The English government supported, after all, not Niall Garv, but Roderick or Rory O'Donnell as chief. He made submission to James I., and was created Earl of Tyrconnell.

[1] From a MS. history of the Franciscans in St. Anthony's College, Louvain, date 1617. MS. (now in Bibliothèque de Bourgogne, Brussels) quoted in Latin by Dr. O'Donovan. *Introduction to Annals*, xxix.

Hugh O'Neill had already promised to finally relinquish his claims of chieftainship, and remain Earl of Tyrone. This (whatever English readers may think) appeared to him a very poor exchange for his ancestral title, 'The O'Neill.' After living discontentedly for some years in straitened liberty, and under constant suspicion from the government, the two earls suddenly fled from Ireland. This happened in 1607. They sailed from Lough Swilly and, finally, journeyed on to Rome. There died Rory O'Donnell in the next year, and O'Neill some seven years after, in 1616. They were the two last Princes of Ireland. The bard, Hugh Roe MacWard, who had accompanied the O'Donnell, wrote their elegy. He visits, in Rome, the grave of Roderick, and finds Nuala, the sister of the dead chieftain, weeping there solitary: 'O Woman of the bitter cry,' he sings, 'were it in green Tir-Connell, this grave thou weepest over, thou wouldst not lament alone!' The family of MacWard gave many hereditary poets to the O'Donnell chieftains: the name (*Mac-an-Bhàird*) means 'Son of the Bard.' In the shortened form of 'Ward' it is still common in the old neighbourhood, and some lands close to Kilbarron are known by the hybrid name of Ward-town (Gael. Baile-mac-an-Bhàird). There are also many O'Clerys still living about here, by no means forgetful of the ancient honour of the name. O'Donnells, too, there are, of various degrees of affinity to the house of the chieftain; but Hugh Roe's branch is believed to be extinct. While I am writing these pages I see in the London papers, 'Death of Marshal O'Donnell;' and he is described as descended from '*a family of Irish extraction*,' who emigrated to Spain. 'A family of Irish extraction!'—Debrett and Burke do better than this for their clients. The Irish chieftains were recognised as of princely rank at all the chief continental courts; and some of their descendants are now among the grand personages of France, Spain, Italy, Austria, and Russia.

The last Ollav of Tir Connell was Lewis or Lewy O'Clery (already mentioned) who became champion for the north in the famous 'Contention of the Bards,' on the comparative historic glories of the north and south. When the so-called estates of O'Donnell and his supporters (according to Irish law they were *clan*-property) were confiscated by James I., Lewy O'Clery was suffered to remain in the O'Clery land, or a part of it, as tenant to the English crown.

His son Cucogry succeeded him as head of their family; but there was now no Chieftain O'Donnell and no Clan-Connell. In an 'inquisition,' held at Lifford in May 1632, it was found that the said Cucogry was 'a meere Irishman, and not of English or British descent or surname,' and he was accordingly dispossessed, and the lands forfeited to the king. Thus the house on Kilbarron cliff became a ruin; no fire henceforth within its walls, nor sound, save of wind and wave and sea-fowl's cry. Cucogry assisted his cousin in the Annals. Afterwards he removed to Mayo, and died in 1664.

Let us now return to Teige, third cousin of the above-mentioned Lewy (that is, their great-grandfathers were brothers). Teige O'Clery seems to have applied himself from his youth to the favourite pursuits of his family—Irish antiquarianism and history; and he continued in the same course after joining, as a lay-brother, the order of St. Francis, when he took the name of 'Michael.' He established himself at Louvain—in what year I have not discovered—under the following circumstances. The town of Louvain at that time possessed, and still possesses, a university, founded in 1426, by John, fourth Duke of Brabant. It was long of high celebrity; and in the sixteenth century is said to have taught as many as 6,000 students together. It had then, as it has now, a distinguished school of Catholic theology. In the year 1610, a certain Irish Franciscan friar, native of Galway, Flaithri O'Mulconry by name, having made himself conspicuous by a learned defence of the disputed doctrine of

the immaculate conception of the Blessed Virgin (finally decided only the other day by the head of the church), was appointed Catholic Archbishop of Tuam. Times were very bad in Ireland for Catholics. The new archbishop promoted a scheme of establishing an 'Irish college' on the Continent, to serve both as an asylum and a place of education. Louvain was the locality chosen; and in 1616 the first stone of an Irish college, in connection with that university, was laid by the Spanish governor of the Netherlands, and his wife, sister to King Philip III. King Philip paid all the cost of the building. It was placed under the patronage of St. Anthony of Padua.

Hugh MacWard, or Ward, a native of Donegal, and a Franciscan friar, was professor of divinity in the new college, and afterwards became its guardian or rector. He was joined by two other Franciscans, also natives of Donegal—John Colgan, for a time lecturer on theology in the college; and Michael O'Clery, lay-brother and a scribe. These three men set their hearts upon preserving the ancient records of Ireland, and chiefly the ecclesiastical, now in peril of destruction; and on the congenial, though troublesome errand, Brother Michael, a middle-aged man, came over to his native island about the year 1626. During several years he travelled hither and thither, consulting living Irish scholars and antiquaries, and examining a great many ancient manuscripts, from which he made, and transmitted to Louvain, extensive transcriptions. These notes and copies were chiefly, if not altogether, on matters ecclesiastical; but in the course of his researches, O'Clery found a great variety of secular information, which he by no means threw aside. He compiled from ancient authority a catalogue of the kings of Ireland, finished in the Franciscan convent of Athlone, Nov. 4, 1630. Next year, in the convent of Lisgool, near Enniskillen, he compiled a 'Book of Conquests' (*Leabhar-Gabhala*). All his writings are in Irish, of which tongue in

its ancient as well as its later forms he appears to have had a perfect knowledge. Finally, in January 1632, we find him at the Franciscan monastery of Donegal, of which his brother Bernardine was an inmate, beginning his laborious compilation of Irish Annals; and at this work, assisted by several other scribes, he continued four years and a half. Here it may be noted that the Catholics of Ireland had at once adopted the alteration of the calendar made under papal authority in 1582.

The Donegal monastery had never been re-edified after the destructive fire of Michaelmas 1601. Let us go on with our sacristan's account:—

'Brethren, however, live to this day, after the manner of a congregation, in safer places below [*infra*—q. *intra*, within] the destroyed boundaries and limits of the convent; nor has there ever been wanting a guardian and a number of at least twelve brothers. Others, too, were transferred from this to other convents. When peace was afterwards made, and Prince O'Donnell having died in Spain, his brother Roderick obtained dominion over the greater part of the principality, and received from the king of England the title of Earl, which title was much lower than his former one [sc. The O'Donnell], he began to rebuild the convent; but, understanding that the English were plotting against his life, and placing his only hope in flight, he removed to Flanders with Prince O'Neill, and thence to Rome, where they both died . . . ; and thus he left the brethren without a protector, and the work unfinished. Now, however, the English heretics possess all, and permit the old brethren to draw out the remainder of their lives in obscure places, knowing they must soon die, but do not easily permit any new to be added to them; and such is the present state of that convent.'

This was written in 1617, and the condition of the Donegal fraternity was probably much like this in 1632.

The 'Annals' were undertaken by the encouragement of Fearghal (Vergil?) or Farrell O'Gara, an Irishman of ancient descent, who still held some position and property, and who was elected a 'Knight of Parliament' for the county Sligo in 1634. To him belonged the original autograph of the 'Annals.' 'I beseech God,' begins the epistle dedicatory of Michael O'Clery, 'to bestow every happiness that may redound to the welfare of his body and soul, upon Fearghal O'Gadhra.' 'Nothing more glorious,' he goes on, with a redundance of phrase which I must prune, 'than a knowledge of the chieftains and nobles that existed in preceding times.' 'I, Michael O'Clerigh, a poor brother of the order of St. Francis (after having been for ten years transcribing every old material which I found concerning the saints of Ireland, observing obedience to each provincial that was in Ireland successively) have come before you, O noble Farrell O'Gara.' 'I explained to you that I thought I could get the assistance of the chroniclers for whom I had most esteem, for writing a book of annals, . . . and that, should the writing of them be neglected at present, they would not again be found . . . to the end of the world.' 'There were collected by me all the best and most copious books of annals that I could find throughout all Ireland (though it was difficult for me to collect them to one place) to write this book in your name, and to your honour, for it was you that gave the reward of their labour to the chroniclers by whom it was written; and it was the friars of the convent of Donegal that supplied them with food and attendance in like manner.'

Then comes the pedigree of O'Gara, traced upwards through 96 generations; and the dedication ends thus: 'On the 22nd day of January, A.D. 1632, this book was commenced in the convent of Dunna-nGall; and it was finished in the same convent on the 10th day of August 1636, the eleventh year of the reign of King Charles over

Saxa [England], France, Alba, and Eire. Your affectionate friend, Brother Michael O'Clery.' Next follows a certificate from the monks of the convent, confirming O'Clery's statements, and declaring that 'the chroniclers and learned men who were engaged in extracting and transcribing this book from various books, were:

Brother Michael O'Clery;
Ferfessa O'Mulconry;
Cucogry O'Clery;
Cucogry O'Duigenan;
Conary O'Clery;
Maurice O'Mulconry, for one month.

'These are the old books they had'—

The book of Clonmacnois;
The book of Shanat Mac Manus, in Lough Erne;
The book of the Island of Saints, in Lough Ree;
The book of Clan O'Mulconry;
The book of the O'Duigenans;
The book of Lecan Mic Firbisigh;
And three more.

'We have seen all these books with the learned men.' This certificate is signed by 'Fr. Bernardinus Clery, Guardianus Dungalensis,' and three others. Bernardine, brother of Michael, became guardian in the year 1636.

The books enumerated are, except the first two, now unknown, and were probably destroyed, with much else in the troubled times which speedily came on.

The title given by O'Clery to his chronicle is *Annala Rioghachta Eireann*, i.e. Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland. It is now generally known as 'Annals of the Four Masters,' an inappropriate title, first, apparently, given it by Father Colgan in the preface to his *Acta Sanctorum Hiberniæ* (1645), after a mediæval fashion of reckoning 'Four Masters' of the art of medicine, &c.

Colgan, much aided by the materials collected for him by

Michael O'Clery, published at Louvain (Hugh MacWard, his fellow-worker, died in 1635) two great folio volumes. First, in 1645, his *Acta Sanctorum Veteris et Majoris Scotiæ, seu Hiberniæ* (he seems jealous lest any should imagine 'Scotia' to mean the modern Scotland). This gives the Saints whose days fall in January, February, and March. And in 1647 appeared his *Trias Thaumaturga*, the three miracle-workers—being lives of SS. Patrick, Columba, and Bridgid.

Of Michael O'Clery, his chronicle finished, I can only learn further that he printed at Louvain, in 1643, a glossary of old and obscure Irish words; and that he soon afterwards died there, aged 63 or 68 according as we take one or another account of his birth-year. Colgan in the preface to his *Acta Sanct. Hibern.* celebrates the learning and labours of brother Michael O'Clery, 'ante paucos menses mortuus,' and praises the annals, which give a picture of the vicissitudes of Ireland for more than 3,000 years, the exploits, battles, deaths of kings and heroes, and also, what is more gratifying to pious minds ('quod piis mentibus gratius et optatius est') the condition of affairs Catholic and ecclesiastic, during 1,200 years, recording the deaths of saints, bishops, abbots, &c., the building of churches, and their burnings, pillagings and devastations, first by Pagans, afterwards by Heretics. In fact, for minds not especially pious, the Annals have a huge and dismal overplus of ecclesiastical matter. His colleagues (Colgan proceeds) were pious men, three of whom, deserving chief praise, were Ferfessius O'Mulconry, Peregrinus (or Cucogry) O'Clery, and Peregrinus O'Duigenan. These three, with Michael O'Clery, he afterwards terms 'in facultate antiquariâ quatuor peritissimi magistri,' and their work '*Annales Quatuor Magistrorum*,' noting that the four had some assistance from two other scribes, namely, Mauritius O'Mulconry, during one month, and Conarius Clery,

during many. This preface of Colgan's is somewhat confusedly translated into English in Professor O'Curry's lectures:[1] and it is strange enough that with Colgan's words before his eyes, Dr. O'Donovan should state that 'the three O'Clerys, with Ferfeasa O'Mulconry, were the *Quatuor Magistri* of Colgan.'[2]

'What matters it?' you may ask, O Sassenach reader. But this chronicle, let me tell you, is to Irishmen—nay, to all scholars and students of Keltic things, a thrice-famous book. Therefore, grudge not that I do this justice to the wronged shade of Peregrine O'Duigenan, antiquary, whilom of the County of Leitrim. Conary O'Clery helped much in the latter part of the annals, and wrote a fine Irish hand to boot; still, he is *not* one of those whom Colgan styled 'The Four Masters,' and O'Duigenan is. The original manuscript of these annals is in two volumes, the second commencing with A.D. 1172. Several copies were made by the same transcribers. Of the first volume, one copy was in the Duke of Buckingham's library at Stowe, and is printed (with many errors, say the experts) along with a Latin translation in Dr. O'Conor's *Rerum Hib. Scrip. Vet.* This manuscript is now in the possession of Lord Ashburnham, who keeps[3] it safe from the eye of every Keltic scholar. Another copy of the first volume is in the convent of St. Isidore at Rome, and seems to be guarded with equal jealousy. Dr. O'Donovan was therefore obliged to use, for his great edition, Dr. O'Conor's text of the first volume, corrected by means of two manuscripts, 'in all probability copies of the autograph original,' one in Trinity College, Dublin, the other in Royal Irish Academy. The second volume he gives direct from autograph manuscript, bought at a sale in Dublin, by Dr.

[1] *Lecture VII.*, pp. 144-6.

[2] *Introductory Remarks, Annals*, vol. i. p. 21.

[3] *Kept* it, as long as he could.

Petrie, who alone discerned its nature, and by him handed over, at price paid, to the Irish Academy.

Dr. O'Donovan's edition lies before me in seven handsome quarto volumes, adorned outside with a curious and good interlaced pattern of ancient Irish fashion. The first edition is of 1851; the second (same type and matter, on cheaper paper), 1856. The Irish, in its own typography, lies on each left-hand page, the English translation on the right. Below are numerous notes—some on verbal questions, some referring to Irish records elsewhere, many topographical—for O'Donovan, long employed in the Ordnance survey, is strong in this, yet even in this not exempt from human errors, as I have found here and there. Elucidation of another kind—hints to clear up one's general notion of the men and things treated of—he never attempts. A German student would with satisfaction laboriously dig and quarry through the book; an Irishman is often interested by the mention of familiar localities, &c.; but to Ordinary Readers of our time, even including the steady and omnivorous, the total result, it must be owned, is a high degree of *unreadability*; they find the annals for the most part very tedious and unfruitful, a brambly, weedy wilderness of uncouth names and obscure actions. Therein lie entangled, nevertheless, and latent many curious and noticeable things—much matter for examination and study by whoever desires a glimpse of what Ireland was in one or another bygone era, and how it comes to be, to-day, an enigma to itself and the world.

The present writer remembers shaking the hand of John O'Donovan, a bright-eyed, alert little man, with iron-gray hair, some fifty years of age, in the 'Brehon Law Office,' in Trinity College, Dublin, where also sat that day, among huge old books and uncouth MSS., his fellow-worker, Eugene O'Curry, a quiet, large, bald man, showing even in a snatch of casual talk, the deep enthusiasm that pervaded

his mind as to all Irish interests. Both are gone, leaving work done, and work still to be done.

He that rambles in this remote corner of Erin—much of it a rocky, moory, wild and barren region, windswept and lonely, but here and there softened into pleasant valley and hill, overlooked often by mountain peaks and enlivened by a dashing stream or clear lake, often with the sea for western horizon, finds many memorials of the Past, of various epochs, the *cromleach* of mossed flagstones—altar or tomb?—in lonely field; the *cairn* on the mountain, the mounded circles of the *rath* on many a green hill: in Innishowen the ruins of *Aileach*, of the kings of Ulster; at Bel-a-Shanny (Ballyshannon) the island of Parthalon, and the waterfall of the Pagan king Hugh the Red. Of the early Christian times, the round tower of Devenish rises over fair Lough Erne; the birth-place of Saint Columba is by the lake of Gartan, and the glen by the great sea-precipice of Slieve-League bears his name; pilgrims come yearly to the holy wells of Doon, Asaroe, and to the renowned Purgatory of Saint Patrick in lonely Lough Derg. Of later centuries are the carved crosses of Drumcliff, the ruins of the Abbey of Asaroe, and the Monastery of Donegal.

Let me take you to the last mentioned spot. The river Erne runs into the sea near the south-eastern corner of the broad bay of Donegal; the smaller river Eske into the north-eastern corner, making an estuary which is Donegal harbour. At low water it is a muddy expanse, through which the little river winds, hardly visible; but now, see, the tide is up, the sun shines upon a cheerful prospect—green hills and islands, ships at anchor, groves, white cottages; Donegal town, a quarter of a mile away, with its roofless Tudor mansion and sharp church-spire; the softened outlines of the Barnas and Bluestack mountains rising over all. Between the high road and the harbour shore, in the burial-ground full of graves old

and new, this group of gray ruins, greatly shattered and crumbled, are what remains of the Franciscan monastery. A row of curiously small cloister-arches, resting on couplets of rude pillars, an east window, with the merest jags of tracery left at its edges, but still recognisable as of good design, a thick wall hollowed into two narrow passages, perhaps hiding-places,—there is little more to see. Looking down, this flat tombstone we stand beside shows a crosier above its nearly obliterated inscription. Raising my eyes, I see the bright harbour with its green hills, and down this bank between hastened to boat the monks and their sacristan with the precious chalices and robes. Here lay O'Donnell with his pikemen and musketeers besieging the English soldiers. Among these trees half a mile westward, are the ruins of Magherabeg Convent (a subsidiary Franciscan house, I gather) to which some of the garrison fled after the explosion and fire. A quarter-mile eastward, where 'Donegal castle' rises over the little town, stood from most ancient times the rude fortress called *Dun-na-nGal*, 'The Fort of the Foreigners,' and about 1474 The O'Donnell built there his stone castle, henceforward the chief residence of the Princes of Tir Connell. It was at or about the same time that he founded this monastery. But before Red Hugh marched to Kinsale he destroyed, probably by gunpowder, the greater part of his castle, lest it might harbour enemies, hoping to rebuild it in greater glory on his return. The bard was not wanting on this occasion. Malmurry Mac-Ward wrote an address to the ruins—'O solitary fortress, how desolate thou art! O mansion of music, how perished is thy loveliness! The dark earth has risen over the whiteness of thy polished stones; thy stately corner-stones are flung outside the ramparts. For the rich wine-feasts thou hast but the cold rain from the sky—thy doorways are filled up. The music to-day through the shattered windows is of birds and winds, and the voices of the stormy elements. Thou wert once the

happy fortress of the meetings of Clan-Connell—the tributes of Connaught were poured into thee, deserted though thou art this night. From thy lofty turrets we have seen, in spring time, the white-sailed ships coming in. From thy watch-towers we have seen the fleetness of the young horses, the bounding of the hounds, the delight of the chase, O pleasant fortress of unnumbered plains!

'At thy banquet-board we have seen the strong warriors of the Gael, and outside in thy green court after the assembly and the feast. Alas for Dun-na-nGal! it is my grief to see thee deserted of thy nobles, empty of thy mirth this night. . . .

'From Hugh O'Donnell, thy own prince, hath come this blow, thou forsaken fortress over the Easky!—not that he wished thee harm, but lest the black ferocious strangers should dwell within thy fair walls—lest thou shouldest become indeed "The Fort of the Foreigners." But he who hath done this, will again heal thy wounds; with God's will and permission, thy courts shall be rebuilded, and thy beauty shall put out of remembrance this, thy low estate.

'As Hugh Roe, Prince of Connellians, laid thee in ruin, so shall he renew thy greatness; he will be thy physician!'

But Hugh Roe never again looked upon the hills of Donegal. After the battle of Kinsale he was 'seized with great fury, rage, and anxiety of mind,' and could neither sleep nor rest soundly for three days and three nights.[1] He sailed to Spain, and saw King Philip at Zamora, who promised more help. But at Simancas Hugh Roe fell sick and died, being thirty years old, and his body was royally buried in the Franciscan monastery of Valladolid.

The present ruins are mainly Tudor; but whether the mansion was built by Earl Roderick, or by the English settler, Captain Brooke, afterwards Sir Basil Brooke,

[1] 'Donegal Annals.'

Knight, who received the grant in 1610, is a question. It was, most likely, by the latter. A huge, handsomely carved stone chimney-piece remains in a large upper room, the stone floor of which is half fallen into the lower story. The jackdaws fly out cawing from the shattered chimneys, as you emerge from the winding stone stair, and peep through a window on the brawling Eske, over which rises one tall gable, clad with ivy. Follow up the stream a few miles, and you will come to the beautiful mountain-girt Lough Eske, and the new 'Castle' of the present representative of the Brooke family,—and thus to modern times.

Tempora sic fugiunt pariter, pariterque sequantur.

SAINT PATRICK'S DAY.

'PATRICK'S DAY in the Morning' (for in the Island of Saints we leave out the title in affectionate, not contemptuous, familiarity) is heralded in our village by an amateur Band, who, accompanied by a straggling mob, play the tune so called through the streets for a long time after midnight. The din approaches; now from one side, now from the other, blares under the window, withdraws, comes again,—the drum's everlasting cadences vanishing last and returning first upon the auricular horizon, and whether in startling proximity or tantalising remoteness, proves equally fatal to sleep: but at length this, too, is over.

And now it is the Day itself. Men and boys wear bits of what English speakers call 'shamrock' in their hats, and the girls have each 'a cross' on the shoulder; that is, a round of white paper, some three inches broad, with bits of ribbon of various colours stretched across it like the spokes of a wheel. The Catholic Churches are crowded at morning mass; and at the mid-day ceremonial, the chapel-yards are filled with the overflow of worshippers, who catch a faint murmur through window or door, and stand or kneel alternately with due regularity. A little later, the streets have frequent groups of country folk in their best attire, the girls with sleek hair, bright ribbons, and gay shawls, the matrons attired in snowy-bordered caps and cloaks of blue

cloth, and every man and boy garnished with his sprig of shamrock,—in Ireland called 'shamroge,' which is the correct pronunciation of *seamróg*, the Gaelic name of the plant, meaning 'little trefoil.' The townspeople stand at their doors; acquaintances greet each other loudly; and many are the invitations to come to take a 'naggin' or a 'Johnny,' or supposing you are one of the few that still have Father Matthew's medal, you will hardly refuse to quaff a measure of temperance cordial, a liquor on which it is not impossible to get drunk. The 'calamity-water' (an expressive name indeed) is usually tossed off neat, and abominable stuff most of it is, the worst new-grain whisky, exasperated with poisonous chemicals. It is asserted that the sale of large quantities of corrosive sublimate to the retail whisky-dealers of Ireland can be proved by direct evidence. Unlucky in many things is poor Paddy, and not least in his habitual beverage, this fiery, adulterated drink which he uses to drown care, clench a bargain, cement friendship, treat his sweetheart, indiscriminately, in fact, on all occasions of refreshment, indulgence, hospitality, mourning, or merry-making.

The song asserts that Saint Patrick himself

> Taught our Irish lads
> The joys of drinking whisky;

and the foolishest song has at times more effect on human life than the gravest history. One wonders how many people in Ireland to-day are thinking upon Patrick as a real man who walked and spoke here once upon a time. His life, so far as we can see it at a distance of fourteen centuries, is full of interest; and if many points remain doubtful or obscure, the main facts appear well established. We need not pause to weigh the claims of Ireland, Scotland (the country so-called), Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany to the honour of giving him birth. The evidence appears to

favour Scotland; and among half-a-dozen dates we may be content to accept A.D. 387 as the year in which he came into the world, and 465 (Usher and Todd, 493) as that of his death, at the age of 78, and on the day answering to our seventeenth of March, for in the language of martyrologists the day of a saint's nativity is that of his quitting earth and entering into the higher life.

His father was Calphurnius, a deacon, who was the son of Potius, a priest. It is asserted by those who maintain the necessity of clerical celibacy, that they took orders after their children were born. The future saint was baptised with the British name Succoth, signifying (as some say) Valiant-in-War. He was educated with care and tenderness, and his sweet, gentle character made him a general favourite. At the age of sixteen, having accompanied his parents, brother, and five sisters to Armoric Gaul (since called Lower Brittany), to visit the relatives of his mother, Conchessa, he was in that country made prisoner by a piratical expedition commanded by the banished sons of a British Prince, and, with many fellow prisoners, carried to the north of Ireland, and there sold into slavery. According to other accounts, he was snatched direct from his home in a raid of the Irish (then called Scots) into Britain, at that time left undefended by the departure of the Romans. Thus the youth became slave to Milcho, the petty prince of a district now included in the County Antrim, and Milcho's three brothers,—receiving the name of Ceathertigh, because he served four masters; but Milcho, noting his diligence and probity, bought the others' shares and made him wholly his own, sending him to tend cattle on the mountain of Slieve-Mis. In the *Confessio Sancti Patricii*, a short piece purporting to be written by himself shortly before his death, and believed to be genuine, many most interesting passages occur, and amongst them the following account of this period of his life, which, with the subsequent extracts, we

have translated from the first printed edition of the writings of St. Patrick, published in 1656 from several ancient manuscripts, by the excellent historian, Sir James Ware.

'After I had come to Ireland, I tended cattle continually, and prayed many times in the day, and more and more increased within me the love of God and the fear of Him, and my faith waxed strong; so that, in one day, I would offer up a hundred prayers, and so also in the night time. And I would even remain in the woods and on the mountain, and before the light rouse myself to prayer,—in snow, in frost, in rain, and I took no hurt, nor had I any slothfulness, because (as I now see) the Spirit was then fervent within me.'

In the seventh year of his slavery, he heard one night, in a dream, a voice telling him that he was soon to be restored to his native country; and, again, that a ship was prepared for him. 'Whereafter,' says he, 'I turned me to flight, and left the man with whom I had lived for six years, and in the strength of God, who would guide my steps aright, went, fearing nothing, until I had found that ship.' He reached a haven, and found there a ship, unmoored and just ready to sail, but the master refused to take him on board because he had no money. So the young man departed to seek some place where he might obtain rest and food. As he went he began to pray, and before his prayer was done, he heard one of the sailors calling after him, 'We will receive thee out of good faith; make friendship with us.' Very noticeable in history, the innate power of great men to affect and control those whom they meet.

After many adventures he reached his home in Britain, and embraced his parents, who entreated him, after the tribulations he had endured, never to leave them. But, after some time had passed, he saw one night, in a vision, a man, as if coming from Ireland, his name Victoricius, who carried a great number of letters, and gave him one, in the

beginning whereof he read—The Voice of the Irish People. 'And whilst I was reading the letter,' says the saint, 'methought I heard the voice of those who dwelt beside the forest of Foclute which is nigh the western sea, and they exclaimed, "We beseech thee, holy youth, to come and walk amongst us!" And I was greatly touched in heart and could read no further, and so I awoke, and thanked God that after so long a time He had approached them according to their cry.' 'And another night (whether within me or beside me, I know not, God knoweth), I heard most learned words, which I could not understand, only this, at the end: "He that gave His life for thee;" and then I awoke, rejoicing.'

After these visions, though dissuaded by parents and friends, he gave himself up to the Church, and to study; beginning under his mother's uncle, Saint Martin, Bishop of Tours. On being priested he received the new name of Magonius, and studied in various places on the continent. From Italy he is said to have visited the islands of the Tyrrhenian sea, and to have received from the hermit Justus, who dwelt in one of them, the famous 'Staff of Jesus.'

In the year 431 Pope Celestine sent Bishop Palladius on a mission to preach to the Irish, amongst whom Christianity had already taken some hold, but Heathenism was still so dominant that Palladius, after less than a year's sojourn, found himself forced to fly to North Britain, where he died soon after. Then Pope Celestine, considering the eminent piety, learning, and other gifts of Magonius, resolved to send him upon the Irish mission, and therefore consecrated him bishop; at the same time re-baptising him with the honourable name of Patricius, which carried its dignity from the ancient times of Rome (meaning Pater Civium, Father of the People), and was afterwards given to Kings of France. In course of time it acquired a very different sort of flavour, especially in the diminutives Pat and Paddy.

In the year 432 Bishop Patricius, then forty-five years old, landed on the coast of Wicklow; but, being driven back to the ship by the Pagan population he sailed northward to a bay in what is now called the County Down. Here the lord of the district hastened to attack the strangers as pirates, but was arrested by the venerable looks of the Bishop, listened to his preaching, and was baptised with all his family. There Patricius immediately established his first church, which was called, simply, *Sabhall Phadraig*, 'Patrick's Barn,' wherefrom the parish of Saul, in Down, derives its name. This Barn, made into a Church, happened to stand lengthways north and south, not orthodoxly east and west; but Patrick we imagine was not one to cavil on such a point. It is said that in imitation of this first Christian Church in Ireland some others were built north and south and also named *Sabhall*.

When Patricius now re-visited the scene of his youthful captivity, a strange event occurred. Two daughters of his old master, Milcho, after hearing him preach, were baptised and became nuns. But Milcho, strongly attached to the ancient traditions, and perceiving that his former slave was in authority as their successful antagonist, made a great fire of his house and goods, and consumed himself therein. Tidings whereof coming to the Bishop caused him to stand for three hours silent, in tears.

Having learned that the time was approaching when King Leoghaire (pronounced 'Layarie') would hold on Tara Hill a great triennial convention of tributary princes, nobles, and Druid priests, Bishop Patricius resolved to come and speak before them at all hazards, knowing that he must begin with the great people of the country. Therefore, on Easter Eve, 433, the next day being that appointed for the opening of the Convention, he raised his tent on the north bank of the river Boyne, and kindled a fire before it. Now, it was a penal act for anyone to light a fire in the province

at the time of the Convention of Tara, until the King's bonfire had first indicated the opening of the solemnities; and when Patrick's fire shone through the vernal night, and was seen afar by the court and multitude encamped on Tara Hill, the utmost astonishment prevailed among them, and the Druids, it is added, told the King that this fire must be speedily extinguished, or else the man who had kindled it and his successors should rule Ireland for ever. The King instantly sent messengers to drag the culprit to his presence, but when Patrick appeared within the circle of the court, so noble and impressive was his aspect, that Erc, son of Dego, instantly rose and offered him his seat. The wonderful Stranger was permitted to preach, and Erc, and Dubtach the poet laureate, were his first converts, along with Fiech, a young poet under the instruction of Dubtach, and who is judged to be the author of a certain poem extant in praise of the saint. The Queen and others followed their example, and at last the King himself. It is on this occasion that Patrick is said to have successfully used the trefoil (*seamrog*), growing at his feet, as an illustration of the doctrine of the Trinity: whence this herb came to be assigned to the patron saint of Ireland, and raised into a national emblem. Soon after, he preached at the Hill of Usneagh, a famous seat of Druidism.

In his peregrinations, he founded several churches and made many converts; and having been thirteen years in Ireland, established himself in Armagh, and on that hill founded a city and cathedral, with monasteries, schools, and other religious edifices. In that place, chosen fourteen hundred years ago, the cathedral, several times re-edificated, stands firm at this day, and the Archbishop of Armagh retains the dignity then established, of Primate and Metropolitan of All Ireland; while, by a curious etiquette, the Archbishop of Dublin is styled Primate of Ireland, without the All. As is well known, there are unfortunately (an

adjective that both parties will accept) two co-existent Archbishops of Armagh and two of Dublin. From a rival hill the new Catholic Cathedral of Armagh looks reproachfully across at the old site.

About two years after the foundation of Armagh, Patricius, by this time probably raised to the rank of archbishop, went over to England for coadjutors, and took the opportunity to preach against the prevailing Pelagian and Arian heresies, reclaiming many. On his voyage back to Ireland he visited the Isle of Man, where, we are informed, he found the people much addicted to magic, an old accusation against them, for they were believed to involve their island at will in supernatural mists, so that no ship could find it. Here he preached with his usual success, and left behind him Germain, one of his disciples, as first Bishop of Man. Having returned to Armagh, he held a synod, the eighth canon of which forbids a clerk to enter the lists with a heathen for trial by combat (a mode of decision not known to have existed in England till long after this time, and commonly spoken of as introduced by the Normans), and the fourteenth canon lays penance on whosoever should seek to divine the future by soothsaying or inspection of the entrails of beasts. After this he went to Bally-ath-cliath ('Town of the Ford of Hurdles'—afterwards called Dublin, 'the Black Stream'), the people flocking out to him, and there baptised the King and many others in a well, thereafter called Patrick's well; near to which a church was built, on the site now occupied by St. Patrick's Cathedral. Archbishop Usher says he saw the well, and that in 1639 it was shut up in a private house.

In a subsequent synod, we learn four other ecclesiastical dignitaries were unwilling to accept the authority of Archbishop Patricius; especially as he was a foreigner; but they at last submitted. He settled the Church of Ireland solidly, and appointed bishops and priests everywhere, well earning

his title of Apostle of Ireland. He travelled continually, a winged labourer, as Chrysostom terms St. Paul, until too old, when he spent his last years in retirement and contemplation, tho' still holding synods and councils, and ruling the affairs of the Church. The latest part of his life was passed alternately in Armagh, and in the Abbey of Sabhall; and in the latter place, where he had adventurously founded the first of several hundred churches, he expired, full of good works and honours, on the 17th of March, 465, aged seventy-eight. This is in accordance with Lanigan's chronology, which contradicts Usher, Ware, and others, who place the event in 493, in the 120th year of his age. His obsequies lasted through twelve successive days and nights, made bright as day with torches and tapers, and were attended by multitudes of the clergy from all parts of Ireland. He was buried at Down, thence called Down-Patrick, and the old rhyme says:—

> In Down three saints one grave do fill:
> Patrick, Bridget, Columbkill.

In 1186, seventeen years after the English invasion, the remains of these three were solemnly translated into the Cathedral of Downpatrick, a cardinal legate being specially sent by Pope Urban III. to attend the ceremony; but the rolling centuries changed men's minds, and in the reign of Henry VIII., A.D. 1538, Lord Deputy Leonard de Grey, invading Ulster, desecrated the cathedral, and defaced the statues of the three saints; and in the same year the famous staff or crozier, so long an object of veneration, was publicly burned along with many other relics, in High Street, Dublin, by order of Archbishop Browne. With this implement is said to have been accomplished the saint's traditionary feat of banishing noxious animals from his beloved Island.

But a more credible, and truly beautiful story, is connected with the same staff, namely, that when Patrick was baptising Aongus, King of Munster, at Cashel, he accident-

ally rested the spike of his iron-shod crosier upon the King's foot, and, leaning forward, pressed it deeply in, inflicting a most painful wound. But Aongus, believing this to be part of the ceremony, made no sign of suffering, and with calm and reverential demeanour, allowed the unconscious prelate to proceed with a baptism which was at the same time a petty martyrdom.

Saint Patrick is said to have been a man of small stature, but of great energy and activity of mind and body, and we have proofs that his very aspect must have inspired regard and submission. He was truly humble, wore coarse garments, and worked cheerfully and stoutly with his own hands. He was 'most sweet and affable in conversation, by which he accommodated himself to all sorts and conditions of people, and did so gain their affections, that if it could be done, they would have plucked out their eyes and given them to him.' Countless gifts were pressed upon him, which he always refused, except it were to relieve the poor, or build religious houses. He slept on the bare ground, a stone his pillow, till fifty-five years old.

The beginning of his *Confessio* (to which, perhaps, the English word Profession comes nearest in sense) is curious: 'Ego Patricius, peccator, rusticissimus et minimus omnium fidelium, et contemptibillissimus apud plurimos, patrem habui Calpornium diaconem,' &c. It ends thus: 'Haec est Confessio mea, antequam moriar.'

The self-contempt of this exordium was a matter of form; but elsewhere he says, no doubt with full meaning, 'I lived in death and faithlessness, until I was much chastised, and in truth, I was humbled by hunger and nakedness. But it was well for me, for in this God wrought my amendment, and shaped me to be at this day what was once far enough from me—that I should care or strive for the good of others, who then regarded not even my own good.'

These are simple and pious words of the good bishop, and

we may well believe him not unworthy of his place in the calendar of saintly men. Self-denying, humble, fearless, diligent, religious, in a wild and difficult field of action; his life was noble, and his memory is worthy of reverence. Yet certain of the rites with which his day is kept and honoured in Ireland have little reverence in them. St. Patrick's Chapel of Ease, by excise consecration, so crowded to-day, is a small, dingy, strong-smelling place, where, before the wooden altar, over-huddled with foul glasses and battered pewters, in a plash of whisky, the devotees hiccup and yell the venerable name of their country's apostle as an incentive to debauchery and madness.

The tradesman or artisan who six months ago registered a vow against drinking, formally excepted the season of the Saint, and, after an interval of hopeful quiet, his family are now again to endure the horrors and miseries inevitably brought on by a drunken father, son, or husband, who, for his part, shall waken to find the path of reformation vanished from under his foot, and harder to regain than ever. The youth, the tender girl, are half-persuaded, half-forced into their first visit to a tavern, in honour of the day. The experienced toper deliberately, and freed from the last lingering touch of shame (sure it's Patrick's Day), wallows into the deepest mire of helpless sottishness. Quarrels rise; oaths and foul words, fists and cudgels are in motion; shrieking wives, weeping sisters and daughters, vainly interfering. Then come the efficient Green-coated Men, truncheons in hand, who, bursting into the thickest of the row, haul off sundry torn, bloody, and foaming creatures, scarcely recognisable as human, to the lock-up. Little boys, some of them not half-a-dozen years old, are made drunk to-day in honour of Saint Patrick, loathing the draught that scorches their young throat; but, before long, they also will anxiously crave the burning liquor, and beg or steal the means of getting it, and under its influence, perhaps advance

to acts that shall at length make them worth Society's attention. Alas! the good Patricius! practically invoked as Saint of Sots, Patron of Publicans, Defender of National Drunkenness! What can we say, but that mankind sometimes puts its saints to very bad uses.

SAINT PATRICK'S PURGATORY.[1]

[1850.]

'TIE a handkerchief round your head, and you'll pass everywhere without question.'

I declining, however, to adopt this counterfeit presentment of a Pilgrim, my companion resumed, 'You will at least be careful not to show any disrespect, nor pry too much into what you may see going on around you.'

I assured him it was far from me to insult my neighbours in their conscientious observances, and, furthermore, promised to restrain my curiosity within moderate bounds; whereupon we made arrangements to visit together that celebrated place of Roman Catholic pilgrimage existing on an island, Lough Derg, County Donegal, Ireland; to which sometimes as many as fifteen thousand people are said to repair for penance in a season, extending from the first of June to the fifteenth of August in each year.

After a drive of about two hours, chiefly along the shore of Lough Erne, wide sweeps of still water, broken by woody promontories, with cliffs wearing their velvety summer green, and streaked with changeable sunlights in the background, opening and closing upon us successively as we pursued the

[1] Perhaps the only account in existence of this famous place in station-time, by a non-pilgrim eye-witness, with the course of things proceeding uninterrupted.

winding road, we turned northwards, and, passing through the village of Pettigo, entered upon a bleaker region, where the road became gradually worse, the huts poorer and less frequent, the patches of oats more scraggy and unfenced, and the land boggier and browner; until at last the view on every side presented nothing but dark stony hills, marsh at their feet and rough heather on their sides, among which lay here and there a very few miserable cottages, scarcely distinguishable from the weather-beaten rocks and crooked clumps of turf scattered about these cheerless uplands.

Leaving our jaunting-car at a hovel by the road-side, we proceeded on foot towards the Holy Lake, which was about a mile distant.

We had already passed many pilgrims going to and returning from it, and now soon fell into company and conversation with three women, each barefoot and carrying the usual staff in her hand and small bundle on her shoulders. They had walked about sixty miles, performing on their way part of the required penance, as is permitted in certain cases. Those who do thus are said to 'bring their fast in with them.' These pilgrims, however, had made but a short journey in comparison with others; some of whom reached the Lough from the remotest southern corners of Ireland, others from various parts of England and Scotland, and some even from America. It was by no means an unusual thing, I was assured, that a person should cross the broad Atlantic for the single purpose of 'making the stations' here. In most of such instances, and indeed in many of the others, the pilgrimage is undertaken in discharge of vows made during sickness. Of the remainder, the majority are voluntary penitents; the number of those on whom the penance is enjoined by their priests being very small.

The Lough soon unfolded itself to our sight; an irregular sheet of water about two miles across, surrounded by a

waving circle of wild, brown hills. Several green islands were strewn on its surface; but a small fleet of whitewashed houses, jumbled together 'stem and stern,' which appeared to float on the water about half a mile from the shore where we stood, soon took our attention. These edifices are, in reality, built upon the Station Island, almost hiding it from view (its dimensions being probably no more than one hundred yards by forty), and comprise two Chapels, the Prior's house and five lodging-houses. At the end of the pilgrim season the Island is altogether deserted.

On the small scrap of ground unbuilt upon near the centre of the Island rose a solitary tree; and round this and across by the wall of one of the houses, and disappearing behind its gable, we could see a constant succession of figures moving in Indian file.

After satisfying our first curiosity with this prospect, and learning that it might be some time before the appearance of a boat to ferry us across, we joined (with some consciousness of an un-pilgrim-like exterior) a party of pilgrims who were lolling on the grass beside a boat-quay of rude stones, and not far from a building resembling a coach-house, inscribed 'Pilgrim Lodge,' which had a third of its length inside cut off by a wooden partition, and a slit in this with 'Tickets' written above. Not without qualms in concealing my character of a heretic, though determined not to assume that of a true believer, I reclined among the way-worn and anxious company.

Two wrinkled old women, who had made the pilgrimage many times before, conversed earnestly about the picture of the Virgin at Rimini, said to have lately become endowed with motion; repeatedly ejaculating their praises and thanks in reference to the miracle; though as to whether its direct object was the cursing of Protestants or the blessing of Catholics, they were unable to form a conclusion. A stout, middle-aged woman, with a Louth brogue, who sighed

frequently, confessed that she felt 'greatly through-other, surely,' at the thought of what might be before her on the Island, it being her first visit; upon which she received encouragement from the rest, and information as to how she ought to proceed. An *indulgence* is promised to those who guide others; and from this, added to the natural disposition of the people, it results that information is most readily given to the new-comers by those who have been already initiated.

But now the attention of the old women who conversed about the Picture was riveted by the startling statement of a man at my side, that he believed the End of the World to be at hand. Being anxiously requested to give his reasons for holding this opinion, he expounded—and really it was hard to avoid being impressed by the simple eloquence and the gravity of conviction with which he spoke—the prophecies of plagues to fall on the beasts, and on the fishes of the sea, and on the fruits of the earth, and on mankind, as now in course of fulfilment; to which the women responded by murmuring short prayers, and uplifting their hands and eyes. Then some one reminded the rest how the Ferry-Boat has been twice lost with its cargo of pilgrims, and how it is *to be* lost the third time; and next, the question arose, whether those so drowned are entitled to any special 'benefit' in the future state from the nature of their death; upon which opinions seemed to differ. A considerable time wore on in talk of this kind, mingled with some interchanges of confidence on more personal affairs, in which I remarked, as I often have amongst the Irish peasantry, a high degree of delicacy of manner, both in asking and answering questions.

I may mention, that, hearing one person alluded to as 'a Stationer from Strabane,' I at first imagined that he was one who, when at home, sold paper, &c., till it suddenly flashed upon me that 'Stationer' was the technical name for a Pilgrim.

An old bugle sounded from Pilgrim Lodge not having succeeded in calling to us the attention of those on the Island, the conversation, at least in the knot of Stationers with which I consorted, gradually dropped, and I was left to muse in silence over the many strange facts and traditions connected with the lake, whose clear water rippled over little pebbles up to the grass on which we lay, while its hills were now cheered with sunshine amid the breadths of shadow thrown on them by a circle of great white clouds ranged at their backs. Fionn-lough, the Fair Lake, was its name, say the old legends, until baptised Lough Derg, the Red Lake, in the blood of a monster who inhabited it, slain by Saint Patrick. Whether the island 'Purgatory' was established in the four hundreds by the saint himself, or in the eights, or the elevens, its origin runs back far enough into the night of time to be invested with all the mystery of those strange indefinite years of the past; and it was curious to picture to oneself the arrival on the shore of that wild remote little lake, five hundred years ago, of Malatesta, Knight of Hungary, and Nicholas de Beccario of Ferrara, with a safe conduct to St. Patrick's Purgatory from King Edward the Third; or, forty years later, of Raymond, Viscount de Perilleux, Knight of Rhodes, with a train of twenty men and thirty horses, bearing a like protection from King Richard the Second; these names standing prominent out of many successions and generations of pilgrims. Sliding in fancy down to later times, the tender story about Carolan,[1] the famous blind harper and composer, rises in one's memory. Carolan's stations completed, the boat in which he sits has reached this quay on the mainland, where a crowd of new pilgrims wait its arrival, as we are now waiting. All are eager to assist the blind old man in landing; a woman's hand touches his; and Carolan, suddenly pausing, exclaims

[1] Carolan, about 1670—1737.

in a tone of surprise mingled with deep feeling, 'That is the hand of Bridget Cruise!' He was not wrong, though he had been a stranger to its touch for many a long year. It was the hand of his first love, who had inspired his finest songs when his heart was warm and his genius in its prime.

By this time a concourse of between thirty and forty pilgrims have arrived at the shore; some of them, to my comfort, decently dressed. All the women, rich and poor, are barefoot, but not all the men; for it is not absolutely necessary to take off the shoes until the duties of the penance be commenced. At last the boat, a large clumsy one, with an awning over the stern-sheets, quits the Island and slowly nears the quay; the delay having been caused by its absence on a trip to the Saint's Island, distant about a quarter of a mile from Station Island. Saint's Island was the original site of the Purgatory, but was found to be too accessible from the shore. It contains the ruins of an abbey, and seems fertile of hay. The pilgrims visit it occasionally. When the Purgatory was transferred to its present site I have been unable to find out, but it was no modern transaction. The boat comes alongside; and the passengers, chiefly women, disembark and exchange greetings and blessings with those who are about to take their places. The latter obtain tickets, price sixpence-halfpenny, from the Lessee of the island, a short stout jovial man, in a glazed hat, who attends on every trip, and has a good-humoured word for everybody; the boat gets gradually filled with passengers; the rowers place themselves two or three to each of the heavy oars; the rope is cast off, and we crawl away from the shore, impelled with short splashing strokes, and steered by the Lessee himself, seated beneath the awning among the 'dacent' minority of the company, who pay a shilling each for this distinguished position on board.

At the Island quay many of both sexes are waiting to receive the new arrivals. We disembark as quickly as may

be, and pass up at once along a lane formed by little houses from the water's edge, which opens into a small, irregular space of craggy ground, with a chapel (the principal one) at its extremity; and this space is alive with people pursuing one another barefoot along a course, marked out by rough stones, which leads them in regular succession round a series of little circles, called Saints' Beds. Each is absorbed by his or her own set of beads; though not so much so as to hinder here and there some peripatetic of delicate feet from making an effort to pick and choose among the sharp-cornered stones which beset the journey; while those who have gone shoeless all their lives, have clearly the advantage, and step along carelessly over rough and smooth; nor is more or less suffering in this respect, said to make any difference in the merit of the station; though some, I believe, secretly think otherwise. What adds to the peculiarity of the scene is, that the head-dresses of the men consist of tightly-tied handkerchiefs of various colours, with a sprinkling of woollen night-caps.

The circuit is performed in the following manner:—Starting from the broken stem, about four feet high, of an ancient stone cross, carved with a spiral embellishment, each Stationer goes seven times round the chapel, repeating a *decade* each time; after the seventh, he stands with his back against a cross cut into one of the stones of the chapel, and stretching out his arms, declares his renunciation of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil. His next movement is to the furthest *Bed*, consisting of a circle of perhaps nine feet in diameter almost surrounded by an uneven gray wall about three feet high, an opening in which gives access to the interior, where stands a time and lip-worn cross of stone. He goes round outside the wall three times, saying three *Paters* and *Aves;* kneels and says three more; rises and walks round inside the wall three times, saying three *Paters* and *Aves*, kneels and says three more, and then kisses the

central cross. After this he passes to the next *Bed*, where the same formula is observed; thence to another; and thence to a fourth; after which comes the 'Big Bed,' resembling two of the others placed side by side, over which spread the leaves of a dwarf sycamore, almost the only bit of vegetation on the island. This bed must be encircled nine times without, and six times within. The next stage is to the water's edge on the eastern shore, where ten *Paters* and *Aves* are repeated standing, and as many kneeling. Wading into the lake, customary not long ago, has been forbidden, as well as carrying stones away as memorials. In fact, the island, being small, and composed chiefly of stones, might by degrees be completely carried off by the pilgrims. From the shore the Stationer moves to a rock on a rising ground, and there repeats two more *Paters* and *Aves* standing, and two kneeling; after which, returning to the twisted cross whence he first set out, he kisses it, and repairs to the western shore to wash his feet; so finishing one *Station*, during which one full Rosary has been repeated. A Stationer who is experienced in his duties, makes his tongue and feet move so harmoniously together that each prayer comes in at precisely the proper part of the journey, without either hurry or delay. A Station ended, the pilgrim is at liberty for a time; which some spend in meditation or grave discourse, others in chat, smoking, and idleness.

After looking as closely as we might, without seeming too curious, at the never-ending, still-beginning procession round the Chapel and the Beds, we entered one of the lodging-houses, where we were comfortably served with tea and bread and butter. We might have had meat too, for the asking; all refreshments being lawful before the commencement or after the termination of one's penance, except intoxicating drinks; the tasting of which within three miles of the Lake is strictly prohibited.

While enjoying our cup of tea (though the beverage has, I

fancy, a smack of the peculiar water which forms its diluent,) we may try to get a definite notion of a pilgrim's routine from first to last. It is, we find, usually as follows:—Say that he enters the Island on Monday evening; he secures a lodging consistent with his means,—the lodging houses ranging from a snug slated house to a hovel, and the number expected to sleep in one bed, bearing an inverse proportion to the cost,—takes care to eat a hearty meal, and then repairs to evening prayers at the Chapel, where he hears the nightly warning against in-orthodox practices while on the Island; amongst which are included the use of intoxicating drinks, alms-givings, and 'exultations,' that is to say, expressions of religious praise or joy, as unfit for a time of penance. After a night, probably, of sound repose, in spite of all inconveniences, he is roused at four on Tuesday morning by the bell which summons him to join the multitude about to flock to the Prior's morning mass; that over, he is likely to set himself to make his first station round the Chapel and the Beds. Three of these stations must be accomplished during the day, but the time when is left to his choice: some perform all the three without interruption.

On Tuesday evening, having eaten nothing since the preceding evening, he is allowed to refresh himself with some bread and wine, and then goes into 'Prison.' It is necessary for the true appreciation of the nature of his fare to understand that the *wine* is the boggy-flavoured water of the lake, drunk hot. The pilgrims speak loudly of its wholesome qualities, as well as of its rich and nutritious flavour; but on the second point, at least, my opinion is distinctly opposed to theirs. They certainly, however, give the best proof of their sincerity by drinking it in large quantities, and sometimes almost scalding out of the kettle. About seven o'clock, then, our Stationer goes into 'Prison,' that is, into the Chapel, as substitute for the now obliterated purgatorial Cave; to stay without food or sleep until the

same hour on the following evening. He is not, however, obliged absolutely to remain within the doors of the Chapel during the whole of the time, but has liberty to pass in and out, under certain restrictions.

In the Chapel, the men are gathered on one side, the women on the other,—some of them on a bench that runs round the wall, some on the altar-steps, but most on the ground, seated or kneeling. When the shades of evening have deepened, a few candles are lighted here and there, throwing faint glimmerings over the confused groups,—the women in blue cloaks or red shawls, drawn over the heads of many of the wearers; some conversing in whispers, some groaning and rocking themselves; some in corners telling their beads with ceaseless perseverance; the men, with coloured handkerchiefs or nightcaps on their heads, and all barefoot (as are the women, too, though less obviously), occupied in a somewhat similar manner; varied, occasionally, by the singing of a hymn, to which perhaps a pilgrim plays a tremulous accompaniment on the flute.

About midnight, some one well acquainted with the ritual, and who not unproudly assumes the office of temporary leader, commences the Rosary aloud, and is followed by all present; the responses being audibly repeated by them in the proper places. They are now performing one Station of the prison-day, with the same prayers as are used on the other days in performing the Stations out of doors; and to mark their progress the more plainly, the leader calls out at intervals from his place on the altar-steps, 'Now the Bed on the top of the hill;' 'Now the Big Bed;' 'Now the Stone;' and so on, assigning the proper prayers to each stage of the imaginary circumambulation.

Three Stations have thus to be gone through occupying, perhaps, from four to five hours; at the end of which time the candles have burnt and guttered away, and the new daylight looks in through the Chapel windows on a hot,

sleepy, and most uncomfortable crowd; some of whom begin to stretch their cramped limbs and seek the refreshment of open air even at the risk of an increased appetite, under the circumstances a most undesirable acquirement; for the consumption of as much as a crumb of bread would cause them to 'lose the benefit of their Station,'—a possibility which is always hanging in terror before the mind's eye of the pilgrim. With bumpers of wine, however, they are permitted to regale themselves unrestrictedly.

In the course of this day the Prisoner is examined by a priest on the leading points of his creed, and if his answers be satisfactory, he is inducted into the Confessional by means of a ticket, for which the Prior receives tenpence, and which the holder may present to any of the four priests on the island. This sum, and that paid at the ferry, are the only charges incurred by the pilgrim, in addition to those for his board and lodging.

On Wednesday evening (having gone into prison on Tuesday evening) he is present at evening prayers, though whether in a state of very vigilant attention may be doubted; after which he is released; and returning to his lodging-house, refreshes his exhausted frame with the stated allowance of bread, oaten or white, and the usual unlimited flow of wine. In a great many cases, however, tea is permitted. His next step, it can scarcely be doubted, is to bed; where he sleeps soundly till roused at four on Thursday morning to renew his acquaintance with the less luxurious Beds outside. The rain, perhaps, is battering fiercely at his window. No help—he must brave it; and as he casts a shuddering look out into the dim, miserable morning, he sees a string of drenched figures already crouching along the prescribed course, tracing their 'rough road returning in a round,' who have probably been so engaged during the greater part of the night; for pilgrims commence their

penances when they choose, and all the various stages are going on in the Island simultaneously.

This third day, Thursday, the Stationer 'receives' (the Communion), makes three Stations, and attends evening Prayers; immediately after which his penance is at an end. He may be supposed to eat a hearty meal (the first since Monday), and either quits the Island that evening, or remains until the following morning.

There are some, however, who accomplish six days' penance, and a few nine days'; when every ceremony I have described is performed—in the first case twice, in the second thrice. I was told of a woman who attends for nine days regularly every season. In most instances, it is said, there is a perceptible improvement, on their return home, in the conduct of those who have made a pilgrimage; but it is admitted at the same time that the effect with the great majority is transient, and its term of duration very uncertain.

Whilst we were at tea in the lodging-house, Pilgrims were constantly swarming in and out, like bees in a hive; one asking another if he were 'in Prison,' or 'going out' (*i.e.*, of the Island); or what Station he was in; or mentioning that he had just made his third in fifty-one minutes (implying, by the way, the possession of a watch); in all the motley crowd, however—there and elsewhere—every one appeared to me to behave with great seemliness and consistency.

About six o'clock in the evening, we went to the Chapel, and heard the Prior preach. His sermon was an excessively strange one to unaccustomed ears; for he addressed his audience in the most familiar conversational tone, and even translated the language of Scripture into the humblest modern vernacular. Yet doubtless this is the right way to preach to the understandings and hearts of the uneducated, and the Prior spoke like a man who took

an interest in what he was talking about; while his language, though unadorned, was always correct and forcible; and his illustrations—in the course of which he introduced Tenant Right, Napoleon crossing the Alps, the Marquis of Anglesea, and the Pork Trade—were very much to the purpose. The congregation, on the whole, was earnestly attentive; but there were one or two fidgetty persons who encountered strongly-worded reproofs, in parenthesis, from the preacher. ('Yon girl in the blue cloak, sit quiet, I tell ye!'—'Don't let him go 'sleep'"—and so forth.) One passage in particular seemed to come home to the audience. Describing the glories and pleasures of the New Heavens and New Earth, the Preacher repeated with emphasis the words, 'And there shall be no sea' (*say* he called it), adding, 'And when there's no say, there will be *land enough for every man*.' Few were absent from the Chapel, and from its appearance we computed the number of pilgrims on the Island at the time of our visit to be about seven hundred.

Leaving the Chapel, we repaired to the quay, and embarked in a small boat, anticipating the large one, which speedily restored us to the mainland. A new group of Stationers were here awaiting transportation, and I confess I felt somewhat ashamed to receive various blessings from these as a faithful son of the Holy Catholic Church.

Dining at Pettigo, we did not pursue our homeward journey till an hour when all Ireland lay wrapped in the clouds of the night, without, as far as we could see, moon or star; and as we approached those thick woods through which our road for some distance led, where the trees stood up black before us against the dark sky, it seemed as though we were plunging into a heavier night within the night. Emerging to opener country and clearer heaven, we dashed across a long bridge, saw friendly lights,

and found ourselves as by magic in our own familiar room. 'Twas but a matter of twenty miles or less, yet we seemed to have driven home out of the Middle Ages.

IRISH BALLAD SINGERS AND STREET BALLADS.

[1851.]

THIS is Fair-day in our Irish market-town. On every road, pour in flocks of sheep, droves of cattle (many of them of the old country breed, small and rough), and pigs; the latter for the most part coming singly, with hay-rope to jerking hind-leg. At every convenient brook or hedge side, country girls don the shoes and stockings they have been carrying so far in a bundle—partly for economy's sake, partly because they can walk with more ease barefoot; mainly, in order that they may enter the fair with undimmed lustre of black, and spotless white or blue. At an outskirt of the town spreads the 'Fair-Green,' bordered with hovels; its expanse of mire thickly trodden with hoof and brogue ('brogue' here meaning a thick clumsy shoe); men shouting, swearing, bargaining, where the moistened penny smites and re-smites the rugged palm; beasts lowing, bleating, bellowing, braying, neighing, and squeaking; horses with ribbon on neck dashing recklessly to and fro; multitudinous horns threatening, parried and punished by innumerable sticks. Who keep all those asses? Are they never curried? In good sooth they *are* ill-used. There are few whisky-tents, but this is because people prefer to drink in the publichouses not far away.

Down the street, it is all a moving crush of carts, beasts, potatoes, corn sacks, and human beings. There are men in blue coats, flat cloth caps, old brown hats; matrons, in blue cloaks, and a few of the old-fashioned red cloth, red shawls, white caps, white kerchiefs on head, red kerchiefs; maidens, with hair of brown or sable Spanish gloss, or, more ambitious, in bonnets with fluttering ribbons and flowered shawls. Yet these, too, found their last mirror, perhaps at Pie's Pool, or the Stepping Stones.

At all corners and points of vantage, apples are offered energetically to the public; at a few, cakes and 'sweet-rock.' Elevated on carts without horses, the auctioneers of old clothes, and the Cheap Johns of new apparel, make their appeals to the crowd, and their apparently ferocious verbal attacks upon each other. Auctioneer, who is licensed and sells second-hand garments in regular mode to the highest bidder, alludes, somewhat haughtily, to the flimsiness of slop goods: Cheap John, a stentorian and brazen outlaw, declares that none of *his* customers can say, 'Lord be marciful to the man that wore this last!—I wonder what he died of!' and kindling with the sympathy of his audience, shoots forth volleys of humour, old and new, making advantage of every passing occurrence. Then, of a sudden, he slides into business again—'I'll not have even one-and-eight, one-and-seven—(Don't stop me, ma'am)—one-and-six, seventeen, sixteen, fifteen!'—and at last sells the new fancy vest, which he has tried on himself ever so often, at ninepence; or, perhaps, cannot sell it after all, and, flinging it by, once more unfolds the three yards and a half and a bit of suspiciously-measured linen, which he whacks with well-managed wand to prove its soundness.

A more quiet company of merchants—amongst whom, years ago, Cheap John the First arose like a red revolutionist—continue to pitch their tents hard by. The *Stannins* (standings) are conveniently ranged over the gutter on each side of the street, with roofs of patched canvas, sack-cloth, or motley counterpane, stretched on rickety poles, or rounded with osiers; whereunder are spread the dazzling treasures of cheap cutlery and jewellery; distorting mirrors in red frames; round pewter-cased ditto capable of being propped up and folded artfully; *gallowses* (*i.e.* braces), and broad belts of coloured web, deemed wholesome wear by country youths; little blue and yellow covered song-books; Lives of Saints, mixed with spelling-books and *Read-a-ma-daisies* (Reading-made-easys); and, in a corner, three or four second-hand volumes—perhaps one of Urquhart's 'Rabelais,' Dublin edition, and two of 'The Justice of the Peace,' published in 1823; which latter the stannin'-keeper recommends to your attention as 'an entertaining romance;' and, on being set right on this point, says he's no scholar (meaning that he can't read), but that's what he bought it for.

At our elbow, a ballad-singer, a young woman in old plaid cloak and very old straw bonnet, strikes up, with a sweet Connaught lisp, and slightly nasal twang, 'The Sorrowful Lamentation of Patrick Donohue'—with the words 'Come all you tender Christians!'—and soon summons around her a ring of listeners. She will sing *da capo* as long as the ballad draws attention and custom, and then change it or move off to another part of the fair.

The hour of melody seems to have struck; for, not far away we discover a second circle united by Orphean attraction. And here our curiosity is raised by the comment of a man who seems to be tearing himself away from the influence. The best ballad-singer this, he declares, that he has heard these twenty years! To which another, assenting, says, 'In troth, it's worth a ha'penny to hear him go over it, let alone the paper.' The minstrel is found to be a tall, sad, stooping man, about thirty-five; his song, to the very favourite tune of 'Youghal Harbour,' is about two faithful

lovers; his vocal excellence consists in that he twirls every word several times round his tongue, wrapt in the notes of a soft, husky, tremulous voice. In this style of gracing—which is considered highly artistic, and for which, I believe, 'humouring' is the country phrase—the words are delivered somewhat as follows:

This pay-air disco-ooeyoor-croid with sich foo-oocy-sorce o' ray-ayizin,
Ther may-ayuin they ay-apeu-ays-expray-ss'd so-lu-o-o clearrrr,
That fan-hor to las——sen too-oo ther caw-aw-ho-on-vairsay-ay-ashin,
My che-ee-in-clinay-ahemy-ashin was for too-oo-hoo-hoo draw-aw-haw ee-aw-a neerrrrr.

That is to say:

This pair discoursèd with such force of rayson,
Their meaning they expressed so clear,
That for to listen to their conversation,
My inclination was to draw near.

Urging our slow way through the crowd, we come within earshot of a shriller strain, which proceeds from two female vocalists, standing face to face, and yelling down one another's throats. Agrarian politics, this time, and not of the most wholesome sort. That country lout—who tenders his copper with swaggering bashfulness, and, for careful preservation of the ballad, rolls it up into a wisp between his hands, and so thrusts it into pocket—lout as he is, has, not improbably, enough of musical ear and voice to enable him to revive the symphony and song of these strange damsels, by his winter fireside, and at subsequent wakes and gatherings; sprinkling into wild hearts the ignorance and foolishness—if it be no worse—of some poor conceited creature who perhaps bribed the printer with a few pence to exalt his trash into type.

Does that fine *gendarmerie* of ours, the constabulary, never intermeddle with crime in its rarefied or gaseous form of song? Seldom; scarcely ever, beyond desiring

the offender to 'move on,' which the offender does—as far as round the corner of the next lane. Notwithstanding all we hear about penal laws, the liberty of the subject is sacredly, almost superstitiously, respected in Ireland. Listen for a moment to that vendor of china-cement and polishing paste, who, rubbing his whitening and quicksilver with his palm on the edges of a roll of pence, invites the crowd to turn their iron spoons into silver, and their saucepans into shaving-mirrors: adding, that the composition is admirable for cleaning up a fire-lock—'and if yiz wuz only to take it out wanst a year *to shoot an agent wid*, yiz oughtn't to grudge the price I'm axin',—ha'pence a-piece, still on, or six for tuppence!' Of course this is mere fun; but it is rather ugly fun.

The muster of ballad-singers, to day, is above the average; for, see, here is another! A little elderly man, wearing a very large and extremely elderly hat—his warehouse. He accompanies his comic song with a fiddle, upon which he leans one of his red weazen cheeks, watching with twinkling black eyes the movements of his left hand on the strings. His fiddle is cheap-looking and cracked, and his bow is mended with packthread. When the harsh chords cease, and he lowers the instrument slowly from his chin, you observe that what seemed to be a continuous self-satisfied smile is, in reality, the effect of a dint or muscular contraction near his mouth; and that his expression of countenance is most doleful. He stands helplessly with the fiddle under one arm, and the sheaf of papers in his hands. Let us buy one of him; and then go home, and look over a certain sheaf of our own gathering, of publications in the same humble but not entirely unimportant department of literature.

Here is our bundle—some ten dozen of the ordinary street ballads of Ireland; comprising, we have reason to think, specimens of almost every sort at present in vogue

in the rural districts; that is to say, all Ireland, except two or three of the largest towns with their immediate neighbourhoods, which have local and *towny* ballads of their own. They are, of course, 'printed on gray paper with blunt type,' headed with most incompatible woodcuts, and filled with instances of every kind of typographical error, from mis-stopping and mis-spelling to omissions of words, lines, and half-stanzas; so that, while intended for the perusal of the humblest, they often require (as I once heard a girl complain) 'a very good scholar to make thim out.'

Nearly one-half of the whole number owe their inspiration to Cupid—a personage not unfrequently mentioned therein by name, and conducting about eighty per cent. of his followers to the happiest conclusion. In this class of songs, two things are observable, as truly reflecting the character of the people: first, lawful wedlock is uniformly the aim and end: second, elopements are very usual, and not considered in the least objectionable. Parents are habitually described as the natural enemies of true lovers; and, as such, it is held not only allowable, but highly praiseworthy, to revile, deceive, and even directly to rob them. Yet the romantic or love-in-a-cottage principle which prevails among the Romeos and Juliets of polite fiction has no parallel here, for care is always taken to provide one or other of the amorous couple with ample means, and often the exact amount of the dowry is impressively mentioned. Instances of ladies of fortune falling in love with young men of the humblest rank, are (in the ballad world) extremely frequent; sailors and servants, or '*labouring-boys*,' appearing to be the most liable to such good fortune. On the other hand, it sometimes happens, but not nearly so often, that a gentleman is found laying his affection and property at the feet of a lowly maiden. The ladies, in truth, are by much the bolder wooers; witness the oldest and most popular ballad

in our collection, which, in the present copy, commences thus:

> Rise up, William O'Reilly, and come along with me;
> I mean for to go with you, and leave this country;[1]
> I'll leave my father's dwelling, his money and fine lawn,[2]
> So away goes William O'Reilly, and his dear Mourneen Bawn.

This ballad had its rise in an affair that happened in the north-west of Ireland about sixty-five years ago. William O'Reilly, or Willy Reilly, a young Catholic farmer, was tried at Sligo for the abduction of Miss Folliott, daughter of a gentleman of property; but the young lady deposed that she had eloped with Willy of her own free will, and he was thereupon triumphantly acquitted. The fact of the Folliotts being aristocrats and of high Orange politics, invested the occurrence with a strong party interest; and this, combined with the romantic circumstances of the case, gave the ballad an extensive popularity, which it still retains. All over Ulster, at least, Willy Reilly is a household word; and the name—sometimes in the form of Reilly, sometimes of O'Reilly—has become a stock name of the heroes of the ballad-makers.

For another instance, less authorised by history, of this leap-year style of courtship, take 'The Admired Love-Song of William and Eliza, of Lough-Erin Shore,' ['Erin' in place of 'Erne.'] William becomes servant to 'a lady of honour,' who falls in love with him, and brings him, first to Dublin, and thence to London.

> For three months in great consolation [says William]
> This lady she did me adore,
> Saying, my Willy, do not be uneasy
> For leaving Lough-Erin shore.
> Dear Willie, you'll roll in great splendour,
> With lords, dukes, and earls of fame;
> You'll correspond with these nobles,
> And you shall be equal the same.

[1] Pronounced *sounterne*.
[2] A misprint for 'land,' which is pronounced *lawn* in the North.

In conclusion, William, who at first really did appear somewhat uneasy despite the splendour promised him,

> Is wed to a great English lady,
> The truth unto you I'll explore;
> He hopes to roll in great splendour
> Once more on Lough-Erin shore.

William, by the way, is out of sight the most popular, lyrically, of Christian names.

The following damsel is no less demonstrative than the one just disposed of:

> It is of a nobleman's daughter,
> So comely and handsome to hear,
> Her father possessed of great fortune,
> Full thirty-five thousand a year;
> He had but one only daughter,
> Caroline is her name, we are told,
> One day, from her drawing-room window,
> She admired a young sailor so bold.
>
> His cheeks they appeared like two roses,
> His hair was as black as the jet,
> Young Caroline watch'd his departure,
> Walked round, and young William she met;
> She said, 'I'm a nobleman's daughter,
> Possessed of ten thousand in gold;
> I'll forsake both my father and mother,
> And wed my young sailor bold.'

Young Caroline—an ante-dated Bloomer, assumes male attire, and

> Two years and a half on the ocean,
> She sailed with her young sailor bold.

On her return, the effect of her novel style of dress on her father's nerves, is described with commendable simplicity.

> Caroline went straightway to her father,
> In her jacket and trousers of blue;
> He received her, and that moment fainted,
> When first she appeared in [his] view.

He recovers, however, from the shock communicated by the blue trousers, and

> They are married, and Caroline's portion
> Is twenty-five thousand in gold;
> So now they are happy and cheerful,
> Caroline and her young sailor bold.

Observe, that by a not uncommon rhythmical license, the accent of this lady's name is shifted between the first syllable and the third, according to convenience.

Our next heroine has set her heart upon her parents' 'Bonny Labouring Boy,' and proceeds thus:

> I courted him for twelve long months, but little did I know
> My cruel parents thought to prove our overthrow.

Being coerced—

> Eight hundred pounds and all my clothes I took that very night,
> And with the lad that I adored to Belfast I did take flight;
> His love it has entangled me, and that I can't deny,
> So to America I'll go with my bonny labouring boy.

Two ladies with military tastes, and no less than five with ungovernable nautical propensities—in other words, female soldiers and sailors—are commemorated in our bundle. The narrative of 'The Undaunted Female' describes how young Mary, who was a damsel fair, so virtuous and so kind, enlisted in the regiment with her lover, and how

> They fought them on the Sutlej till the Indians did give o'er,
> Did Mary and her William *in the late Indian war.*

We may here take an opportunity of quoting from another ballad, a singularly condensed and simple statement of the tender feelings of a young lady whose lover is a military gentleman:

> When I do awake in the morning,
> My breast it does tremble with woe;
> *To think that a youth who's so charming,*
> *Has such dangerous places to go.*

The sentiment here is similar to that in the ballad of *Gilderoy*:

If Gilderoy hath done amiss,
Must he be strangled then?
Alas, what cruelty is this,
To hang such handsome men!

The last verse of 'The Handsome Cabin Boy' contains a remarkable passage:

Then each man took a bumper, and drank '*Success to Troy*,'
And likewise to the cabin boy, was neither man nor boy.

The sailors drinking, 'Success to Troy,' would be indeed profoundly unintelligible; were not the hypothesis open to us that the poet thought reason an unimportant matter, compared with rhyme.

In 'The Lady and the Sailor,' occurs one of the very few bits which can be said to possess, accidentally or otherwise, any merit in thought or expression. It is this:

As the lady and [the] sailor was crossing the deep,
Says the lady to the sailor, 'You sigh in your sleep.'
'I once had a sweetheart,' the sailor did say,
'And by her cruel parents I was sent away.'

The two following lines of 'Erin's Lovely Home' are better yet; the speaker is a convict:

There is seven links upon my chain, and every link a year
Before I can return again to the arms of my dear.

Some of the comic and satirical pieces are not without spirit; but in general, the style of this class of ballads is even more wretched than their typography. In one amorous ditty, the lover says:

I drew up near this lovely maid,
And with a complaisanting smile,
My heart being captivated quite,
I stood and viewed her for awhile.

In another, he avers:

Her slender waist and carriage has fractured my poor brain.

A third song commences in language which the poet or the printer, or both, have contrived to invest with the not uncommon poetical merit of impenetrable obscurity:

Being in the month of May, when all vesitudes was gay,
A young shepperdess came viewing on her flock.

And in a fourth the swain inquires of his Mary:

Ah, lovely creature, the pride of Nature!
Did Cupid send you to the Shannon side?

whereto, properly enough,

She then made answer, 'It's all [romance, Sir,]
For you to flatter a simple dame;
I'm not so stupid or duped by Cupid,
So I defy you on me to scheme.

On the whole, mythology has gone much out of esteem. Our present collection furnishes only one thorough specimen of the old classical-allusion ballad style; namely, 'The Maid of Slievebawn'; which opens with Cupid and Morpheus, and prefers its own heroine to Venus with her peacocks, to the Nine Muses, and likewise to Juno, 'when drawn in her chariot by swans.' The writer, to get himself into a proper frame of mind for inspiration, proposes to 'range to and fro,'

Reflecting on Cupid, who on me did promise to fawn;

adding—

I'm trepanned in love's chains, and in pain for the maid of Slievebawn.

He proceeds as follows, in a state of mind sublimely distracted:

The grand King of England, this beautiful maid he had seen,
He would not let Paris deprive that fair maid of his queen;
To Old Ireland he'd sail to O'Neill at that fair one's demand,
His grand Trojan troops he'd encamp at the foot of Slievebawn.

Let us now turn to the Party Ballads. Of these we have fourteen; some poetical, some on Church polemics.

In Ireland, the mass of the people recognise but two great parties; the one, composed of Catholics, patriots, would-be rebels—these being interchangeable ideas; the other, of Protestants, Orangemen, wrongful holders of estates, and oppressors in general—these also being interchangeable ideas. It is true there are Protestants who rank on the popular side, and who, on occasion, receive tumultuous applause from the common cry. Smith O'Brien and John Mitchell were of these; and the Young Irelanders exerted themselves to build an Irish party, on other than the old ground of priestly Catholicism; but herein lay one cause of their failure. THE PEOPLE, in the confused brains of its many heads, could not, would not, and will not understand more than two parties. The exceptions are too few to affect their general habit of mind, if, indeed, the many-headed (when they came to think of it) would really trust a Protestant patriot, save in the belief of his readiness to join the true Church, when the proper time should arrive. Such of their own clergy as profess 'loyalty,' are considered *to know what they are about.*

'The Brave Defenders of the Church of Rome,' is in celebration of one of the boys of the '98, who was sent to 'Vandimonds land'

> Because he was head leader
> Of Father Murphy's Shelmoneers.

The Reverend General Murphy, one of the most renowned of the chiefs of '98, who used to boast of catching the heretic balls in his fingers, is often alluded to in these ballads. This ballad and some of the others were, no doubt, written many years ago; but their sentiments are by no means out of date; and Father Murphy's fame vividly survives in some of the most recent effusions. The fourth verse of The Brave Defenders presents a curious junction of the theologist with the insurgent:

> For being a Roman Catholic I was trampled on by Harry's breed,
> [meaning Henry VIII.]
> And for fighting in defence of my God, my country, and my creed;
> Transubstantiation is the faith that we depend upon;
> Look and you will find it in the sixth chap. of St. John.
> As Moses and Elias, they told us of our heavenly church,
> That we in future ages should suffer persecution much.

The 'New Hunting Song' is an allegory. Brought to the bar of zoological science, it is rather faulty; for it represents the 'Scorpion' in the character of a beast of the chase pursued with horn and hound. Neither can the geographical details of this ballad escape criticism. The scorpion is hunted to Athlone, Killaloe, Hanover, Dover, the rocks of Gibraltar, and a few other localities, until finally run down into the Red Sea.

> And to join the chase from every place
> The sportsmen they will gather,
> From America, both France and Spain,
> In spite of wind or weather;
> The bravest hunters that can be,
> Brave Cahill has them selected,
> &c., &c.

'The Heroes of '98' announces its subject in its title, and is more happy in a tolerably relevant illustration than most of its fellow lyrics; being headed with a woodcut representing a man running a sword through the body of another man. 'Tara's Hill, or Erin's Glory,' is of similar import; referring with opprobrium to Strongbow, Oliver Cromwell, Dutch Bill, and other historical characters by whom 'we were wrecked with tormentation.' The noticeable part of this ballad is the *patch* at the end of it, glaringly different from the rest of the stuff:

> Now, to conclude, God send long life to Queen Victoria,
> And that we may see our nation free from vile Whig or Tory;
> May plenty smile round Erin's Isle—may peace and freedom flourish
> May all agree in unity, and broils and quarrels perish!

'The Irish Emigrant's Address to his Irish Landlord,' exults in the turning of the tables, by which their honours,' the landlords, are to be reduced to the poor-house and *India Buck* (Indian-corn porridge). It is sung to the tune of 'O Susanna, don't you cry for me,' and opens thus:

I'm now going to a country where
From Poor-rates I'll be free,
For poor Ireland's going to the dogs
As fast as fast can be;
You know you'd like to stop me,
So I'll do it on the sly;
With me I'll take a half-year's rent,
Your Honour—won't you cry!

This ballad, treating, not without sarcastic force, of passing events and sharp actualities, must sink fast into the ears of its audiences, and somewhat deeply too. The copy we quote was purchased from two women, singing it loud and shrill through a town on a fair or market day. They seemed to have plenty of eager customers, and more attentive listeners. It appears worth while to add some further extracts:

I don't believe I pel the rint
Within the last three years,
And so I owe your Honour
Some trifle of arrears;
I mention this, because I think
You'd like to say *good-bye!*
For these arrears I have them sung;
Your Honour, don't you cry.

Chorus.

O, your Honour!—the Poor-house is your dart,
Before, like those by famine died, your chibler breaks your heart.

'Your dart,' is vernacular for 'your resource.' Verse five, relates how his Honour sent his bailiff:

For fear I'd stir the corn,
But his efforts they did fail;
For I tied him in the barn,
And that night I took leg-bail.

Verse seven, proceeds—

I hope your Honour may have luck
When all the country's waste,
And when they give out-door relief,
May your Honour get a taste.
But if they build a union
For the landlords there to fly,
And you get in—why, then I think
Your Honour need not cry.

And, in concluding, this Irish emigrant (who is a very different character from the sentimental one who sits upon the stile) sings sarcastically:

Now, when I'm landed in New York,
That moment I will get
A gallon of rum, and drink your health,
With what I'm in your debt.

'The Poor Irish Bard' also descants on distress, emigration, Dives and Lazarus, but in a moralising and mendicant key. His explanation of one of the misfortunes of the country, asks quotation:—

To kill your potato crop—rent them asunder
By the nocturnal clap of the cloud's roaring thunder.

which, perhaps, enables us to see some prophetic meaning in Nat Lee's line,

A mad potato on the whirlwind flies.

This has taken us out of the domain of Party. Of songs of general Patriotism, we have five; on sea-voyages, wrecks, and Pirates, eight, including 'A Lamentation on the Loss of the Barque, Edmond,' with the names of the passengers lost, given at foot. Of regular 'Farewells to Ireland' (besides numberless ballads that refer to or conclude in America), we have three. 'Patrick Fitzpatrick's Farewell' presents a rude picture of misery, which is unexaggerated and touching.

Those three long years I've laboured hard, as any on Erin's Isle,
And still was scarcely able my family to keep;
My tender wife and children three, under the lash of misery,
Unknown to friends and neighbours, I've often seen to weep.
Sad grief it eased her tender heart, when forced her only cow to part,
And canted [auctioned] was before her face, the Poor-rates for to pay;
Cut down in all her youthful bloom, she's gone into her silent tomb;
Forlorn I will mourn her loss when in America.

The popular hopes of emigrants are thus expressed:—

Let Erin's sons and daughters fair now for the promised land prepare,
America, that beauteous soil, will soon your toils repay;
Employment it is plenty there; on beef and mutton you can fare;
From five to six dollars is your wages every day.
Now see what money has come o'er those three years from Columbia's shore,
But for it numbers now was laid all in their silent clay;
California's golden mines [my boys] are open now to crown our joys,
So all our hardships we'll dispute when in America.

We have five *Criminal* ballads; the usual characteristics of which class are, that the judge is cruel, the counsel for the prisoner 'noble' and 'bold,' and the prisoner himself an object of deep sympathy.

The glories of the great French Emperor, once a favourite theme, linger in two effusions. The 'Grand Conversation on the Remains of Napoleon' is immensely absurd; but 'Buonaparte's Farewell to Paris' demands our last spare moments for its opening stanza.

I'll visit that splendid citadel metropolis called Paris,
Situated every morning by Sol's refulgent beams;
Conjoined by bright Aurora advancing from the orient,
With radiant light adorning in pure shining rays;
Commanding Cynthia to retire where the windows glance like fire,
The universe admire their merchandize and store,
With Flora's spreading fragrance the fertile plains to decorate,
To illuminate the royal Corsican again to the French shore.

What follows is not unworthy of this commencement; but we can do no more than advert to the antithesis, wherein 'Napoleon Buonaparte, the conqueror of nations,'

who 'trampled Dukes and Earls, and splendid congregations,' complains of being 'Now in a desart isle annoyed with rats.'

About a dozen miscellaneous, and half-a-dozen intentionally comic ballads—sung with eccentric choruses—go nigh to exhaust our collection. The comic ballads have, perhaps, more nature and smartness than those of any other class, and are remarkably free from improprieties; which, in some cases, their subjects and general downrightness might seem to foreshadow.

Any didactic essay on ballads might fairly be expected to commence with the remark that a wise old writer has said, 'Let me make the ballads of a nation, and who will may make the laws.' This saw (which is somewhat rhetorical in form, and exceedingly musty) is at least as applicable to melodious, credulous, impulsive Ireland, as to any other country in the world. And, certainly, in the matter of ballads—let the laws be what they may—Ireland is far enough from having justice done to her. The humble dwellings of the land are pervaded by the national melodies; many of which have become the darlings of the world and of fame, whilst many others, perhaps some as beautiful, have never been noted down, and are perishing yearly, by twos and threes, or lingering only with an old nurse, an old piper here and there. Moore's words flew high above these humble dwellings; nor have the Young-Ireland lyrics succeeded in becoming, in the true sense, popular. The sphere of Moore's songs was the drawing-room; of Young-Ireland's, the Repeal Meeting-room and the Club-room. Songs for a people must find their natural element beside the cottage hearth. Such simple and pathetic ditties, in the old Irish tongue, are still sometimes heard.

In the English tongue, the popular songs of Ireland—perhaps comprising three-fourths of the national literature—

are such as are sung about the streets and country towns, and sold by wandering pedlars; just such ballads, in short, as we have quoted and described.

THE MIDSUMMER FIRE.

TOWARDS sunset on St. John's Eve, the 23rd of June, tens of thousands of great Fires are set a-blazing all over the island of Ireland, by an Annual Custom so ancient that its origin is lost in the night of time. The same is, or was lately, to be seen in parts of England, Wales, Scotland, and the continent of Europe. Once, in all probability, a rite of Sun-worship, marking our great orb's culmination in the northern zodiac, it was long ago connected with the Christian Kalendar, and assigned to the honour of Saint John the Baptist, whose feast falls on the next day. Possibly it may have been shifted a little to fit in with this. In the ancient Kalendar of the Church of Rome, June 24th is marked, '*Nativitas Joannis Baptistæ—solstitium vulgare.*' But no trace of Christian ceremony, if ever there was any, clings now to the Irish celebration, though of pagan superstition some hints yet survive. 'Bonfire Night' is one of the annual amusements of boys and lads of the humbler class, irrespective of creed, and their elders have a share of interest in it from old associations.

Many think '*Bon*-fire' the right word, Good Fire, a protection against disease and ill-luck, and indeed this form is in general use. The Devon poet, William Browne, writing about the year 1620, mentions 'The Blessing Fire' (*Shepheard's Pipe*, 3rd Eclogue), with this note, 'The Midsummer

Fires are termed so in the west parts of England.' '*Boon*-fire' has been suggested, that is, made up by contributions. I never heard it called anything but 'Bone-fire' in Ireland, and this, after all, seems to have authority on its side, for what says Professor Skeat (Etym. Dict., 1882). 'Bonfire (E) orig. a bone-fire. '*Bane-fire*,' ignis ossium'; Catholicon Anglicanum, A.D. 1483; where *bane* is the Northern form of *bone*.'

In the foresaid Kingdom of Ireland, where linger many old fashions, both of speech and custom, for weeks before St. John's eve, swarms of little boys seek 'something for the Bonefire' all round the towns and villages, and also levy, without any verbal application, what they term 'custom' from every cart and donkey-load of turf they meet; revelling in their piratical descents on the 'turf-cadgers,' and the consequent squabbles and hair-breadth escapes from those exasperated rustics. To aid the removal of turf from a high cart, or round a corner, the brigands sometimes carry sticks tipped with an iron spike or hook.

When the evening of the twenty-third has arrived, each band begins about five o'clock to build its particular fire, assisted by a few 'big brothers.' In the country—where, by the way, the collection of the fuel is a quieter business, every neighbour readily giving his share—high grounds are chosen for the sites; in the town, open places in the suburbs, usually; for the police are no longer so tolerant of the streets being put to this purpose, as they used to be a few years ago. In the process of building, live coals are placed in the heart of the heap, with a vent for air, and ere long, the black, smoking cones are left to themselves for awhile, or only watched by some children and two or three stout guards, whose part it is to prevent a possible attack from the adherents of some rival Fire, or foil it if made. The pile of turf is sometimes garnished with layers of bones, cows' horns obtained from the tan-yards, and perhaps a horse's

head; but these are now considered luxuries of cremation, not necessaries, as formerly. In the old unscientific days bones were unsaleable articles, and people were glad no doubt to get rid of accumulations of them by burning. Close by, if the funds have proved sufficient, stands a row of old, brown, smeary tar-barrels; and the *fod-gogues*, or torches, though as yet invisible, are ready for their work. About nine o'clock the turf-cones, detruncated, are crowned with red glow and wavering flames, and round them gather crowds of both sexes, chiefly young people and children, laughing, talking, shouting and restless. Let us visit some of the Bonefires of our little town.

First, one in a nook at the end of a middling street, where, at a comfortable distance from the blaze, a butcher and a pensioner are talking politics, with a select audience, and showing a very intimate acquaintance with the news of the day (distinctly coloured, though, by the medium through which it has come), as well as no mean amount of general information and intelligence; while under a wall sit a row of girls, chatting confidentially among themselves, or ironically with some young fellow who has ventured to lounge over to them; and a frequent laugh runs down or up the line in various tones, like a chime of bells.

Our next move brings us to the middle of a bare common, where there is a much larger fire, and a rougher mob. Droll remarks, strongly flavoured with personality, are flying about; a turf, now and again, is also flying about; and practical jokes of every sort are in great estimation. At last, a fight arises between two 'boys'—who are stout young men—but after a blow or two they are sundered by a noisy crowd, and removed, bareheaded, and talking defiance over their shoulders, to opposite corners of the common; where the male friends of each antagonist soothe him by declaring 'It's a good kicking you *ought* to get'; and his female relations by dragging his coat half off his back, and telling

him concisely to 'have wit!' However, it is now time to light the tar-barrels and *fod-yogues*—the latter being bundles of dry reeds, some of them ten or twelve feet high, and at the lower end as large as the crown of a hat, some shorter and tied on sticks. When all are well ablaze, the tar-barrels mount to the heads of sturdy volunteers, the *fod-yogues* fall in behind, and away go the lights down into the town, drawing most of the people after them; and so they round street-corners, and flare unwonted blaze on the old gables, while every step increases the train of human moths —a very noisy species, for they incessantly scream, laugh, halloo, and whistle through their fingers. The procession now approaches a district of thatched houses, and it is whispered that the police are at hand, designing evil; whereupon the whole crowd sets off pell-mell, the tar-barrels, dropping flame, roll fearfully on the dusky surge like ships on fire, and at last one topples over with a crash and makes a chasm in the stream of people, but it is soon lifted again, and those who press on from behind kick the blazing fragments scattered in the street. Meanwhile the *fod-yogues* have been getting into confusion; some jostle one another, some fall to pieces about the bearers' ears; the more lucky, streaming like comets in their flight, return in safety, and gambol about the Bonefire till their torches fail. There also the tar-barrels are deposited, to consume themselves away.

Another fire burns by the river brink, throwing a bright wavering path across the broad, dark stream. When we stand a little way off, the sound of the water continually gushing through the weir, and of the night breeze in the grass, are not broken by that occasional muffled shout; and the black figures, seen dimly athwart their nucleus of fire, assume a novel and mysterious aspect.

Elsewhere, the Midsummer flame shines on some fishermen's cottages, almost under the leaves of a grove of sycamore and beech trees, at the entrance to a gentlemen's avenue;

close by, a runnel is scarce heard to flow, among stones and under its little bridge, down to the harbour creek. This is a small fire, but with the merriest circle we have yet seen, consisting almost entirely of fishermen, their wives, hardy sons, handsome daughters, and sturdy bare-legged children, seated round in large and small groups.

In one place the elders are smoking their pipes, and talking of California and Australia; in another, a man who has been out in a whaler is relating Arctic anecdotes for a relish to the heat; in another, some lads are trying to persuade the girls that the first who will leap over the fire is sure to be married before the year is out; but, without supposing the girls indifferent to that contingency, it appears that the nature of the feat, or incredulity as to its efficacy, prevents their making the attempt, whereupon the lads themselves leap boldly across, sometimes scattering the hot coals and causing shrieks and laughter. Here, a child is caught up in stout, friendly hands, and swung several times over the coals, half afraid and half enjoying the sport; and there, in the only chair, sits an ancient man with curling yellow locks, childhood's garland restored, retracing in slow utterances his memories of vanished years. If we can suppose a Ghost several thousand years of age looking on, I believe he would see some familiar things here to-night, some dim survivals of very ancient customs. But silence is requested: two sisters are going to sing; and from the centre of a crowd of girls their voices rise clearly, blended in one, in a ballad about a pretty fair maid and her true love; with a chorus for which many voices join in unison, and all in excellent tune. Between the verses the singers are kindly encouraged with approving interjections, and at the end warmly applauded; and, indeed, real good manners characterise the assembly during the whole of the rather long performance. Now come women with tongs and children with sticks, and carry off a share of the glowing coals, to be deposited on the

cottage hearth or cast for luck into the corn or potato-field (you note this, friend Ghost!). In some cottages the domestic fire is allowed to die out on St. John's Eve, and re-kindled with a coal from the Bonefire. But ere the fire die, some late *fod-yogues* remain to be consumed. They are lighted, and set in motion; the bright row gleams at intervals through the trees, and then begins to ascend to Fort Hill, which commands a circling prospect of the town, river, harbour, and country. Massing their flambeaux into one blaze on the hill-top, the bearers leave them there to burn out; and we, ascending afterwards, enjoy in quiet the view of the dim country side, spotted with fires, flashing fitfully or shining with steady lustre; some on hill, some marking the position of hamlets, and one, like a rising star, on the obscure crest of the remoter mountain. Over all hangs a dark, clear sky; with a three-quarter moon, that in a few hours will see these earth-sparks subside one by one.

Again at the large Bonefire on the common. It is still broad and deep; but in the powerful rays linger only half-a-dozen idlers and a few ragged boys, some of whom are taking the opportunity to roast potatoes which they have begged during the day, or perhaps have 'hoked' in the neighbouring fields. The fire sheds a ghastly, green-white hue on their faces, very different from the glow beside a comfortable hearth; and this, aided by the wretched garb and dull movements, might present to the fancy one of those disinfecting fires lighted in time of plague, resorted to at night by the poor, sick, deranged, and outcast.

But it is time we were in bed; the glaucous dawn begins to lift itself behind those great ranges of cloud in the south-east. At the corner we exchange a Good-night, which might have been Good-morning, with the police patrol making their round.

GEORGE PETRIE.

[1790—1866.]

Archæologist—Painter—Musician.

[From *Fraser's Magazine*, 1866.]

ONE of the early days of 1866 removed from the list of the living George Petrie, the Irish Archæologist or Discourser on Antiquity. He died in his house at Dublin on the 18th of January. He was not only a famous antiquary, but a finished and original landscape painter, an excellent violinist and scientific musician; and, moreover, a most complete gentleman, courteous as a king, modest and simple as a child, an ever-delightful companion, a warm and trusty friend, an honest, pure, and noble man. The sadness of such a removal is not of a gloomy and painful kind; the good man lived on this earth 76 years, happy, as we believe, and making happy, doing quietly and steadily the work that he was fitted for by his natural gifts, and for which the materials lay around him. He worked no stroke for fame or money, but all for love of the work; and he saw the gradual effects of his labour and influence in the department of Irish antiquities and history. This was a quagmire, a Bog of Allen, and if part of it is now drained, and has here and there firm causeways running through it—if the business of reclamation has been begun at last on a right principle—thanks chiefly to George Petrie.

Many of those to whom his sweet and noble face is now become a treasure of the past will feel that Dublin and Ireland can never be the same as formerly.

Surely the climate's colder there
Since *Petrie* died.

Yet on the other hand they will often think what a happiness and encouragement it is to have known such a man, one whose truthful, lovely, and elevated character was only purified and strengthened by the trials and experiences of life, and whose last years resembled the mild evening and sunset of a long summer day.

George Petrie was born in Dublin on the 1st of January, 1790. His father, James Petrie, was a portrait painter of considerable reputation. George went to the school of Mr. Whyte, of Grafton Street, at which Sheridan and Tom Moore had been pupils before him. He was designed for the medical profession, but, showing a decided turn for art, at an early age he assisted his father in painting miniatures, when fifteen gained a silver medal for a group of figures in the School of the Dublin Society, and was permitted to adopt landscape-painting as his profession. He produced a great number of drawings and sketches of Irish scenery and topography, many of which have been engraved, and many highly finished water-colour pictures, some of them on an unusually large scale. They are remarkable at once for refined truthfulness and grace. In colouring they have often an originality and delicacy of flavour (so to speak), which to be rightly appreciated needs an instructed palate. There is a fastidious avoidance of trick and of over-emphasis which by some may be thought to tend towards the opposite extreme. Refined expression of the natural tints and subtleties of light and shadow was the aim of the colourist; any approach to stage effect he abhorred, and thereby perhaps sometimes fell short of a legitimate artistic effectiveness. Be

this as it may, any one of Petrie's best landscapes is inexhaustively valuable, the work of combined originality and cultivation, of sensitive genius and refined skill. His manner, without the least touch of imitation, is not unlike the middle manner of Turner, an artist for whom Petrie, from his youth up, had the highest admiration. None of Petrie's pictures, so far as we know, is to be found in any public gallery; one or more of the best ought certainly to be placed in the new and handsome Irish National Gallery in Merrion Square. In his quality of painter he was for several years President of the Royal Hibernian Academy. During his sketching tours through Ireland, Petrie took more than a painter's interest in the numerous remains of antiquity which came under his eye—ruined castles, churches, abbeys, gray old carved crosses, mysterious round towers. In 1818 he visited the ruins of the Seven Churches of Clonmacnoise on the shore of the river Shannon, and made them the subject of an admirable picture. 'But these ruins' (we quote from the graceful and discriminating *éloge* delivered at a meeting of the Royal Irish Academy, on the 12th of February, by their President, Dr. Graves—' these ruins excited a still deeper interest in his mind, regarded as memorials of the men who lived, and the civilisation which subsisted on the spot a thousand years before. Looking around him in that great cemetery, he found it filled with inscribed monuments, recording the names of distinguished persons who had been buried there in former times. It was a favourite place of sepulture for kings and chiefs, for bishops and abbots, for men of piety and learning, from the sixth to the twelfth century. Applying himself first to the copying of these inscriptions, he made drawings of about three hundred of them. But, as few of them had been previously noticed or explained in any printed work, he was obliged to investigate for himself the history of the persons whose names were thus preserved. With a view to the accomplishment of this

object, he commenced, and from that time continued, the formation of such a collection of documents, whether in manuscript or print, as he hoped would lead to the illustration of the monuments. Thenceforth, in fact, he became an archæologist, devoting as much time and attention as he could spare from other avocations to the study of Irish history and antiquities.'

Petrie was elected a member of the Royal Irish Academy in 1828, and chosen a member of the council of that body in 1830. The Academy was then in a 'state of torpor;' such antiquities as they possessed were lying uncared-for on the floor of a little upper room, and were gradually *disappearing* by unknown agencies. Petrie put those that remained into a glass case in the board-room, and this was the nucleus of the present large and valuable Museum. He also induced the Academy to purchase various Irish MSS.; and where their funds or grants fell short, he more than once, at his own risk and out of slender private means, secured such treasures when offered for sale. In this way he bought the autograph copy of the second part of the *Annals of Ireland*, commonly called *Annals of the Four Masters*, and though offered in the sale-room 100*l.* profit on his bargain, and afterwards a much larger sum, he handed the MS. to the Academy for the price which he had paid for it. He was a large contributor to the 'Transactions' of the society, and thrice received their gold medal, namely for his essays *On the Round Towers*, *On Military Architecture in Ireland* (still unpublished), and *On Tara Hill*. The first-named essay, published in 1833, is the most celebrated, assigning, on various evidence, especially that of ancient Irish MSS., and by an exhaustive train of reasoning, a simple and definite origin to these towers—fortresses frequently and hotly attacked and defended (in a metaphorical sense) by the partisans of different theories. They were supposed and alleged, in turn, to be of Druidic, Buddhist, Phœnician,

Danish origin, to have been built for fire-temples, to announce pagan festivals, as astronomical observatories, as phallic emblems, as prisons, as anchoritic retreats; and their date was, by some, removed to an immeasurable antiquity. Petrie's conclusions are, that the towers are of Christian and ecclesiastical origin, and were erected at various times between the fifth and thirteenth centuries; that they were sometimes probably used for beacons and watch-towers, but mainly as belfries, and places of security for the sacred utensils, relics, books, and other valuables of the adjacent churches or monasteries, and for the ecclesiastics thereof, during the sudden predatory attacks which were so common in those days, whether of aliens or of neighbouring tribes, and in which holy men and holy things were by no means spared.

There are certainly some who, unwilling to give up a long-cherished theory of their own, or to lose the attraction of mystery, or from whatever reason or want of reason, form to this day an opposition party on the round-tower question; 'but,' says Dr. Graves, 'I have never yet met any intelligent man, who has taken the pains to read through and understand Petrie's essay, and who has also gone out of his study and examined round towers with his own eyes, and compared their masonry and architectural details with those of the ancient ecclesiastical structures beside which they often stand, who was not ready to give his frank assent to Petrie's main conclusions;' and this assent, on our own humble part, after having studied the essay and visited several of the round towers, we have long since given. The oldest towers, according to Petrie, are of large hammered stones, and *spawled* masonry, have simple square or semicircular door-heads, sloping jambs, little or no ornament. The quadrangular doorways are never ornamented. He gives the following as the probable dates of certain of the towers: Drumbo, County Down, 5th century, built of limestone;

Devenish, Lough Erne (St. Molaise), 6th century, the conical cap (disturbed I think by a young tree growing between the stones) was restored not many years ago; Tory Island, County Donegal (St. Columbkill), 6th century; Glendalough (St. Kevin), 7th century, of mica slate, granite doorway, and Kilmacduagh, County Galway, 7th century, of limestone, both of them built, says tradition, by the famous architect, Goban Saer; Clondalkin, near Dublin, 7th century, perfect; Monasterboice, County Louth, 7th century, has a *torus* moulding, the rich stone crosses are of the same date; Donaghmore, County Meath, 10th century, has a crucifix over the doorway; Clonmacnoise, on the Shannon, probably 12th century and restored later, the upper 20 feet limestone, the rest sandstone.

In the same year, 1833, in which the essay on the round towers was presented to the Academy and the public, Petrie was engaged to take charge of the topographical department of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland. Among his assistants were John O'Donovan and Eugene O'Curry, whom he trained in his methods of inquiry, and whose knowledge of the Irish language he turned to good account; he himself being no adept (though far from a tyro) in the Irish tongue. He became the founder of a new and solid school of archæology, elucidating from countless careful examinations of places, buildings, remains, and ancient Irish MSS., the true nature and history of many things hitherto obscure or misunderstood. Besides his important share in the *Ordnance Survey Memoir*, he contributed many papers and drawings to the first and part of the second volume of the *Dublin Penny Journal*, with the signature 'P.,' wherefore that little magazine, amidst the mountains of 'periodical' rubbish which have since accumulated in the world, is always snapped up at a good price when a chance copy comes to market, honest work being recognised as such sooner or later.

Another natural gift that Petrie received from heaven in large measure, and cultivated to a high excellence, was Music. In his travels and rambles over the face of Ireland, he heard and noted down a great number of old Irish tunes, from harper, fiddler, piper, from labourer's whistle and boatman's chant, and the songs and lilts of peasant women, milkmaids, and old wives. A society to preserve and publish Old Irish Music was started in Dublin in the year 1851. Petrie was the president, and his collection was to have filled the earlier numbers of the work. One volume (now extremely scarce) came out with about 150 airs, but there were delays and complications, the publishing machinery stood stock-still, and most of Petrie's collection remains unpublished. Of those airs which have appeared, the settings, with pianoforte accompaniments, preserve the native character and colouring of each with, we should say, incomparable refinement. With his usual fastidious taste, and anxiety for the highest attainable degree of perfection in whatever he undertook, our friend (for we do not speak without personal knowledge), enjoying the constant assistance of an admirable musician in his eldest daughter, often spent hours and hours in the selection of one out of many versions of a tune. It must be owned that this fastidiousness, along with the feeble health of his later years, caused the publication of the Old Irish Music to drag intolerably, and was a main cause of its coming to a premature stop. Those who have heard his violin and Miss Petrie's pianoforte discourse together some old Irish battle-march (which was always brisk and lively), or some strain of tenderness, or pathos, or quaint humour, that first floated through the brain of some gone and forgotten Keltic harper or piper, and have thrilled the ears and souls of so many vanished men and women, may reckon themselves lucky to have heard something so complete in its own kind. And whenever the air had any traceable history, that also was forth-

coming, conveyed with graceful exactness. Where (let us ask) is the large unpublished portion of the Tunes which Petrie collected?

But there was something still finer than Petrie's music, namely, his manner—his presence, look, voice, smile, conversation. His figure was tallish and slight, a little stooped, when we knew it, with years and delicate health. The good old man's long, thin, and finely-shaped hands, pure complexion, plentiful white hair, arranging itself naturally into a graceful outline, smooth capacious forehead of the most beautiful even curve, and under it a pair of brows no less finely arched and of softly bright intelligent eyes, in colour blue-gray, if we are right—handsome longish nose, and longish chin fringed below with white beard—sensitive yet firm mouth, receding a little for the loss of teeth,—each and all of these features of his, and the sweet natural smile that so often blended them into one delightful and tender expression, are clearly present in our memory, yet the mere catalogue of them conveys little. Himself the most generous of mortals, his face when he heard or spoke of any instance of meanness or selfishness changed altogether, and expressed a deep and scornful indignation; unless, indeed, he was the injured party, when he usually spoke resignedly, with a tone of regret at men's defalcations. He was clear-sighted as to character, and, like all wise men, perfectly tolerant. His religion was the faith of the heart—love, hope, and awe. Of the mystery of our life and prospects he never spoke a word save with almost trembling reverence, as though within a sanctuary. He was educated and remained in the Protestant forms, but in the comparative merits of different rituals he felt no personal interest. Nor did he in politics, Irish or other; though, at the same time, rites, politics, *quodcunque agunt homines*, he observed, reflected on, and was ready to discuss frankly. His opinions were his own, not conventional, and he often differed from you in conversation, but with such a gentle freedom (very different from the 'dog-ape' manœuvres of Society!) that he never in his life, we should think, gave personal offence to living soul. His tone in discussion was never in the least controversial; but, it is true, we speak of his mellow time, and how much of his sweet even temper was the gift of 'years that bring the philosophic mind' we know not. He was one of those happy beings whose character is mellowed, not soured, by the operation of time. His love of reality and simplicity inclined him to the People, but to his fastidiousness of body and mind the notion of democracy was quite unpalatable. He liked not Americanism; with the Frenchman at his best—liberal, vivacious, polite, artistic, intellectual—he had much sympathy. Whether this French type, by-the-bye, is scarcer nowadays we cannot say, but Petrie's notions of France were certainly formed at an earlier date than the reign of Napoleon III. In poetry, Petrie's favourite was Wordsworth; among musical composers, Haydn stood high with him. Of his time, so much occupied with other things, probably not much was given to general literature, yet seldom did any question arise upon which he had not something interesting to say. In painting, landscape was his own speciality, and Turner his man of men, long years before Ruskin stood up to startle the public with his inspiring trumpet-blast. When a young man, Petrie had possession of a little landscape by Turner, and used to place it on a chair in his bedroom, so that his eyes might open upon it when he awoke. In later life he was interested and pleased with the pre-Raphaelite movement, and indeed, originality and excellence, of whatever kind, he always looked upon with respect and admiration, although by temperament he leaned towards the suave in every art, and was personally shy of eccentricity. In music, he was a skilled judge, and as to Irish music, an unrivalled one. Socially, he had met on equal terms, during a period of more than

half a century, a great number of the most able and distinguished men of the Three Kingdoms. At Dublin Castle, he was a welcome guest of successive viceroys; his anecdotes were countless of Curran, O'Connell, Moore, and a host of other famous people, and were told with elegance and effect, though sometimes with an amplification unsuited to bad listeners. His speech on all topics was (like his handwriting) deliberate and careful, sometimes elaborately so; he prologuised, parenthesised, guarded against misconceptions, modified, returned; yet he never *strayed*, and if you gave him his own time you got his chief intention fully conveyed, and usually several interesting things into the bargain. His voice was soft and melodious, not strong, and touched with a pleasant *brogue*. Hurry was foreign to his temperament; he observed, and reflected, and mused upon his favourite subjects with an affectionate persistence. A picture of his, if it remained with him, he hardly ever thought quite finished. His happiness was perfect in poring interminably over his ancient ruins, and relics and records. His books took a long time to write; his music a long time to arrange and revise. The work he did was always labour of love, and he lingered over it, with a pace further slackened by delicate health. When done, it was as well done as he possibly could do it; and of how many workers, in any department, can this be said, in these days of high-pressure and hurry-scurry, and of belief that—

> The real value of a thing
> Is just as much as it will bring.

George Petrie's income, at its best, was a very modest one, and he took no thought of money; but his disregard was not that of the improvident, much less that of the extravagant man. His way of living—orderly, refined, and befitting a gentleman—was at the same time of the simplest and least expensive character. Delighting to be hospitable,

he gave his friends a hearty welcome and excellent plain fare, in old-fashioned style, including a glass of good whisky punch after dinner. Such easy, frank, intimate, cultivated and imaginative conversation; such delicately original music as usually followed, are seldom heard at showy feasts. The fine collection of Irish antiquities arranged in glass cases round the rooms were inexhaustibly interesting. There was no pretence or grimace at these little banquets; there were no artificial flowers, as it were, but simplicity and sincerity bloomed out into the most refined delights of human intercourse.

Our generation, we fear, is not favourable to sociality like this. The huge whirlpool of London, whirling larger and swifter year by year, sucks in everybody, and makes them all dizzy. The over-stimulated brain oscillates between excitement and exhaustion. There is no sweet leisurely delight, no tranquil, happy receptiveness, effortless and unconscious expression of one's best—vivid repose, that high condition. And the hot, restless, and crowded life is surely not only unfavourable to true sociality, but also to literature and the arts. You always hear in London of people being 'so busy'—but about what? And why? It is mostly a Saint Vitus's Dance. Is England, perhaps, in these things, coming to that state which would appear to be the normal state of France, epoch after epoch, namely that of bringing forward a wonderful crowd of second and third-rate men, but no first? Putting aside his antiquarian lore, Petrie, with his temper, manners, accomplishments, and experience, was socially a first-rate man, we consider, yet one to whom London as it is could have been no fit arena. The Londoner, though himself a cultivated person, has possibly never heard the name of George Petrie, so little interest does England even yet take in Irish matters, except when some clatter of Fenianism or the like grows loud enough to be audible across the Channel. Intellectual faculties, accom-

plishments, even accomplished works, which though representing an integral and extensive part of the United Kingdom do not revolve in the system of London, remain even when of a high and rare order all but unknown to the British public and its instructors. This, perhaps, must be, but cultivated Irishmen who live at home don't quite like the fact. These Irishmen, the salt of the country, have no sympathy with Fenianism or any other revolutionary scheme; but they know that in their fathers' or grandfathers' time Dublin was really a capital—Dublin was a centre. It is such no longer, and they have neither the wish nor the power to make London *their* centre. They are included, and glad to be included, in the circle of English laws; but they feel that intellectually, and also as a matter of sentiment, *they have no country*. Ireland has ceased to be a country, and England is not theirs. They know that Ireland is in a poor case (owing to both her own and to English misconduct), but they entirely mistrust the proposed nostrum for her cure. We mention this as a noteworthy and little noticed thread in the texture of Irish public feeling. George Petrie, the least revolutionary and least polemical of men, and with a very strong respect and admiration for the specialities of English character, felt this like others. He had seen the departing skirts of Dublin's social brilliancy, and spoke with regret, not only of the old society, with its peculiar ease, vivacity, and jovial refinement, but of the countless pictures and other objects of art which were sooner or later transported from Ireland to England, after Dublin lost her numerous resident nobles and members of Parliament. 'Walking about the streets,' he said to me, 'I used often to have glimpses of most beautiful pictures hanging on the walls inside.'

Petrie's last house in Dublin was in Charlemont Place, on the south verge of the city, with a rather pleasant look-out on the Grand Canal and its rows of elms. Before coming

there he lived for some years in Rathmines Road, in the same neighbourhood.

But we must end our slight notice. Petrie was delicate in chest from his youth up, and of late had a painful cough every winter. Last winter, his last of all in this state of things, he seemed stronger and better (says one who was near him) than usual; but towards the beginning of December he began to complain of languor, and his appetite, always slight, got worse. The most alarming sign was that he sat unemployed, which those who knew him had never known him to do before. Then he went to bed, his bodily powers ebbing through six days without pain, with some wandering of mind now and again, but always a return to clear consciousness when answering any question. 'Whenever we asked him how he felt, he always replied, "Quite comfortable"; and, judging by the expression of his face, he never seemed to have an uneasy thought. He died so calmly and quietly that we hardly knew when he ceased to breathe.'[1]

His papers, including several unpublished essays, are in the hands of Dr. Stokes, Dean Graves (now Bishop of Limerick), and Lord Dunraven; and the first-named gentleman is to prepare a Life and Letters of his friend.[2]

Let us add that the good old man was generally called 'Doctor Petrie,' having received the title of LL.D. from the University of Dublin; that he was many years a widower, and that he had a small pension on the Civil List which will doubtless be continued to his daughters.[3]

In Europe, America, India, Australia, or wheresoever else in the world, it would be hard, we think, to find a cultivated Irishman or friend of Ireland who is not a sincere mourner of George Petrie. He has left behind him on this earth no gentler inhabitant.

[1] This was in a letter to me from Miss Petrie. [2] Published. [3] It has been.

SIX ESSAYS

Flatter your world and it will smile on you,
Narcissus to its dear reflected self.

THE occasions on which these Papers were written lie now some years behind us, but the subjects and principles discussed are not of passing but of permanent importance. I wish it had been possible to handle them altogether impersonally, but it was as embodied in the works and words of influential living men that some of these questions came under discussion, and without definite examples all must have been vague and unintelligible. I have been forced, with fear and trembling, and a kind of shame, to differ on certain points from some whom I deeply respect; yet, I hope, a frank reader may find in these pages suggestions for thought, not bounded by topics of the day, and entirely irrespective of names, whether famous or insignificant.

MODERN PROPHETS

REMEMBER this, Lover of truth and right,
Against the Powers of Darkness sworn to fight,
If mine, a fellow-soldier's helm you smite.

The Theologian, propping faith with lies,
The Savant, sifting natural mysteries,
Faithless, irreverent; which of these is worse?
And must we choose between the two, perforce?
Nay, courage still! for nature and the soul
Are what they are, and not in man's control.

By miracles these, and by mechanics those,
Explain the Universe, which meantime goes
Quietly on its way—how, no man knows.

The highest, widest, noblest thought of thine
Is the most true.
And is it greater than the Truth Divine?—
O drop of dew
In which the glory of the sun doth shine!

ESSAY I.

MODERN PROPHETS.

[*Fraser's Magazine*, September, 1877.]

I.

IN my youth, the chief object of my intellectual and moral animosity was the Theologian. I looked upon him as the Chief Liar, and, therefore, the main evil-doer in this world; poisoning every source of knowledge, vitiating every social relation. I myself suffered from him bitterly; and bitterly did I resent the suffering and the wrong. Low Church was my immediate tormentor; but Low and High, Papist and Dissenter, were alike hateful. It was as nauseous to hear of mediation as of transubstantiation; not a pin to choose between one false dogmatism and another. I was often beside myself almost at the hypocrisy and cowardice of those—and they seemed almost everybody—who tolerated, who upheld, who without any true faith pretended to venerate these old fantasies and falsities.

But this rebelliousness of mind was no diabolic spirit; it sprang out of a religious not an irreligious temper; it was the rebellion of loyalty not of lawlessness. I longed to submit myself without shadow of scruple or reserve to

Rightful Authority, and I found Wrongful Authority usurping its place.

As I grew up I succeeded, after many struggles, in shaking myself free from this unjust yoke; but it has bowed my shoulders and cramped my muscles, and the recollection of it never fails to sting. Few people are less likely than myself to object to the warfare against theologic dogmatism so boldly declared by modern science. Let us be rid of this old crust of lying and chicane. Let us have done with it, and turn away from it altogether. Let neither benevolent Broad Church Dean, nor eloquent Dissenter, nor philosophic Editor, induce us to pay further attention to such essentially absurd questions, any more than mystic High Churchism or senile Infallibility itself.

And since Thought has not yet escaped out of the militant condition, I by no means complain that the most popularly influential of our Scientific Writers and Lecturers have not confined themselves to what was comprehended by the word 'Science' in the days of Dalton and Davy, in the days of Herschel and Faraday. Our chief Literati have been usually very cautious, sometimes, one might say, cringing in their demeanour to the respectable old Shams they could not avoid encountering. It was time they and the world in general got a hint that public opinion (as well as private opinion this long while) has much changed in regard to these pretensions.

Would I then, if I could, forbid the Professors to investigate matter and force in every possible way, without regard to any former doctrines or ideas regarding them? Certainly I would not. Is it my wish to prohibit their speculating and forming theories in regard to the physical Universe, including the constitution of Man? Not at all. Theorising is a necessary part of any process of investigation, and these men are engaged in great and noble work. They are strong men, some of them, and not always merciful to the unlike-

minded. A little fair comment cannot harm them. If by the nature of this essay I am forced to cite on censurable points some highly-honoured and honourable names it is not, assuredly, that I am less willing than average mortals to acknowledge and to pay the dues of gratitude and homage which they most justly command.

II.

To Science *versus* Dogmatic Theology I should, therefore, wish every success, if it were in want of anybody's good wishes. But Science wants no backing or encouragement in this matter. Science has of late been carrying all before it; and I must own that I am not entirely satisfied with the result. Science is, perhaps, carrying too much before it. The victor sweeps away not only hostile rampart and citadel, but the city itself. Those teachers and preachers who have most the ear of the present time, aim at, or at all events tend to, the destruction, not merely of Dogmatism but of Religious Faith. Some of them say that as to the existence of a God they neither affirm nor deny it; it would be as irrational to do the one as the other; but 'tis a question that does not concern them, and their time is sufficiently occupied. Well, I count these Atheists; as being *persons who do not believe in God*. The force of the 'A' is in their case privative. In the case of others it is directly negative; they *are persons who believe there is no God*. But those who ignore God, and those who deny God, are both practically Atheists; they do not acknowledge an intelligent Sovereign Ruler of this Universe of which they are part; their thoughts and life are shaped without any reference to such a Sovereignty. The present age will be noted or notorious for this, that for the first time in the history of modern civilisation

ATHEISM is publicly and authoritatively inculcated. It is now in England taught in schools, classes, lectures to working-men, lectures to the fashionable world, Sunday afternoon discourses, 'lay-sermons' of all sorts, books and periodicals addressed to people of every rank and every degree of culture. The artisan who used to find it skulking in his cheap newspaper and dingy discussion hall, is now invited to hear it in a national building from the mouths of famous Professors paid by the Government. It has its half-crown *Fortnightly Review*, as well as its twopenny *National Reformer*, and its doctrines are served up in the flavouring of countless novels and poems.

It may as well be frankly confessed—we are going to try to do without a God of any sort.

But this important change in public opinion is coming on without earthquake or tornado. The professors of Atheism are polite, and manage at worst to discover a *modus vivendi* with bishops and deans, though with the lower clergy it is sometimes a little difficult. Our age prides itself on being pretty-behaved, on having its manners thoroughly mollified by culture; its dogmatism on the one hand, even in the furthest ultramontane extent, and its 'scientism' on the other, even when most atheistic, are tempered with mutual civility and compliment. Have we not heard rumours of a 'Metaphysical Society,'[1] as heterogeneous and harmonious as any Happy Family ever collected into one cage? Certainly the professors seem to marry like other people, and to have wives and children that are very much like other people's, and on the whole one might suppose theories of the universe to have but little effect on actual life. But effects take time. Our prophets, at least the elder ones, have much of the old religious leaven in their blood. We are already beginning to see something of the second genera-

[1] Expired, after a lingering illness, December, 1880 (or, with more exactness, committed suicide quietly in Dr. Martineau's parlour).

tion of Atheism, and some of us who read this may live long enough to see the full undiluted effects of that view of things.

There is, as I say, no agitation or alarm perceptible; yet now and again some anxious person enquires whether, if Belief in God became obsolete in society, the feeling of Moral Responsibility would remain unimpaired? One can hardly conceive Civilised Society existing without 'Moral Responsibility'—or something equivalent, however named. Among other reassuring replies it is sometimes pointed out that men exhibit an average of good conduct and trustworthiness who hold very various opinions on what are usually considered vital questions of religion and morals. True; but hitherto there has always been a general basis underlying all these varieties. Most varieties of opinion at any given time are probably superficial. Those who as individuals have any real opinions at all are comparatively few. But in a community or several contemporary communities in nearly the same stage of civilisation, there has always been a substratum of opinion, old, composite, and very solid, seldom examined and seldomer disturbed, on which society rested. It is *this* of which the breaking-up appears to be threatened. God, the Soul, Right and Wrong, Duty, Unselfishness, these ideas, each in connection with the rest,—under whatever forms received, however varying in force and effect in various minds, and though always, perhaps, rejected by some thinkers—have never been rejected by any *community* of civilised men. The tendency of the present time seems to be towards such a rejection—seems to point to a future, not distant, generation, whose Poetry and whose Science shall agree in ignoring 'the Soul,' both in Man and in the Universe.

What then? There are those who have gone all lengths in speculation, yet continued to find their portion of content in a quiet, useful, and what would certainly in any other

case be called a 'moral' life. Such men doubtless there would still be. But such men are at any time exceptional, and in precept and example are apt to be neutral and inoperative. In a general breaking up of the floors of the great deep of men's faith, they would be of little account. Suppose it shall be found that to the majority no faith would mean no morals: 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die'—? Well, retorts the Professor, shall we keep our sham faith or faiths?

By no means.

III.

The Scientific Creed of the Future has not yet been put into any formal shape, even tentatively; but it would seem that conceptions not unlike the following have a good chance to find place in it.

Man is merely and entirely an animal, differing but in degree from apes, dogs, rats, &c., and all the faculties of man begin in the lower animals. Animals are machines, of a particular kind, built up and compounded of material atoms. 'Life' is only the way in which this machinery works. Consciousness, Thought, Memory, are only subtler effects of the machinery. There is nothing perceptible, or properly conceivable, anywhere in the universe but Matter. There are no causes or effects which are not mechanical, which do not come from particles of matter, moving about and pushing against each other. 'Soul' is an unmeaning phrase. 'Morality' is consideration, in a rational and logical shape, for the welfare of the community or of mankind; and apart from this there are no moral obligations. There is no future for the individual; his army and perhaps his regiment will survive, and may recollect his name for a time, but each soldier marches into nothingness. We do

not know, and perhaps are not capable of knowing, how things began, but Matter has a tendency to become alive, to grow, to vary into many shapes, to develop higher things out of lower. Still, high or low, thick or thin, it remains Matter. There is no trace of a 'God' anywhere, or of anything higher than man, the chief animal. As to the question whether God may not exist, it is at best merely speculative, and has no practical bearing on human affairs.

This perhaps represents not unfairly the general impression made on average minds by the teaching of even the elder Modern Prophets, although these gentlemen have not failed now and again to modify and soften things, and sometimes endeavour to soothe the susceptibilities of their hearers—nay possibly, of their own minds also, leavened as aforesaid by old grannies' tales. But the Younger Prophets here in England, emboldened by illustrious examples on the Continent, have gone quite as far in meaning as we have just indicated, and much further in audacity, or, as some may think, insolence of tone.[1]

IV.

John Wilkes one day said, 'I never was a Wilkesite,' and Darwin might declare, 'I am no Darwinian,'—that is, in the extreme sense in which the word is commonly used. In his famous 'Origin' he deals from first to last with what have been called secondary causes. Practically his Disciples inculcate Atheism; all discountenancing, some despising, faith in a Divine Personality, the Creator and Upholder of the Universe—a Living God: but they vary in tone. One Professor (though he cannot sufficiently ridicule prayer) does

[1] A sign of the times is an English Judge, and an eminent one, who is publicly and aggressively atheistic.

not resist the notion, so long as it is not formed into a dogma, of there being possibly a mysterious Something not describable in scientific terms or discoverable by scientific means, something (as the poet said) deeply interfused, whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, and which occasionally seems to 'give tone' to the Professor's own mental condition. But all this at best is little more than a dream. It is Matter which claims our serious attention,—though how Consciousness and Thought are evolved from Matter our Professor owns himself unable to even guess, and does not expect that man will ever be able discover it. In this Modern Prophet's teaching some traces of awe and reverence survive (partly perhaps from the impressions of his quiet Irish boyhood), some shadow of mystery is still allowed to hover here and there upon our conception of the Universe, and he indulges us with quotations from the poets.

His friend, Professor Huxley, shows a different variety of 'Scientist' temperament, and has had a more active early experience as medical student, sea-voyager, &c. He harbours nothing of these sentimental musings, glimmers and glamours and half-regretful glances at the old dream of Spirituality. He answers the question 'Is there a God?' in a bluff, matter-of-fact, wholly irreverent tone, to this effect: 'I don't know—and don't particularly care. It would be as foolish to deny that there may be something of the sort, as to assert that there is. There is nothing whatever to be made of the enquiry. Let us attend to practical business.'

As to the questions hitherto unsolved, to which replies may be found in the future by means of scientific investigation (the only means of arriving at any truth) this Professor is much more sanguine than his friend. He not only 'expects' Science to show us organic matter produced wholly from inorganic, but to demonstrate (what the Professor is himself already convinced of) that Consciousness, Thought, Memory, and all that we have been used to

regard as attributes of 'the Soul' are mere 'functions of matter,' as much as heat or gravitation. 'There is every reason to believe that consciousness is a function of nervous-matter when that nervous-matter has attained a certain degree of organism. . . Our thoughts are the expression of molecular changes in that matter of life which is the source of our other vital phenomena.' Professor Huxley has also, reviving and in part reshaping certain theories of Descartes, put forward a statement that 'animals are conscious Automata,' and defies anyone to demonstrate that they feel either pleasure or pain.

V.

Let us now turn our eyes abroad and look at Jena, where we find a public instructor for whom our Professor Huxley has a warm admiration, calling him 'the Coryphœus of German naturalists'—and conferring his name on some kind of apparently live substance found in the depths of the sea, *Bathybius Haeckelii*.[1] Professor Haeckel's voice reaches the general English public too by means of a translation (revised by Professor Ray Lancaster) of his *Schöpfungsgeschichte*, under the title of *The History of Creation; or, The Development of the Earth and its Inhabitants by the Action of Natural Causes*. By natural causes, Professor Haeckel tells us over and over again and with the greatest emphasis, he means *mechanical* causes exclusively (chemistry being itself reducible to mechanics), and he rejects with scorn and contempt any notion of the 'supernatural interference of a personal Creator' at any stage of the world's history. Darwin speaks of 'the primitive form which was first called into life by the Creator,' but Professor Haeckel finds

[1] But Science unfortunately has had to reject *Bathybius*.

this idea repulsive to him, even as a hypothesis, and endeavours (vol. i., ch. xiii.) to 'form a tenable conception of a completely non-miraculous origin of the first primary organism.' He gives his theory of the evolution of the world with all that therein is out of 'a *gaseous chaos*,' a theory which is 'purely mechanical or monistic, makes use exclusively of the inherent forces of eternal matter, and entirely excludes every supernatural process, every pre-arranged and conscious action of a personal Creator.'

As to the Human Animal, Professor Haeckel traces its 'Chain of Ancestors' up through twenty-one successive links or stages, beginning from 'formless little lumps of mucous or albuminous matter' (protoplasm).

As to what we call 'soul,' there is no 'qualitative difference between Man and lower animals.'

But even Professor Haeckel thinks it well to guard against sending away his audience in an uncomfortable, dispirited state of mind, as might happen with such of them at least as were brought up in old notions. He tells them that 'the Theory of Descent as applied to man opens up the most encouraging prospects for the future, and frees us from all those anxious fears which have been the scarecrows of our opponents.' The new mechanical philosophy 'must open up a new road to moral perfection.' And his book ends with a burst of eloquence:

'The highest function of the human mind is perfect knowledge, fully developed consciousness, and the moral activity arising from it. "Know thyself!" was the cry of the philosophers of antiquity to their fellow men who were striving to ennoble themselves. "Know thyself!" is the cry of the Theory of Development, not merely to the individual but to all mankind. And while increased knowledge of self becomes, in the case of every individual man, a strong force, urging to an increased attention to conduct, manhood as a whole will be led to a higher path of moral

perfection by the knowledge of its true origin and its actual position in Nature. The simple religion of Nature, which grows from a true knowledge of Her, and of Her inexhaustible store of revelations, will in future ennoble and perfect the development of mankind far beyond that degree which can possibly be attained under the influence of the multifarious religions of the churches of the various nations, religions resting on a blind belief in the vague secrets and mythical revelations of a sacerdotal caste. Future centuries will celebrate our age, which was occupied with laying the foundations of the Doctrine of Descent, as the new era in which began a period of human development, rich in blessings—a period which was characterised by the victory of free inquiry over the despotism of authority, and by the powerful ennobling influence of the monistic [*i.e.* mechanical and atheistic] Philosophy.'

It will be owned that our New Prophet has managed to catch the tone of a certain school of pulpit eloquence pretty well, and he is certainly not less windy and hollow. It is ludicrous enough to find him, when warming up in his 'trot for the avenue,' taking to the good old device of personification, and Mechanical Nature becoming 'Her' with a big H.

It seems probable that these moral comforts and encouragements which our Modern Prophets still think themselves bound to offer, are but 'survivals' from the superstitious times, and will gradually become obsolete.

VI.

I was reading last night some of Professor Clifford's discourses at the Sunday Lectures for the People in Langham Hall, now published in a cheap shape, and this

morning when I awoke fell athinking of them till I grew profoundly melancholy. Mr. Clifford is a young man who distinguished himself in mathematics at Cambridge, and is now Professor of Applied Mathematics and Mechanics in University College, London. But his name is more widely known as a contributor to some of the principal magazines; besides which he is fond of giving popular lectures; and his position, learning, and ability, aided by a pleasant, lively delivery, make him, I believe, highly acceptable to his audiences. His writings and discourses have always one burden: Science is the sworn foe of all theology, and the rightful queen of human life.

Mr. Clifford is not only an avowed but an enthusiastic materialist and atheist. 'The physical world . . . is made up of atoms and ether; there is no room in it for ghosts.' And he finds no trace of any world except the physical. He does not agree with Mr. Huxley, who thinks that to deny the existence of a Deity would be as presumptuous as to assert it. He announces it as the decision of science that 'there is no mind without a brain,' finds that there is no evidence for the existence of a 'vast brain' 'far away in space' (and if there were 'it could affect the solar system only by its weight'),[1] and says that 'we seem entitled to conclude that during such time as we can have evidence of, no intelligence or volition has been concerned in events happening within the range of the solar system, except that of animals living on the planets.' The notion of any kind of 'providence' outside of man appears to him profoundly immoral. And, as to man himself, if anybody says that the Will influences matter, the statement is not untrue, 'but it is nonsense.' Here again our Prophet (just a generation later born than the others) has advanced very far beyond the position of his older contemporaries.

[1] *Body and Soul*, p. 29.

Professor Huxley asked us, 'Why trouble ourselves about matters of which, however important they may be, we do know nothing and can know nothing;' urged us to practical work; and told us that for this it was 'necessary to be fully possessed of only two beliefs: the first, that the order of nature is ascertainable by our faculties to an extent which is practically unlimited; the second, that our volition counts for something as a condition of the course of events.'[1] Mark this. Professor Huxley considers it necessary for practical work to hold a belief that '*our volition counts for something as a condition of the course of events.*' I should, myself, prefer to say that the most remarkable fact in life is the reality and unmeasurable power of Human Will. But the Professor's admission is enough. He has preferred to attack Will, seeing that it commands his whole position, has advanced his forces, planted batteries—when, all of a sudden, we find he has decamped! 'The Will counts for something' is an absolute and final abandonment of his position by Field-Marshal Huxley. But Professor Clifford asserts that, '*if anybody says that the Will influences matter, the statement is not untrue, but it is nonsense.*'[2] I have no doubt that however strikingly obvious to the mind of an ordinary hearer of Sunday lectures and lay sermons may be the antagonism here, a subtler mind (which can even conceive that there may be triangles with three angles not equal to two right angles) may find it easy to reconcile the two statements. What such subtlety may be worth I know not, but in these particular cases my reason plainly answers, 'Then by the word "triangle" you do not mean what I mean; and as to Will, *there is no one fact so absolutely certain to me, next to that of my own existence,* as that my Will does influence Matter.'—'It cannot.'—

[1] *Lay Sermons, &c.*, 'On the Physical Basis of Life.'

[2] *Body and Mind*, p. 21.

'It does.'—'I say no!'—'And I say yes!'—a form of argument unprofitable to pursue.

As to morality, Professor Clifford teaches that there is no such thing in any way obligatory upon the individual man or woman, no real foundation at all for morality in the individual; morality takes its rise and has its meaning in the relation of each person to the community to which he belongs. But it is not easy to understand how far it is needful for morality as thus defined that the individual should be in accord with the community. How in the case of civil war? Is it to the well-being of the dominant party, or to that of the party which he wishes to be dominant, that any given man's morality is referable? When a man is quite sure of the community to which he owes loyalty—owes 'piety,' as our Professor wishes to phrase it—he is to measure the moral worth of every action of his life by its traceable effect upon that community. In all cases, then, in which he cannot trace any such effect, there is no moral obligation upon him whatever. Where he *can* trace such an effect, it remains for his judgment to decide whether it be a good or bad effect; no easy matter, even on scientific principles. For example, is luxury good for a community?—always?—only sometimes? Then in what cases and to what extent? The maxim, that 'we must not do evil that good may come,' is evidently obsolete, like so many other old saws. Whether what we do is evil or not depends entirely upon what comes of it—to the community. The abolition of weakly or superfluous children, the hopelessly sick, the aged and infirm, will in no few minds be among the logical results of morality on a scientific basis. Indeed, Professor Haeckel of Jena (who is a still more enthusiastic atheist than Professor Clifford, if that be possible) not obscurely indicates his approval of such expedients, and his belief that they will take their place in the political economy of the future. Professor Huxley gives no hint of his opinion on these

delicate questions of applied science; but an average hearer of his, thoroughly imbued with the idea of 'mechanism,'—as for practical purposes at all events, the true idea of the universe, extending to all the phenomena of what we call life, and dealing with man on precisely the same conditions as any other animal,—might well be expected to find no essential difference between the drowning of a superfluous baby and of a superfluous kitten, or *prima facie* objection to getting rid of one's grandfather as is sometimes done in the case of an old horse. If there be no *sacredness* in human life, many of our dearest, and, as we fondly thought, deepest notions of right and wrong, must assuredly be given up as empty superstitions.

VII.

Such are our Modern Prophets; and it is vain to deny the force and effect of their preaching, or to shut our eyes to its probable effects in the future. The assault upon Spirituality made with ruder weapons by many a thinker, ancient and modern, is renewed with all the resources of the nineteenth century's armouries. And who am I that I should venture to raise my voice in ridiculous protest against the eloquence and learning of the time, like the hapless interrupter at a public meeting, who speaks from among the auditory, and is met with universal cries of 'Turn him out!' Yet if I can gain a few minutes' hearing I will venture to say, with all due humility, that there are, at all events, some things which a thoughtful and reasonable human being, contemporary with these famous 'Scientists,' and, whether he will or no, subject to their influences, may fairly object to in their teachings, especially their popular lectures and books. One objectionable thing is the *tone* in which they often write, and of which some examples have already been incidentally given. Another objectionable thing is, the

habit of weaving-in guesses and unsound or unproven statements into a so-called scientific argument—putting here and there in the iron chain a link which when tested proves to be painted wood or even gingerbread.

A few examples I can furnish out of my note-book, and first one from Mr. Darwin. He is telling us[1] that 'all the organic beings'—plants and animals together, including man—'which have ever lived upon this earth may have descended from one primordial form.' 'In all, as far as at present known, the germinal vesicle is the same. So that every being starts from a common origin.' What a prodigious assertion does this '*so that*' quietly introduce! the qualifying clause, 'as far as at present known,' being put out of sight. But when we take up this clause, and look at it, we find that it leaves the whole question open. And it is certainly as reasonable a supposition as any other, that if we do not detect any difference between two germinal vesicles (which are on the way to produce two very unlike beings), it is because our means of investigation are limited and inadequate. That they *are* always limited and often inadequate we know as matter of fact.

But of all Darwinites Darwin himself is the most cautious and the least liable to this accusation of admitting bad links into his chain of argument. Professor Huxley's more ardent temperament, which sometimes runs into pugnacity and paradox, commits him in this way not seldom. Speaking of the beginning of things, he said he had no means of forming any definite conclusion, but, *if* it were given him to look back so far, he '*should expect*' to be a witness of the evolution of living protoplasm from not-living matter. 'I should expect to see it appear under forms of great simplicity,' &c.[2] The scientific value of this retrospective expectation, surely, is just nothing at all. And the Professor not merely supposes

[1] *Origin of Species*, p. 519.

[2] *Address*, as President of the British Association at Liverpool.

himself placed where and when he has full opportunity to observe the precise beginnings of what we call life, but supposes himself made capable at the same time of knowing absolutely that the matter visibly becoming protoplasm was at one moment non-living and at another moment living matter. He would not only need to make his dreadful journey into

> The dark backward and abysm of time,

but, on reaching the goal, to find himself in possession of entirely superhuman powers of observation.

The Professor's love of paradox induced him to defy us to prove that the lower animals can feel pain. With like rashness he told a medical class to look on a patient precisely as a mechanic looks on the spinning-jenny he is called to repair.[1] But did a spinning-jenny ever move faster or slower when its repairer came in at the door? Could standing near it and speaking to it make any possible difference in its condition? Men whose words reach every ear should choose them well, and avoid saying startling things on ephemeral stimulus,—since men, themselves included, are really *not* spinning-jennies.

He believes in 'the development of the moral sense' out of the simple feelings of pleasure and pain, liking and disliking, with which the lower animals are provided, and says it may be affirmed 'with equal truth' of men and of animals, that all their actions are traceable to the fear of punishment or of pain, or to the hope of pleasure. 'To do your duty is to earn the approbation of your conscience or moral sense,' and this approbation is a pleasure, as its disapprobation is a pain. But this 'conscience or moral sense,' which certainly often requires us to do things that are in themselves troublesome and even painful to us,—speaking according to usual language

[1] The report of this address will be found in the *Times*, but I neglected to note the date.

and common experience,—whence comes it? If you choose to insist it is something in the nature of man; that 'immutable and eternal principles of morality' are innate in him; the Professor has nothing to say against this proposition. 'Admitting its truth, I do not see how the moral faculty is on a different footing from any of the other faculties of man. If I choose to say that it is an immutable and eternal law of human nature that "ginger is hot in the mouth," the assertion has as much foundation of truth as the other, though I think it would be expressed in needlessly pompous language.' Surely the sub-sarcastic or slightly insolent tone has seldom been less happily adopted! That man is capable of enduring suffering and death out of a sense of duty, and that ginger bites his tongue, seem to the Professor to be not only equally true but truths of the same order; he does not see how they are 'on a different footing.' A little farther down in the same paragraph, he appeals 'to the common sense of mankind;' but if he could actually appeal to it on this question of Conscience and Ginger, he would find himself as poorly off as politicians sometimes are after a general election of which they were confident.

VIII.

When pressed in argument by Mr. Wallace to show by what mental steps we could pass from movements of matter to sensation and consciousness, Professor Huxley declared that: 'In *ultimate analysis* everything is incomprehensible;' which is one way of apologising for not explaining a particular difficulty: 'We cannot really explain *anything*.' (If only Messieurs the Scientists would keep their modesty in regular wear, and not pull it on and off like a pair of gloves!) 'I do not even know, cannot at all conceive (our Professor asserts) how it is that one billiard-ball striking another puts the second in motion.' That we can have no *absolute* conception of anything or any property of a thing is an elementary truth of psychology. But, turning from the vain attempt to fathom the bottomless abyss of the absolute, we arrive at various degrees of conceivability in regard to the phenomenal nature of things and their mutual relations. In the collision of two elastic bodies the communication of *vis viva* or motion is a visible fact, as intelligible to the human mind as any phenomenon can well be; there are (I speak without book) impact, elastic yielding, resistance, resilience, pushing, displacement; and the shares in the effect due to velocity, weight, material, and form are calculable. Now, if Professor Huxley cannot 'form any conception' of how it happens that a billiard-ball is moved when struck by another billiard-ball, of what use, it might be asked, can his reasonings and speculations possibly be on physical phenomena incomparably more obscure, complicated, and subtle than this? How can anyone reason and speculate upon a thing of which he can form no conception? 'In *ultimate analysis* everything is incomprehensible'—is one of those vague truisms under cloud and cover whereof debaters often conceal their difficulties. The fact is that Mr. Huxley is constantly striving to form and formulate and convey to the world 'conceptions of how it happens' that things are what they are and do what they do,—not merely such simple facts as two marbles and their striking together, but the phenomena of life, consciousness, thought, and memory. It is precisely the point of all his teaching that they can be conceived and explained on the principles of physical science. He finds, however, that after investigating and also speculating to the full length of his tether in any direction, there always remains something more to be explained, to which he can find no clue; and here comes in usefully the axiom, 'In ultimate analysis everything is incomprehensible.' How much the ultimate Something More may be which refuses to be analysed, is of course

unguessable; but it is acknowledged to include no less than *the Real Nature of Everyone*—the what, how, and why of all those phenomena whereof the greatest efforts of human Science (so presumptuous where it ought to be so humble) can but, as it were, scratch the surface,—and sometimes spoil it, without getting at anything worth while below.

If science can form 'no conception' as to the physical relations of the two billiard-balls to each other, science's occupation is gone: but if it *can* form a sufficiently clear working conception in this case, it by no means follows that it can also do so in the case of the motion of my nerves in relation to my consciousness. The bringing the two cases into one category is an example of what we find everywhere with our Modern Prophets, the assumption underlying all their thought and teaching, that physical science is competent to deal with the total contents of human experience; the truth being that these our Prophets translate every experience into materialistic formulæ. Their minds, having a natural bent to begin with, have been fostered by training and habit into a way of looking at all things which to themselves appears pre-eminently large, sane, and wise, but which may turn out to be (however valuable in its own range) narrow, superficial, and miserably inadequate, when pretending to the interpretation of Man and his Universe.

No, the universe is not mechanical; but merely scientific conceptions of it are mechanical.

IX.

A MODERN PROPHET, a Frenchman, who died not many years ago, has a small but active body of disciples in England. Their *culte* is the worship of Humanity; this is 'the New Supreme Being.' All the religious sentiments (awe, veneration, wonder, spiritual love, duty, faith, and

hope) are solely to spring from and be nourished by the contemplation of the History of the Human Race, studied by the light of a new science, the culmination of all other sciences, and the most complex, which has been named 'Sociology.' The French 'High Priest of Humanity' made his own classification of the sciences, beginning with Mathematics, and rising step by step through Astronomy, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, to this crowning Science of Sociology.

But our chief Science-Prophets have refused to acknowledge the leadership, not to speak of the high-priestship, of Auguste Comte; wherefore between these and the Comteists has come about a condition of declared warfare. An able and learned disciple writing in the *Fortnightly Review* (June and July, 1877) shows with force the unsuitableness of Professor Huxley's epithet, 'conscious automata,' and the want of all real evidence to found any theory upon the origin of life, not failing to throw a contemptuous glance at the mathematical paradoxes in which Professor Clifford delights. Speaking broadly of 'that recrudescence of metaphysics which is now passing current for science,' Dr. Bridges wishes men to follow Comte's advice, and discard all attempts 'to stand outside the universe, to regard it as a whole, and to explain it.' Comte's synthesis of the sciences is subjective; everything is studied with reference to Man, the central object. And Man too is to be studied scientifically. The 'positive method' is the study of constant relations, underlying the apparent irregularities of phenomena; and Comte was the first to apply this method to the study of human nature, individual and social; the culminating result being the formation of the Religion of the future, namely, the Worship of Humanity. But our later Scientists, not accepting this, are attempting 'to *explain* the evolution of the universe on mathematical principles,' a 'gigantic exhibition of Materialism,' a new effort to build the Tower of Babel up to the skies. 'The process (says Dr. Bridges)

is a strange one to watch, so confused are their tongues, so doubtful their materials. The bricks must be of the newest; there is hardly time to bake them; for "physiological facts," we are now told by a distinguished professor, and apparently the facts of mathematics also, "only last for three years." The scaffolding is no longer of the old-fashioned sort, firmly planted on the earth's surface; planks and beams are suspended in the sky by the largest balloons that hypothesis can inflate.' The molecular view of the constitution is, as Dr. Bridges most truthfully reminds us, only 'a subjective artifice or logical tool, susceptible in wise hands of most valuable results,' but a view which has been 'elevated to an objective reality.' The universe, according to the scientific doctrine now in vogue, consists of Atoms and Ether; and we are told a great deal of the size and movements of the invisible Atoms, and of the qualities of the mysterious Ether. 'But the whole theory is mere speculation.'

X.

When the Comteist lance thus hits the Scientist home, I clap my hands and rejoice; yet when in the next joust the Knight of Science pierces his opponent's armour, I cannot say I feel sorry. I fight under neither banner; and should groan to see this combatant, or that, crowned as fair Idea's champion. When the Knight of Humanity has dismounted and put aside his lance and armour, what is it he brings us? Dr. Bridges writes: 'It may be well to say that I do not accuse Professor Huxley either of Theism or Atheism; understanding him, like myself, to disavow both.' Well, gentlemen, but this *is* Atheism. You ignore God: there is no Divine Being in your theories or your thoughts. The position is logically different, but not practically, from that of Professor Clifford, who abjures the notion of a God,

and believes that the *impossibility* of the existence of any such being will soon be an established scientific truth.

Here is *A General View of Positivism*, translated from the French of Auguste Comte by J. H. Bridges, Physician to the Bradford Infirmary, late Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford (London, 1865); and on studying this book we find that the High Priest of Humanity repudiates all connection between Positivism and Atheism as a system (p. 49). Systematic Atheism (which he truly calls 'very rare') occupies itself as much as Theology with insoluble problems, and can be of no use. But the book in my hand bears on its title page the motto, '*Réorganiser, sans dieu ni roi, par le culte systématique de l'Humanité.*' And it concludes thus (I omit nothing tending to qualify what is quoted):

'Monotheism in Western Europe is now as obsolete and injurious as Polytheism was fifteen centuries ago. . . . The truth is, the more zealous theological partisans, whether royalists, aristocrats, or democrats, have now for a long time been insincere. God is to them but the nominal head of a hypocritical conspiracy, a conspiracy which is even more contemptible than it is odious. Their object is to keep the people from all great social improvements by assuring them that they will find compensation for their miseries in an imaginary future life. . . . There are now but two camps: the camp of reaction and anarchy, which acknowledges more or less directly the direction of God: the camp of construction and progress, which is wholly devoted to Humanity. The Being upon whom all our thoughts are concentrated is one whose existence is undoubted. . . . Placing our highest happiness in universal love, we live, as far as possible, for others; and this in public life as well as in private; for the two are closely linked together in our religion, a religion clothed in all the beauty of art, and yet never inconsistent with science. After having thus exercised our powers to the full, and having given a charm and

sacredness to our temporary life, we shall at last be for ever incorporated with the Supreme Being, of whose life all noble natures are necessarily partakers.'

XI.

So far the High Priest himself; and now let us listen for a short time to a recent utterance of one of his most enthusiastic and eloquent disciples, Mr. Frederic Harrison. He is violently angry with the 'Materialists,' who are dominant nowadays. 'There is a school of teachers abroad, and they have found an echo here, who dream that victorious vivisection will ultimately win them anatomical solutions of man's moral and spiritual mysteries.' These are suffering from 'unholy nightmares,' and their leading notion is 'a bestial sophism.' But there is a subtler materialism amongst us—'it has nothing to say about the spiritual life of man; it has no particular religion; it ignores the Soul.'

This sounds comforting and encouraging.

And by-and-by comes the question, 'What then is the only solution which can ultimately satisfy both the devotees of science and the believers in religion?' at which we prick up our ears—or rather we should, did we not know already what answer is coming. Positivism is the solution, and no other is genuine; observe the signature 'Auguste Comte'—and so forth.

We have heard it all before, but the audacity (not to use a harsher word) of the title given to this essay, *The Soul and Future Life*, led us on to read, and, having read, leaves us amazed. The Soul is 'the concensus of the faculties which observation discovers in the human organism. . . . We are determined to treat man as a human organism, just as we treat a dog as a canine organism; and we have no ground for saying, and no good is to be got by pretending, that man is a human organism *plus* an indescribable entity . . . and to

talk to us of mind, feeling, and will continuing their functions in the absence of physical organs and visible organisms, is to use language which, to us at least, is pure nonsense.' (This, you observe, is a favourite argument with the Younger Prophets, that whosoever does not entirely agree with them is talking 'nonsense.')

Well, but, my good sir, all this sounds very like the 'anatomical solutions,' 'unholy nightmares,' 'bestial sophisms,' which you have so earnestly repudiated. Not at all! 'We have not the slightest reason to suppose that the consciousness of the organism continues, for we mean by consciousness the sum of sensations of a particular organism'—but (observe!) 'the energy of the activities' is never lost. 'Not a single manifestation of thought or feeling is without some result so soon as it is communicated to a similar organism.' 'The mental and moral powers are not dispersed like gases. They retain their unity, they retain their organic character, and they retain the whole of their power of passing into and stimulating the brains of living men; and in those they carry on their activity precisely as they did whilst the bodies in which they were formed absorbed or exhaled material substance.' After much reflecting on these words, I can only say, with all due respect to their learned author, that they look as like 'pure nonsense' as anything I have seen in print for a long time.

In fact a man's 'higher activities and potency' only begin after he is dead. Theology has deadened us to the true 'grandeur and perpetuity of our earthly life . . . the consciousness of a coming incorporation into the glorious future of his race, can give a patience and a happiness equal to that of any martyr of theology.' 'For our lives live when we are most forgotten; and not a cup of water that we may have given to an unknown sufferer, or a wise word spoken in season to a child, but has added (whether we remember it, whether others remember it, or not) a streak of happiness

and strength to the world.' It is curious to notice in this passage, as elsewhere, the doleful attempts of Atheism to speak comfortable words to the meditative, sensitive human Soul; an echo, as from a hollow cave, of the voice of heart-warm eloquence; half ludicrous in effect, and wholly sad. 'The difference between our faith and that of the orthodox is this: we look to the permanence of the activities which give others happiness; they look to the permanence of the consciousness which can enjoy happiness. Which is the nobler? What need we then to promise or to hope more than an eternity of spiritual influence? . . . Alas, how vilely selfish it is to exclaim, "What is all that to the *man*, to you, and to me? . . . What is the good of mankind to me, when I am mouldering unconscious? . . . I want my personality!"' Yes, Mr. Frederic Harrison, I assure you, that is what people say, and always will say. That is what I for myself say, most emphatically. That is what all the most eminent men say whom I have been privileged to know in my way through life; what Goethe said, and what the old woman in the nearest almshouse will say if you ask her. That which *you* call 'Future Life,' is by the human soul within us—which you and ten thousand Comtes will never be able to define or describe—named Eternal Death.

Mr. Harrison, on his part, grows very noisy and shrill in the last paragraphs of his sermon. The wish for personal survival is not merely 'so gross, so indolent, so selfish a creed [softly!]; but its worst evil is that it paralyses practical life, and throws it into discord. . . . So far as we can grasp the hypothesis, it seems equally ludicrous and repulsive. . . . These hyperbolic enigmas disturb our grave duties and our solid hopes. No wonder, then, while they are still so rife, that men are dull to the moral responsibility which in its awfulness begins only at the grave; that they are blind to the dignity and beauty of death, and shuffle off the dead life and the dead body with such cruel disrespect.

[What does this precisely mean?] The fumes of the celestial immortality still confuse them. It is only when an earthly future is the fulfilment of a worthy earthly life, that we can see all the majesty as well as the glory of the world beyond the grave; and then only will it fulfil its moral and religious purpose as the great guide of human conduct.'

'Noble' creed, full of 'solid hopes,' 'the majesty and glory of the world beyond the grave;' worship of the New Supreme Being—that is to say, Man in the aggregate; and (for you and me and everybody) Death for ever! O, my Anglo-Comtean Friend (as some one might say), thou art thyself a rather curious phenomenon!

XII.

Thus we find the Scientists and the Comteists at odds with one another—indeed, sworn foes. But to an outsider, who cares little for the respective methods in comparison with their issues, the mental and moral atmosphere which they cause him to breathe, the general view of life and duty which they give him to see, there is really not a pin to choose between them. Atheism, Eternal Death, are the cardinal articles in the creed which they offer to mankind. Who are these 'Materialists,' whose antagonism to religion and morality Mr. Harrison so severely warns us against? Professor Huxley is sadly blind to the lofty claims of the French High Priest of Humanity—'M. Comte's classification of the sciences, under all its aspects, appears to me to be a complete failure.'[1] But scientific theories lead our Professor to use language essentially similar to Mr. Harrison's on the most interesting of all questions: 'Thoughtful men, once escaped from the blinding influences of traditional prejudice, will find in the lowly stock whence man has sprung the best evidence of the splendour of his capacities,

[1] *Lay Sermons*, 'The Scientific Aspect of Positivism.'

and will discern in his long progress through the Past, a reasonable ground of faith in his attainment of a nobler future.' 'His,' you observe, does not apply to you or me or any man in particular—only to Man in general, to Mankind. Professor Haeckel, as we have seen, sings to the same tune. And Professor Clifford, more boldly, praises Atheism for 'the promise which it holds forth for the future.' 'What is the domain of Science?' he asks. 'It is all possible human knowledge which can rightly be used to guide human conduct.' 'Man speed the plough!' 'Conscience is the voice of Man within us.'

This gentleman's recent essay on 'The Ethics of Religion'[1] has much that I heartily agree with. Many things in it I have, myself, for years past, been trying to get said, but have never succeeded in saying them so well. The monstrous evil of sham theologies is never absent from my thoughts. The cruel injustice of allowing our children to be taught dogmatic creeds is a wrong which I have ever most heartily abhorred, and would give my blood in battle against it. I began this paper by saying as much, and nothing I am able to say could express the reality and depth of my feeling on these matters. But that which I cannot sympathise with in Professor Clifford's essay and other utterances,—that which I cannot feel anything but repugnance to,—is his habit of treating the Supreme Ideal ('who shall name Him?'—to the possibility of thinking of Whom profoundest awe and reverence are, as it seems to me, the necessary conditions) as a mere subject for reasoning and logic, and only noticeable at all on these terms. Professor Clifford talks freely, as many have done before him, of Zeus, of Jehovah, of the many 'gods' that men have formulated, but he is constantly pushing over and through these shadows at the human *Idea of a God;* this is the true object of his attack. And Professor Clifford's idea of 'God'

[1] *Fortnightly Review*, July, 1877.

involves no feeling of awe, no sense of mystery, no recognition of an immeasurable, unutterable Presence and Power. To suggest anything 'superhuman' to Professor Clifford enrages him so much that it sometimes drives even the logic out of his head, leaving only confusion. For example: 'Conscience'—Professor Clifford asserts—'is the voice of Man within us.' But men have thought it to be 'the voice of a god.' In that case 'the god may speak to us for man's sake, or for his own sake. If he speaks for his own sake . . . our allegiance is apt to be taken away from man and transferred to the god.' All this becomes the emptiest frivolity in reference to the idea of the Divine Presence. When applied to any particular god-formula it may be relevant, but it concerns a serious man very little. But Professor Clifford, *more suo*, goes a step, and a very long step, farther, and puts the following case: 'To this same treason against humanity belongs the claim of the priesthood to take away the guilt of a sinner after confession has been made to it. The Catholic priest professes to act as an ambassador for his God, and absolve the guilty man by conveying to him the forgiveness of Heaven. *If his credentials were ever so sure* [I italicise here], *if he were indeed the ambassador of a superhuman power, the claim would be treasonable.* Can the favour of the Czar make guiltless the murderer of old men and women and children in Circassian valleys? Can the pardon of the Sultan make clean the bloody hands of a Pasha? As little can any God forgive sins committed against man.' Like the Northern Farmer, Professor Clifford feels he could get along pretty well, 'if godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let him alone.' He cannot picture them save as allies in mischief.

Now, it may be noted, in the first place, that the Catholic Church never has taught that mere confession is enough to procure absolution from guilt; there must be hearty penitence, and, in cases where possible, reparation of the wrong

done. But the statement to which I call attention is this: 'If his [the priest's] credentials were ever so sure, if he were indeed the ambassador of a superhuman power, the claim would be treasonable.' 'A superhuman power' (there is ambiguity in this phrase) we must take as equivalent here to supreme power, for the power now postulated is ideal Godhead. But we are required to suppose the ideal supreme God and All-Father, of whom Justice and Goodness are two essential qualities, making upon a man or men a claim of a treasonable character; an immoral and wicked claim. And looking at the transaction from another point of view, we are to suppose the superhuman making such a claim upon the human and finding it at once disallowed, at least by all cultivated thinkers like Professor Clifford; the 'superhuman power' being thus (though 'super' in some unexplained way) destitute of authority over the human, and, indeed, very evidently *below* the human.

Thus the terms of the supposed case involve two most distinct and glaring contradictions; and perhaps few feebler positions have ever been taken up by an able man in the course of a grave argument.

Professor Clifford, who is interesting and useful as a specimen of what the younger and more advanced School of Atheism can produce, declares, as we have seen, that to speak of Will influencing Matter is 'to talk nonsense;' he, further, believes that the 'bridge' between mechanical bodily movements and human consciousness and thought, deemed impossible by his predecessor, can be made, and that he himself has very nearly discovered how to make it. He has eagerly taken up the curious paradoxes of a foreign mathematician (the possibility of conceiving a space of four dimensions, parallel lines that meet and intersect, triangles whose three angles are not equal to two right angles), and endeavours, apparently in good faith, to found on them an entire revolution in our notions of mathematical truth, and

our conceptions of the physical universe. He thinks he is able to conceive Space as *limited;* and that if he could travel from, say, Charing Cross out among the planets and comets, suns and moons, a very *very* long way in a straight line, he would at last find himself exactly at Charing Cross again. This conception, Professor Clifford tells us, he finds a great comfort to him. One would not willingly grudge a man any comfort he can find, but I must confess that here is not the least comfort for me, any more than in Mr. Harrison's New Supreme Being.

The essay on 'The Ethics of Religion' concludes thus: 'But there are forms of religious emotion which do not thus undermine the conscience. Far be it from me to undervalue the help and strength which many of the bravest of our brethren have drawn from the thought of an unseen helper of men. He who, wearied or stricken in the fight with the powers of darkness, asks himself in a solitary place, "Is it all for nothing? shall we indeed be overthrown?"—he does find something which may justify that thought. In such a moment of utter sincerity, when a man has bared his own soul before the immensities and the eternities, a presence, in which his own poor personality is shrivelled into nothingness, arises within him, and says, as plainly as words can say, "I am with thee, and I am greater than thou." Many names of gods, of many shapes, have men given to this presence; seeking by names and pictures to know more clearly and to remember more continually the guide and the helper of men. No such comradeship with the Great Companion shall have anything but reverence from me, who have known the divine gentleness of Denison Maurice, the strong and healthy practical instinct of Charles Kingsley, and who now revere with all my heart the teaching of James Martineau. They seem to me, one and all, to be reaching forward with loving anticipation to a clearer vision which is yet to come—*tendentesque manus ripæ ulterioris*

amore. For, after all, such a helper of men, outside of humanity, the truth will not allow us to see. The dim and shadowy outlines of the superhuman deity fade slowly away from before us; and as the mist of his presence floats aside, we perceive with greater and greater clearness the shape of a yet grander and nobler figure—of Him who made all gods and shall unmake them. From the dim dawn of history, and from the inmost depth of every soul, the face of our father Man looks out upon us with the fire of eternal youth in his eyes, and says, "Before Jehovah was, I am!"'

This elaborated eloquence may appear intelligible in some sense to certain fit and few readers, but no one can suppose it to be scientific. Mystical as any theologic creed, this Figure, 'grander and nobler' than all conceptions of divine grandeur and nobleness,—our father Man, in the dim dawn of history,—is strangely inconsistent with Sir John Lubbock's ferocious and filthy savage and his predecessor, Mr. Darwin's catarrhine ape. Leaving the main subjects as too high, I should like to hear Professor Clifford attempt—as no doubt he would, and succeed too as far as ingenuity can in such a case—to reconcile this 'reverence,' &c., &c., with his declaration a few pages before—'The Priest is always and everywhere the enemy of mankind.' Are Maurice, and Kingsley, and Martineau to be reckoned 'priests' or not? If not, what do you mean by the word? If yes, are they exceptions to your rule? If you know of these exceptions, how many may other people know of? And would no conceivable number of exceptions invalidate your statement?

But have we not here again 'the trot for the avenue,' rhetorical flourish to wind up,—with some attempt (how vain!) to make the hollow caves of Death echo sounds of lofty and sweet music? Atheism would fain have its hymns; and ghastly parodies they are.

XIII.

In fact, the emotional, moral, and poetic elements, felt to be so large and important in human nature, are embarrassing to the Scientist Prophet. They are out of his line: his methods do not in the least enable him to deal with them; but there they are, full of practical force, of wide, deep, and perpetual influence; by no means to be ignored.

One resource, as we have seen in the case of the Younger Prophets, is to deny the emotional and moral elements any rank or privilege, except so far as they can be made to wear scientific livery. Shall anything be allowed reality which we are unable to formulate?

Another shift for the Modern Prophet is to try and believe and make others believe that the scientific view of the universe includes the poetic; the latter by itself being a kind of *divertissement* of the ignorant fancy, while the scientifically trained mind finds in the truth of things (humanly attainable truth) not merely solid gains but poetic pleasures also, and incomparably better than any others.

Truth to tell, the rapture of our physical friends over merely mechanical facts is sometimes rather ludicrous. One Professor finds a space of the sea-bottom thickly carpeted with the chalky part of minute floating creatures, showering down when they die like a perpetual snow-fall; and is filled with wondering awe by this phenomenon—curious phenomenon enough, but when once the mind has fully taken it in, what more is there to be thought or felt about it? and that this animalcular snow should go on falling to the sea-floor for x years and over an area of y square miles makes very little difference. Multiplied and continued repetition, in which the natural world superabounds, may have *some* effect on the imagination, but only a very poor and narrow effect.

Another Professor is rapt into ecstasy by considering how the sun's heat sets in motion all that moves on this our

planet, and tracing out in all its details the alternate winding up and running down of the complicated world-machinery. 'Presented rightly to the mind' (he instructs us), 'the discoveries and generalisations of modern science constitute a poem more sublime than has been yet addressed to human imagination. The natural philosopher of to-day may dwell amid conceptions which beggar those of Milton. Look at the integrated forces of our world—the stored power of our coal-fields; our woods and rivers; our fleets, armies, and guns. They are all generated by a portion of the sun's energy which does not amount to $\frac{1}{2300000000}$ of the whole.'[1]

I must say, with all due respect, that here is a radical misconception. A sublime poem cannot be constructed out of any number of physical facts, however numerous or gigantic. The sense of all beauty, and a deep delight therein, emotions of awe, of affection, of passion, of moral freedom, of heroic elevation, taking artistic shape and musical voice through a human soul—it is thus that Poetry is generated, not from conceptions, however large, however subtle, of gases and atoms, of solar and planetary orbs, of living forces wound up mechanically in vegetables, and running down again in animals. Milton's conceptions of angelic armies with their artillery, and the like, or his versions of Hebrew myths mixed with Greek, are of little enough value to us; but of priceless value, incommensurate with all the gifts, all the great gifts, which Science bestows, are the dignity of his mental presence, and the inspiring music of his words.

Poetry will certainly assimilate the new materials of thought presented by science; and already there are poets imbued with science, and 'scientists' who love to drink the wine of the Muse. But the two classes will not become confused; the Scientist must be 'born' with his analytic bias and close interest in cause and effect, as well as the

[1] Tyndall, *On Heat, &c.*, near the end.

poet with his passion for beauty and high instinct of unity. And the latter is needed by mankind. If we had to take our account of the world exclusively from scientific minds, from men endowed with all the specially 'scientific' faculties in their fullest measure, the result would be dreary beyond all telling! To the Poets, indeed, the inventors and purifiers of language, Professor Tyndall owes it that he can address mankind in eloquent and imaginative discourse, and is not confined to the worse than Pigeon-English or Choctaw of strictly scientific phraseology.

Supposing us to receive the gift of a sight able to penetrate to the farthest recesses of matter, to sift and separate matter into its ultimate components, its atoms, what are we to expect to see? Just this, wherever we choose to look,—a curious dance of particles, as of motes in the sunbeam; a dance varying in figure, but essentially monotonous, and with nothing else behind it or beyond it. I, for one, should soon tire of watching these dancing atoms, and should prefer of the two gifts an eyesight able to give me full and healthy vision of the opposite end of the process, that which is now presented to us, the beauty, wonder, and significance of the world as it lies around us in its normal relations to our senses. The world which the poet and the painter see is, I devoutly believe, not only more beautiful, but incomparably more true, more like the real 'substance' of things, than the world of microscopists and atom-hunters. Let these latter pursue their quests, and all good luck to them; but let them know their place better, and not tease us in season and out of season with their specialisms. When we long for music, a lecture on acoustics will not serve; even though it include experiments on the sonority of every string and wind instrument in the orchestra. Moreover, after you have tabulated all the vibrations, shown the anatomy of the ear, added exact accounts of the shape, manufacture, and properties of violin, flute, horn, clarionet, trombone, and all the rest, you

have not only not given me any touch of the mystic and elevated pleasure of Mozart's and Beethoven's art, but (which is much to our present purpose) you have not even *explained* in the very least how that effect is produced.

We may fairly regard the world as a symphony, and the scientist as a lecturer on 'Acoustics.'[1]

XIV.

I VENTURE to predict that, except among the people born with a turn for that particular way of looking at things (by no means the only way, as they fondly hold, or even the highest way or best way) which is termed 'scientific,' science will go out of fashion as decidedly as it has of late come into it.

Scientific facts are very interesting and valuable, as far as they go, but *they do not go far;* by the confession of the Prophets themselves, they leave the real nature of things wholly unexplained; and we, who are not professed scientists, don't want to spend our lives in taking everything to pieces and prying among the fragments. These little bits are not the only 'facts' in the world. The landscape is a fact, at least as much as any of your microscopic details; and so is the beauty of it. We common people are not going to take our world with all the flavour boiled out of it by a dozen specialist experimenters. Life after all is not an anatomical preparation. *The surface of things* is what we most want, and must always come back to. The surface of things is what we were intended to see, touch, and live with. Therefrom are reflected the rays of beauty, poetry, and art. And courage, friendship, and love, are also found on the surface of life, not in the anatomy of it.

But here come the Learned Men, the flower of modern culture, speaking with authority and with eloquence, who

[1] 'The Science of Harmony,' so far as it is scientific in the strict sense, is a branch of Acoustics.

tell us that Science is the Queen and Mistress of all Knowledge, and indeed of all Human Affairs. Even a humble man has the right to speak up and say, 'I tell *you*, gentlemen, that instead of Science alone being able to deal with all things rightly, Science alone can deal with nothing rightly, Science by herself misconceives and misinterprets everything. It finds matter and mechanism everywhere, because it has no means of finding anything else. It searches for 'Life' and cannot find it; finds no 'principle of vitality,'—Life 'a function of matter.' It searches for 'Soul' and cannot find it; only brain-matter and nerves. It searches for GOD and cannot find Him. No possible place where God can be—if He were anywhere we could not fail to detect Him. Yet the ancient question still holds good: 'Can man by searching find out God?' Neither can Science find out the nature of Music by means of acoustics, or of Painting by the help of optics, and these are much simpler matters.

Gentlemen, you must pardon my making so free (you have often hurt me and other simple people a good deal) as to say that the Poet, the Artist, even the healthy Child, see the physical world far truer than you. You have your own place, an important place, in the scheme of things. You must learn better what this place is and keep in it. Let Science come forward in its due time and its proper rank—a rank decidedly lower than that which it now lays claim to. There are subjects of great interest, upon which the most eminent Scientist, *qua* Scientist, can have nothing to say, and therefore should say nothing.

XV.

OUR remarks do not apply to all the Scientific Men of our time: far from it: there are among us profound scientific intellects that have never entered the arena of conflict between Science and Theology, but have contented them-

selves by strengthening the position of Science and enlarging her borders. Neither, as we said at the outset, is it in the least our intention or wish to cast any shade of reproof or discouragement on those Knights of Science who have entered the arena *because* they have entered it. What we object to, and have, by miscellaneous but convergent illustrations, endeavoured to set before the reader, is their conduct in that arena, their behaviour towards the Knights Theological whom they overthrew, and towards the world in general, in their pride of victory. The Knights of Science are heartily welcome to despoil those others of horse and arms whenever they can; but not to assume in turn the arrogance of those whom they subdue, and become insolent and tyrannical to mankind. The Dogmatism of Science in human affairs is to be as strictly guarded against as the Dogmatism of Theology, and Science has of late unquestionably shown a tendency to overbear and tyrannise in the domain of Human Thought. It is against this tendency that I have with fear and trembling lifted up my voice.

But no more of the image of tilting Knights. I began by speaking of Prophets. The Scientific Evangelist of the younger school calls upon each of us to rejoice in the idea of Everlasting Death. The disciple of the French High Priest of Humanity (though despising the Scientist Prophet) exhorts each of us with equal enthusiasm to rejoice in the idea of Everlasting Death. 'You will soon be dead; but other people will be alive.'

I cannot rejoice in this. And I prefer to think of the words of a modern man who combined in large and perhaps unexampled measure the scientific with the poetic faculties. 'I shall never forget' (says Chancellor Von Müller, Goethe's friend) 'the night on which he exclaimed, "Do you think I am to be frightened by a coffin? No strong-minded man suffers the belief in immortality to be torn from his breast."'[1]

[1] *Characteristics of Goethe, &c.*, by Sarah Austen. 1833. Vol. iii. p. 324.

PAINTER AND CRITIC.

Though fools and rogues the same disgrace,
The Critic hath his useful place
To guide the floating Multitude.
How learns the Critic, subtle and shrewd?
Only from Artists' vital work.
There, every Critic rule doth lurk;
Impossible else, as botany
If there grew no flower or tree.

Artist, your business is with surface: true.
But, to slice off the surface will not do!
No mask or hollow elf-maid give us, you,
But life, with heart and brain within it, too.

ESSAY II.

PAINTER AND CRITIC.

With especial reference to the Subject in Pictures.

[*Fraser's Magazine*, August, 1875.]

I.

THESE remarks are not meant to be taken as criticisms on particular pictures, but as an attempt to attain some principles of judgment, especially on one important point in matters of Art, namely SUBJECT, and to use as illustrations some of those Works which will be fresh in everybody's memory, and for the painters of which—be it permitted to add—nobody has more sincere respect and admiration than the present writer. Notable works are chosen for remark *because* they are notable and noted; and because, the greater the Painter's skill, the more important is it that it should be wisely applied.

II.

THE old feud which has long existed between Artist and Critic is by no means extinct in this our own day, although

we are extremely civil to each other in public. Artists (I now mean painters in particular) among themselves speak of Critics with supreme contempt. Sometimes there is a mixture of personal feeling; but where there is nothing at all of this the Artist feels it his duty to object to the average or typical Critic.

It is not the Critic's blame that is objected to, but his ignorance; not his censure, but his want of sense of what it is really important to aim at in a work of art, and what constitutes success or non-success in carrying it out. No man (it is contended) who has not at least made a serious effort to do real art-work can understand the technical difficulties and the means of overcoming these. He does not know in any given case (say the Artists) what could have been done, what ought to have been done, what was intended to be done, nor how much has been done. Moreover, he does not see that when an original man gives the world something peculiar by means of his special gift it is foolish and insolent to ask why he has not given some other thing, or why not everything. When he does praise, it is very likely something an Artist cares little or nothing about. He would be a rare sort of Critic whose technical knowledge and experience were up to the average mark of an Artist's. Such a man is not very likely to be a professed Critic at all; he will prefer doing Art to writing about it. Even grant him technical knowledge, still nothing can prevent his having biases and preferences as an individual—for who is without them?—and if he writes all the year round about all kinds of pictures and painters, it is impossible he can judge all fairly.

III.

THE Artists further say: if Critic Richard or Critic Robert gave his remarks simply as his—an account of the

real impressions made upon him—we should listen, if we had time, with a certain interest to his notions, or to the notions of any intelligent man or number of men; the more of such opinions the better, and from a multitude of them there would be certainly something to learn, to whatever effect. But when the voice of Dick or Bob is magnified into celestial thunder through the speaking-trumpet of a great newspaper, and the general world hears and trembles (irrespective of Bob or Dick), we call this unfair.

Moreover, adds the Artist, reading and hearing, as most of us do (against the grain, perhaps, but we are living in the midst of it all) quantities of various criticism one year after another, we have a strong sense of absurdity, mingled with indignation, when we think of the masses of ignorance, stupidity, and impudence upon which 'Public Opinion' on the Fine Arts is too commonly nourished.

I confess I do not wonder at this habitual attitude of the artist-mind towards the noble body of Art-Critics.

It is doubtless the cardinal rule in this matter that Critics, like all mankind, must learn Art from the works of the Artists, and can learn it nowhere else. Art is always concrete: we puzzle ourselves, and ever vainly, when we try to consider it as abstract.

Yet, it might be asked *per contra*,—may not an Art-Critic's opinion be important beyond that of an average intelligent spectator? The qualified Art-Critic must, in the first place, have innate perception and sympathy in matters of art, as the wine-taster inherits a fine palate; and to both Critic and wine-taster is indispensable also the cultivation derived from large and varied experience. The skilful taster will not be ignorant of the processes of vine-culture and wine-making; and the intelligent Critic will have a considerable knowledge of technicalities of art, to the extent of being aware of the possibilities, the aims, and, at least partly, of the methods involved. This is conceivable without

the necessity of supposing him *artiste manqué*. On such points, indeed, the Critic will always hesitate to set his judgment against an Artist's. But, as to comparison of works and styles, the Critic may possibly have seen a greater number and variety of the best things extant in the world than most Artists. Let us suppose an intelligent, sympathetic, and cultivated Critic to be, further, a thoroughly honest, impartial man; and now, bring him before a remarkable, new picture. Is he not, viewing this from his own coign of vantage, *ab externo*, likely to judge on the whole better than the painter himself as to the harmony and completeness of the work, its value to mankind, and its probable position in the history of art? Let us consider.

The *raison d'être* of a Picture is that it charms the eye. The painter has seen keenly, felt deeply, represented by the means of his art, with an exquisite skill, some of that magical, multitudinous beauty of visible things; and moreover has, willy-nilly, infused into the representation a human quality derived from himself. Natural beauty has flowed to the canvas through his brain, *viâ* fingers and thumb. This human quality, the very essence of art, the precious and subtle thing in every work, is strong in proportion to the strength of the individual nature, what we name the *genius* of the artist. But the Artist's work very often (how could it be otherwise?) shows not only the peculiar noble powers natural and acquired, but the peculiar faults and defects, that combine to constitute his character. I will not say that the stronger he is the more pronounced these latter are likely to be: but merely that everyday experience tells us how rare it is to find harmonious development and perfect balance of powers in a Man of Genius. A man's most ingrained defects, like colour-blindness, are the least likely to be suspected by the man himself. A good Critic, then, will judge the new picture, it seems probable, more justly than the Artist could; and this holds equally true as regards

any number of other pictures you may submit to the said Critic's judicial gaze. Is not this so?

My Artist thinks *not*; and has reasons to show for his negative. Every Artist is, no doubt, likely to have 'the faults of his qualities,' and must be on his guard accordingly; and a really sound Critic might often give him a needful caution, a useful hint. It has long been known that no human work is perfect. But the Painter, on the whole, must and will work according to his genius, and it is thus that when he expresses himself happily he gives us something peculiar, exquisite, and incomparable. Look close at your Critic (whom you have so well furnished ideally for his business that it would not be easy to match him in real life), and what do we find? Is not he too a man? Do you suppose (as already hinted) that *he* has no idiosyncrasies, prejudices, predilections, associations, biases? That he has not a 'fad' for one sort of thing, and a dislike to another sort? That he has no individual sympathies and antipathies, likings or dislikings? Can he pull out a pair of scales for the picture, or measure it with an ell-wand?

Criticism, as you allow, is derived from Art; and the more original and incomparable a work of art is, the more criticism at first is at sea in regard to it, and the more certain are a Critic's individual prejudices and assumptions to come into play. You might find, not very easily, a Picture, and a Critic for it who should form and express a thoroughly impartial and thoroughly competent judgment. But to find a Critic who could do the like, or come near doing it, for twenty various pictures—two hundred—two thousand!

'Judge,' 'judgment,'—here once again we are in the risk of being cheated by the legerdemain which words, loosely used, so easily lend themselves to. A judge legal may try and may decide satisfactorily a thousand or ten thousand causes; the general principles of Reason and the

special precepts of Law being sufficient for his guidance. A judge artistic (self-constituted) can find no principles and precepts applicable to any but the most elementary portion of the vast variety of cases presented. Exactly in proportion to the importance and difficulty of a case will be the need of his extracting reason and precept from the case itself. And he who is capable of learning thus (the only way) is not a likely man to undertake the office of Public Judge. Further, to suppose that a Journal, Magazine, or Review, as a collective power, can hold any opinions on art (as it may on politics or theology) is mere nonsense.

In brief, it would seem that what an Art-Critic ought to do (since as long as there are public exhibitions there will be public criticism) is to give his reasons and sign his name, or initials, or even a *nom de plume;* thus speaking as one man and no more. Then his comment goes for nearer its true worth. He still has the opportunity and prestige of the high journalistic pulpit; only he stands up and delivers his sermon, not pours it oracularly through a mystic speaking-trumpet. Artists, in any case, would not care very profoundly for such opinions, apart from their effect on the public; but they would feel better satisfied if the widely published praise or blame, which often affects the commercial value of their work, had not so much artificial and undue importance given to it, as it still has in most cases under the present system.

It is clear that good Critics are not to be run against at every street corner. A fine Picture is not only the result of a peculiar human gift or combination of gifts, innate, incommunicable, (what we call 'genius'); along with which goes highly trained skill; but, moreover, it is a work of science. The perspective alone may demand the solution of problems such as try the engineer and the mathematician. In short, the knowledge of Visible Nature, from the human form to a wreath of mist, and of all natural vicissitudes and combinations, and of all *character* in men, animals, and things discernible by the subtlest eye, which a painter may put into his work, is literally immense.

Thus it appears that as regards (1) the artistic individuality or genius embodied in a work of art, and (2) the *technique* of it, Artists are not without reason for the contempt in which they hold criticism in general. The first, wherever in any art it is found, demands recognition not criticism. As to the second, unlearned criticism of technicalities is an everyday vice of criticism; and, to an Artist, the technical part of the picture is the very life of it.

Further, when Critics deal mainly with something that may be considered more within their reach, namely *the Subject*, Artists, or many of them, call this 'literary' criticism—criticism 'from the literary point of view,' and consider that they have thus disposed of its claims to attention, or at least reduced those claims to a very small figure.

How then should the Artists not despise the Critics!

Up to this point I have, broadly, thought the Artists right. Here, broadly, I think them wrong. They are apt to undervalue SUBJECT, and, if I may venture to say so, I think to misunderstand it. Most painters are so thoroughly and all but exclusively taken up with the *technique*, that they care little for anything besides. The Artist loves the *art* in a picture so much that he is jealous of the subject. Praise the subject, and he had almost as lief you praised the frame. I have often heard Artists say, that in looking at a picture the subject made no difference to them. That might be trivial or even ignoble, so long as there was good colour, drawing, composition. Now, in my humble opinion, if the *technique* be the life of a picture, the subject is something even higher—it is the soul of it. Besides Drawing, Composition, and Colour, there must be *Expression*. Drawing, Composition, Colour, may be considered and estimated

separately in a given picture; Expression belongs to the whole work and to every part; and *that which is pictorially expressed is the real Subject, and the soul of the picture.*

The subject, moreover, is precisely that in a picture which can be criticised with real effect by the application of sound principles of judgment,—still, not without scope and necessity for the finest qualities of mind, in conjunction with a true feeling for art; for subject and treatment must be in harmony with each other. And it is singular to notice how loose, vague, and utterly inadequate the criticism of subject usually is, though copious at times in commentary, or lucky now and again in a passing remark.

In any Picture, then (as I hold), *that which is pictorially expressed* by means of its drawing, colouring, and composition *is its real Subject*—irrespective of name, description, motto, quotation, reference, or any non-pictorial means of suggestion. There are Sham Subjects, plenty of them; there are Bad Subjects; allowable Historic and Literary Subjects; and true Pictorial Subjects. And every Picture proper, I submit, has a subject, something which *underlies* the objective presentment; and there must be at least two connected ideas to constitute a Subject—a cause (or *motif*) and an effect.

But very often the real subject of the Picture is one thing, and the pretended subject quite another thing. The pretence may be put forward wholly in words, or it may be partly in the Picture itself. And let us first take the latter sort of sham subject, which is the more subtle and the more difficult to bring to conviction. A painter enchanted with the leaf-woven labyrinth of some shady Wood, paints it tenderly and well, and at some stage or other of his work puts in a conspicuous but vapid figure or pair of figures, in which he neither feels interest nor expects it to be felt. Perhaps he calls the performance 'Amaryllis,' or 'Lycidas,' or 'Apollo and Daphne,' or 'Love's

Young Dream,' but, however named, the real subject is still a Wood; *and even without a name of this kind* the suggestion to the eye that a subject of special human interest is intended would be a pretence and an offence. This case of a landscape subject pretending to be a human one is very common, and many famous names in art could be brought forward in support of the practice. Nevertheless, I believe the true doctrine to be that where all you want to do, or can do, is to put 'Figures' in your landscape, every pretence that you are offering those figures as your subject is to be avoided.

Again, let us suppose that, in designing his delightful Wood, the painter has also designed therein, and carried out with happy harmonious effect, a figure of a Youth leaning against a tree, or of a Maiden walking slowly along; and say he calls *this* 'Love's Young Dream.' The real subject here is a Youth or Maiden in a Wood. In this case, a subject with general human interest, not closely defined, pretends to have a particular sort of human interest. The look of sweet meditation (supposing that to have been expressed) is labelled; you are told in words what the person presented to you is thinking of. This is another common kind of sham, always vulgarising in effect, and used *ad captandum vulgus*. Here we come upon one of the sources of the contempt of *Subject* among Artists: the Public looks almost exclusively for the Subject in a Picture; the Artist, caring, to begin with, chiefly for the *technique*, also knows that the subject is, in many if not most cases, a sham, and that the Public is being led by the nose. Now, Master Public is perfectly right in holding the Subject to be the chief thing; only he should always look for the *real* Subject—the thing pictorially expressed; and he ought to feel disgusted and insulted, instead of allowing himself to be cajoled, amused, tickled, and misled, by these tricky pretences of Subject.

Let us turn back for a moment to our Wood Picture. It

might, as we have seen, be a landscape subject pretending to be one of human interest. It might be the scene and accessory of undefined human interest pretending to be definite; or, we might say, of one kind of human interest (pleasant meditation) pretending to be another kind (love's young dream). Or, it might present a recumbent figure in the traditional costume of the melancholy Jacques,—a literary subject, belonging to a debateable class; or a Young Gentleman smoking a cigar, a mean subject; or a Gamekeeper pulling the neck of a rabbit, a repulsive subject.

The Wood in its character of loneliness; or as the dwelling-place of many wild creatures; (but a solitary landscape, too, must have its *motif*, and that thoroughly expressed) or with Human Figure or Figures rightly subordinated; or with a walking Maiden or a leaning Youth in good keeping with the scene; or with a loving Pair to whose love-dreamful looks the landscape formed harmonious accompaniment; or the leaning Youth, with due expression, just done carving 'Mary' or 'Laura' on a tree—any of the above (barring tricks of title) would be a Right subject, as far as it goes—a pictorial subject proper. You might, moreover, fairly call either of the two last 'Love's Young Dream,' an it so pleased you.

Let us now leave imaginary pictures and turn to some actual examples which everybody will remember. A Picture in the Royal Academy Exhibition represents an old shepherd in a smock-frock leaning over a wall in a snow-covered landscape, his two dogs waiting. He holds in one hand a pair of spectacles and a folded newspaper. His look is meditative and serious. The subject here is, really, an Old Shepherd with his dogs in a snowy field; a sufficiently interesting subject. Snow is in itself enough to make a shepherd serious (but indeed this fine old man's face has scarcely more in it than the usual pensive and touching gravity of age). The folded *Times* may have notified some important variation in market prices. But the newspaper has been put in as a connecting link between the picture and the catalogue; and in the latter you are requested to believe that the subject of the former is 'War News,' and further that the old man's son Tommy is dead.

Here is an instance where it can be pointed out, without any need of technical criticism, that the Artist has made a mistake. The public are known to like a 'story'; it amuses and interests thousands to whom pictorial qualities would be a dead letter; therefore, not having succeeded in expressing a story in this picture (though he has succeeded excellently in others) the painter puts it into the catalogue—puts it into the *name* of the work, helped in this case by a descriptive poetical quotation. Leave out newspaper and spectacles (relinquishing the aim of amusing the general public by a trick), and call it simply 'The Old Shepherd,' and the picture would be admirable and full of pathetic suggestion.

If the painter had distinctly set before himself and worked out the problem of painting a picture on the subject of 'War News,' showing how a battle wounds many who are far distant from the field of blood, he might have shown (to suggest one method) a large bill on a village wall with 'Great Battle—List of the Killed and Wounded,' &c., and, close by, a man reading from a newspaper to a group of listeners with various expressions of grief, pain, anxiety, &c. Even with the shepherd as he stands, something more might have been done; for instance, on the folded newspaper instead of 'Latest' (which can be dimly made out), why not have let one see 'The War,' and have put, along with it, a black-edged letter in the old man's hand? Shepherds get black-edged letters now-a-days; and you might suppose that an officer of the regiment had written.

The objection just made is that the painter tells us he

meant to express a certain subject in his picture, and has not there expressed it. But suppose we take the Picture as carrying out pictorially the subject of a Poem? Is not that allowable?

Sometimes, *perhaps*. It is best that a picture should be completely self-contained—tell its own story (if story there be), express its own intention, without any extraneous aid. But, conceded the privilege of a title, it ought at most to set the spectator's imagination at the right point of view for seeing what *is in* the picture. The employment of further description or quotation is always unlucky; and the more the worse. As to the question of a picture offered as 'illustrating' something literary, and depending in some degree thereon for its interest, perhaps its intelligibility,—the Literary Something ought at least to be well known, to have a recognised place in the world. It is, for instance, perhaps allowable to paint such a world-famous situation as Hamlet's first view of his Father's Ghost, and to take advantage of the manifold associations inseparable from the scene in the spectator's mind; yet even in this case I cannot conceive of any mode of treatment which would make this situation a thoroughly proper subject to be painted. To represent the Figure in armour as a King and as a Supernatural Visitant is well within the resources of pictorial art. That it was the Ghost of Hamlet's *Father* might be strongly hinted by means of an emphatic family likeness. That the Ghost was 'a perturbed spirit' could be shown. But nothing in the picture could show that he had been poisoned, poisoned by his brother; that that brother now wore his crown and was married to his widow, Hamlet's mother; and that the hollow voice of the dead was calling on his son to revenge his 'foul and most unnatural murder.' *A Son seeing his Father's Ghost* is a pictorial subject proper (whether good or not good we need not here enquire), a subject thoroughly expressible

by pictorial art; *Hamlet seeing his Father's Ghost* is a 'literary' subject, with much pictorial effect, but eking itself out by something extraneous. Take a few other subjects from the same play. *Hamlet Soliloquising* would be literary with a minimum of pictorial expressibility; it would depend almost wholly on your knowledge of the play. *Hamlet with the Skull*; literary with more of pictorial: a man looking on a skull is in itself a subject. *Ophelia giving back Hamlet's Gifts*; literary but with a high degree of pictorial. Call it simply *Gifts Returned*, or even without any title, the situation is thoroughly expressible in painting, capable of being made at once intelligible and subtly pathetic; and in this case I doubt whether it would not be excess of purism to object to the further interest to be gained by association with Shakespeare's poetic masterpiece.

In the Old Shepherd (to come back) a good simple pictorial subject is damaged by an unsuccessful attempt to give it literary interest.

On the other hand, interest of a suitable kind might have easily been added to 'Three Jolly Postboys' by legitimate pictorial means, namely by giving them wedding-favours.

The picture called 'The Crown of Love' pretends to have a poetic, pathetic, and tragic subject, and has, in fact, no distinguishable subject whatever. It is a study of a Young Man in a greenish fancy dress (unfit for such an enterprise) carrying a Young Woman in white up-hill. You are informed in the catalogue that the young man is a knight, the young woman a princess with whom he is in love; that he has been promised her hand on condition of his carrying her to the top of a certain steep mountain; and you are told in printed words not merely the past history and present relations of the pair—which are nowise indi-

cated pictorially—but the future into the bargain. The young man will succeed in carrying his fair burden aloft, and will then sink down exhausted and breathe his last. The subject of the picture, you will please observe, is 'The Crown of Love,' and your interest is helped by being told, without the least artistic excuse, that the end is pain, death, and despair. The introduction of gloom and misery into any work of art, plastic or literary, without adequate artistic reason, is one of the unpardonable offences.

But putting aside the catalogue, one does not need any technical knowledge to see the absurdity of the Picture itself, as regards subject. An artist wishing to paint a Young Man romantically carrying a Young Woman up-hill could easily enough contrive a sufficient plot; putting, for instance, safety at the top—a castle-gate; danger below—armed pursuers. The human face being an important index of emotion, one would like also to see something of the faces of both the principal actors. But it is not my object to go into details. Suffice it to say, here is the Academy's most pretentious Picture in subject, as set forth in the title and quotation, and it has no intelligible subject at all. Name it 'The Robber Knight,' suppose the Young Lady a Victim, there is nothing to prevent your taking it so. The girl's look and gesture agree better perhaps with this than with the declared intention.

The same painter's 'No' shows us a charming and touching three-quarter-length portrait of a young lady; but the pretended subject depends wholly on the title given. If a fancy name was thought indispensable, especially on account of the engraving-buying public, 'What has she written?' would have at least saved the work from falling into the class of Sham-subject Pictures.

The same painter has two landscapes in this year's Academy Exhibition, one of which is called 'The Fringe of the Moor.' When an artist formally names his picture

in sending it out into the world, the name, if we attend to it at all, must be taken as indicating his intention in the work. This vigorously realistic picture might have been named 'View near Dunkeld' (or wherever the scene lies), as a noble and priceless landscape in the National Gallery is named 'Mousehold Heath,' and another, 'Bligh Sands near Sheerness.' But the fashion of the day suggested something less simple, and 'The Fringe of the Moor' was selected. If we take this as the subject, we have a right to expect a scene presenting with emphasis the characteristics of the fringe of a moor, and such a scene is not before us. A large oil picture without any human figure must always be a questionable experiment, and it ought, at least, to express characteristically some aspect of nature.

The other landscape also has its subject distinctly announced in the catalogue: one of the most pathetic subjects conceivable for a mere landscape picture; where, without a single human figure, nay, by means of the absence of all human figures, a deep human interest might be infused; namely, the tangled solitude 'where a garden had been.' We are shown a mossy sun-dial and a long deserted garden-seat, with some garden growths still struggling against weedy neglect. Amidst these, in the foreground, one single flower is definitely shown, evidently the 'bull's eye,' so to say, of the interest; and this one conspicuous bloom, astonishing to relate, is a *wild* rose—not the finest garden rose that the painter's palette could produce. A more curious and perfect example of blunder in the business of expressing a given subject could not be found or even invented. The motto is from Campbell's 'Lines written on Visiting a Scene in Argyleshire,'

> Yet wandering, I found on my ruinous walk,
> By the dial-stone aged and green,
> One rose of the wilderness left on its stalk,
> To mark where a garden had been.

The poet's phrase, 'One rose of the wilderness' has misled the Painter. 'One rose in the wilderness' would have been clearer, if slightly less melodious; and I think it a pity that Campbell did not so write it. (Goldsmith, by the bye, in his 'Deserted Village' has touched the same theme with more nature and simplicity.) But the meaning is indisputable, for by no possibility could a dog-rose 'mark where a garden had been,' and, putting Campbell aside, the Painter's acknowledged intention is to express a place, amidst a wilderness, where a garden had been.

Another notable picture, 'Eastern Slinger Scaring Birds in the Harvest Time: Moonrise,' shows us ripe wheat, gold-red in the cloudless twilight, into which rises a full moon. On a wooden platform, lifting him above the level of the ears of corn, stands up against the sky a nearly naked figure, occupying the whole field of view, gigantesque, portentous, minatory. He whirls around his head a sling from which the large stone, or some other apparently heavy missile, is just about to be released, and shouts as he whirls it. Danger, deadly contention, some imminent tragic issue —such is the effect flashed into our imagination by a first look at this picture. But it is a scene of Harvest Fruition, a Field of Ripe Corn ready for the reaper, with a tranquil full moon rising over it. The towering gladiatorial slinger is but scaring away birds; as is also the small figure seen in the background. That this Picture has a Subject cannot be questioned, nor what that subject is; the catalogue tells us.

The Painter wanted to set a naked man against a twilight sky; the slinging gave an emphatic action: the ears of wheat and the rising moon gave tints and 'tones' of value. Well and good. Let us suppose the pictorial part done to perfection. The fact remains that the Subject and the Pictorial Effect do not merely fail to agree, but are in violent opposition to each other.

Given the Subject, the treatment might have shown us

the broad, wavy sea of golden corn under translucent dome of purple twilight, beginning to acknowledge the serene advent of the moon: then the bird-scarers islanded on their little platforms, seen against the sky, in such attitude and composition as might best agree with the whole effect strange and quaint figures perhaps, pathetic in a way, belonging to the scene and blending into it as in nature. It is unnecessary to discuss whether or not the Subject is a good one. This way of treating it would, at all events, be consistent and satisfactory.

Nine painters out of ten will repeat, I know,—'He wanted a nearly naked figure in action against the sky; he has got a very fair *motif* for that, what more need be asked?' And the picture in reality is a highly finished Study of a nearly naked Man against a twilight sky, in the act of whirling a Sling. The corn is a mere accessory, and, indeed, could be done without. It supplies a *motif*—true; but, *as here treated*, the suggestions made to the imagination by the ripe corn and rising moon are disturbed and even outraged by the dominating Figure. The general effect on one's soul is of discord, not harmony. You cannot at one and the same time deal adequately with a subject alive with human interest, and care about nothing but the drawing and colouring of a well-placed Figure or Figures. A work of Pictorial Art ought to gratify the eye: true. When it does this feat—so exquisite and so difficult in its higher successes—artists are not willing that more should be demanded. But Art itself claims to have more expected of it. It can do much more; it can satisfy the *imagination* with a sense of harmonious beauty; and whatever Subject it may have, from a tuft of violets to Lear in the Storm, that also, the Subject, must form part of the harmony.

The picture of the Chelsea Pensioners at Church has been with justice warmly praised by the critics of the press.

The war-worn and time-worn Veterans sit in rows, in their red frocks, mostly prayer-book in hand, listening to the religious service; in the background a sprinkling of civilians of both sexes is added to the congregation. That is the subject, and a good subject. The painter has made careful studies of the scene; the old men are portraits; in detail and in *ensemble* the effect is doubtless very truthful, if entirely prosaic; and we are impressed much as if we were present at the service. But the picture has, we find, a double title, *The Last Muster—Sunday at the Royal Hospital, Chelsea;* and on looking for the meaning of the first name, we discover an incident which is thus described by an experienced and sympathetic critic (*Athenæum*, June 5), who undoubtedly has possessed himself rightly of the painter's intention: 'An old soldier, placed at the end of one of the benches, has just answered the last call, and ceased to live rather than died, so softly and silently that his neighbour knew it not for a time, but he now turns and anxiously shakes the lifeless wrist enquiringly rather than with surprise or pain. It is clear, however, that this man who walked to the bench will have to be carried away. . . . This group of two soldiers is very pathetic, and finely thought out.'

I had myself seen and admired the picture before hearing any criticism or comment upon it, and, being sure of the general subject, I had taken little or no note of the title. It startled me to hear of this Dead Pensioner, and I was even incredulous at first; but soon became convinced that the picture is unquestionably meant to be taken thus.

Now, first, the man (luckily) does not look dead or dying; until told so by external authority I had not, as I say, suspected it, and I find that others were equally unaware of the fact. Second: to slip by-the-bye into the middle of a large composition of many figures so overwhelmingly impressive an incident as a sudden death, and give the work its title from this, is entirely outrageous to the imaginative

sense of 'keeping' in subject. Given, say, the subject of the Old Pensioners at Church, you fill with it a large canvas, and put in row after row of carefully painted figures, each with his individual character, all decently occupied with the Church Service. You have now just two more old men left to paint, and some clever friend or your own evil genius suggests, 'Make one of them dying or dead, and at once your subject becomes vastly nobler, as well as immeasurably more interesting to the public;—and call it (another happy thought) *The Last Muster.*'

But what a mistake! Name the picture *Chelsea Pensioners at Church*, and this old man would interest us with the others, and we might ask ourselves, 'Why is his neighbour touching him on the sleeve?' without needing a definite reply. He is perhaps drowsy, faint, a veil has fallen over his consciousness, as not seldom happens in extreme age.

Even then, it seems to me, the two prominent figures suggestive of incident by their attitudes would attract too much attention and break the true subject—'Old Pensioners at Church.'

Given as subject, 'An Old Chelsea Pensioner dying during Church Service,' and a different treatment would be necessary throughout.

Looking at the Academy picture as it stands, the harm is mainly in the title chosen. Apart from that, the real subject remains on the whole well expressed in a way; the doubt being still reserved as to whether the old man with closed eyes, emphasised as he is, be not out of harmony. I think he decidedly is. Had the pensioner been made *unmistakably* dead or dying, the vice would then have been rooted in the work itself.

If the painter really 'thought out' (as his Critic says) and worked in this large picture to express the death of the Pensioner, we have one of those cases before us in which

failure is more fortunate than success. Take it how we will, this picture, as regards subject, remains unsatisfactory.

Mr. Alma Tadema's favourite subjects are the houses and furniture of pagan Rome, with appropriate figures. But that certain dramatic subjects are well within his reach is sufficiently proved: take for examples his picture of the savage young Frankish Princes practising the use of weapons in presence of their father and mother, and that of Claudius trembling behind the tapestry. In each of these, something is pictorially expressed which cannot fail to arrest the attention and excite the imagination; and by the title you are referred (fairly I think) to an Historic basis, which is or ought to be in the memory of a spectator of average cultivation. Moreover, where you have a real historic basis, and have really given pictorial expression to an incident, you have a right to elucidatory quotation (within proper limits) so far as seems necessary to put your spectators in general at the point of view of one acquainted with the recorded facts.

Mr. Tadema's triple design, in the Old Water-colour Gallery this year, seemed to me open to objection in point of subject. The first drawing of the three expressed pictorially a dramatic situation well fitted for painting; the Dead Woman in the second might be almost any dead woman; the Miracle in the third does not explain itself, and when explained, by help of the much too lengthy printed quotation, is without meaning or interest; to which is to be added that it is at least very questionable for an artist of our time to paint, in sequence to two pictures depending on matter of fact tragic human interest, a third showing, with equally realistic treatment, a legendary miracle as occurring before our eyes, that is in precisely its most incredible and ridiculous aspect. Taking the whole work, it is far from expressing pictorially any such thing as 'The Tragedy of an Honest Wife.'

In the same Gallery two years ago was a drawing of

another class by the same remarkable Artist: a curvilinear wayside seat of marble, inscribed with the name of a Roman Emperor, three or four wayfarers resting, two others passing on through the autumnal landscape and the falling beech-leaves. Here is an entirely delightful subject, complete within itself; simple, and without any hint of narrative or dramatic incident, yet endlessly suggestive; free of individual sentiment or passion, but profoundly pathetic. The yellowing foliage of autumns long past, the massive stone seat (which has melted like snow), the bye-gone men and women resting there, the mighty Roman Empire itself, are softly summoned up out of 'the dark backward and abysm of time.'

Mr. Albert Moore has this year in the Academy three very small and very exquisite designs: 'A Flower Walk'—a woman among flowers; 'A Palm Fan'—a woman in a very thin robe lying on a sofa, the fan close by; 'Pansies'—a woman sitting on a sofa; a purple pansy on the floor, and the suggestion of others, or at least of their purple, on the sofa-cover. We are to suppose, moreover, that there are *pensées* in the lady's brain, or so I have heard.

The title of this last, if so intended, is of the punning sort, pretty enough in its way and perhaps allowable; but the custom of seeking for clever titles is a snare. To really work out Pansies—*pensées*—as the *subject*, the woman ought to have been unmistakably in a trance of sweet meditation; and in her lap might have been a scroll; for, to make a Picture there ought always to be a *motif*, however slight, pictorially expressed. Were there a purple anemone, instead of a pansy, on the floor, the present Design would really remain unaltered—a Woman in classic drapery seated on a sofa.

'A Palm Fan' and 'Pansies' might very easily have been made Pictures, but the Artist seems to have deliberately chosen to omit *motif* (except indeed in his titles—*his* too, as if he had not had the full courage of his opinions). As it is, we get in each case a Female Figure posed, with accessories,

for the sake of a certain pictorial effect, and without expression of character, incident, or sentiment, either self-involved or reaching to anything external. Finished Studies would perhaps be the right description of them. From the title and the damsel's gossamer garment 'A Palm Fan' might be thought to express or suggest the luxury of coolness in warm weather; but the heat evaded is nowhere pictorially hinted. Given that as *motif*—a little casement opening on summer or curtained from the outside glow, or a bunch of roses, or one rich rose with a bee on it, might have been used to express warm weather (slightly or emphatically) in painters' language; and the picture of the lightly draped Female Figure curled on a sofa would then, to me at least, have been still more delightful than it now is.

I should guess this admirable Artist's creed possibly to be that the pictorial qualities of a good picture are of such exquisitely peculiar value that the mind had better be allowed to drink them in, thirsting for beauty, to repose on them in a trance of delight, to rejoice in them, love them, almost worship them—and that saliency of subject tends to interfere with this mood of enjoyment, to disturb, confuse, and vulgarise it. The pleasures flowing from a pure triumph of pictorial art are subtle, mysterious, and inexhaustible; and when you connect them with distinctly intellectual suggestions, you limit and lower the *artistic* suggestiveness, you clip and pedestrianise the winged joy of pure art. Moreover, in allying pictorial art with the more material and definite 'literary' expression, you run the risk of exciting various degrees of interest and various opinions and prejudices in various spectators, to the detriment of the purely artistic effects; you appeal to your spectator on a ground where feelings and notions not properly connected with Art come into play.

Our Artist chooses to paint a woman walking among flowers rather than 'Proserpine' or 'Perdita,' and not a

word have I to say against the choice; a charming human subject, *self-expressed*, remains, and one in harmony with the painter's method and means, 'A Flower Walk,'—giving the opportunity of bringing together feminine and floral beauty in mutual relation. Here is a *motif;* and the only possible objections are that the walk is perhaps not characteristically flowery, nor the woman's face characteristic of the enjoyment of such a walk. The 'Palm Fan' would have lost nothing whatever, so far as I can see, by having a more distinct *motif;* on the contrary, would have gained much to the imagination.

'What you suggest would have interfered with the scheme of colour,' might perhaps be replied; but would not this be saying, in reality, that the artist had either neglected to consider in due time the work as a whole, subject and treatment together, or else found himself unable to overcome or would not take the trouble to overcome the difficulties in the way of including adequate pictorial *motif* along with other things? Will anyone go so far as to assert that a *motif*, in perfect harmony with the technical qualities of a pictorial work, does not increase its delightfulness?

As matter of fact, each of these three Designs, in all probability, was never meant to be anything but a Study of form and colour. What then is the *subject?* 'Precisely form and colour,' the artist might possibly reply,—'and these are precisely the things I care about in pictorial art.' There are several painters, some of them men of high and peculiar gifts, now at work apparently on some such principle as this, and the matter deserves further investigation, all the more because they are true-born artists.

Mr. Moore's pictures, these and others much larger, have been described as 'decorative'; so have Mr. Poynter's 'Golden Age' and 'Preparing for the Feast.' Now, I have never met any satisfactory definition of 'decorative art,' nor, after various attempts, am I able to frame one. All

good pictorial and sculptural art is decorative in one sense —pleasing to the eye. To please the eye is essential. But 'decorative art,' taken strictly, refers to a limited and special department of art, and to define its limits is the difficulty. At present it may suffice to note that a necessary characteristic of a decorative work seems to be its studied adaptation to a particular place and space. I purposely omit all reference to the nature of the work itself, either in subject or treatment, finding further brief definition impossible. But a step towards clearness may be taken by asking, Does 'decorative' mean precisely the same as 'ornamental'?

Mr. Ruskin (*Stones of Venice*, I. xx., xxi., &c.) uses the words as synonymous—and he speaks, we may notice (p. 232), of some points in regard to Ornament, as 'by far the most difficult questions I have ever tried to work out respecting any branch of art.'

Now I would humbly propose (for though synonyms are joy to the Poet they are bane to the reasoner) that 'decoration' and 'ornament' be used as different, though not unallied, terms; and that the first be defined as *art-work adapted to a given place and space;* the second (included in the first and more limited than it), *art-work strictly and emphatically subordinated to a given place and space.* The Ornamental necessarily stops short at a very low mark, and loses its virtue if it venture a step further. Its virtue is subordination, and it expresses that, by modification or by arrangement, in every form it employs. The Decorative may rise to the highest pitch of art. Raphael's so-called arabesques, the Ornamental, are in the one class, the frescoes of many thrice-famous men in the other, as well as pictures of Tintoret, Veronese, and others.

Now, Mr. Poynter's two pictures are clearly Decorative work; but none of Mr. Moore's three works bears the evidence of intended adaptation to a particular place and space —whether we consider them or not as designs to be repeated

on a larger scale—and there is no good reason for calling them 'decorative,' or for examining them from any special standpoint. Why, then, have they been called 'decorative'? Perhaps it is because many people associate with this phrase the notion of a certain kind of pictorial treatment different from that used for an 'easel picture,' a treatment wherein qualities which are criticised by the eye alone —sensuous, visible qualities of art-work—have, and, it is believed, ought to have, greater proportionate importance than in an 'easel picture.' Herein lies a mistake, as we have already hinted, in the matter of theory, so far as any conclusive definition of the word 'decorative' is supposed to be involved; but, as matter of fact, a large number of decorative works *are* of this character.

And it certainly would seem as if Mr. Albert Moore and other artists of the same persuasion, in presenting pictorially, say a Feminine Figure, selected as far as possible those qualities which give eye-pleasure by means of form and colour and the sense of pictorial skill, and deliberately and intentionally omitted everything else. Scarcely anything is given that could appeal to the intellect or the affections, or to any kind of human sympathy whatever which is more than skin deep. Not only is there no variety of action or passion, no emotion, but there is, as far as possible, *no expression of character.* All that is presented along with charm of lines and tints is the feeling of animal vitality. I have heard it asserted that the very aim and glory of this School of Painting (which, if this were true, might fairly be called the Mindless School) is to represent the human form as a vehicle of fine drawing and colouring, and, as far as may be, to leave out, or reduce to a minimum, everything else that usually impresses us in looking at a man or a woman. The expression of character, clearest in the face, is what chiefly interests and affects human beings in the looks of each other, but our Painters will not let us have it;

we must admire pictorial effects and pictorial skill, and as far as possible nothing else. We are to care extremely little, it would seem, for the humanity which is in the human soul and informs the body with expression and character. The charge of working on such a principle would be a serious one. To give us the human bodily form merely for the amusement of the eye, and cut off so far as possible from all its associations, intellectual, moral, affectional, or emotional, would be to do something in a high degree unnatural—the more unnatural the more careful, skilful, and technically successful the work. Also, the larger the scale of the work the more objectionable must such treatment be felt to be.

I do not wish to be understood for a moment to assert that Mr. Albert Moore, who, being a man of true genius, has unbounded possibilities in him, holds any such creed. I merely criticise the works which he has exhibited this year and last, and find that they appear to point in this direction.

And I will maintain that to present—not the highest of all visible forms, the Human, but any natural object whatever, pictorially (reserving the case of ornamental treatment proper), in such a way as to announce or imply di regard of the associations proper to it in the human mind, is unnatural and utterly wrong. And I use the words 'natural' and 'unnatural' in relation to all the faculties of a healthy human mind or soul acting in combination; for if Art does not appeal to these, Art must come down from the high place claimed for it. When William Hunt chose, as he so often did, to paint a broken branch of may or apple blossom, and a ruined nest thrown on the ground (but not with any pathetic suggestion), rather than the flowers blooming in their natural places, and forming the safe bowers of happy birds, rather even than flowers in a glass or on a table, he thought—if the question occurred to him at all—'No matter! so long as I get such forms and tints as I prefer to make into a picture'—and a great many people agree with

him. I cannot. Such work carries the assertion that the mere eye-charming qualities matter so much that everything else is hardly worth considering. Those qualities do convey a special delight, expressing (which is the main thing) a peculiar and mysterious human faculty. So admirable is it (say, in effect, many artists) that the things chosen whereby to present this faculty matter nothing, or next to nothing; they are merely the vehicle. But, on the other hand, when you take natural forms and represent them realistically, you take something already appropriated, already interwoven with human life, already brimful of associations. Does any artist think it his function to make a mere exquisite pattern out of these? If so, let him step frankly into the narrower domain of Ornamental Art, and submit willingly to its law of subordination.

If this be true of a primrose or a bird's nest, how emphatically true must it be of the Human Form! I am inclined to believe that every design consisting of an *unmotivated* figure or composition ought to be considered (if as more than a study) as 'Ornamental Work,' and treated with distinct expression of subordination in its arrangement. In Raphael's 'arabesques' are introduced many complete human figures, which are ornamental. The Sistine Prophets and Sibyls I should call decorative; the interposed figures of naked boys, ornamental.

Mr. Albert Moore's work gives me great delight; and, besides the deliciousness of colour, these three very small designs in the Academy have left the impression of life-size on the memory, doubtless owing to a certain largeness and dignity of treatment. Then why ask more? Because it appears to me that the works assume to be Pictures proper, and do not fulfil the character.

I want a *motif* (I must repeat); and a pictorial expression of it. Not any particular kind or degree of expression; but let there be some, of an appropriate kind. The contour of

a cheek and the tip of a nose are not enough. The notion of coolness and rest would not have been disturbed but enhanced by a look of pleasurable repose; nor the delightfulness of a Woman walking among Flowers by a more interesting face reflecting the sweetness of such a scene; nor 'Pansies' by a look of more indubitable meditation—not to speak again of the defective use of accessories, if we consider these designs as Pictures.

It is certainly true, as artists complain, that stories in pictures, not art, are what most people look at, and that this fact leads in countless cases to inferior pictures being admired and bought. Still, a picture surely might even tell an interesting story and be good art besides? Hogarth did not paint badly. A story-picture, for one thing, serves to educate in art numbers of people who were attracted to it mainly by the story, as those who read Shakespeare for incident catch fragrances of poetry by the way. But let it not be supposed for a moment that I am one of those who look eagerly for dramatic or even storytelling incident in a picture. I very much more enjoy subjects of another kind; those which are suggestive to the imagination, and not suggestive of one thing, however noticeable, but of many things; so that the picture, even while the eyes rejoice in it, is an open door through which thought flies on as in a dream. Such are Mr. Millais' Old Knight carrying Two Children across a Ford (forgetting its sham quotation from 'Sir Isumbras'), Mr. Leighton's Greek Youth teaching a Maiden to stop a flageolet, and his 'Cleobulus and Cleobule'; and such (opening direct into an Enchanted Region) is Mr. Burne Jones's 'Night,' that steps from the sea and stars over a marble threshold into her field of fast-asleep daisies,—with many another work of that pictorially inventive brain. I would rather myself have an Ornamental Design by Mr. Albert Moore than the biggest and most intellectual Dramatic or Historic Picture by one or another R.A. whom I could

name. But this does not touch the question, Does Pictorial Art do its best and highest for us when it appeals, as far as possible, exclusively to the eye? If the answer be 'Yes,' then Pictorial Art must consent to take a lower place than is usually claimed for it.

The fact is, a considerable proportion of the human race are capable of learning to paint pictures; moreover, one may paint well, even admirably, without heart or brain to speak of; but wherever we find a man of strong natural gift who has also these two commodities in good measure and puts them into his work, we find a case where the truest criticism will be a form of the sincerest reverence and gratitude.

ON POETRY.

The Bard sings Beauty, and what lies behind
All Beauty, in the Everlasting Mind.
Rejoice, O world, if one true verse you find:
Grave it in gold and on your forehead bind.

If you love not Poetry,
Never name the word to me.

ESSAY III.

ON POETRY.

[These remarks were orally delivered, which partly accounts for the form they have taken.]

THE spirit of Poetry in man is that force which everywhere and through various means is urging him to the production of something beautiful—to the production of Beauty. Through Metrical Speech it finds one channel to express itself. Through this, it expresses itself on the whole more completely than in any other way. And, therefore, Metrical Speech, in its best examples, is called 'Poetry:' this manifestation of the Poetic Spirit is called 'Poetry'—*par excellence*.

But the word 'Poetry' is used sometimes in *this* sense, sometimes in the wider and more general sense; and thus is produced a haziness in our minds. The words Poetry, Poet, Poetical, are applied in a loose, indefinite manner. A beautiful place or prospect is sometimes called poetical; a starry night; a romantic incident; a noble action; a fair face or form. A picture, a piece of music, is said to be poetical, or 'full of poetry.' Dancing has been called 'the Poetry of Motion;' Sculpture, 'silent Poetry;' Beethoven is sometimes styled a 'tone-poet;' Turner, a 'poet in colours.'

In these cases, perhaps we mean, 'Here is a manifestation of the Spirit of Poetry;' or, perhaps, 'Here is something that impresses us like Metrical Poetry—puts us into a similar mood.' We may, consciously or unconsciously, refer either to the ideal source of all kinds of Poetry, or else to the flower and finest embodiment of the Spirit of Poetry which exists in metrical language; we may be using the words Poet and Poetry in a direct sense, or an indirect, or partly in the one and partly the other. Hence, some indistinctness and confusion of thought; greatest, when we come to compare one form of words with another form of words, and call Prose 'poetical,' or even call Prose 'Poetry,' as is done every day. What more common than to praise some rich and sonorous bit of prose-writing, or some flight of oratory, as 'highly poetical'? and now and again we go farther and declare it to be 'true poetry.'

Let us examine this a little. Richly coloured and melodious sentences there are in the writings of several of our high prose-writers. Many parts of our English Bible have a powerful poetic impressiveness. If you call these 'poetry,' do I dissent? No. Substantially we agree. The question that remains is one of words, of definition of words.

Here is a passage, you say, which embodies the spirit of poetry in a powerfully impressive form. As to this, we are of one mind. Also it has a very discernible rhythm and modulation of sound—a greater degree of this than ordinary prose. Thus it has not only the high spiritual qualities of Metrical Poetry, but a noticeable degree also of the peculiar quality of *metre*. This does not amount to a regular metre, or the composition would *be* Metrical Poetry. It approaches, but is not, Metrical Poetry: it is something else. Might we not call it Rhythmic Prose? Then 'Rhythmic Prose' (you remark) may be, and is as high, perhaps a higher thing than regular Poetry. Not so either.

In certain grand and rare examples of Rhythmic Prose, the matter, the substance, is transcendently impressive, and the total effect upon the mind more powerfully poetic than the effect of most of the matter to be found in a regular metrical form. Nevertheless, other qualities being equal, and the matter expressed being suitable for rhythmic treatment, a composition in regular metrical form is more impressive than one which is not in regular metrical form. Nay, must not the Psalms be finer still in their original form than in any translation? and that original form is metrical, after the Hebrew manner. Isaiah and Ezekiel, too, and the author of 'Job,' recognised Metrical Poetry as a thing different from Prose, and rose into it when they felt need of their highest means of expression.

'Poetry'—*Poiesis*—Making—in the widest sense (as applied to man) I take to mean the mental Creative Energy, and its products—the whole group of the inventing, systematising, and ordering faculties; that energy which is the earthly well-head (but drawn from a higher invisible source) of morals, laws, arts, society.

Long usage has applied the word more distinctively to the Fine Arts—those arts which spring from, and appeal to, our sense of Beauty: and, in its *strictest* application, we confine the word Poetry to one particular Fine Art—that which expresses beauty through metrical speech. It is an Art arising out of the musical quality of words, and thus, as we shall find, influences the manner and the matter. When any one speaks simply and without qualification of Poetry, he is understood to mean *Metrical* Poetry, and nothing else. And it is in this sense that I desire to use the word.

Poetry thus defined, is a different thing from Prose. Prose is sometimes very like Poetry, yet Prose and Poetry are two distinct things, and ought to have two distinct names. You might ask me to call the latter Verse; but I don't see that we need give up the old and honoured name, by which metrical Poetry is marked as Poetry *par excellence*.

Poetry includes every highest quality of Prose, and includes them in a definitely metrical and musical form, peculiar to itself: but observe, this form is not a mere grace and decoration; it is found by experience to give to words their greatest attainable force and beauty, and, in most cases, to convey the highest thoughts incomparably better than Prose. Poetry is metrical, Prose is non-metrical: they are thus at first definable by their forms: but the distinction is found to permeate their substance and spirit.

No doubt (though each has its proper realm, its own authority and laws) there is a kind of borderland where they sometimes mix. Prose is never without some share of rhythm and modulation, because these are inherent qualities in human speech; and in the best rhythmical prose this rises into a near approximation to the effect of metre. There are many gradations of rhythm from the merest Prose—say of an Act of Parliament, rising through that of a statement in the Nisi Prius Court, of a familiar letter, of a conversational narrative, of a newspaper leading-article, of an eloquent novel, of an impassioned oration, up to the rich, emphatic and almost lyrical modulation of our intensest prose-writers.

So, in the Pictorial Art, you may pass from a design in simple outline, to one in outline shaded, to a woodcut, an etching, an engraving, a tinted sketch, a sketch in colours; and upwards, by gradations, till you arrive at the finished water-colour or oil picture.

Now an etching, or even a design in outline, may exhibit the highest qualities of the Pictorial Art in larger measure than many a painting. You might properly prefer one of Rembrandt's etchings, or one of Dürer's woodcuts, to a large and careful picture by Benjamin West, although President of the Royal Academy, and admired by George the Third. Yet, in the finished picture only, the Pictorial Power uses all its means. And it is in organised metrical

Poetry that human speech attains its most perfect and impressive form.

But let us rather consider Prose in its usual and average condition, when it is most in its own character, and less emulous of those qualities which are the especial property of Poetry. Taking the simple and usual point of view, Prose is obviously one thing, and Poetry another.

It is in the very nature of Prose to be *non-metrical*; and it is artificially put together with that very intention. Prose is a later, less natural, more conventionalised and artificial form of composition than Poetry. The metrical qualities of language are by effort and practice subdued, reduced to a minimum, kept out of observation. Prose is the expression of the scientific and analytical intellect, striving to take things separately, to examine them narrowly, little by little, continually guarding and limiting itself in its progress. Prose is careful, cautious, judicial; its business-like eyes fixed upon some attainable object, towards which it moves step by step, whether slowly or swiftly, lifting right foot after left in due succession. Vehement, high-coloured and notably rhythmic Prose, even when successful, is felt to be on the confines, if not over the boundary, of its proper dominion; it is only allowable in exceptional cases; if much used, it becomes disagreeable. In good Prose, usually, metrical forms are avoided. Metrical forms are felt to belong to a *mood* different from that to which Prose, as Prose, addresses itself; they belong to the *poetic mood*, in short, wherein imagination rather than intellect is paramount; a mood of delight, not of investigation, when the soul is lifted from the ground and moves on pulsing wings in a new and freer element.

Prose Composition, then (we say) is a form of language growing out of scientific limitations and the spirit of analysis, and is only perfectly attained through the culture of ages. In early times, everything was chanted. The

chief works in Sanskrit upon grammar, law, history, medicine, mathematics, geography, metaphysics, are in verse; verse being more natural, and more memorable. Science in those days was far from being so strict, scholastic, pedantic, as in ours (but there are changes gathering in the atmosphere of Science), for imagination came largely into all processes of thought; the feeling of the unity of the world, and of the general mystery of things, showed itself in every department of study; the universal was felt in the particular. Mean associations of ideas and words (always caused by separation from the universal) were fewer than they now are. With the progress of culture came necessarily division of studies, definitions, exclusions, application to particulars, and the growth of Prose as a distinct vehicle of thought.

Poetry, by this (you may say), would appear to belong to a barbarous condition of humanity. Say, rather, to a simple and primeval condition. After science and analysis have done their best, there is still need for us nineteenth-century people to make a synthesis, and a larger synthesis than ever: to rise from anatomic studies to the contemplation and enjoyment of *Life*—from particulars to the universal. The Man of Science, the Man of Business, break up the whole into little bits, for analysis, for calculation, for sale; the Poet reconstructs the shattered world, and shows it still complete and beautiful.

Poetry proper (the Poetry of which I speak) is metrical, by the nature of it. Metre is *sine qua non*; and though you may compare *this* given specimen of Prose with *that* given specimen of Poetry, and prefer the former, and even rightly prefer it, and prove that it possesses a larger share of poetic qualities than the latter, yet the one remains a different quality of thing from the other. And however high the degree of poetic expression that has, in exceptional instances (fewer, perhaps, than we vaguely fancy), been attained in Prose, Metrical Poetry remains the best medium of poetic

expression. The works of the Poets—of the high men who wrote in metre, are, as a matter of fact, the real treasury of poetic language. The Sense of Beauty, seeking expression in words, finds in Metrical Poetry its most fitting embodiment.

Metre, I repeat once again (for there is much misconception as to this), is the natural form of Poetry; and it brings about certain important results, for thereby is Poetry constituted as one of the Arts—an Art which is perhaps the earliest, as it is the most famous of them all.

Art comes to man before Science; also, it comes after Science, and includes it.

'But what is your boasted Art, after all, but a toy—a knack of rhymes and metres?'

Yes!—and what, in fact, too, are bits of cobalt and vermilion, when you come to consider them dispassionately? What is Raffael's brush? a tag of bristles (you may count them, if you like). What is Mozart's harpsichord?—a frame of chips and wire. And what are you yourself, my friend?—what am I?—but a bundle of rods, and strings, and pipes? Only, somehow, there is a something slipt in, which we call *Life*—nay, *Soul*—and which makes a difference. We don't know what it is: we see it in its effects.

Poetry has a good deal of life in it. What is old Homer himself, this very long time, but a name, a dream, a question? But the Homeric Poems are alive at this day over the face of the earth, springing up fresh and fresh like grass, new to every new generation. They have outlived dynasties, and nations, and creeds. Two hundred and fifty years ago, William Shakespeare's body (eyes and hands, tongue and brain) was hidden in the ground beside a little river in Warwickshire; but his Book is not buried yet—it is running about in this world, lively enough.

Why do we love and reverence Art? Because it gives a

natural scope, and lasting expression, to *Genius*. Artists are men of a communicate genius.

Why is 'Painting' a grand word? Because the Art of Painting has embodied for us the genius of such men as Van Eyck and John Bellini, Raffael and Titian, Holbein and Hogarth and Turner.

What is glorious in music? That it keeps for us, safer than wine in its flask, the fine inspirations that come (we know not how, they knew not how) to a Bach, a Glück, a Handel, a Mozart, a Purcell, a Beethoven, a Rossini: and to those nameless men who made the delicious old melodies of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.

And even so, by the Art of Poetry has embodied itself the power and beauty and wisdom and versatility of the minds of the Greek, Latin, Oriental, Italian, Spanish, German, English, Poets—a noble crowd. Its Poetry is the glory and the crown of every Literature. The work of these men cannot be held as toyish and trifling. Their place in human history is honourable, and most honourable. The Art through which they reach us, through which they belong to us, certainly is wonderful, and to be reverenced.

I had intended to submit in this place some thoughts on Painting, Sculpture and Musical Composition, distinguishing these, along with Poetry, as *Creative Arts*,—of course using the word 'creative' in no absolute sense; and also on Acting, on Musical Performance, and on Oratory, describing these as *Arts of Personal Communication*; as well as the semi-fine-arts (is there no good phrase for them?) which ally beauty with usefulness. Architecture I reckon one of these: also Prose-Writing, which is perhaps to Poetry what Architecture is to Sculpture and Painting: mere Prose being mere building, like Baker Street, or Pimlico, or a brick wall: good Prose rising and rising, till it meets, competes, almost blends with Poetry. But it seems better to refrain for the present

than to deal with these matters too cursorily; and I leave untouched the question as to Landscape Gardening's place among the arts.

Metre is the bodily form of Poetry: and now on metre let us say a few words. Metre, a stimulant and a delight, acts through the ear. A man deaf from his birth, could not taste the true enjoyment of Poetry: though he might have some pleasure, through the eye, from those verses arranged in the visible forms of eggs, altars, turbots, lozenges, which you see in old-fashioned books.

Metrical movement in words,—swing, emphasis and cadence, melodious and varied tones, rhythm and rhyme, have (as matter of fact) certain peculiar effects upon us. Some people are more moved than others, more vibrant, but all (unless notably defective) are thus moved in some degree.

We do not examine or estimate the Art of Painting or the Art of Music, according to the impressions of those who have least natural sensibility to those arts; nor need we stop to consider degrees of sensibility to Poetry, or to argue with those who care little or nothing for Poetry, or complain of them, or lament over them. Innumerable people know from experience, that metrical movement tends to draw the mind into, and keep it in a particular mood—a mood peculiarly favourable to certain impressions. Partly the mind is drawn, partly it yields. Its own feeling coincides with the known intention of the writer, or speaker. It receives, and it prepares itself for delight. It is at once soothed and stimulated. It desires and expects warmth of feeling, beauty of imagery, subtlety and rapidity of thought, refined, rich, and expressive forms of words, in the best possible order.

And all these are given to it by good Poetry. In its melodious movement it raises a succession of pleasurable expectations, and in due succession fulfils them; shows at

once a constant obedience to law, and a joyful boldness and mastery; its movements and transitions are birdlike, with free yet symmetrical swing and cadence, with regulated exuberance (like that of nature in all her best forms) a beautiful proportionality develops itself as by spontaneous movement, giving to each part its utmost effect, while each remains in due subordination to the whole.

Thus far, the effect closely resembles that of Music; but during the working of Poetry's enchantment, the intellectual powers also are in a peculiar condition of pleasurable excitement and clairvoyance. Beautiful Proportionality permeates the thought and the spirit of the thought which the well-proportioned words convey. Plan, ideas, images, style, words, are all modulated to one harmonious result. All, together, moves and floats, and orbs itself. A rapid-glancing and airy logic (but strong and genuine) makes itself felt throughout; the highest and sweetest gifts of memory, of fancy, of imagination, are now fittest to the soul's mood; the synthetic, comparing, harmonising, unifying power is in the ascendant. The soul rises above trivial cares and hindrances, moving rapidly, breathing in all its body, rejoicing in every cadence of its beating wings; all its powers at command, all of them acting in due subordination; it is become more refined, clairvoyant, harmonious; organised form and regulated movement are joined with a mystical and supersensuous beauty. Beautiful Proportionality, manifest yet mysterious, that all-pervading quality of Nature's work,—here it is also, developed in the world of man's mind, in the microcosm of human thought.

This is the work of man's joyful sense of beauty (of the beauty which is in all things, rightly seen) expressing itself in choicest rhythmic words; and this is the most complete manner of human expression. Every man, when he speaks his best, would utter Poetry if he could.

Shall we then call *any* composition of metrical words a poem?—and leave no distinction at all between Poetry and Verse? This would not do. Without metre, no Poetry; but, given a metrical form of words, have we necessarily Poetry? Not so. What is thus expressed, must be something *naturally fit to be so expressed.*

For expression by the Pictorial, or by the Musical Art, certain things are fit, others unfit, and the limits of these Arts are well marked. The Art of Poetry is of wider scope, less definite boundary; hence the innumerable mistakes of critics, and of poets too. But on the whole it is recognised that Poetry is doing its right and peculiar office when it expresses imaginative truth, in forms of beauty, or of sublimity, imbued with tenderness, awe, aspiration, exultation, every mood of noble emotion; and the general result is harmonious thought and feeling in harmonious words.

The Poet does not think in prose, and turn his thought into poetry, by measurement and arrangement and decoration. His thought is poetic. The beauties of a true Poem are not excrescences—they are part of the life and nature of the work. When a true poetic impulse, seeking verbal expression, clothes itself successfully in rhythmic speech, the rhythm will have a natural suitableness to the thought; its words will be the fittest and choicest words; its arrangement of them, the best possible arrangement. In good Poetry, the Metre is not a limitation, but a power; it gives not shackles, but wings.

Good Poetry is in every way the choicest arrangement of words: it demands, therefore, and rewards, the nicest *elocution*. And here let us glance at the benefits which Poetry confers on Language. Poetry preserves, upholds, and improves Language. It chooses the most clear, vivid, and exact forms of speech; and supports the purest methods of pronunciation. Poetry is the chief storehouse of authority

on these matters. Changes must gradually come into every Language: but Poetry opposes itself to carelessness, conventionality, vulgarism, corruption of whatever kind,—all those deteriorations to which ordinary speaking and writing are subject. And remember that when language decays, not merely good taste, but thought and reason also decay. One cannot rate highly the *jus et norma loquendi* of our own day, but doubtless it would be many degrees worse but for the Poets. The diction of social life is at present for the most part vague, unpoetic and corrupt; so also is the general run of our public writing and public oratory,—both of which indeed being addressed to the hour, use naturally the phraseology of the hour; but it is proper for men of literature, and it is their duty, to uphold our noble tongue out of these debasements. This, though a subordinate, is an important function of literature, and especially of the flower of literature, Poetry,—namely, to preserve and if possible enhance Language (which is Thought's body) in health and beauty. Many words and phrases now in common use are less than half alive; blood from the intelligent vital source hardly enters their cold lumpish substance. Human speech of this kind resembles the Horny Woman whose skin was hard warts all over,—smiles, blushes, every sympathetic change, being hopelessly and hideously encrusted. The Poets by their genius, their sensibility and culture, are led to use those forms of their native tongue which are essentially best. And the general character of their forms, where differing from those in ordinary use, is by no means additional pomp, elaboration, inflation, but on the contrary, greater simplicity, naivety, directness, nature, truth; and thus they are at once more picturesque and more exact. Which do you suppose—is the Great Newspaper or the Great Poet the more simple and more exact in the use of words? Good poetic language fits as close as possible to its thoughts; while ordinary language too often hangs loosely sagging and bagging, here gathered into a shapeless lump, there trailing on the ground, disguising and disgracing the thought of which it is the slovenly garment.

The Spirit of Poetry itself it was, which, at an earlier stage of language, fitted words to things, and ever it requires the word and phrase not merely to approach but to get as near as possible to the thought. Many or most of the finest forms of language we owe, as we shall find if we trace them up, to the Poets. The chief wealth of Prose is borrowed or adapted from the treasury-house of Poetry. Poetry has not only originated the best words and applications of words, but has taught Prose the general power of language, and given it the hint of invention. They who, loving high Prose, disparage Poetry, are, if they knew it, a little ungrateful. I know a very great Prose-writer of our time,[1] who is not always respectful to Poetry in the abstract, yet whose pages are bejewelled with costly phrases and sentences from the Poets.

The youth enjoying his beloved poem, perusing and reperusing till every line becomes familiar as his own name, is unawares storing his memory with better forms of language than he could elsewhere find. Considered merely as a literary composition, a good Poem is incomparably the most perfect of such things,—although Prose has a wider and more varied service.

Dealing oftener with high and abstruse matters, good Poetry is always as clear as the nature of the subject and the nature of human speech will allow. If not, it so far falls short of what it might be, and of what Poetry is, at its best. At the same time let me remark, that good Poetry is not to be read lazily and loungingly, but with both eyes open, and all one's wits about one.

Now think of the diffusion of the English language over

[1] Carlyle.

the face of the globe, and of the still mightier future that lies before it among the unborn millions of Australia and of the American Continent, and it will appear no light thing to uphold the purity and strength of the great English Tongue and to confirm it by examples and models. When a language becomes corrupt, so also do thought and reason: the form of civilisation which it contains and expresses must deteriorate along with it.

Even in this lively literary weather, so to speak, of our own day, when it snows novels, and hails essays, and blows newspaper-articles from all points of the compass at once, a good Poem still finds its readers, is oftener read, and better remembered than the other things.

Repeat to me a sentence or two of that 'leader' which you were so much pleased with, eighteen months ago, or say the day before yesterday. It was not meant, you will say, to be remembered verbatim—it did its part, gave its message, had its influence. But, allowing this its value, do you think it would be well that all writing should be of this hasty and ephemeral character?—nothing written with care, and with the highest care? nothing that will be worth reading next month, or next year?

Can we not guess some of the probable effects on taste, and on judgment, too?

To its Poets, the world (give it time) is on the whole not unappreciating or ungrateful. The greatest names in Literature, among the greatest in all History, are the names of Poets. Over millions and generations of men they have an influence, not confined to one people or tongue. The higher the Poet's genius, the more it belongs to all mankind; and its effect is to unite them all in the feeling of a common humanity. The ideal Poet is the highest of men, the masterwork of known being, the crown of life.

Poetry, in its actual examples, is differently conditioned

and modified in different languages. The Poet is limited by his instrument, and some languages give more freedom and power in poetic expression than others. Yet when the true Poet appears, he is able to use whatever language lies next to his hand, and certain times and countries blaze into poetry, who can tell why?

Poetry, as we believe, preserves and purifies language, cultivates good taste, helps memory, fills the mind with fair images and high unselfish thoughts, wondrously increases our perception and enjoyment of natural beauty, relieves the pain of our usual lack or poverty of expression, shaping and bringing within compass multifarious thoughts and feelings, otherwise inexpressible. But the boon of boons, including all the rest, is the general enlargement, elevation, emancipation of the soul. Poetry universalises. In its last result it is never despondent, but inspired with the loftiest joy and courage. It begins in the glad sense of Universal Beauty, and when it bestows the same glad sense upon its hearers, its result is accomplished. Here and there you find a short poem, exceptional, expressing a despondent mood. Diseased genius, or unlucky circumstances, may surprise the passing age with hectic and short-lived births. But the best Poetry in its total effect is cheerful and encouraging. Even when it treats of sorrow, of pain, of death, it is sympathetic but not despondent and gloomy. The very production of the exceptional sad poem (if it have permanent qualities) indicates a victory over the sadness. The Iliad, treating much of war, wounds, and violent death, is animated and exhilarating throughout: of Dante's great poem the first part is most read, for its fierce picturesqueness and dreadful fascination, but the second is an ascending symphony of hope and faith, and the third part a hymn of heavenly rapture. Chaucer is cheerful as the green landscape after a spring shower; Spenser full of rich vivacity and bold adventure; Shakespeare's book a multifarious

world of movement and interest; nothing did Goethe so much abhor, in life and in literature, as despondency, discouragement.

The Poet, when he is most himself, rises to a high and serene view. He will not exhibit grief, misery, horror, in isolated sharpness and for the mere sensational effect; these must lose their harsh and painful prominence, and fall into place in a large and noble circle of ideas. The merely painful always marks as inferior the work in which it is found. Didactic poetry, and doctrinal poetry, are also inferior, so far as they are narrowed not merely by human but by particular limitations, concerned too much with certain people, opinions, circumstances, with the temporary and accidental. In the pure mountain air which blows over the realm of true Poetry no mental epidemic can exist, or if it rises thither it melts away; fever of partisanship, itch of personality, ophthalmia of dogmatism, lie below with fog upon the marsh-lands.

Yet the Poet escapes not the influence of his time, usually it affects him far too much. He is sensitive, sympathetic, enters easily into the feelings and opinions of others, but does not so easily escape again. He is apt to fall into sudden timidity in the midst of his boldest enterprises, apt to yield to the pressure of the hour. The World, his inevitable and dangerous antagonist, strives by force and by cajolement to put him off his right road. His delicate senses persuade him to luxury and sloth. His experience of the stupidity and the selfishness which have possession of so many human beings goads him sometimes into one or another form of cynicism. He may sometimes write below his own dignity, and that of his Art. But, remember, if he puts any evil (here is not meant by evil, what this person or that person may object to, but contradiction of his own better self, treason to humanity)—if he puts any wickedness

into his poetry, it is so much the less Poetry. So far it suffers loss of value and of rank. It is always demanded of him that he dignify, not degrade, that with which he deals. The external facts, too, and incidents connected with composition and publication, are often ugly, nauseous and warping.

The ideal, the typical Poet has all but superhuman power of vision and of speech. But in the actual, every Poet is very limited and imperfect. Even the greatest poets are faulty, full of faults and shortcomings. They pour themselves often into strange enough moulds. Each, limited already in his genius, is also limited from without, and does not do even as well as he might. On every side a dull and perverse world of persons and circumstances presses in upon his work. We have entered, we hope, a zone of freedom, but our poets are still timid, and mostly sing in old forms.

The fair Poem, a gift to many,—to the Poet himself is often but a poor shadow, a faint reminiscence of some glorious message.

> 'Could I revive within me
> Her symphony and song,
> To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
> That, with music loud and long,
> I would build that dome in air,
> That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
> And all who heard, should see them there;
> And all would cry "Beware! Beware!
> His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
> Weave a circle round him thrice,
> And close your eyes with holy dread;
> For he on honey-dew hath fed,
> And drunk the milk of Paradise."'

Never yet has a Great Poem been really written—only hints and fragments. No one as yet has delivered his message even as well as he might have done. The masterpieces of all Poetry are only such by comparison.

I think—hope—might almost say believe, that the best

poets are yet to come. Do we not hope for a better earth than has yet been? And we all hope for a better life elsewhere. Shall not *that* have its Poetry, think you, inexpressibly greater and finer than anything we can now conceive or dream of?—and when Man is more in unison with Heaven (be it here or elsewhere) a fairer, fuller Poetry will surely arise: yet, with all its imperfections, that which we already possess is a great gift.

Of Poetry as written, Poetry as we have it, there are many degrees and varieties.

Every poem need not be great, but it must be genuine in its own class, true and fine.

Every poem is the result of two co-operating forces: one, impulse, emotion, inspiration; the other, will, intention, conscious effort. Of true Poems, some have more of the one, and some of the other: and so also of different parts of a Poem, one part is done chiefly from will, another part from impulse. The Poets, exceedingly various as they are, seem to me to be divisible mainly into two great classes, those whose work springs chiefly from the pure poetic impulse, and those whose work is chiefly produced by will and intention. All are to be called Poets who succeed in expressing themselves in verse, and the lesser Poets are as real as the greatest, and have thus seats in the temple.

Those whom I would place in the second and lower class of the singers from *poetic will* are able men who have been turned, by circumstances and choice, in proportions varying in the various instances, to express themselves through the medium of verse, and who on the whole successfully accomplish their aim. Other men, of equal or greater total capacity, are quite ungifted for singing their thoughts; but these of whom we speak have more or less a share of the necessary gift; some true musical impulse moves in the midst of their general intellectual power; each, along with

his other qualities, has enough of the metrical, the musical, the poetic, if not to urge, at least to enable him to write in verse, and this gives him his claim to be called a Poet. Even within the limits of this class, one will prove much more of a Poet than another. Some Poets there are who, in the economy of things, appear to be made for the *unpoetic* listener,—since metrical language works more or less upon all men. These move on the confines of prose, yet move in poetry. Swift, unexpectedly, has a true sense of metre hidden somewhere in his mind.

In the Poets whom I would reckon in the other class, the purely *poetic impulse* is the master quality, irrepressible and all-pervading; even as the born Painter has a constant delight in colour for its own sake.

One might, I think, arrange the names of all Poets known to him (though in certain cases there might be question and difficulty) broadly into these two large classes. Suppose this done, it probably strikes us, that such a one standing in the *Will* class is on the whole greater than such another in that of *Impulse*: but we also find that *all the greatest* Poets in the total list stand in the class marked 'Poetic Impulse'; and that the precious qualities *peculiar to Metrical Poetry* come to us most abundantly from natures wherein also dwell the highest sensibility to beauty, the swiftest movement of thought, the most penetrative intellect. The imagery of these men is usually that of the true Imagination, intuitive, dealing with essential relations of things. The imagery of those who would come into our other class (of *Will*) is collected chiefly by the Fancy, in her sport or for parade; and its product may degenerate into the clever or the factitious.

If we divide and classify further, we arrange Poets into certain schools,—but at last we shall find, if we go on, that every considerable Poet is to be taken singly; and the greater the Poet, the more distinctly individual he is. He

views the world in his own way, and reports his experience in his own way; his sincerity is his power. If he 'carries a mirror' it is not a common mirror, but a magic mirror, made out of his individual quality. Yet, a high Poet is also a chief representative of the human race; his work, while peculiar, is at the same time thoroughly sympathetic. The particulars which he conveys so strikingly are not merely particulars, they are also typical, and have a general application. The singularity of each Poet may be counted as one more indication of the importance, the kingship of every single Human Being. Each has a whole world of his own, besides the world that is his in common with mankind. The Poet is peculiar, because largely receptive of life and nature at first hand, and bold and skilful enough to sing his own proper experiences; he is universal by virtue of that unity which underlies all appearance, and which is everywhere reached by the penetrative mind. He, more clearly than another, recognises and delights in the magical appearances of things, and at the same time it is peculiarly his instinct and his gift to perceive the essential under the apparent. The individuality will be modified by circumstance and accident; the insight, the veracity, is the gift given to all true Poets, and the secret of their strength. As to the work of judging and ranking the poets of an Age, this must needs be left to another Age, perhaps to several.

Let us glance back at the ground we have passed over. Poetry is the Art of Verbal Metrical Expression. It is the most comprehensive of the Arts. It furnishes the most adequate means of expressing certain thoughts and moods. The thought, the mood, must itself be emotional and creative—must be such as moves all the powers of expression to harmonious result. It is first the movement of the Poet's *mind* that is musical: not saying 'musical' in any technical sense, but that his mind is moved and modulated into a

beautiful orderliness: his emotions, his conceptions, when they seek and find the most fitting expression, flow into harmonious speech. There is always some resistance in the medium; his song is not so free and perfect as he desires. He must often compromise, supply missing links, as best he can, by more conscious exertion; he stumbles, makes mistakes, falls short in many ways; but if his work on the whole is a genuine Poem, a boon to mankind, an addition to the world, the music of it first vibrated spiritually through the Poet's being, and there lives in it a mystical quality, inherent in all true Art, inexplicable even to the Artist himself.

Where lies the source of this influence? It lies deep. In approaching this part of my subject, I would avoid anything like a rhetorical or rhapsodical tone. The idea to be conveyed is, I believe, not fanciful or fantastic, but of the deepest truth;—so deep is it, and draws us into such awful precincts, that Poetry itself could alone furnish words in the least degree adequate, words at once clear and subtle; and even these at their best would fail and fall short.

To those varied and wonderful manifestations of the Divinity, in the midst whereof we find ourselves placed, and of which we form a part, and a most important part, we give collectively, in default of a better term, the name of 'Nature.' And all Nature is poetic—a countless multitude of poems, which Man translates as best he may into his own language. It is too great for any of us; we can but report a line here and a verse there. The Man of Science is the critic and grammarian of Nature's Poems; the Poet the translator and interpreter. Neither is let into the secret. The absolute essence remains inconceivable. Yet most astounding it is that little Man should possess the faculties of intellectual investigation and the powers of spiritual vision which are his; powers correlative to all that is external to him—other forms of One Eternal Truth.

Nature is poetic: Nature (as we have ventured to express it) is a Poem, and every part of Nature. Art is not the same as Nature, has something less and something more, is an externised beauty imbued with human elements, and is *not* the result of mere imitation of Nature: but that life, that Spirit, which shows itself through Nature, and which shows itself through Art, is one and the same. The soul of our pictures, our music, our verse-poetry,—there it is also in Nature. Beauty is everywhere; unnecessary, useless beauty; throughout earth, water, air, and the infinite of space; and everywhere developed in metre, in balance, in rhythm, in symmetry; the grand original *Poiesis*. Consider merely the growth of a plant: what the Indian conjuror pretends to do in five minutes is no less wonderful in the slower natural movement continued throughout weeks and months. The little seed sends up its stem like a slender fountain, shaking out the delicate foliage on every side, unfolding bud and flower, leaf for leaf, petal for petal, in due order and proportion, with symmetry and freedom gracefully reconciled; beauty is not alone of lily, rose, and palm-tree; every wayside weed is a green poem. More wonderful still the multiform animal creation; Lion and Horse, Bird, Serpent, Fish, Butterfly, Earthworm, Animalcule, each of these, and every living thing, harmoniously organised, and fitted to its place; and above these again our own orderly and rhythmic frame, with its powers and energies.

Then consider in this light the steps and incidents and progression of a human life, from appearance to evanishment. Every chief incident, every group of incidents, seen in the true connection and from the proper point of view, with right insight and right feeling, is poetic. I do not speak of the life of a hero, but of an average common-place human being. Birth, Childhood, Youth, Maturity, Old Age, Death; —a day, a month, a year, a life from cradle to grave,— all together rounds itself, when seen from a little way off,

into a consistent and symmetric form, which as a whole is permeated with beauty,—rounds itself into a Poem.

Again, looking off from ourselves, we see every day, not unrelated to us, the landscape with all its variety combined and rounded and poetised within its horizon-circle. This we see with the natural eyes. And with the larger and no less truthful eyes of the imagination, we can see (standing upon the vantage ground won by Science, and looking beyond and above Science) this Earth-Globe of ours, clad with the seasons, painted with day and night and many-coloured clouds, softly spinning round its regulated course. Who doubts of this, more than of the apple which he holds in his hand? What man has ever seen this? It is a Poem, seen only by the eyes of the imagination, but known also to be a scientific fact. Is there any External Universe (the old question)? We answer, Yes. How can we know anything of it? In the last step, only by the Poetic Imagination.

Looking higher still and farther, aided thereby, what find we? On every side,—boundless, inconceivable, yet true and sure, as mere matter of fact as our own five fingers when we hold out our hand,—a Universe crowded with Earths and Suns. They move and mingle unceasingly, in a mighty dance, 'Cycle and epicycle, orb in orb.' Our utmost imagination, though entirely believing, throws hitherward a most faint and ineffectual glance.

And higher still we may rise at privileged moments above this sphere, into the awful perception of Absolute Truth, when, Religion and Poetry becoming one, we recognise Conscience and its laws as a beautiful reality and wonder excelling the Starry Heaven itself.

This great Universe is the Poem of Poems. The Maker of it is the Primal Poet.

The Plant, the Animal, the World—poems, miracles, are these; Man the greatest. He only, of all known Created Beings, has the gift of articulate speech, and of conscious

communion with the Divine Source,—this faculty, this communion, cognate powers. So does he share in little the Creative Energy. He orbs his intelligent life into economic, into moral, into social, into religious order. His delight in the universal Beauty he projects into ordonnance of forms and colours and sounds; and for all the faculties of his mind, in due subordination and perfect proportionality, he finds an expression, and the best expression, in the wider, freer, and more various element of Language, and so orbs that also into Poetry—what we agree to call 'Poetry' *par excellence*. Divine is the impulse, nor are the means unworthy, since Language also (however we may analyse its grosser elements and trace its growth) originates from a spiritual, and celestial source. In Language, the Poetic Spirit seeks, finds and uses its own, that which it gave long before, and ever it strives after what is truest and most essential in Language. Rightly is Poetry esteemed miraculous, a gift from above. The impulse comes to all men, but only a few are so open and sensitive by genius, so unspoilt by circumstance, so unclogged with trifles, unshackled by daily needs, as to vibrate with free and full responsive tone, and convey to others any hint of the heavenly message. Here and there by the bounty of Heaven, some true messenger, among many pretended messengers and many self-deceiving, speaks a word not inadequately. In those good and happy moments of enlargement and power, when memory, hope, experience, faith, imagination, all the faculties, rise together into an emotional mood of love and joy, new, delicious, and creative,—a gifted Human Soul, recognising the presence of eternal beauty, and impelled to communicate its delight, projects itself into the world of language, and there creates beautiful things.

Happy I call him, whatsoever his visible fortune, to whom above the petty and distracted din of the passing day, it is given to hear the far-off movement of an Eternal Harmony.

For one Poem that he writes, ten thousand unwritten poems are his. And if he have the gift and courage to report well some snatch or fragment, happy also are they whose ear and soul are open to his message, whereby human life thereafter is enriched.

In youth, when the senses are fresh and the spirit is open, it is well to drink of this ambrosia. As people grow older, they are apt to grow more shrewd and decorous, not always more reverent, not in every way wiser. I can imagine that an Old Man may gladly find floating on winged words into his memory some early dream, some ideal hope or joy, some high thought, a Poet's gift, and find it truer after all, more deep founded, than much that he counted reality in life, but which was only fleeting appearance. Perhaps, though long latent, it has not been without its influence.

But whether this or that individual, young or old, reads or never reads, remembers or does not remember any Poetry in a given form of words, the Poets have not the less influenced and modified the world of men into which he and we have been born, the language that we speak, the society in which we live.

If this man or that cares nothing, has never cared anything for Poetry, 'tis his loss and his defect—the greater, the less he is conscious of it; let him at least carefully avoid to brag of his apathy. He might as reasonably be proud of deafness or blindness.

Poetry, like Humanity itself, appears poor and absurd, or rich and profound, partly according to the mood in which we regard it, but mainly according to the wisdom we bring to its estimation.

The Spirit of Poetry is assuredly a divine presence and power. This particular manifestation of it, this Art of Metrical Language, is a fact and a force in the world; its effects delightful, elevating, and enduring; its source hiding beyond investigation,—in the Infinite Deep of Things.

DISRAELI'S MONUMENT TO BYRON.

I never write from personal spite
  As much as a single word,
When hot I feel, 'tis public zeal,—
  Which may seem to you absurd.

ESSAY IV.

DISRAELI'S MONUMENT TO BYRON.

I.

THOSE who happened, like the present writer, to be in Willis's large room in King Street on the afternoon of the 17th of July, 1875, heard a highly characteristic speech from a man of world-wide celebrity. The Premier—political First Man, by selection, in the British Empire, and moreover notable in literature—expressed his undoubtedly genuine and strong feeling of admiration for a certain English poet, and urged the duty of raising to his memory a national monument. The speech was not long, but it bore the marks of careful preparation, and was delivered with all the measured solemnity characteristic of this orator.

In spite of the attraction of so celebrated a chairman the room was far from crowded, and the audience by no means enthusiastic. In addition to Mr. Disraeli, literature was represented on the platform by Lord Houghton, Lord Stanhope, Mr. Matthew Arnold, Mr. Frederick Locker, and Mr. G. A. Sala. Let us come at once, however, to the feature of the day—Mr. Disraeli's speech. It is worth recalling, and so we will give it here, almost *literatim*

throughout, and in its essential parts entirely so. The 'cheers' and 'loud cheers' proceeded mostly from the platform and its vicinity.

After some usual words, Mr. Disraeli, with almost funereal gravity, proceeded thus: 'In the 12th year of this century a poem was published by a young man, who instantly commanded the sympathies of the nation. There is no instance in literary records of a success so sudden and so lasting. To use his own words: "He awoke one morning, and found himself famous." From that time for twelve years he poured out a series of complete inventions, which are not equalled for their number and their consistency of purpose in the literature of any country, ancient or modern. (Cheers). Admirable for many qualities, for their picturesqueness, their wit, their passion—they are most distinguished by their power of expression and by the sublime energy of their imagination. (Cheers.) And then, after these twelve years,' said the orator, very slowly, and dropping his voice to a sepulchral tone, 'he died. He died, I say, in the fulness of his fame, having enjoyed in his lifetime a degree of celebrity which has never fallen to the lot of any other literary man, —not only admired in his own country, but reverenced and adored in Europe. (Cheers.) How is it, then, that after half a century has elapsed, we are met here for the first time in public meeting to devise some means of a national expression of admiration and gratitude to qualities so transcendent? It has been said, as some reason for this strange and dark neglect, that the private character of this poet was not as illustrious as his public one. When half a century has elapsed, private character is scarcely an element in the estimate of literary genius. (Cheers.) But of his private character it may be said that it was ambiguous, and that of it little is clearly known; and there is no man in this room —ay, I would even say, in this country—that upon that subject can presume to give a definite and precise opinion.

(Loud cheers.) But then it was said, as another excuse, that his works were deficient in morality, and that he indulged in too free speculation on those subjects which the human mind can never penetrate, but which it is organically formed to reverence. And yet it must be remembered that he was born in an age of contracted sympathies and restricted thought, and that much which he then questioned has since been surrendered. (Cheers.) If he fell, which he undoubtedly did, into many erroneous conclusions on Divine subjects, it may be urged for him that [with extremely deliberate emphasis] *he was very young*. Lord Lyndhurst, speaking of Canning's dying at fifty-six, said, "Why, he was a mere boy!" Byron was twenty years younger when he died, and in any speculations upon his character and career this element in that wonderful character and marvellous career should never be omitted. It should always be remembered, I say, that we are speculating on the life of one who, like those whom the gods love, died young. (Cheers.) During those fifty years that have elapsed, and during which no public meeting has ever been called to recognise his merits, a chorus of poetasters have unceasingly worked to decry his abilities, and ultimately even to deny his genius. (Cheers.) No one who has ever travelled in Greece can for a moment question the place of Byron as a poet of the highest class. He has impressed his mind on that country more than any poet who has existed since Homer. (Cheers.) There is not a cape, a promontory, or a column that he has not touched with the fire or suffused with the sweetness of his song. If you follow him in his Italian residence, you will find that Italy was to him a source of scarcely inferior inspiration. But the last and greatest of his works does not depend upon local interest. It will remain, as it is now recognised, a great and unexampled picture of human nature, and a triumphant effort of the English tongue. (Cheers.) We are met here, then, to-day, at last to do justice to one of the

greatest of England's sons (cheers); what form your feelings should take it will be for you to decide.' After alluding to his visit more than forty years ago, in company with Byron's son-in-law (Lord Lovelace, who was present at the meeting), to 'that Albania which Byron celebrated,' Mr. Disraeli concluded—'For myself, though I presume not to dictate to this assembly what form their feelings should assume in this respect, I will express my individual desire to see in some public place a semblance of this great spirit, so that the English people when they pass shall recognise one of the greatest masters of the English language.' (Loud cheers.)

II.

Men able to throw their backward gaze to the first quarter of the century can testify of their own experience that during Lord Byron's too short career no name rivalled his in general notoriety save one—that of Napoleon, and that of all poetry Byron's was most admired.

Besides the qualities of his writing, there were adventitious circumstances that greatly enhanced this notoriety. His light was by no means under a bushel, but set conspicuous, and aided by numerous multiplying and magnifying mirrors. His satirical retort on the 'Scotch Reviewers' had no wide effect, though it made his name known in literary circles; but the two cantos of *Childe Harold*, 'written for the most part amidst the scenes which it attempts to describe,' and picturing for the first time in English verse many anciently famous and recently talked-of localities, which in those days were practically as remote from the majority of readers as is now the interior of China, shone out like a comet. The author's title was no small help. The rumours which were even then afloat of his darkly romantic personal character and adventures had their share in heightening public

curiosity. Next came in quick succession what may be called the Turkish Tales. People were greatly delighted at the importation direct from the Levant of such splendid novelties as minarets, muzzins, tophaiks, calpacs, caftans, capotes, bulbuls, ataghans, caloyers, symars, chibouques, tambourgis, tchochodars, camboloios, and a thousand other curiosities. Something new and striking was wanted in narrative poetry. Scott was the only recent minstrel in that sort who had really found the sympathies of the generality, and they had begun to be satiated with border knights, feudal castles, and Gothic windows, and Scott himself to be tired of the business.

Lord Byron after his return to England had been living as a man about town in some of the 'fastest' sets, getting deeply into debt and only saved from prison by his peerage, and continuing to be much talked about for various reasons. Then followed his marriage, his separation, his second and final flight from England. Much outcry rose against him, but even this only sounded his name more loudly in men's ears, and doubtless increased instead of lessening the demand for his poems.

Travelling by Belgium and the Rhine to Switzerland, he wrote two more cantos of *Childe Harold*, striking while the iron was hot (one of the secrets of his power), describing scenery in the freshness of first impressions, and gleaning his poetic spoils on the recent field of Waterloo, and in the then little visited mountain vales of Switzerland and art galleries of Italy. He wrote quickly and published with little delay (though not without careful revision and amplification in the proofs); a method entirely suitable to his genius. His London publisher knew his business, and Byron, too, being noway deficient in worldly shrewdness, took pains, after his boyish petulance had subsided, to keep on good terms with several of the most influential critics of the day. To Gifford, editor of the chief English review (also

published by Murray), he was 'affectionately yours,' and carefully made up his quarrel with Jeffrey, editor of the rival *Edinburgh*.

His passage through Switzerland produced *Manfred* and *The Prisoner of Chillon*. He took up his abode in Italy, living chiefly in Venice, where he resided in a palace on the Grand Canal, and kept what has been called 'a harem,' but that phrase is very unjust to that legal Oriental institution, for Byron's intimates were loose and low women, his least scrupulous acquaintances were shocked and disgusted by his manner of living, and his subsequent *liaison* with Countess Guiccioli was looked upon by those around him as a hopeful sign. At this period he wrote his five Plays, two 'mysteries' (*Cain* and *Heaven and Earth*), and then sixteen cantos of *Don Juan*, which remains a fragment.

He had now grown tired of Italy and tired of writing—'it may seem odd enough to say—but *I do not think it was my vocation*.'[1] But as Moore tells us, 'the voice of fame had become almost as necessary to him as the air he breathed,' and he was resolved that the eyes of the world should still be fixed on him.[2] He used to say when a boy, 'I will some day or other raise a troop, the men of which shall be dressed in black, and ride on black horses. They shall be called "Byron's Blacks," and you will hear of them performing prodigies of valour.'[3]

After much vacillation, he resolved to go to Greece and join the cause of the insurgents against the Turkish oppression,—albeit of the Greeks he always had a most contemptuous opinion—'plausible rascals, with all the Turkish vices, without their courage.'[4] His health he felt to be in 'a precarious state,' and 'it was better to die doing something than nothing.'[5] He landed in January 1824, and

[1] Letter to Moore. [2] See chap. 51 in Moore's *Life*. [3] *Life, &c.*, c. iv.
[4] *Letters*, 42. [5] *Letters*, 549.

after a fit of chronic disease, and a subsequent attack of fever, died April 18, in his thirty-seventh year.

All through the period of his self-expatriation his name had been constantly in the ears and mouths of the public; in journals and reviews, and even pulpits, in dining-rooms and clubs, literary coteries, and private conversations, no name was so familiar, the subject of so much praise and blame as that of Lord Byron. Even those characteristics and actions which nobody ventured to defend gave additional matter for discussion and added to his notoriety. The dark rumours of mysterious crimes and haunting remorse, which hints in his own writings assisted to keep up, were always varying in form. And whenever the practical question chanced to present itself—'Is not such a course of life vicious, and, in fact, an outrage on social humanity?' the answer was ready: 'We all know what gossip and scandal are; how grossly things are exaggerated. Byron is not a puritan, never pretented to be, but he is no worse than a thousand others at home and abroad. His separation from his wife—well, who can venture to say how much of the blame was his? The act after all was *hers*, not his; and we hear she is a frigid, tiresome, didactic woman, who tried to lecture her fiery lord into tameness instead of coaxing him. The "harem" report is the kind of nonsense people always invent and repeat; and as to Childe Harold, and Manfred, and Lara, and the rest of them being adumbrations of their author—who is idiot enough to confuse Macbeth, and Hamlet, and Othello with the personal William Shakspeare?' Thus with ceaseless strokes of pro and con, countless pairs of battledores kept the name of Byron, a gleaming shuttlecock, perpetually aloft and in motion. Remoteness and the romantic names of Venice and Genoa aided the glamour, and his death 'in the cause of Greece' was a fortunately heroic finish.

The history of the Poet's life, carefully arranged and

coloured to make the most favourable impression, and interspersed with his brilliant, cynical letters and diaries in a modified and expurgated form, was the work of his particular friend Thomas Moore,—the autobiography, which Byron deliberately confided to Moore for the press in due time, being found 'too gross for publication'[1] [Gifford, consulted thereon by Mr. Murray]—'the second part full of very coarse things,' Moore himself reports.[1] This cunningly manipulated 'Life,' by Moore, remains the accepted portrait of Byron; but even there, garbled as it is, the true lineaments could not be concealed. Mr. Disraeli takes upon him to term Byron's character 'ambiguous,' but—whatever doubts may hang over particular circumstances—his general habits of life, the prevailing hues of his thoughts and feelings, are known to us with a very unusual degree of distinctness.

III.

The mode of defending his character which has just been mentioned, is precisely that adopted, in its least scrupulous form, in a certain novel called *Venetia*, in which Lord Byron is avowedly 'shadowed forth,' or rather illuminated, by all the devices of eulogy. *Vivian Grey* and *Contarini Fleming*, by the same author, are full to overflowing of Byronism, both in manner and substance, though it is true that the vehemence and the magniloquence of the original are often caricatured in the imitation. The fact, indeed, has long been well known to many, that Lord Byron has been the chief object of Mr. Disraeli's literary hero-worship, almost from the cradle, and continues to be down to the present moment. There is nothing in the least surprising in this; nor perhaps even in discovering indications in the recent

[1] *Life and Letters of Thomas Moore.* By Lord Russell. May, 1854.

speech in King Street, that Mr. Disraeli still occupies the line of defence as to Byron's social character and conduct which, as has been said, he took up in *Venetia*.

Mr. Disraeli allows that Lord Byron 'indulged in too free speculations on those subjects which the human mind can never penetrate, but which it is organically formed to reverence,' and that 'he fell into many erroneous conclusions on Divine subjects.' But in making these remarks, Mr. Disraeli does not speak to the purpose (except, indeed, the purpose of the moment); he decidedly, to use a very vulgar phrase, has *the wrong sow by the ear*. Byron was not one of those men who feel an urgency to promulgate new and daring theories in opposition to those which are accepted in their time and nation. He sneered at Christianity, no doubt, the doctrine of the Trinity, Eternal Punishment, and so forth, as men of the world did and do, but he neither fell nor rose into any conclusions whatever on 'Divine subjects.' And on human subjects, in which department he really was interested and influential, what were his 'speculations' and conclusions'? These phrases, applied to a writer of note, suggest something systematic, philosophic, profound—careful researches, serious convictions. Byron's case was that of a man of pleasure, who was also a man of extraordinary ability, with views of life engendered from his own moods and casual experiences; his speculations were those which occur to such a man over his cigar: conclusions of the least importance he never arrived at, or strove to arrive at, on any serious matter. Putting 'Divine subjects' out of the question, his attitude towards human subjects was not in the least that of the enthusiast for new opinions, right or wrong. He sneered at marriage and family ties, not because he had formed any speculation, much less any conclusion on the subject, but because he was sensual and self-willed, and had been born and bred in a foul, contagious atmosphere. Let the truth be told. He had bad parents. He indulged freely

in sexual vice from his school-days. From boyhood up he mocked on every opportunity at any notion of female virtue or conjugal faith.

At a certain time in his career he was advised that it would be prudent to marry a well-to-do wife, and he accordingly proposed and married in all the ordinary forms (sneering at them all the while—his letters to Moore at this time are odious). Brigham Young's doctrines on the relations of the sexes may not deserve much attention, but he has some, or professes to have; Byron had none, save such as sprung from bodily and mental habits of libertinism. His wit was in partnership with these. Wit he undoubtedly possessed, but if you were to cut out all the jests that turn on adultery and fornication, you would leave but little in proof of it.

Mr. Disraeli says that, after fifty years, 'private character is scarcely an element in the estimate of literary genius,' the truth of which apophthegm is in any case not self-evident; but when the question is of a man whose private character infused itself into every pore and cranny of his public writings, and it is proposed to erect a national monument to him in token of admiration and gratitude, then the consideration of private character most decidedly cannot be left out. If the subscribers to the monument could shut their eyes to it, those who looked upon that monument, were it but with a passing glance, certainly would not. Lord Byron's character and writings are perhaps more inseparable than those of any other writer who ever lived. In fact, the interest and vitality of his verses mainly depend upon their strongly autobiographic nature. The 'consistency of purpose' which, according to Mr. Disraeli, runs through the poems, is to us only recognisable in the form of perpetual egotism.

What, then, was the private character of this poet, which is so inextricably mixed up with his poetry and his fame? 'Of his private character it may be said that it was ambiguous, and that of it little is clearly known; and there is no man in this room—ay, I would even say, in this country—that upon that subject can presume to give a definite and precise opinion.'

Now in one sense it is, of course, true of Lord Byron, as of every mortal, that no man can presume to give 'a precise and definite opinion' as to his private character: we never can know *all*. On the other hand, there are certain undeniable facts as to Lord Byron, which are as well established as any facts can possibly be, relating to his parentage, education, temper, and conduct. The pictures on which we rely are drawn most of them by his warmest friends, or by his own hand. If we may not venture to characterise Lord Byron's conduct in life with reference to some of the chief laws which bind civilised human society together, we may as well make a bonfire of our biography books.

But we must pass on to consider the accuracy of Mr. Disraeli's description of Lord Byron as a 'poet of the highest class.'

IV.

The poetry which we read in our youth, and particularly that of the contemporary writers then in vogue, is the poetry which most deeply impresses us. Mr. Disraeli's youth was within the influence of certain London literary circles combining literature with fashion, and lay under the full blaze of the noble poet's (as Moore delights to call him) brilliant celebrity. It is no wonder if, to not a few of the men of that time who are still amongst us, the splendid reputation retains its morning brightness, or has become, if less dazzling, even more lovely and adorable seen through the long vista of memory; and for Mr. Disraeli the charm must be especially powerful. His sympathy with Byron in matters of literary taste (and to these we would for the present con-

fine ourselves) has from the first been manifest. Before the date of Byron's death, Disraeli the Younger, had already we believe, tried his hand as a public writer, and about two years after that event his novel of *Vivian Grey* was given to the world. Vivian Grey is Byron's favourite melo-dramatic hero over again, transferred to the world of English politics; he is a social and parliamentary Corsair. His opinions and feelings are of the well-known 'Byronic' sort, translated into prose. Several pages of this novel are occupied with remarks suggested by the *Corsair*—'that great work of your illustrious poet.' 'Ah! what a sublime work!—what passion!—what energy!—what knowledge of feminine feeling!—what contrast of character!—what sentiments!—what situations,' &c., &c. Mr. Disraeli's taste for Byronism in language—his preference for the high-flown, declamatory, and melo-dramatic—displayed itself in his earliest work, and has continued to adorn his stories, his political essays, and his speeches down to the present day, almost unmodified by time.

Having made politics his profession, and in his own person 'dashed into the very heat and blaze of eloquent faction,'[1] the clever and tenacious antagonist of Peel gradually acquired much experience—after a sort—of men and affairs, which of course infused itself into his later fictions, and made them better worth reading; but as to style, his taste has continued unaltered; he adores *tall talk*, and is liable at any moment in his speeches or books to begin swelling and strutting about on tiptoe. There is in short in him, as there was in Byron, a great deal of the actor, and this in one who comes much before the public is far from an unpopular quality, is very likely to 'take'; people in general are often in the mood of a theatrical audience—ready to be stimulated and excited, and not too particular how, while

[1] *Vivian Grey.*

comfortable at the same time in the underlying feeling that, after all, nothing serious is meant. Whether, however, it be not past a joke when a man of this kind becomes Head of the Government of England is a question which our sons will probably be able to answer more distinctly than we can. But we must not digress. Our business to-day is with literary matters.

V.

Mr. Disraeli being himself a Grand Celebrity, any public and formal enunciation of opinion from such a man cannot fail to have influence. It is not uninteresting to inquire how far in the present case such influence is reasonable and rightful. Although a Prime Minister can make a duke or bishop, he has no official authority whatever to establish the literary rank of a poet, and we must somewhat jealously estimate the value of his opinion on a question of the latter kind.

We are not here without means of judging. From Mr. Disraeli's prose writing in its most ambitious flights we are able to gather a pretty clear notion of the sort of diction and style which he most admires. But we have something more to guide us. Here and there in his clever novels he has given specimens of his own poetry in various metres; our readers may turn to them for themselves. But they may not be able to lay their hands so readily on his *opus magnum* in verse—*The Revolutionary Epick*, first published in 1834, when the author was twenty-nine years old, and republished by him in revised form with a dedication to Lord Stanley, in 1864, when he was fifty-nine. It is, therefore, not an immature production. The original preface is reprinted, and is so nobly characteristic a piece of writing that we wish there were room here for the whole of it. It begins thus: 'It was on the plains of Troy that I

first conceived the idea of this Work. . . . Deeming myself, perchance too rashly, in that excited hour, a Poet, I cursed the destiny that had placed me in an age that boasted of being anti-poetical. And while my Fancy thus struggled with my Reason, it flashed across my mind, like the lightning that was then playing over Ida, that in those great poems which rise, the pyramids of poetic art, amid the falling and the fading splendours of less creations, the Poet hath ever embodied the spirit of his Time. Thus the most heroick incident of an heroick age produced in the Iliad an Heroick Epick; thus, the consolidation of the most superb of empires produced in the Æneid a Political Epick; the revival of learning and the birth of vernacular genius presented us in the Divine Comedy with a National Epick; and the Reformation and its consequences called from the rapt lyre of Milton a Religious Epick. And the spirit of my Time—shall it alone be uncelebrated?'

In short, 'standing upon Asia and gazing upon Europe, with the broad Hellespont alone between us, and the shadow of night descending on the mountains,' Mr. Disraeli exclaimed, 'For me remains the Revolutionary Epick.' And 'the Work,' he says, 'first conceived amid the sunny isles of the Egean, I have lived to mature, and in great part compose, on the shores of a colder sea, but not less famous land.' He submits, however, but 'a small portion of [his] creation' to public opinion, and should that prove unfavourable, intends to 'hurl [his] lyre to Limbo'; finishing this remarkable preface in these words: 'This Work, if it be permitted to proceed will, I hope, evolve a moral which governors and governed may alike peruse with profit, and which may teach wisdom to monarchs and to multitudes.'

Are we, it is natural to ask, forbidden to hope that this great Work, in its complete form, may yet be given to mankind? Meanwhile let us look at the three 'Books' which are actually in our hands:—Book I., Magros. Book II., Lyridon. Book III., The Conquest of Italy. MAGROS, who is neither Scotchman nor Frenchman, but a 'mighty sprite'—in short, the Genius of Feudalism—appears at the opening of the poem, along with LYRMON, the Genius of Federalism, before the throne of DEMOGORGON, each to plead his cause in turn. Section I. is as follow:

> Throned on an orb of light, his awful form
> By cloud translucent veiled, as mist conceals
> The cataract, the terrors of his mien,
> Ineffable subduing; darkly alone
> The DEMOGORGON. Round his high estate,
> Maintained their pride the spirits of his host
> In vast array. Bright beings like to morn,
> With amethystine wings and starry crowns,
> Rank above rank, in semicircled grace;
> The chiefs in front, behind the inferior sprites,
> Till with the dimness of the distant sky
> Mingle their blending wings; while broad and bright
> Spanning this solemn company, its arch
> An iris spreads.

This does remind one of *Paradise Lost*—but with a difference.

Demogorgon exclaims, 'Rise, dread antagonists!' and the two geniuses spring up together; but Magros catches the Speaker's eye (so to say), and is allowed to open the debate. He describes in a highly figurative manner the Fall of the Roman Empire, triumph of the Barbarians, rise of the Papacy, &c., &c., being attended in his wanderings on the earth by two beautiful youths, who on their first meeting give him this particularly clear description of themselves:

> Spirits are we,
> And tho' the star-crowned choristers above,
> Eternal praises round the Eternal Throne
> Chanting, few emanations from the form
> Divine, more reverence, than the mighty sprite
> In heaven called Magros, even akin to thee.
> Me FAITH they call; my brother FEALTY hight.

Inversion is one of our author's favourite devices for heighten-

ing his poetic style, and it is possible that by sorting out these words some meaning might be elicited. The three companions find, in a place of tombs and ruin vast, a motionless and gigantic Old Man sitting on the ground, who has evidently seen better days, and is in fact the Pope —or rather the Catholic Church personified.

> And as I watched
> With breathless scrutiny that reverend face,
> Behold a tear, a solitary tear,
> Broke from those ancient eye-balls; down that wan
> Majestic visage rolling; then it sighed,
> Not loud, yet strangely thrilling, and that sigh
> Repeats unearthly echoes; on each branch
> Blasted, their mystic wings the visions flap.
> The dragons, in their dens obscene, their tails
> Lash flaming, mid the serpents' gloomy hiss.

This, it will be owned, is sublimely terrible, and the solitary tear remarkably touching. They kindly pick up the Old Man, hand him his sceptre, set his triple crown on his head, and lift him again on his throne; proceeding afterwards to new adventures, in which we regret we are not able to follow them. LYRIDON must in fairness have a word or two, and we will choose a gentler scene, where he 'meets a beautiful maiden on the banks of the Rhine.' Here are sections xix. and xx. of Book II.:

XIX.

> Heights castellate,
> Quaint towns, fair farms, and morn-illumined sails,
> Mid carolling of birds, while through the vale
> Of vineyards flows the river. As I gazed,
> Than the dawn fresher, singing like the birds,
> Came by a maiden. 'Who art thou, this morn
> Golden, amid the meads of RHINE?' Slight blush
> From pastime task uplooking, coronal
> Of heartsease twining, she with flute-like voice:
> 'Of lovers too long parted, I the child;
> My name OPINION: saintly mother mine

> Long known to few, yet by those few adored;
> From my majestic sire by wicked arts
> Long parted but in vain; for in this land
> By hand of holy man united were
> PHYSICAL STRENGTH and MORAL; of their love
> I the true pledge; my infant hours around
> Knowledge and Truth the nursing ministers
> And never dying Hope, who by their side
> From deathlike trance awaking, now arose
> With crimson flush.'

XX.

> 'Long honoured and long known
> Thy parents, in their cause long labouring I
> To blend their fates. Ah! couldst thou dream the woe
> Withering, their loves have cost, those fawn-like eyes,
> Glancing around, unconscious of their light,
> Would form a current swifter than the stream
> That rushes at our feet.'

Lyridon, in company with Opinion, emigrates to America, where he assumes

> 'Of stainless Washington the form serene.'

In Book the third Napoleon comes on the scene, pledges his faith to Lyridon, invades Italy, and makes his triumphal entry into Milan—

> He comes! he comes! Amid the crashing peal
> Of bell and cannon, and the louder shout,
> Upon his prancing steed Napoleon turns
> Upon their awestruck vision.

Want of space compels us to refrain; but before closing the volume, we cannot resist a few lines on the most charming of subjects, the chief inspirer of poetic rapture—need we say Woman?—

> A silken slave
> Erst in a tyrant's hall, fair WOMAN moved
> With step permissive; trifle of the hour,
> Or bauble flung aside with cold disdain,

> Of higher deeds man musing. Goddess now;
> But heaven descending, in celestial love
> Man inspiration finds: A teeming spring
> Of heart-ennobling fancies and of thoughts
> Crystalline. O'er his various life she throws
> Her ever-varying spell. With all his moods
> Magicly blending; sigh or smile, she shares
> His being, and the philtre of her power
> Unceasing Sympathy!

It must be recollected that the Author of the Poem, of which these three books form the beginning, entertained the hope,—not in immature years, or as a passing fancy—believed that he had a good chance, of becoming the peer of Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Milton. This he states in sober seriousness.

Of the diction and style our extracts give some notion, but none of the weariness caused by long-drawn page after page—at once florid and monotonous—of personification and artificiality, turgid language, awkward verse, pompous commonplace in thought, confusing accumulation of tawdry imagery.

Whosoever perceives in the *Revolutionary Epick* anything to suggest a rivalry of the *Iliad*, *Æneid*, *Divina Commedia*, and *Paradise Lost*, may very reasonably look up to Mr. Disraeli as an authority on questions of Poetry. Many—far too many—venture to give judgment on this most difficult and delicate subject; but there are few of these who also give us so indubitable a gauge of the value of their opinions.

VI.

Ours is an ungracious and a far from pleasant task; but we face it in loyalty to the High Muse herself, and for the honour of those great English poets who justly command our reverence and love. We believe the fact to be (speaking from no slight familiarity with his works, and without the

faintest prejudice against them) that—vigorous, copious, and in a way impressive as he is—no celebrated poet is so frequently faulty in diction, loose and untruthful in imagery, vulgar in versification, barren in thought, false in sentiment, as Lord Byron, none so narrow and unwise in his life-philosophy, none so unwholesome in general effect.

Childe Harold, a rhymed diary of travels, broken off not concluded, could not in any case take high rank as a poem. But much of it is common-place and poorly written, and it is floated chiefly by a few isolated passages and lyrics—not one of which is really of the first order. In these, as in the Tales, we feel the movements of an irrepressible vehement nature, gifted with copious rhetorical eloquence, and some but no large share of that true poetic faculty which vibrates to the harmonies of the world, and communicates them by an unlearnt though not uncultivated magic of words.

Let those who would judge of 'Spenserian' stanzas read in Spenser himself—say Mammon's underground realm, the Cave of Despair, or that glorious canto of 'Mutabilitie.' Before we talk of ranging anyone as 'a poet of the highest class,' let us be sure that we have made some serious attempt to estimate (speaking of native poets only) the wealth bequeathed to us by Chaucer, Spenser, Milton and others, and in imperial profusion by Shakspeare. These great writers have not shrunk from showing us the dark side of human nature, from dealing with passion and crime, pain and death. But they do so with a constant sense of proportion and fitness. French critics used to accuse Shakspeare of making the stage a slaughterhouse, but it is to Byron one must turn to find death *in its physical circumstances* displayed and dwelt upon over and over again. After the horrors of description, he has nothing to say to us but this—always the same reflection—See! a moment ago this was a human being, full of pain, pleasure, passion, agitation; now it is a piece of clay, food for worms. Hamlet

is known to have meditated on a skull; and from Hamlet down to Werter we have had no lack of the expression of *tedium vitæ* in literature. It remained for Byron to represent a few morbid figures and call it the picture of life—to set his palette with colours of sensuality, pride, and *ennui*, and deny that nature had others.

The Byron Theatre is impressive (at least in youth) by its scenery, costumes, and decorations—its pretty actresses, some rather scantily clad, and distinguishable mainly as dark or fair—and its one famous melodramatic actor who plays all the leading parts—the manager himself—strong of lung, vehement in gesture, and 'making his points' with unfailing emphasis; a striking performer in his way. But frequenting this theatre is not good for the taste, nor good for the morals.

To mention Morality in connection with Art is a sure way to produce sneers, open or covert, among the *illuminati*. But, for all that, the question is one that must one of these days have a much fuller and closer examination than it has hitherto received, and be extricated, if possible, from the tangle of confusion in which it lies. As to the stereotyped Byronic hero, of ungovernable passions, diabolical pride and self-will, and at the same time brave, generous, high-souled, and romantically (though illicitly) in love, it might be thought too unnatural a figure to have any serious effect; but if the 'Penny Dreadfuls' do our street boys harm, there can be little doubt, we think, that the companionship of these more magnificent Dick Turpins and Jack Sheppards is also degrading and injurious to the imagination of youthful readers of a higher class.

VII.

But we wish to say something of Byron's latest, and on the whole most important work—a 'great and unexampled

picture of human nature' Mr. Disraeli calls it—certainly that in which the capacities and tendencies of the author's mature mind and character are most fully and brilliantly expressed.

Byron, familiar both with the Italian and English models of *ottava rima*, took up this metre and manner with a different result to Frere's, whose cleverness was wanting in *grip*.

It was received, amid many praises of its talent, with absolutely universal disapprobation on grounds of morality and decency, all the friends and admirers of the author agreeing with his severest critics in lamenting its appearance, and deprecating its continuation. Mr. Murray refused to publish it, and the earlier cantos appeared without either an author's name, or a publisher's. The friendly and flattered Jeffrey felt bound to speak thus severely in the *Edinburgh Review*:—'We have an indelicate, but very clever, scene of the young Juan's concealment in the bed of an amorous matron, and of the torrent of rattling and audacious eloquence with which she repels the too just suspicions of her jealous lord. All this is merely comic, and a little coarse; but, then, the poet chooses to make this shameless and abandoned woman address to her young gallant an epistle breathing the very spirit of warm, devoted, pure, and unalterable love, thus profaning the holiest language of the heart, and indirectly associating it with the most hateful and degrading sensualism. Thus are our notions of right and wrong at once confounded, our confidence in virtue shaken to the foundation, and our reliance on truth and fidelity at an end for ever. Of this it is that we complain.'

Now, was there any good reason for the universal cry of 'Shame!' on this poem called *Don Juan*? If so, has that reason since that time lost its force—and why? Is it nowadays recommendable to general attention and admiration? These are questions surely worth asking.

There are, perhaps, few readers of English literature who have not, openly or secretly, read some parts of *Don Juan*. Not nearly so many have gone through it from beginning to end. Of these latter, it is probable that only a small proportion would be qualified to sit in judgment upon it as a work of art. But there are certain points in it, considered in that light, as to which the majority of competent and impartial readers who should give due attention to the piece would, I think, hardly fail to agree.

The style, generally, is flowing and easy; the language and tone that of a cultivated man of the world; the shrewdness, humour and wit (aided often by excellent comic rhymes) are undeniable; there is, moreover, an air of conscious mastery, which now and again becomes brag—as indeed a vein of brag runs all through Byron—but is felt on the whole to be, up to a certain point, natural and allowable. Serious artistic defects, however, both in the substance and style, are as undoubtedly visible. *Donna Julia's* letter, on the odiousness of which, morally, Jeffrey most justly animadverted, is equally wrong in point of art, is out of character for her, and out of place in general.

The Shipwreck has been much praised, but, though striking in some bits, it is decidedly unsatisfactory; shows bad taste, bad feeling, bad art. The far too numerous details are pieced together out of extracts from various narratives of shipwrecks, often hitched word for word into verse and remaining uncombined into any poetic whole. This is not the way in which Shakspeare, or even Scott, uses prose material or brings scenes and events before us. There is abundant bad taste in the attempts at comic effect by mixing tragic terror and physical pain with burlesque, sometimes of a most dangerous kind. Byron, in a letter to Mr. Murray (August 12, 1819), laughs at somebody who objects to this 'quick succession of fun and gravity, as if in that case the gravity did not (at least in intention) heighten the fun.'

The 'fun' in the lengthy description of the starving sailors driven to cannibalism is heightened with a vengence; it would be hard to find in all literature anything so vile and sickening as some of the details. We might compare Shakspeare's interweaving of tragic and comic—for instance, in the grave-digging scene in *Hamlet*, where the humour flows entirely and naturally from the character of the speakers—were it not at any time the worst kind of profanation to use Shakspeare's name in this connection. With those who speak of him and Lord Byron in a breath it is not profitable to argue.

The Siege of Ismail has similar faults to the Shipwreck, though it never falls to the same depth of offensiveness. It is very much too long, and composed out of a *canto* of extracts from books. If along with Byron's copious language and vigorous manner (though always without depth or refinement) he had possessed a stronger sense of poetic proportion, he might have done a powerful and valuable picture of a Shipwreck and another of a Siege in a tenth part of the space now occupied. What he has done are, on the whole, failures. That sense of proportion (half the battle in every art) would also have saved him from expending so many lines on the incidental figure of the country girl in Canto XVI., and from other similar mistakes. The poem is avowedly rambling and desultory; yet even a poem of that kind must retain form and proportion, and especially where it presents definite pictures it cannot escape the necessary conditions of poetic art.

Vraisemblance, in the moderate degree requisite in such a work, is often neglected in *Don Juan*. The young Spaniard, leaving his mother's apron-strings for the first time, finds no difficulty in conversing freely in Turkish, Roumanian, English, and we know not how many tongues. When he submits to don female attire in the harem (an incident on which the plot there depends) no motive is suggested; he is first utterly indignant

and defiant, and then yields without the ghost of an argument. His soldiership at Ismail, his courtiership at St. Petersburg, his diplomacy in England, his familiarity with English habits and manners, are all quite extemporary and astonishing; the more so in descriptions professedly realistic and knowing. Such liberties are allowed in farce, not in comedy. But, indeed, 'Donny Johnny' (as his inventor calls him) cannot on any terms be accepted as a delineation of human character. He is as much a masquerading character as Childe Harold and the others.

Don Juan altogether is too long,—we mean accepting the author's aims. It is a fragment in sixteen cantos, and if Byron (as he once thought of doing) had carried his hero, after various English 'affairs,'—among which a *crim. con.* was evidently to be prominent—to Italy, and thence to France, to be cut off at last by the guillotine in the Great Revolution, it is difficult to imagine the completed work as other than tedious. The jibes at marriage and jokes on adultery are already monotonously numerous, the clever rhyming (which, especially in the later cantos, often degenerates into slovenliness, and even relies upon slovenly liberties for its funny effect), the sarcasms and witticisms, the dissertations, the sudden turns, are of a particular pattern, and the friendliest reader, one would say, has had enough of them. There is no true depth of feeling or insight; no broad, hearty, various, sympathetic painting of human character. Here, as elsewhere, it is neither poet nor prophet (denunciatory or even satiric) whom we have to do with, but an extremely clever, sensual, sneering, *blasé* Lord Byron. That *Don Juan* is 'an unexampled picture of human nature' is true, and also that it is a picture thoroughly false and base.

VIII.

Lord Russell, speaking of Lord Byron (in his preface to Moore's Life and Letters), exclaims: 'His philosophy of life is marvellous!' an exclamation which echo may well be left to answer. But is there, indeed, anything that deserves to be called Philosophy of Life in his poems?

> We wither from our youth, we gasp away—
> Sick—sick; unfound the boon—unslaked the thirst;
> Though to the last, in verge of our decay,
> Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first—
> But all too late,—so are we doubly curst.
> Love, fame, ambition, avarice—'tis the same;
> Each idle—and all ill—and none the worst—
> For all are meteors with a different name,
> And death the sable smoke where vanishes the flame.[1]

Is that it? or,

> Love is vanity,
> Selfish in its beginning as its end,
> Except where 'tis a mere insanity.[2]

or this,

> Man, being reasonable, must get drunk;
> The best of life is but intoxication.[3]

If not in these and similar passages, which sound sincere enough, where is it? Perhaps a Philosophy of Life is to be derived from a careful study of Byron's writings in general—and, if so, what is it likely to do for us?

Great Heaven! think of the wisdom, the dignity, the humility, the gentleness, the variety, the religion, the humanity of our true Great Poets and eternal benefactors. Did *they* know nothing of the dark shadows of our life, its pains and its fears, or load their pictures with rose pink? And compare their men with these moping Harolds and

[1] *Childe Harold*, iv. 124. [2] *Don Juan*. [3] *Ibid.*

mocking Juans, these masquerading and mouthing Corsairs, Laras, and Manfreds.

Glance along the divinely radiant ranks of Shakspeare's women—Miranda, Perdita, Rosalind, Beatrice, Hermione, Juliet, Ophelia, Imogen, Cordelia, Desdemona; and turn if you can without a smile to the waxwork gallery of Zuleika, Medora, Gulnare, Parasina, Myrrha, Donna Julia, Haydee, Dudu—all in the main alike, and in various degrees improper! Byron's habitual estimate of women in general, by the way, agrees very closely with that held by one of Shakspeare's men—namely Iago. In Aurora Raby he began a sketch of a pure Englishwoman, but there, too, the devil was already jogging his elbow.

It is curious (we say it in pity, not in blame) to consider how limited Byron's experience of English society really was—of the society of refined Englishwomen how extremely limited. The poor lad, it must be owned, had an exceptionally unlucky infancy and boyhood. To have such a father—a handsome blackguard—that his death was no misfortune, was in itself the greatest of misfortunes. With his termagant, vulgar mother (amusingly sketched in *Venetia*), he could not live a day without violent quarrel.[1] His childhood never knew a home. After leaving Harrow, he passed his time between the dissipations of Cambridge and London,[2] although 'the inadequacy of his means to his station was early a source of embarrassment and humiliation to him.[3] He took pique against his guardian, Lord Carlisle; all but refused to shake hands with the Lord Chancellor when presented in the House of Lords; and persisted in standing aloof from the society natural to his age and rank. At the

[1] The original life-size portrait of Byron's mother, with vulgar, bloated red face, was by far the most curious and interesting object in the Byron Exhibition in the Albert Hall.

[2] *Chronology* in Murray edition of Works; and Moore.

[3] Moore, chap. vii.

very outset of life, he had, according to his friend Moore, 'anticipated the worst experience both of the voluptuary and the reasoner[1] (i.e., the sceptic); and at the age of twenty-one, 'chilled and sated,'[2] left England, and was absent two years, visiting Greece, Asia Minor, &c. After his return, in his twenty-fourth year (when he published the first two cantos of *Childe Harold*, and woke famous one morning); he lived 'about town,' among fast men of the clubs, with a seasoning of the green-room and the prize-ring, condescending now and again to a fashionable ball or dinner-party. He thought himself proud, but his pride was more like an overgrown vanity; he was vain of being a lord, vain of being a rake, vain of being famous, vain of despising fame. Shelley, the rich Baronet's son; Keats, the livery-stable keeper's son, were thorough and essential gentlemen. Can this be said of George Gordon, Baron Byron, whose ancestors came over with William the Conqueror. After some three years of this kind of town life, running always deeper into debt, he married Miss Milbanke, and a little more than a year after, was separated from her. Two months later, at the age of twenty-eight, he again quitted England—for ever. He had never been at home in any decent English circle. So far as appears, he had never been on terms of intimacy with any pure-minded woman except his wife, of whom he tired in a month, if not sooner.

Dismal and doleful retrospect! An unhappy character—a most miserable career!

IX.

We deeply regret that this Byron question has been brought forward again. No one will venture to say that it is a public movement. A few respected names appear on

[1] Moore, chap. vii. [2] Moore.

the meagre subscription list, and one is forced to remember that old glamour, laxity mistaken for liberality, unwillingness to seem harsh or churlish, often take effect where more positive motives are wanting. On the other hand, 'national admiration and gratitude' are solemn things, and when a formal and permanent declaration of these is claimed through the voice of England's (though but *pro tem.*) Foremost Man, a word of protest is allowable—is necessary—from those who object. There are persons—and we believe neither few nor despicable—who are deeply convinced that Byron, in spite of his brilliant abilities, is not one of those to whom a National Monument, in token of gratitude and admiration, ought to be raised. His example is not an example to be followed in any particular. He neglected his inherited duties as Englishman, as landed proprietor, and as peer of the realm. Throughout his career he outraged and ridiculed the regulations which make human society possible, and, worse, defiled the sanctuary of the human heart itself. His Book is no well-spring of refreshment, much less a fountain of healing; he is the poet of self-will, mockery, and despair.

Perhaps one more sooty statue amid the turmoil of London would not matter much one way or another. But if such things can still be supposed to have any serious meaning, we must ask—why raise a National Memorial to Lord Byron? *Implora pace*—this was the epitaph he envied. 'Rest, rest, perturbed spirit!'

THE BYRON MONUMENT.

(*To the Editor of 'Fraser's Magazine.'*)

[May, 1879.]

SIR,—It has never been customary to adorn the English capital with statues of literary men. Very recently, at a private cost, a drinking fountain in Park Lane has been embellished with counterfeit presentments of Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton, and another in Leicester Square with a sprawling figure, sometimes described as 'Mr. Albert Grant in the character of Shakespeare,' in reality a travestie on Roubiliac's work in the Abbey. But no public statue, in the usual sense of the word, of any Poet or Man of Letters is to be found anywhere in the streets of the metropolis. An exception is now about to be made. A scheme announced as 'The National Byron Memorial' has taken shape as a monumental effigy in bronze, nine feet high, which at this moment awaits the selection of a site to be set up on an appropriate pedestal in the daily view of London's throngs, and, it is hoped, for the contemplation of many future generations of Englishmen and Englishwomen. Notwithstanding the 'national' character which has been ascribed to it, it is no secret that the proposal of such a monument has been received from first to last by the general public with a very languid interest, and with disgust by no few, and that but for the exertions of a very small body of persons, including (a host in himself) the present Premier, it would never have come to anything. It would certainly be curious to see the subscription list. I visited the Byron Exhibition in the Albert Hall after it had been

open for several weeks; a subscription paper lay on the table, a large fair sheet, and it held the names of two subscribers for the sum of one shilling each. But the money has been raised or guaranteed somehow, and indeed the enthusiasm of Lord Beaconsfield in the cause was itself enough to insure it against visible failure. He, too, it was that chose the site in St. James's Street; but, as he will probably reflect, against vestries the gods themselves contend in vain. He is defeated on this bye-issue, but he will have his monument.

And now the question arises, What manner of inscription or inscriptions should there be? The business of a public monument is to remind, to *admonish* all who gaze upon it, of certain memorable bygone facts, presumably to excite admiration, reverence, emulation. What particular parts of Lord Byron's character and career may be supposed fit to exercise such effects upon a gazer's mind? His history and his writings are perhaps more inseparable than those of any other writer who has ever lived. Certainly the properest way to deal with the inscriptions, unless we prefer to consciously worship a sham, would be to select them from the utterances of the celebrated man himself. I am not on the Committee, nor even a subscriber, but I venture to offer the following as specimens to choose from. There is in no case anything modifying in the context of these quotations; and that they fairly represent the substance and tone of Byron's teaching is, I think, incontrovertible:

'How should he who knows mankind well do other than despise and abhor them?'
Journal (*Life*, I. vol., Ed. Murray, 1839, p. 227).

'All men are intrinsical rascals, and I am only sorry that, not being a dog, I can't bite them.' *Letter* (*Life*, p. 537).

'I have always had a great contempt for women; and

formed this opinion of them not hastily, but from my own fatal experience.' *Conversations* (*Medwin*, 1824, p. 80).

'Love is vanity,
Selfish in its beginning as its end,
Excepting where it is a mere insanity.'
Don Juan, ix. 73.

'The fact is, Don Juan is *too true*, and the women hate everything which strips off the tinsel of sentiment.'
Letter (*Life*, p. 458).

'I never knew any good come of your young wife and legal espousals.' *Journal* (*Life*, p. 201).

'Judge of my detestation of England and of all that it inherits, when I avoid returning to your country at a time when not only my pecuniary interest, but, it may be, even my personal security, requires it.' *Letter* (*Life*, p. 534).

'I like the Greeks, who are plausible rascals,—with all the Turkish vices, without their courage.'
Letter (*Life*, p. 104).

Virtue . . . 'that "empty name," as the last breath of Brutus pronounced, and every day proves it.'
Journal (*Life*, p. 210).

'Is there anything in the future that can possibly console us for not being always *twenty-five?*'
Journal (*Life*, p. 210).

'Man, being reasonable, must get drunk;
The best of life is but intoxication.' *Don Juan.*

'I am grown as tired as Solomon of everything, and of myself more than anything.' *Letter* (*Life*, p. 242).

'We wither from our youth, we gasp away—
Sick—sick; unfound the boon—unslaked the thirst;

Though to the last, in verge of our decay,
Some phantom lures, such as we sought at first—
But all too late,—so are we doubly curst.
Love, fame, ambition, avarice—'tis the same;
Each idle—and all ill—and none the worst—
For all are meteors with a different name,
And death the sable smoke where vanishes the flame.'
Childe Harold, iv. 124.

Two or more of these mottoes might be inserted on each face of the pedestal.

I am, Sir, your faithful servant,
ONE WHO LOVES AND HONOURS ENGLISH POETRY.

[In fine, the Monument is now set up, and the fulfilment is worthy of its conception and incubation: Byron, with a dog beside him, sits apparently in the Duke of Wellington's back garden, looking sullenly over the railings at the fashionable carriage drive outside. The group, as a memorial, has really been erected by the Author of *Vivian Grey* and *The Revolutionary Epick*; while as a work of art it will always be associated with 'the Belt case.']

SOME CURIOSITIES OF CRITICISM

On others' work you've said your say;
Now let us see your own, I pray.

ESSAY V.

SOME CURIOSITIES OF CRITICISM.

MARKHAM.—I was struck by a remark of yours the other day, Benison, as to the irreconcilably various opinions held on certain points by men of superior intelligence; and set about in my mind to recollect examples, especially in the department of literary judgments, and I have lately spent two wet mornings in the library hunting up some estimates of famous men and famous works, the estimators being also of note. Most of these are from diaries, letters, or conversations, and doubtless express real convictions.

Benison. Will you give us the pleasure of hearing the result of your researches? It is a rather interesting subject.

Markham. I have only taken such examples as lay ready to hand. If you and Frank are willing to listen, I will read you some of my notes; and you must stop me when you have had enough. First I opened our old friend Pepys. Since his *Diary* was deciphered from its shorthand and published (as he never dreamed it would be) we think of Samuel as a droll, gossippy creature, but he bore a very different aspect in the eyes of his daily associates. Evelyn describes him as 'a philosopher of the severest morality.'

He was in the best company of his time, loved music and books, and collected a fine library. He was a great frequenter of the theatres and a critical observer of dramatic and histrionic art. Well, on the 1st of March, 1661, Mr. Pepys saw *Romeo and Juliet*[1] 'the first time it was ever acted'—in his time, I suppose—'but it is a play of itself the worst that ever I heard, and the worst acted that ever I saw these people do.' 'September 29, 1662—To the King's Theatre, where we saw *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which I had never seen before, nor shall ever again, for it is the most insipid, ridiculous play that ever I saw in my life.' 'January 6, 1662-3—To the Duke's House, and there saw *Twelfth Night* acted well, though it be but a silly play, and not relating at all to the name or day.'

Benison. Pepys was certainly sensitive to visible beauty, and also to music; to poetry not at all. And Shakespeare's fame seems to have made no sort of impression on him.

Frank. We must remember, however, that most if not all of these that Samuel saw were *adaptations*, not correct versions.

Markham. He had a somewhat better opinion of *Macbeth*. 'November 5, 1664—To the Duke's House to see *Macbeth*, a pretty good play, but admirably acted.' 'August 20, 1666—To Deptford by water, reading *Othello, Moor of Venice* [this, doubtless, was the original], which I ever heretofore esteemed a mighty good play; but having so lately read *The Adventures of Five Houres*, it seems a mean thing.' The bustling play which Pepys so much admired was translated or imitated from Calderon, by one Sir George Tuke, and is in the twelfth volume of Dodley's *Old Plays*. April 15, 1667, he saw at the King's House '*The Changes of Crownes*, a play of Ned Howard's, the best that ever I saw at that house, being a great play and serious.' August 15,

[1] Pepys, 5th edition, 4 vols., London, 1854.

he was at the same theatre, and saw *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 'which did not please me at all, in no part of it.' '*The Taming of a Shrew* hath some very good pieces in it, but is generally a mean play.' (April 8, 1667.) Later (November 1) he calls it 'a silly play.' *The Tempest* he finds (November 6, 1667) 'the most innocent play that ever I saw'; and adds, 'The play has no great wit, but yet good, above ordinary plays.' To do Samuel justice, he was 'mightily pleased' with *Hamlet* (August 31, 1668); 'but, above all, with Betterton, the best part, I believe, that ever man acted.'

Frank. It is pleasant to part with our friendly Diarist on good terms. How persistently Shakespeare has held and continues to hold his place on the boards amid all vicissitudes, literary and social.

Benison. The double star of Beaumont and Fletcher has long ago set from the stage. It is curious to remember that there were hundreds of dramas produced in the age of Elizabeth and James, no few of them equally, or almost equally, successful with Shakespeare's; many written by men of really remarkable powers; and that not a single one of all these plays has survived in the modern theatre.

Frank. Might not one except *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* of Massinger?

Benison. That is revived, rarely and with long intervals, to give some vehement actor a chance of playing Sir Giles Overreach. Webster's *Duchess of Malfy* and perhaps one or two other old plays have been mounted in our time for a few nights, but excited no interest save as curiosities.

Markham. But there have been fluctuations in taste; in Pepys's time, and not in Pepys's opinion merely, the star of Shakespeare was by no means counted the brightest of the dramatic firmament. I have a note here from Dryden, which comes in pat. In his *Essay on Dramatic Poetry*, he says that Beaumont and Fletcher 'had, with the advantage

of Shakespeare's wit, which was their precedent, great natural gifts, improved by study; Beaumont, especially, being so accurate a judge of plays that Ben Jonson, while he lived, submitted all his writings to his censure.' 'I am apt to believe the English language in them arrived to its highest perfection.' 'Their plots were generally more regular than Shakespeare's, especially those that were made before Beaumont's death; and they understood and imitated the conversation of gentlemen much better. . . . Their plays are now the most pleasant and frequent entertainments of the stage; two of theirs being acted through the year for one of Shakespeare's or Jonson's; the reason is, because there is a certain gaiety in their comedies, and pathos in their more serious plays, which suits generally with all men's humours. Shakespeare's language is likewise a little obsolete, and Ben Jonson's wit comes short of theirs.'

Frank. It is very comforting, sir, to find *the best* holding up its head, like an island mountain amid the deluge of nonsense and stupidity, which seems to form public opinion.

Benison. The nonsense and stupidity are only the scum on the top. It is plain that public opinion, or rather say the general soul of mankind, has, in the long run, proved to be a better judge of the comparative merits of plays than even Dryden or Beaumont.

Markham. I have sometimes thought that old Ben's *Silent Women* would still please if well managed, and *The Fox*, too, perhaps. They have more backbone in them (*pace* our great critic) than anything of Beaumont and Fletcher's. But now, with your leave, I'll go on a century, and pass from Pepys to Doctor Johnson and Horace Walpole.

Frank. Who by no means formed a pair.

Markham. Both, however, are notables in literary history, and men of undoubted acuteness. The Doctor's opinion of Milton's sonnets is pretty well known—those 'soul-animating

strains, alas! too few,' as Wordsworth estimated them. Miss Hannah More wondered that Milton could write 'such poor sonnets.' Johnson said, 'Milton, madam, was a genius that could cut a colossus from a rock, but could not carve heads upon cherry-stones.'[1]

Take another British classic. 'Swift having been mentioned, Johnson, as usual, treated him with little respect as an author.'[2] 'He attacked Swift, as he used to do upon all occasions. . . . I wondered to hear him say of *Gulliver's Travels*, "When once you have thought of big men and little men, it is very easy to do all the rest."'[3]

Gray was also one of the great Doctor's antipathies. 'He attacked Gray, calling him "a dull fellow." BOSWELL: "I understand he was reserved and might appear dull in company, but surely he was not dull in poetry?" JOHNSON: "Sir, he was dull in company, dull in his closet, dull everywhere. He was dull in a new way, and that made many people call him great."'[4]

Nor did Sterne fare much better. 'It having been observed that there was little hospitality in London—JOHNSON: "Nay, sir, any man who has a name, or who has the power of pleasing, will be very generally invited in London. The man Sterne, I am told, has had engagements for three months." GOLDSMITH: "And a very dull fellow." JOHNSON: "Why, no, sir."'[5] [1773]. 'Nothing odd will last long. *Tristram Shandy* did not last.'[6] 'She (Miss Monckton) insisted that some of Sterne's writings were very pathetic. Johnson bluntly denied it. "I am sure," said she, "they have affected me." "Why," said Johnson, smiling, and rolling himself about, "that is, dearest, because you are a dunce."'[7]

His opinion of the Old Ballads, in which Bishop Percy threw open a new region of English poetry, was abundantly contemptuous.

[1] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Illustrated Library, iv. 207. [2] ii. 46.
[3] ii. 207. [4] ii. 212. [5] ii. 145. [6] ii. 287. [7] iv. 82.

Benison. It must be owned there were a good many blunders to be scored against old Samuel—a professed critic, too, who might have been expected to hold an evener balance. Speaking of Johnson and poetry, I never can hold the Doctor excused for the collection usually entitled *Johnson's Poets.*

Frank. He did not select the authors.

Benison. No, but he allowed his name to be attached to the work, and there it remains, giving as much authorisation as it can to a set of volumes including much that is paltry and worthless, and much that is foul. It was one of the books that I ferretted out as a boy from my father's shelves; and several of the included 'poets' would certainly never have found their way thither but for the Doctor's *imprimatur.*

Markham. He says himself, in a memorandum referring to the *Lives*, 'Written, I hope, in such a manner as may tend to the promotion of piety.'[1]

Benison. I remember he pooh-pooh'd objections made to some of Prior's poems; but Prior at least was clever. On the whole, he evidently allowed the booksellers to take their own way in the selection of 'Poets,' and did not hold himself responsible for the work as a whole—but responsible he was.

Markham. In a measure, certainly.

Frank. The work as a collection is obsolete, is it not?

Benison. I believe so, and many of the individual writers would now be utterly and justly forgotten but for Johnson's *Lives.* But you have some more extracts for us.

Markham. Yes. The opinions of Horace Walpole, an acute man and fond of books, of his predecessors and contemporaries are often curious enough. Every one of the writers whom we are accustomed to recognise as the unquestionable stars of that time he held in more or less contempt. And remember that Horace collected, selected, and

[1] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Illustrated Library, iv. 31.

most carefully revised and touched up that famous series of Letters of his. There is nothing hasty or unconsidered. 'What play' (he writes to Lady Ossory, March 27, 1773), 'makes you laugh very much, and yet is a very wretched comedy? Dr. Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer.* Stoops indeed! So she does, that is, the Muse. She is draggled up to the knees, and has trudged, I believe, from Southwark Fair. The whole view of the piece is low humour, and no humour is in it. All the merit is in the situations, which are comic. The heroine has no more modesty than Lady Bridget, and the author's wit is as much *manqué* as the lady's; but some of the characters are well acted, and Woodward speaks a poor prologue, written by Garrick, admirably.'[1] Of the same comedy he writes to Mr. Mason: 'It is the lowest of all farces. . . . But what disgusts me most is, that, though the characters are very low, and aim at low humour, not one of them says a sentence that is natural, or marks any character at all.'[2] He thus notices the author's death: 'Dr. Goldsmith is dead. . . . The poor soul had sometimes parts, though never common sense.'[3]

Dr. Johnson's name always put Walpole into a bad humour. 'Let Dr. Johnson please this age with the fustian of his style and the meanness of his spirit; both are good and great enough for the taste and practice predominant.'[4] 'Leave the Johnsons and Macphersons to worry one another for the diversion of a rabble that desires and deserves no better sport.'[5] 'I have not Dr. Johnson's *Lives.* I made a conscience of not buying them. . . . criticisms I despise.'[6] 'The tasteless pedant . . . Dr. Johnson has indubitably neither taste nor ear, criterion of judgment, but his old women's prejudices; where they are wanting he has no rule at all.'[7] 'Sir Joshua Reynolds has lent me Dr. Johnson's

[1] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Illustrated Library, v. 453. [2] v. 467.
[3] vi. 78. [4] vi. 109. [5] vi. 193. [6] vii. 508. [7] viii. 10.

Life of Pope. . . . It is a most trumpery performance, and stuffed with all his crabbed phrases and vulgarisms, and much trash as anecdotes. . . . Was poor good sense ever so unmercifully overlaid by a babbling old woman? How was it possible to marshal words so ridiculously? He seems to have read the ancients with no view but of pilfering polysyllables, utterly insensible to the graces of their simplicity, and these are called standards of biography!'[1] '. . . . Yet he [Johnson] has other motives than lucre: prejudice, and bigotry, and pride, and presumption, and arrogance, and pedantry, are the bags that brew his ink, though wages alone supply him with paper.'[2] On the Doctor's manners Horry comments thus mildly: 'I have no patience with an unfortunate monster trusting to his helpless deformity for indemnity for any impertinence that his arrogance suggests, and who thinks that what he has read is an excuse for everything he says.'[3] Of Dr. Johnson's *Prayers* he writes: 'See what it is to have friends too honest! How could men be such idiots as to execute such a trust? One laughs at every page, and then the tears come into one's eyes when one learns what the poor being suffered who even suspected his own madness. One seems to be reading the diary of an old almswoman; and in fact his religion was not a step higher in its kind. Johnson had all the bigotry of a monk, and all the folly and ignorance too.'[4]

'Boswell's book is the story of a mountebank and his zany.'[5] 'A jackanapes who has lately made a noise here, one Boswell, by anecdotes of Dr. Johnson.'[6] 'Signora Piozzi's book is not likely to gratify her expectation of renown. There is a Dr. Walcot, a burlesque bard, who had ridiculed highly and most deservedly another of Johnson's biographic zanies, one Boswell; he has already advertised an *Eclogue between Bozzi and Piozzi*;' and indeed there is ample matter. The Signora talks of her Doctor's *expanded* mind, and has contributed her mite to show that never mind was narrower. In fact, the poor man is to be pitied; he was mad, and his disciples did not find it out, but have unveiled all his defects; nay, have exhibited all his brutalities as wit, and his lowest conundrums as humour. . . . What will posterity think of us, when it reads what an idol we adored?'[7] 'She and Boswell and their hero are the joke of the public.'[8]

[1] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Illustrated Library, viii. 27.
[2] viii. 150. [3] vi. 302. [4] ix. 11. [5] ix. 25. [6] ix. 45.

Walpole's chief poets were Dryden, Pope, Gray, and—the Reverend William Mason, 'a poet if ever there was one.'[1] He also had a great admiration for Mr. Anstey.[2] He desires the acquaintance, he says, of the author of the *Bath Guide* [Anstey] and the author of the *Heroic Epistle* [Mason], adding, 'I have no thirst to know the rest of my contemporaries, from the absurd bombast of Dr. Johnson down to the silly Dr. Goldsmith; though the latter changeling has had bright gleams of parts, and the former had sense, till he changed it for words and sold it for a pension.'[3] Mr. Mason's acquaintance he *had* the privilege of, and kept up a profuse exchange of compliments with that great writer ('Your writings will be standards,'[4] 'Divine lines,'[5] 'Your immortal fame,'[6] &c., &c.). Mr. Mason was not only an immortal poet, but a connoisseur of the first water in the arts of painting and music. Here, by the bye, is his judgment of a certain musical composer of that day: 'As to Giardini, look you, if I did not think better of him than I do of Handel, my little shoemaker would not have had the benefit he will have (I hope) from the labour of my brain [Mr. M. had been writing an opera-book, *Sappho*, and Giardini, whoever he was, was to furnish the music]. Let Handel's music vibrate on the tough drum of royal ears; I am for none of it.'[7]

[1] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Illustrated Library, ix. 48. [2] ix. 49.
[3] vi. 375. [4] ii. 12. [5] v. 458. [6] vii. 121. [7] vii. 84. [8] vii. 456. [9] vii. 26.

'Somebody,' says Walpole, 'I fancy Dr. Percy, has produced a dismal, dull ballad, called *The Execution of Sir Charles Bawdin*, and given it for one of the Bristol Poems, called Rowley's, but it is a still worse counterfeit than those that were first sent to me.'[1] This was one of Chatterton's productions, but after the boy's miserable death had made a stir, Walpole thought 'poor Chatterton was an astonishing genius,'[2] and denied that he had had any hand in discouraging him.

To turn to the stage. We are accustomed to think of Garrick as a good actor, but Walpole loses no opportunity to sneer at him. 'He has complained of Mdme. Le Texier for thinking of bringing over Cailland, the French actor, in the Opéra Comique, as a mortal prejudice to his reputation; and no doubt would be glad of an Act of Parliament that should prohibit there ever being a good actor again in any country or century.'[3] Being asked to meet David at a friend's house, Walpole writes: 'Garrick does not tempt me at all. I have no taste for his perpetual buffoonery, and am sick of his endless expectation of flattery.'[4] Of Mrs. Siddons he writes (in 1782, after seeing her as Isabella in *The Fatal Marriage*): 'What I really wanted, but did not find, was originality, which announces genius, and without both which I am never intrinsically pleased. All Mrs. Siddons did, good sense or good instruction might give. I dare to say that were I one-and-twenty, I should have thought her marvellous, but, alas! I remember Mrs. Porter and the Dumesnil, and remember every accent of the former in the very same part.'[5]

Frank. Johnson, I remember, though always friendly to his old townsfellow and schoolfellow, Davy, said many contemptuous things of him.

[1] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Illustrated Library, v. 389. [2] vi. 447. [3] vi. 416. [4] vi. 303. [5] viii. 295.

Benson. Perhaps rather of the art of acting. He certainly thought Garrick superior to almost all other actors. Johnson was a good deal about the theatres at one period of his life, and, as we know, wrote a play and several prologues and epilogues, yet he settled into a conviction of the paltriness of acting.

Frank. As Goethe seems to have done.

Benson. The Doctor says, for example, that a boy of ten years old could be easily taught to say 'To be or not to be' as well as Garrick. But pray go on.

Markham. Neither Sterne nor Sheridan pleased Master Walpole a bit. 'Tiresome *Tristram Shandy*, of which I never could get through three volumes.'[1] 'I have read Sheridan's *Critic*, but not having seen it, for they say it is admirably acted, it appeared wondrously flat and old, and a poor imitation.'[2]

And now let me lump in some of his notions of more distant literary worthies.[3] He is going to make 'a bower' at his toy-villa of Strawberry Hill, and consulting authorities. 'I am almost afraid (he says) I must go and read Spenser, and wade through his allegories and drawling stanzas to get at a picture.'[4] Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* are 'a lump of mineral from which Dryden extracted all the gold, and converted [it] into beautiful medals.'[5] 'Dante was extravagant, absurd, disgusting: in short, a Methodist parson in Bedlam.'[6] 'Montague's *Travels*, which I have been reading; and if I was tired of the *Essays*, what must one be of these! What signifies what a man thought who never thought of anything but himself? and what signifies what a man did who never did anything?'[7] 'There is a new *Timon of Athens*, altered from Shakespeare by Mr. Cumberland, and marvellously well done, for he has caught the manners and diction of the original so exactly, that I

[1] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Illustrated Library, v. 91. [2] vii. 291. [3] 18 to 22. [4] iv. 330. [5] vi. 201. [6] viii. 235. [7] vi. 92.

think it is full as bad a play as it was before he corrected it."[1]

Frank. It is to be hoped that neither Dante nor Shakespeare will suffer permanently from the contempt of Horace Walpole.

Benison. Nor Johnson and Goldsmith, for that matter. One moral of the whole subject before us is—not that we are to despise criticism and opinion, but that the criticisms and opinions of even very clever men are often extremely mistaken. The comfort is, as Frank said, that good things do, somehow, get recognised sooner or later, and are joyfully treasured as the heritage of the human race.

Frank. Take away *Boswell's Johnson*—'the story of a mountebank and his zany'—and what a gap were left in English literature!

Markham. Do you remember what Byron said of Horace Walpole? Here it is, in the preface to *Marino Faliero*—'He is the *ultimus Romanorum*, the author of the *Mysterious Mother*, a tragedy of the highest order, and not a puling love-play. He is the father of the first romance and of the last tragedy in our language; and surely worthy of a higher place than any living author, be he who he may.'

Frank. A comical judgment, truly, if sincere!

Benison. I believe Byron had a deep insincerity of character, which ran into everything he wrote, said, or did.

Markham. And now listen to Coleridge's opinion on this same 'tragedy of the highest order.' 'The *Mysterious Mother* is the most disgusting, vile, detestable composition that ever came from the hand of man. No one with a spark of true manliness, of which Horace Walpole had none, could have written it.'

Frank. Decided difference of opinion! By the way, it is Byron's distinction among English poets to have been in the

[1] Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Illustrated Library, v. 356.

habit of speaking slightingly of Shakespeare and of Milton, who (he observed) 'have had their rise, and they will have their decline.'[1]

Markham. Let us return to Coleridge. Talking of Goethe's *Faust*, after explaining that he himself had long before planned a very similar drama (only much better) with Michael Scott for hero, he praises several of the scenes, but adds, 'There is no whole in the poem; the scenes are mere magic-lantern pictures, and a large part of the work is to me very flat.' Moreover, much of it is 'vulgar, licentious, and blasphemous.'

Frank. By my troth, these be very bitter words!

Markham. Coleridge's estimate of Gibbon's great work is remarkable. After accusing him of 'sacrificing all truth and reality,' he goes on to say: 'Gibbon's style is detestable, but his style is not the worst thing about him. His history has proved an effectual bar to all real familiarity with the temper and habits of imperial Rome. Few persons read the original authorities, even those which are classical; and certainly no distinct knowledge of the actual state of the empire can be obtained from Gibbon's rhetorical sketches. He takes notice of nothing but what may produce an effect; he skips on from eminence to eminence, without ever taking you through the valleys between—in fact, his work is little else but a disguised collection of all the splendid anecdotes which he could find in any book concerning any persons or nations from the Antonines to the capture of Constantinople. When I read a chapter of Gibbon, I seem to be looking through a luminous haze of fog: figures come and go, I know not how or why, all larger than life, or distorted or discoloured; nothing is real, vivid, true; all is scenical, and, as it were, exhibited by candlelight. And then to call it a *History of the Decline and Fall*

[1] Letter on Bowles's Strictures, note. *Life, &c.*, 1839, p. 626.

of the Roman Empire! Was there ever a greater misnomer? I protest I do not remember a single philosophical attempt made throughout the work to fathom the ultimate causes of the decline or fall of that empire.' After some further strictures, Coleridge ends thus: 'The true key of the declension of the Roman Empire—which is not to be found in all Gibbon's immense work—may be stated in two words: the *imperial* character overlaying, and finally destroying, the *national* character. Rome under Trajan was an empire without a nation.'

Frank. Coleridge's two words are not so decisively clear as one could wish. The 'key' sticks in the lock. But his criticism on Gibbon certainly gives food for thought.

Benison. Gibbon, however, completed a great book, and has left it to the world, to read, criticise, do what they will or can with; whereas Coleridge dreamed of writing many great books, and wrote none. He is but a king of shreds and patches.

Markham. Even 'the Lakers' did not always admire each other. 'Coleridge's ballad of *The Ancient Mariner* (says Southey) is, I think, the clumsiest attempt at German sublimity I ever saw.' And now, if you are not tired out, I will finish with some specimens of criticisms on certain works of the last generation which (whatever differences of opinion may still be afloat concerning them) enjoy at present a wide and high reputation. The articles on Wordsworth and Keats are famous in their way, but the *ipsissima verba* are not generally familiar. Take a few from Jeffrey's review of *The Excursion* (*Edinburgh Review*, November, 1814).

'This will never do. . . . The case of Mr. Wordsworth, we presume, is now manifestly hopeless; and we give him up as altogether incurable and beyond the power of criticism, . . . a tissue of moral and devotional ravings, . . . "strained raptures and fantastical sublimities"—a puerile ambition of singularity engrafted on an unlucky predilection for truisms.'

In the next number, I see, is a review of Scott's *Lord of the Isles*, beginning, 'Here is another genuine lay of the great Minstrel.'

Frank. One must own that much of the *Excursion* is very prosaic; but that does not, of course, justify the tone of this review.

Markham. And here is the *Quarterly Review*, January, 1819, on *The Revolt of Islam*. 'Mr. Shelley, indeed, is an unsparing imitator.' 'As a whole it is insupportably dull.' 'With minds of a certain class, notoriety, infamy, anything is better than obscurity; baffled in a thousand attempts after fame, they will make one more at whatever risk, and they end commonly, like an awkward chemist who perseveres in tampering with his ingredients, till, in an unlucky moment, they take fire, and he is blown up by the explosion.' 'A man like Mr. Shelley may cheat himself . . . finally he sinks like lead to the bottom, and is forgotten. So it is now in part, so shortly will it be entirely with Mr. Shelley:—if we might withdraw the veil of private life, and tell what we *now* know about him, it would be indeed a disgusting picture that we should exhibit, but it would be an unanswerable comment on our text.'

Now a few flowers of criticism from Mr. Gifford's review of *Endymion*, a poem, in the *Quarterly Review*, April, 1818. 'Mr. Keats (if that be his real name, for we almost doubt that any man in his senses would put his real name to such a rhapsody). . . . The author is a copyist of Mr. Hunt; but he is more unintelligible, almost as rugged, twice as diffuse, and ten times more tiresome and absurd than his prototype.' 'At first it appeared to us that Mr. Keats had been amusing himself, and wearing out his readers with an immeasurable game at *bouts-rimés*; but, if we recollect rightly, it is an indispensable condition at this play, that the rhymes when filled up shall have a meaning; and our author, as we have already hinted, has no meaning.' The

reviewer ends thus: 'But enough of Mr. Leigh Hunt and his simple neophyte. If anyone should be bold enough to purchase this "Poetic Romance," and so much more patient than ourselves as to get beyond the first book, and so much more fortunate as to find a meaning, we entreat him to make us acquainted with his success; we shall then return to the task which we now abandon in despair, and endeavour to make all due amends to Mr. Keats and to our readers.'

Benison. Byron made some kind remarks on the same subject.

Markham. Yes; in a letter from Ravenna, October 20, 1820, he writes: 'There is such a trash of Keats and the like upon my tables that I am ashamed to look at them.' 'Why don't they review and praise Solomon's *Guide to Health*? It is better sense, and as much poetry as Johnny Keats'.' 'No more Keats, I entreat, flay him alive; if some of you don't, I must skin him myself. There is no bearing the drivelling idiotism of the manikin.'

The *Quarterly* in March, 1828, had another generous and appreciative article beginning—'Our readers have probably forgotten all about "*Endymion*, a Poem," and the other works of this young man [Mr. John Keats], and the all but universal roar of laughter with which they were received some ten or twelve years ago.'

But now enough. Only I should like to read you just one thing more, which is less known, and presents, perhaps, the extreme example of literary misjudgment, by a man of true literary genius—Thomas De Quincey's elaborate review of Carlyle's translation of *Wilhelm Meister*, in the *London Magazine* for August and September, 1824. 'Not the basest of Egyptian superstition, not Titania under enchantment, not Caliban in drunkenness, ever shaped to themselves an idol more weak or hollow than modern Germany has set up for its worship in the person of Goethe.' A blow or two from a few vigorous understandings will demolish the 'puny

fabric of babyhouses of Mr. Goethe.' For the style of Goethe 'we profess no respect,' but it is much degraded in the translation, on which the reviewer expends many choice epithets of contempt. The work is 'totally without interest as a novel,' and abounds with 'overpowering abominations.' 'Thus we have made Mr. Von Goethe's novel speak for itself. And whatever impression it may leave on the reader's mind, let it be charged upon the composer. If that impression is one of entire disgust, let it not be forgotten that it belongs exclusively to Mr. Goethe.'

The reviewer is annoyed to think that some discussion may still be necessary before Mr. Goethe is allowed to drop finally into oblivion.

Benison. You have not quoted any of Professor Wilson's trenchant *Blackwoodisms* against 'the Cockney School.'

Markham. It did not seem worth while. All the bragging and bullying has long ceased to have any meaning.

Frank. And 'Maga's' own pet poets are where?

Benison. Let echo answer. You might easily, Markham, bring together some specimens of misapplied *eulogy*—of praise loud and lavish, given (and not by foolish or insincere voices) to names and works which proved to have no sort of stability. Meanwhile, many thanks for your Curiosities.

Frank here, whom I half suspect of a tendency to authorship, may take a hint not to care too much for censure or praise, but do his work well, be it little or great, and, as Schiller says: *werfe es schweigend in die unendliche Zeit*—'cast it silently into everlasting time.'

A POET OF THE LOWER FRENCH EMPIRE

A brilliant literature, no doubt, have we,
Gay poison-toadstools on the rotting stem,
Prismatic bubbles on the putrid pond,
Such books this age produces; far beyond
All flow'rs, the critics tell us,—trust to them!—
Or sunset's glory mirror'd in the sea.

A MODERN PLEASAUNCE.

Our garden is full of flowers and bowers;
But the toll of a death-bell haunts the air.
We have tried to drown it with lute and voice,
Love-songs and banquet-songs for choice,
But still it is ever tolling there;
And who can silence that dreadful bell?
Take the grim key-note; modulate well;
Let us keep time and tune with the knell;
Sing of mad pleasure and fierce despair,
Roses and blood and the fire of hell!
With pants and with sobs, with shrieks and moans,
Loud laughter mingled with dying groans;
The death-bell tolling piteously
Through all, our key-note,—and what care we,
In our garden full of flowers and bowers?

ESSAY VI.

A POET OF THE LOWER FRENCH EMPIRE.

[1869.]

THE name of Charles Baudelaire has within the last twenty years or so become of note in French poetic literature, and we have now, in one volume, a final edition of his poems, except a few suppressed by the censorship as too bad for the not very squeamish taste of the French public. These few, which have been republished by an enterprising firm at Brussels, add little or nothing to the general evidence in the case. In style and thought they are like all the rest. Their subjects—which Ancient Rome would not have protested against, and Modern France partly did—are of a kind that certain English followers of Baudelaire have had the courage to serve up to our own dear discerning Public, without incurring the chastisement that might have been expected. In fact we have had to undergo during the last quarter of a century several severe attacks of a species of literary *morbus gallicus*, the symptoms of which have by no means yet disappeared.

Let us first take a look at the man, as portrayed by his friend Théophile Gautier.

The author of *Les Fleurs du Mal* was born in Paris in 1821, it would seem in the upper middle class. After his father's death his mother was married to a general, afterwards ambassador to Constantinople. The boy, we gather, was not in harmony with his relatives; he desired to follow a literary career; they sent him to India, and put him into commercial training. From this he broke loose, and returned to Paris, enriched only with certain brain-pictures of tropical scenery. Visions of the dark-blue Indian seas and of Indian girls under lofty cocoa-palms often floated before him in the narrow streets and between the chimney-pots of the French capital.

He was now about twenty-one years old, with some little patrimony, not much, but enough to go on with, handsome in person, with highly polished manners, and an artistic intellect, of that order in which æsthetics and materialism are mingled in hazardous proportions.

This youth entered on the career of a Parisian man-about-town, and *littérateur*. His criticisms, short stories, poems, in various periodicals, won him no public attention during several years, nor even any position with the editors as a desirable contributor; but by degrees the younger generation of artists and writers began to recognise, as they are usually the first to do, the name of Baudelaire as that of a new star in the literary sky, and in 1849, when M. Gautier first met him, in one of the inner circles of artistic and literary Paris, his presence excited much interest.

He had a striking personal appearance; a handsome sarcastic face of warm-pale complexion, the black hair cropped on the forehead, brown eyes, lips voluptuous and ironic; and dressed with a careful simplicity, a 'sober dandyism.' His manners were punctiliously polite, even to formality, and his conversation abounded in expressions of extreme humility. He spoke coldly and precisely, with few gestures, and was continually putting forward in the most

quiet and matter of fact way some astounding paradox. With perfect quietness and simplicity he would advance some 'satanically monstrous' axiom, or theory '*d'une extravagance mathématique*.' Philanthropists of every sort he held in the deepest contempt. In political, social, or moral questions he neither had nor pretended to have the slightest interest.

To the French reading public Baudelaire first became known as the translator of Edgar Poe. This work, we are told, he did to perfection, and the marvellous tales of the American became 'the rage' in France. The natural sympathy between the minds of the author and translator in this case is indubitable, and in Baudelaire's own writings the effects of his admiration of Poe are frequently traceable. Baudelaire, in fact, has little inventiveness; his distinction rests in his style, and that, we are told by French critics, is exquisite of its kind. He is nothing if not artistic; '*l'amateur des élégances exquises, des maniérismes raffinés et des coquetteries savantes*,' he 'searched curiously for the strange' and elaborately wove it in. 'There are some men who are naturally mannerists,' and he was one of these. His love of art grew, by what some people must believe to be an unhealthy development, into a taste, a passion for the artificial, in literature, in painting, even in life. He compared 'the artificial' to a Parisian lady, elaborately dressed and highly perfumed, a touch of rouge on her cheek, dyed hair, eyelids darkened with kohl, witty, polished, self-possessed and self-conscious to the last fibre, and 'the natural,' to a rustic beauty, '*répugnante de santé et de vertu*,' —for he demanded not merely the artificial, but the morbid, to complete his satisfaction. He is '*poète de décadence*,' his friend tells us, the product of an advanced and highly corrupt stage of civilization, and as an artist he uses '*ces nuances morbidement riches de la pourriture plus ou moins avancée*.'

This is perhaps not very encouraging; yet we may venture for once to look more closely at the product of Baudelaire's poetic labour as it lies compact before us in the shape of 152 short poems. Many of them are fourteen lines long, but not in regular sonnet form. One hundred and seven of the pieces are classed under the sub-title *Spleen et Idéal*, twenty as *Tableaux Parisiens*, five, *Le Vin*, four, *Révolte*, and six, *La Mort*, while ten others are left unclassified. The phrase *Spleen et Idéal* is very significant, and briefly indicates the characteristic mood of Baudelaire's mind,—a mood unwholesome, yet interesting as something really felt by a man, and in less degree, or at all events with less power of expressing itself, by many other men. His pursuit in life is the enjoyment of a refined and artistic voluptuousness. He abhors ugliness, pain, poverty, old age, but they haunt his steps, he meets them everywhere; this world, when illusive mists of youth have melted away, is seen to be full of tortured men and women, suffering for the most part by and through their evil propensities, which are natural and ineradicable. It is a combination of bagnio, jail, penitentiary, hospital, madhouse, torture-chamber and charnel, —orgies, gambling, black gloom, despair, ending in death or suicide, and annihilation. The Imp of the Perverse (to use Edgar Poe's phrase) is the ruling demon of man's life. The Poet, for his part, devotes himself to adoration of the Beautiful—'*le beau*'—and avows this as his only religion. It is a Parisian kind of *beau*, we find, wholly material and sensual, yet with exquisite and fastidious manners, and always more or less *factice*. Yet this form of worship also, however cunningly refined and varied, is found to be unsatisfactory. In the man abides a conscience, a soul, a something, which, after all sensual and æsthetic satiation, is neither filled nor satisfied, but tormented with hunger and unrest, and then whither can he turn? what do, but groan, or grind his teeth, or sit with chin on fists and eyes staring into the *néant*, his only utterance a profound sigh at long intervals. He finds the only practical relief in his natural turn for literary composition. In such soil and climate have grown these *Fleurs du Mal*. So has come this dismal volume of highly artistic verse, '*langue marbrée des verdeurs de la décomposition*.'

Middle-aged, lonely, out of health, oppressed with ennui, Charles Baudelaire moved from Paris to Brussels, but the change helped him nothing. A paralytic seizure deprived him of motion and of speech, and the expression of eyes alone showed that he retained consciousness. In this condition he survived some months. He was about 46 years old at his death in 1867.

A comparison, after the manner of Plutarch or otherwise, of Charles Baudelaire and Heinrich Heine might be not unprofitable.

The portrait, prefixed to the edition 1869, shows a clean-shaven face, broad and powerful Napoleonic cranium, with sparse hair, a thick nose, dark intent eyes, close-shut lips. He looks steadily at you, without the least atom of feeling or sympathy, but with the cold, cruel curiosity of a police-inspector or an inquisitor mingled with something of the self-absorption of a madman. There could not be drawn a handsome face more utterly unlovable.

Besides the poems, fifty short tales and fantasies of his have been collected from various periodicals to form a volume. These *Petits Poëmes en Prose*, which are now included in an edition in five volumes of *Œuvres Complètes de Charles Baudelaire*, would not in themselves have given one much interest in their author. The subjects and colouring are similar to those of the *Fleurs du Mal* (mainly *pourriture*) but, wanting verse's glamour, the poverty in imagination, feeling, and thought is laid bare, notwithstanding neatness of style and occasional felicity of phrase. They remind one sometimes of Poe, sometimes of Heine, sometimes of

Hans Andersen, but the peevish Frenchman is not worth naming in the same day with any one of these. Here is the first of the *Little Poems in Prose*, Englished:

THE STRANGER.

—Say, what lovest thou best, enigmatical man? Thy father, thy mother, thy sister or thy brother?
—I have neither father, nor mother, nor sister, nor brother.
—Thy friends?
—There you use a word the meaning of which remains unknown to me to this day.
—Thy country?
—I am ignorant in what latitude it is situated.
—Beauty?
—I would willingly love Beauty, goddess and immortal.
—Gold?
—I hate it as you hate God.
—What, then, lovest thou, extraordinary stranger?
—I love the clouds—the clouds that pass—there below—the marvellous clouds!

Any reader who finds fancy or profundity here may be encouraged to go on through the other forty-nine Little Poems in Prose; but the sighs and groans of prurient ennui are extremely unprofitable to mankind in general, and the imbecility of most of those short papers is as plain as their unwholesomeness. The only one that has any point worth calling so is *La Corde*, a story of a handsome Boy who comes first as model then as servant to an Artist. His master has occasion to reprove him and at last threatens to send him home. The Boy hangs himself. When his Mother comes, she earnestly entreats to be allowed to carry away the fatal cord. Horrible relic! thinks the Artist,—strange turn of maternal tenderness and grief! By and by, he finds that she has been *selling it* by the inch to the curious public. The Epilogue to the book is in verse and ends thus, speaking of Paris:

Je t'aime, ô capitale infâme! Courtisanes
Et bandits, tels souvent vous offrez des plaisirs
Que ne comprennent pas les vulgaires profanes.

The public rumour that Baudelaire was addicted to opium or hashish or both is contradicted by M. Gautier. We cannot however avoid noticing that he puts his contradiction forward in an argumentative form: Baudelaire frequently writes with repugnance of *ce bonheur acheté à la pharmacie*, therefore, &c.; he was *sobre comme tous les travailleurs*; the true man of letters *n'aime pas que sa pensée subisse l'influence d'un agent quelconque*. But M. Gautier is much more sparkling than exact or profound, and forgets what he has written a few pages before, in describing the death of poor Poe, Baudelaire's favourite writer. It is elsewhere mentioned that 'Baudelaire spoke a great deal of his ideas, very seldom of his sentiments, and never of his actions.'

He seems to have always lived alone in Paris, showing himself at intervals in the studios and salons of his acquaintances. Of his amours and subsequent disgusts we have enough and to spare in his poetry; on this topic he always speaks with a kind of saturnine lubricity. He plunges into sensualism, emerges satiated, disgusted, sad; then plunges again. The exact translation of his *l'amour* is 'lust.'

Physical horrors have a morbid attraction for him as they had for the American; he examines minutely into the hideousness of disease, death, putrefaction. His imagery abounds in serpents, corpses, graveworms, nightmares, demons. His *spleen* finds food in every natural sight and sound; the firewood brought into the courtyard fills him with dreary thoughts of winter; the sound of cock-crow is like a sob cut short by a spitting of blood. In the following little poem, intended as we suppose to express one of the milder shades of pensiveness, observe the not tragic but

butcherly image by which the tranquil setting sun is presented:

HARMONIE DU SOIR.

Voici venir les temps où vibrant sur sa tige
Chaque fleur s'évapore ainsi qu'un encensoir;
Les sons et les parfums tournent dans l'air du soir;
Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige!

Chaque fleur s'évapore ainsi qu'un encensoir;
Le violon frémit comme un cœur qu'on afflige;
Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige!
Le ciel est triste et beau comme un grand reposoir.

Le violon frémit comme un cœur qu'on afflige,
Un cœur tendre, qui hait le néant vaste et noir!
Le ciel est triste et beau comme un grand reposoir;
Le soleil s'est noyé dans son sang qui se fige...

Un cœur tendre, qui hait le néant vaste et noir,
Du passé lumineux recueille tout vestige!
Le soleil s'est noyé dans son sang qui se fige...
Ton souvenir en moi luit comme un ostensoir!

The above may be taken as a specimen of the art, amounting to artifice, of Baudelaire's style. In the following composition appear, though not in their most offensive form, all the main characteristics of the writer, presented with a carefully considered ingenuity of form and great choiceness of language. In several points, and particularly in a strange *cruelty*, a gloating upon physical torture, the French poet reminds us of his contemporary and fellow-countryman, Gustave Doré, especially as the latter displays himself in the designs to Balzac's *Contes drôlatiques*, probably the most characteristic of the artist's works. This cruelty is a 'note' of the New Diabolic School. Their sensual Muse (false sister of the nine) is no Cleopatra, no Messalina even, but a She-Vampire or Succubus—or both in one.

A UNE MADONE.

EX-VOTO DANS LE GOÛT ESPAGNOL.

Je veux bâtir pour toi, Madone, ma maîtresse,
Un autel souterrain au fond de ma détresse,

Et creuser dans le coin le plus noir de mon cœur,
Loin du désir mondain et du regard moqueur,
Une niche, d'azur et d'or tout émaillée,
Où tu te dresseras, Statue émerveillée,
Avec mes Vers polis, treillis d'un pur métal
Savamment constellé de rimes de cristal,
Je ferai pour ta tête une énorme Couronne;
Et dans ma Jalousie, ô mortelle Madone,
Je saurai te tailler un Manteau, de façon
Barbare, roide et lourd, et doublé de soupçon,
Qui, comme une guérite, enfermera tes charmes;
Non de Perles brodé, mais de toutes mes Larmes!
Ta Robe, ce sera mon Désir, frémissant,
Ondoleux, mon Désir qui monte et qui descend,
Aux pointes se balance, aux vallons se repose,
Et revêt d'un baiser tout ton corps blanc et rose.
Je te ferai de mon Respect de beaux Souliers
De satin, par tes pieds divins humiliés,
Qui, les emprisonnant dans une molle étreinte,
Comme un moule fidèle en garderont l'empreinte.
Si je ne puis, malgré tout mon art diligent,
Pour Marchepied tailler une Lune d'argent,
Je mettrai le Serpent qui me mord les entrailles
Sous tes talons, afin que tu foules et railles,
Reine victorieuse et féconde en rachats,
Ce monstre tout gonflé de haine et de crachats.
Tu verras mes Pensers, rangés comme les Cierges
Devant l'autel fleuri de la Reine des Vierges,
Etoilant de reflets le plafond peint en bleu,
Te regarder toujours avec des yeux de feu;
Et comme tout en moi te chérit et t'admire,
Tout se fera Benjoin, Encens, Oliban, Myrrhe,
Et sans cesse vers toi, sommet blanc et neigeux,
En Vapeurs montera mon Esprit orageux.
Enfin, pour compléter ton rôle de Marie,
Et pour mêler l'amour avec la barbarie,
Volupté noire! des sept Péchés capitaux,
Bourreau plein de remords, je ferai sept Couteaux
Bien affilés, et comme un jongleur insensible,
Prenant le plus profond de ton amour pour cible,
Je les planterai tous dans ton Cœur pantelant,
Dans ton Cœur sanglotant, dans ton Cœur ruisselant!

At the end of this 'definitive' edition of *Les Fleurs*

du Mal we find an appendix consisting of letters of friends and articles of critics on the first edition. All join in praising with enthusiasm the formative art and the force of language displayed by the poet,—'Que de vers trempés d'une vigueur étonnante ou d'un enchantement inaccoutumé! que de tours elliptiques et nouveaux, que de rhythmes dociles et fiers!'—'Cette langue, plus plastique encore que poétique, maniée et taillée comme le bronze et la pierre, et où la phrase a des enroulements et des cannelures.' M. Sainte-Beuve praises the subtlety, refinement, 'et un abandon quasi *précieux* d'expression' of the work, while objecting to its diabolism.

But Théophile Gautier and several other critics not only extol the poet's gifts of expression, but defend his choice of subjects and manner of treating them. The defence takes several forms. We are living in the midst of an advanced, artificial and by no means innocent-minded civilisation; voluptuousness, vice, scepticism, cynicism, atheism, ennui, tædium vitæ, are around us and within us. Shall we shut our eyes and ears to the truth and keep on saying Peace! when there is no peace? or shall the Poet declare and describe the existing evils with terrific force, enough to make us shiver and start,—perhaps to make us leap out of this dangerous trance? Shall he administer his 'emetic for the sick time?' Is all our literature now-a-days, asks M. Asselineau, to be written for school-girls? (his question by the way has lately been decocted and diluted into an English review article.) This poet, pleads M. Édouard Thierry, paints vice, but not in attractive colours; his pictures are sombre and horrible. He looks vice in the face, as an enemy which he knows and confronts. He does not take pleasure in the spectacle of evil: it makes him profoundly sad: it is this sadness which justifies and absolves him. And the critic concludes by comparing Baudelaire to Dante. According to M. Dulamon, the poet

in choosing hazardous subjects has done as Juvenal, as Shakespeare, as many theologians have done before him. To recognise evil is not to approve. He paints the ennui which devours souls when satiated with sensual pleasures, and tormented by fleeting glimpses of an ideal; he represents 'l'expiation providentielle suspendue sur le vice frivole de l'individu, comme sur la corruption dogmatique des sociétés.'

The book, we are told by several, is by no means to be taken as a representation of the author's character and feelings; it is dramatic throughout. Indeed Baudelaire himself placed a note of deprecation to this effect in his first edition,—'Fidèle à son douloureux programme, l'auteur des *Fleurs du Mal* a dû, en parfait comédien, façonner son esprit à tous les sophismes comme à toutes les corruptions.' But this cautious note he rightly suppressed in the second edition.

M. Gautier rests his vindication of his friend on the statement that art has no business whatever with morality. Baudelaire's nature led him to contemplate the strange, the dreadful, and the obscure; 'il aime à suivre l'homme pâle, crispé, tordu, convulsé par les passions factices et le réel ennui moderne à travers les sinuosités de cet immense madrépore de Paris, à le surprendre dans ses malaises, ses angoisses, ses misères, ses prostrations et ses excitations, ses névroses et ses désespoirs,'—and all this, being a poet, he brought within the circle of his art, and shaped, as he had a right to do, into forms and coloured with hues of a strange and sinister kind of beauty, without troubling himself with any questions of morality or immorality. Where he is disgusted by Vice, it is on account of its being unbeautiful, inharmonious,—in short, in bad taste.

Certainly some of the arguments of these various pleaders appear to contradict one another flatly. The poet wrote according to his feelings and experience. He wrote (it was himself who thought of this plea) *en parfait comédien*. By

another theory, his plan is to represent life as it would picture itself to a Caligula or Heliogabalus of artistic temperament, and the moans of remorse and cries of aspiration which sometimes break forth are violations of his 'programme,' 'inconséquences presque fatales,' and in that sense serious faults in his book. On the contrary, to M. Sainte-Beuve the work presents itself as a modern temptation of St. Antony, evil nightmares put to flight by the dawn, 'l'aube spirituelle,' and his objection is that this purifying light is not made to shine out more strongly and more evidently to triumph over the darkness. While the Marquis de Custine finds Baudelaire 'reflecting like a faithful mirror the spirit of a diseased age and country,' and laments over 'an epoch in which so lofty a genius is reduced to employ itself in the contemplation of things which were better consigned to oblivion than to immortality.'

These criticisms were made while the *Fleurs du Mal* and their author were novel, incomplete, and somewhat puzzling phenomena. The man's natural life among us is now finished, his poems are in our hand in an *édition définitive*, and looking at both without prejudice for or against, we can perhaps come to a simpler and sounder opinion on the whole case. All Human Life is mysterious, and every human being's life is in a sense inscrutable; but we are usually able to form approximative judgments, which are found to have practical value; and, as it strikes us, there is no especial mystery here—unless we prefer to see things through smoke of our own of others' raising. Sham subtlety is one of the commonest amusements or perversities of the modern mind. A young Parisian, handsome, clever, and with some money to spend, seeks pleasure as his aim; tries vulgar sensuality, which disgusts his taste; and aims at a refined and artistic voluptuousness, but even this proves unsatisfying; every path leads him to the black gulf of ennui. Before him all

the time floats an ideal, a recognition of better things, which he chooses to describe as a longing for the Beautiful. Whatever it be, his idea is something infinitely above his actual life, it beckons to him, it tortures him, he makes no effort to follow, but acknowledges its power by sighs and moans. He is a man of letters withal, a poet, of cultivated taste, and even with genius. With careful artistic skill, therefore (for his mental temperament is cool and critical), he distils into most elaborate verse his desires, his fancies, his orgies, and also his disgusts and horrors, his satiety and ennui, with ever and anon a cry of sadness, which might almost pass muster for a prayer. But the utterer would be ashamed to have it so recognised, or rather would curl his lip in contempt; for it is an evanescent mood, originating mainly in selfishness, and formulated chiefly for artistic effect. He is unhappy in the midst of indulgence; this unhappiness makes him not contrite, but angry; not angry with himself, but with the conditions of human life. I find in myself a taste for *le beau*, for flowers, for perfumes, and pictures, and wine, and handsome women; I can't get them, enough of them, for I am not rich; I do get them, and they sting me; in either case, Damn the Nature of Things! Often he sinks below this point, to a mood of deeper disgust, like that indicated in the following characteristic lines:

SPLEEN.

Je suis comme le roi d'un pays pluvieux,
Riche, mais impuissant, jeune et pourtant très-vieux,
Qui, de ses précepteurs méprisant les courbettes,
S'ennuie avec ses chiens comme avec d'autres bêtes.
Rien ne peut l'égayer, ni gibier, ni faucon,
Ni son peuple mourant en face du balcon.
Du bouffon favori la grotesque ballade
Ne distrait plus le front de ce cruel malade;
Son lit fleurdelisé se transforme en tombeau,
Et les dames d'atour, pour qui tout prince est beau,
Ne savent plus trouver d'impudique toilette
Pour tirer un sourire de ce jeune squelette.

Le savant qui lui fait de l'or n'a jamais pu
De son être extirper l'élément corrompu,
Et dans ces bains de sang qui des Romains nous viennent,
Et dont sur leurs vieux jours les puissants se souviennent,
Il n'a su réchauffer ce cadavre hébété
Où coule au lieu de sang l'eau verte du Léthé.

Of Imagination, in the highest sense of that word, of that great and healthy faculty (including all others) whereby man has wide and profound visions of truth, Baudelaire, we should say, possesses not a particle. He has an unwholesomely stimulated and morbidly active fancy. He has wonderful taste and skill in the artful management of language. He makes a forcible impression by means of the cold audacity of his choice and treatment of subjects which social (founding itself on natural) decency has taught us to avoid as far as possible.

Still, Nature made him an Artist, gifted him especially with a true sense of literary form; his poems are brief, pithy, expressive, each conveying a definite and generally a striking idea, and conveying it fully, without loss of power. Some express mainly ennui; some a sense of the miseries of life, which excite in him a kind of cold rage; some are directly lascivious; many are deliberate studies of the most revolting things, hospital wards, murdered corpses, charnel-houses; and even the ghastliest horrors are treated with a certain prurience. There is remorse (gnawing pain) but no contrition, no longing to be better, only a desire to be *better-off*. He calls to Death, without hope, but at least it will bring a change. The thought of a Higher Power, though sometimes it impels him to sue for pity, usually breeds a mood of scoffing or defiance. His contempt for the Christian code of morals, for benevolence and self-sacrifice, is bitter and constant. Our sense of Right and Wrong, which Kant felt as one of the two sublimest things, the other being the visible starry heavens—Baudelaire images as a serpent living and biting in man's bosom. 'A little

grain of conscience made him sour.' Thirsting for sensual pleasure, *volupté*, he would also fain have the delights of moral purity and elevation, and is angry because the world is not so made as to indulge these contradictory cravings. He looks round and sees evil everywhere, because he has polluted his mental vision. And the sight makes him unhappy. He can in no way reconcile himself to the diabolic; much less can he come out of it. His *amour* is merely varieties of lustfulness; love he does not see, save perhaps in a far-off starlike glimpse through the vapours of the pit, and even then the vague glimmer is suggestive not so much of spiritual as of an ethereal double-distilled sensual delight. The lofty and tender relations between human creatures, the happiness of parents, children, friends, lovers, the power of good teachers, the nobility of heroes, all wisdom, purity, duty, unselfishness, he ignores, or else scoffingly denies. He utters words of pity, but his pity is not sympathy, nor humanity, far from it. He only pities picturesque or sensational sufferings, mainly those caused by vice, those of the criminal, the gambler, the harlot grown old. Commonplace poverty and misery excite in him no feeling but disgust.

Parisian society of the Lower Empire, and a personality such as we have sketched, have in combination produced *Les Fleurs du Mal*, symptom of a diseased age not to be overlooked. No wonder if people find Catholicism (Councils and all) more comfortable than this kind of philosophy. The New Diabolic School promotes inhuman sensuality on the one hand, and on the other fanaticism. Byronism seems almost religious by comparison. Mock-Byronism abounded in its day; mock-Baudelairism, equally foolish and more corrupt, is having its vogue. Indecency is reckoned one of the surest signs of genius, and, instead of apologizing or pleading a set-off, you are even expected to take the indecency as the most precious part of the gift.

Charles Baudelaire could not escape from the reality that clutches every human being. He lived, and he was wretched. His writing has a representative truth in it, and a deep moral lesson unintentionally enclosed. He at least points out with unmistakable clearness the practical unwisdom of a certain way of thinking about life. After all, one parts from him with a deep sadness and pity. He is immeasurably above those, whether his direct imitators or unconscious followers, who write foul and blasphemous cleverness mainly from the sting of vanity, as the most telling way to exhibit themselves and make a strong and immediate sensation. His book is altogether dismal and in parts odious, but of this later and lower ignominy we hold him guiltless.

HOPGOOD & CO.

PERSONS.

Sir Samuel Hopgood	*Banker and Brewer, ex-Mayor of Moneyborough (middle-aged, wealthy, serious).*
Mr. John Hopgood	*His brother and partner, a little younger (lively and good-natured).*
Robert Straight	*Their nephew.*
Miss Lovaine	*A rich unmarried lady, of a certain age.*
Mary Hope	*Her 'companion.'*
Judith Cassidy	*An Irishwoman.*
	Servants.

Scene—*Drawing-room in Miss Lovaine's villa, 'The Evergreens,' in the neighbourhood of Moneyborough.*

Time—*Present Day.*

[Note.—It would be easy to play Judy Cassidy farcically, and with effect so far as the part itself went, yet to the ruin of the ensemble. Farce is delightful in its own place, but no touch of it is intended in this character or in the piece].

HOPGOOD & CO.

A Serio-Comic Piece in One Act.

SCENE *(throughout)*—*Handsome Drawing-room in Miss Lovaine's Villa, 'The Evergreens.' Window to garden.*

Enter James *showing in* Mr. John Hopgood.

James. Miss Lovaine is in the garden, sir, I believe. I shall let her know directly.

Mr. John Hopgood. Thank you, thank you. [*Exit* James.] Well, here we are. Nice place. (*Walks about room: looks at small picture.*) And there *she* is—rather younger than life, but never mind—fine woman still, very fine woman. Money, too. (*Looks at another picture.*) The rich aunt, I suppose. Ah, ah! brother Samuel, you know all about it. Suppose I cut him out, eh? Why not? (*Goes to mirror.*) Ha, Jack! delighted to see you looking so well! I feel in spirits. My new coat fits me. I don't look—feel convinced I don't look anything like—pshaw! what do dates matter? Only a fool counts ages by the almanac. (*Looks at* Miss L.'s *picture again.*) What's her age now? The original's, I mean. Pooh! nobody but a fool thinks he can tell such a woman's exact age. She's young enough for me; I'm old enough for her. No! I don't mean that. (*Comes to mirror again, adjusts cravat, etc.*) Nice house. Very fine woman. Hallo! (*Turns suddenly as door opens.*) My dear Miss—— eh? (*Man shows in* Sir Samuel Hopgood, *and exit.*) What, Samuel! you here? Nothing the matter?

Sir Samuel Hopgood. May I ask, brother, if there is anything especially strange in the fact of my calling here to-day, as I find you also have done?

John. Oh, not at all, not at all. Only—excuse me, Sam—you *do* look so dismal. I often say to myself, why *does* Sam look so dismal? But, after all, nobody but a fool thinks he can dive into *any* man's breast—even his only brother's.

Sir S. Really, John——

John. Come, Sam, I've not offended you? You know my ways. I was always an easy-going, loose-tongued beggar, not like you. *You* were perfect from the first—*perfect*, as baby, child, boy, man, brewer, banker, chairman at religious and charitable meetings; faith, I believe you made speeches in your cradle! You were *born* mayor of your native town.

Sir S. Pardon me, John; I am not at this moment hilariously disposed.

John. Very seldom are, to do you justice.

Sir S. I *have* a particular reason for calling on Miss Lovaine to-day.

John. Really!—Sam! you don't mean to say——

Sir S. I have come to speak about our nephew.

John. What's Bob been doing, poor fellow?

Sir S. I regret to say he has been acting in a most foolish, culpable—I might almost say, criminal manner.

John. A girl, I bet!

Sir S. It is a complication of the nature to which I understand you to refer.

John. And he's in love with her?

Sir S. Worse than that.

John. Behaved badly to her? Can't believe it!

Sir S. Worse than that.

John. The devil! what can have happened?

Sir S. I regret to say he is *engaged* to her. When I say this is *worse*, I am not for the moment referring to abstract questions of morality, all-important as these are: these I reserve in the fullest sense, as you will readily understand.

John. Oh, ah, I dare say! Well, a good deal will depend on what the girl's like.

Sir S. Pardon me; I have plans for Robert—I have prospects for Robert, I have a career for Robert—a magnificent career. He is about, as you know, to enter the firm. He will probably be my heir. He will represent the family.

John. Yes, and I love Bob—you know that; poor sister Kitty's only child, and a fine lad, too. Though I confess I'd rather have an heir of my own—wouldn't you, Sam?

Sir S. That is in the hands of Providence.

John. No doubt, no doubt—at least, partly. Have you never thought of taking a wife, brother? You may pick and choose, you know. Title—immense wealth—enormous respectability. As to looks, well, perhaps not *quite* up to the family standard—but still——

Sir S. John, this frivolity pains me.

John. And what are you going to do with Bob?

Sir S. Has he given you any hint of this affair?

John. None, so far; by-the-bye, he has asked to see me alone this evening. Has he told you?

Sir S. No; but I have just had a letter which leaves no doubt about the matter. (*Deliberately.*) If he marries without my consent, I will never see him again—never give him another farthing.

John. Poor boy! deuced hard! I think I can guess who the girl is. (*Points at door and nods.*)

Sir S. Your surmise is correct. The young person is sort of *protégée* of Miss Lovaine, with whom she lives as a poor companion, something between lady's-maid and beggar. I must distinctly request that you leave me to deal with this unhappy affair.

John. Pretty girl, by Jove!—Miss Lovaine doesn't appear to be at home after all. You're not going to be cruel, Sam? Suppose Bob has pledged his honour?

Sir S. He must leave it in pawn.

John. He may refuse to draw back.

Sir S. Then he must bear the consequences. (*With*

emphasis.) An irregular marriage would be, in one word—unpardonable!

John. Poor Bob! but look here, Sam——

Enter JAMES.

James. Very sorry, Sir Samuel, but I find Miss Lovaine have gone hout by the garden gate.

Sir S. Do you know when the lady is likely to return?

James. No, Sir Samuel.

John. Miss Hope at home?

James. I think so, sir.

Sir S. (*looks at his watch*). Be so good as to present my compliments to Miss Lovaine (*giving card*), and say that I promise myself the honour of waiting on her again later in the afternoon.

James. Yes, Sir Samuel. (*Puts card on a silver plate on small table.*)

John. Think I'll stay—have nothing particular to do.

Sir S. I am glad to hear that, John, because there is something at the office which requires your immediate attention.

John. Hang it, Sam!

Sir S. Come, brother John, my carriage is at the door. (*Going.*)

John. All right, I'll come—(*to himself*), but I'll come back, too. (*Puts his card beside* SIR S.'s. *Looks at* MISS L.'s *portrait.*) Deuced fine woman!

Sir S. (*outside*). John!

John. Confound it! I'm coming. Poor Bob! [*Exit.*

Enter MISS LOVAINE, *large and showy, in walking dress. Looks at the cards. Rings spring-bell once. Enter* JAMES.

Miss Lovaine. Have these gentlemen called?

James. Yes, madam, and Sir Samuel's compliments, and he'll call again later in the afternoon.

Miss L. Let Sir Samuel Hopgood be admitted. [JAMES *bows, and exit.*] (*Rings twice.*)

Enter MARY HOPE.

Miss L. Now, Miss Hope, take my things, please. (MARY *helps her to take off things.*) You may put them down here for the present. Are your writing materials ready? Very well. Let us finish these circulars. (*Reclines on sofa or couch.* MARY *brings forward a writing table covered with letters open and shut, inkstand, etc., and takes her seat at it.*) How many have you written, Miss Hope?

Mary. Twenty-seven, I think.

Miss L. Ah, we must get on; there are a good many more. I think it reads pretty well. (*Takes up a letter from the couch.*) 'The honour of your presence is requested at the Evergreens, on Thursday next, at 4 in the afternoon, to consider as to the testimonial which is proposed to be presented to the Rev. Horace Lambkin on his leaving the parish.' What do you think of it, Miss Hope?

Mary. It seems to be all that is required.

Miss L. Ah, but style—style! It strikes me very strongly that 'which it is proposed to present,' would be better than 'which is proposed to be presented.' What do you say, Miss Hope?

Mary. Perhaps it would, madam.

Miss L. 'Perhaps it would'! Oh, you are so apathetic! Your heart is not in your work! It would be *much* better. I have a good mind to tear all these circulars up. But let them go, and please to correct the sentence in those that follow.

Mary. Yes, madam.

Miss L. It is gratifying that, although I am comparatively a new comer, my humble drawing room should be the scene of so interesting a meeting. For whom is that letter intended?

Mary. For Mrs. Fitzwigram.

Miss L. Be so good as to let me see it. (MARY *goes over to couch with letter.*) Really, Miss Hope, I am astonished!

You have addressed it to 'Mrs. Fitzwigram'! The *Honourable* Mrs. Fitzwigram, if you please. (*Tears it up and hands it back.*) I trust you have not made many such dreadful blunders.

Mary. I trust not, madam. I will write another.

[*Goes back to table and writes.*

Miss L. Inexcusably careless! Have you written to Sir Samuel Hopgood yet?

Mary. No, madam.

Miss L. Or to his brother, Mr. John Hopgood?

Mary. No, madam.

Miss L. Be sure not to forget them. (*Sits up.*) Have you looked over the tradesmen's bills?

Mary. Yes, madam.

Miss L. And reminded cook to tell the poulterer that we cannot take any more fowls without livers?

Mary. Yes, madam.

Miss L. Have the dogs been out for their exercise?

Mary. Yes, madam.

Miss L. Has Polly's cage been cleaned?

Mary. Yes, madam.

Miss L. You may leave off writing for the present. I want you to read a little. Pray find Professor Brudie's book. You are not tired? That is well. I don't like people who are always getting tired. (MARY *gets the book.*) Do you remember where we left off yesterday? (*Leans back and closes her eyes.*) If there are certain points in the writings of Professor Brudie which I cannot unreservedly accept—I allude rather to his deductions than to his doctrines—on the whole I look upon him as a most valuable as well as a most interesting expositor. Do you not think so?

Mary. I fear I am very dull to-day, Miss Lovaine. I must confess I have a slight headache.

Miss L. Dear me; I never have headaches: don't understand them—so sorry. (*Chime-clock goes Four.*) Four o'clock! Haven't I forgotten something? Of course! I never called at Madame Clotilde's about the alteration of my new hat; she'll send it home all wrong. Pray ring and order the brougham at once. (MARY *rings.*) You ought to have reminded me, Miss Hope. You are extremely inattentive.

Enter JAMES.

Mary. The brougham, if you please, directly.

[JAMES *bows, and exit.*

Miss L. (*While* MARY *helps her on with her things*). I shall be back as soon as I possibly can. Meanwhile you had better go on with the turning of my black silk—nothing so resting as a little sewing. I trust I shall find you quite recovered. I shall want you to finish the letters when I return, and you can go on with Professor Brudie after tea—(*returns*)—and, oh! you'll come down this evening and give us a little music? Thank you so much. (*Returns.*) And pray see if the press in the housekeeper's room is locked; and will you be so good as to open the drawing-room windows? [*Exit.*

Mary. What an odious life is this! I don't mind work—I like it. Try me with plenty of work—and, oh dear!—a little friendly human feeling with it. What am I? A 'companion'—which means a servant, with more sensibility to ill-treatment and less defence against it—shut out from one class and not admitted to another—a human bat, equally hateful to mice and birds! Oh, come, Mary Hope, this won't do! Suppose you *are* a bat, then *be* a bat, as good a bat as you can. What would Robert say if he saw your face like this? If he could look into your mind and see frowns and wrinkles there. Nay, but he *sha'n't* see them there, or anywhere else. Now for the account books.

[*Opens account books.*

Enter SARAH (*a young housemaid*) *with an air of mystery.*

Sarah. If you please, miss——

Mary. I'm busy, Sally—nine and four's fifteen—no, that's wrong—go away, Sally.

Sarah. But, miss, a young gentleman——

Mary. A young gentleman?

Sarah. Yes, miss; and 'ere's a note, and 'e's there hisself; and it's Mr. Robert, miss, and he do want to see you so bad, miss; and I tells him missus is hout, and he says—O lors! if he ain't come in!

Enter ROBERT STRAIGHT.

Robert. Oh, Mary, forgive me! Just one word; I've something to tell you. I did not hope to see you now, but when I heard you were alone I could not resist the temptation. [*Kisses her hand.*

Sarah (aside, going out). Oh, ain't it lovely! Poor things! I'll look out for the old cat.

Mary. Oh, Robert, you should not run such risks. Think, if Miss Lovaine should find you here, after forbidding me to meet you again!

Robert. That is the very reason I must come without her leave; I cannot do without seeing you, Mary. You may look at that note by-and-by: spoken words are sweetest. Do you love me, Mary?

Mary. I have told you so.

Robert. And is it true?

Mary. Not at all.

Robert. What do you mean?

Mary. Not what I say. When I tell you the truth you don't believe me, or why ask so often?

Robert. To be assured and reassured. You will not suffer anyone or anything to part us?

Mary. Not with my goodwill. But oh, Robert, I often think I am the most selfish creature in the world to have allowed this engagement between us.

Robert. Selfish!—oh, yes, I know—you are poor, and I am rich, you think. Perhaps there won't be so much difference in that respect, after all. I am forgetting what I came to tell you—what is in that letter. I was going to tell Uncle John of our engagement this very day; but Uncle Sam had already found it out—I don't know how—and he has had a grand scene with me—worked himself into a red-hot rage, and swore—no, he's too pious for that—solemnly declared that his magnificent intentions in favour of your humble servant will come to nothing at all if I marry against his wishes——

Mary. Oh, I knew it would be!

Robert. And that I must immediately break off our engagement.

Mary. And so I say, too.

Robert. But there's another person to be consulted, who says, No, no, no! You remember the first time we saw each other?

Mary. Yes, Robert.

Robert. Were you thinking about my expectations then?

Mary. No, Robert.

Robert. When we fell in love, was it my expectations you fell in love with?

Mary. No, Robert.

Robert. And when we solemnly promised to be man and wife, was your mind set upon my expectations?

Mary. No, dear, no; I thought of nothing but your love. But other thoughts have forced themselves upon me. How could I drag you down to my own level—you, who have such different prospects?

Robert. Oh, Mary, must you, too, talk conventionally when it is a question of love and faith?

Mary. I must talk rationally, dear Robert.

Robert. I am not irrational. I talk sense when I say that a girl like you does not drag a man down, but raises and upholds him; and that to work for a wife like you would be no unworthy ambition for any man living. Listen to me,

Mary. We are young and healthy: I shall not be a pauper —I have put by some money; we will go to Australia, Canada, or the Far West—where you please; set up our own homestead and till our own land, as many thousands have done before us with good success. We are sure of each other, Mary—are we not, darling?

[Sarah *appears at door, aghast, and making signs.*

Mary. Oh, my own dear love! [*They kiss.*

[Miss Lovaine (*in carriage dress*) *pushes* Sarah *aside and comes in.*

Robert. Madam——

Miss L. Sir!

Robert. Permit me to——

Miss L. Be silent, sir!

Robert. If I may——

Miss L. You may not, sir! You are Sir Samuel Hopgood's nephew, and Mr. John Hopgood's nephew. I have the pleasure of knowing both those gentlemen: they are men of honour. They would be deeply shocked by such conduct as yours.

Robert. My conduct, Miss Lovaine——

Miss L. Is disgraceful! Pray retire!

Robert. Not without a word of explanation.

Miss L. Pray retire!

Robert. For entering your house uninvited, Miss Lovaine, I offer my sincerest apologies. This visit was entirely unpremeditated.

Miss L. Sir, I have noticed for some time past your discreditable attentions to this young person.

Robert. I deny that there is anything discreditable in an honourable engagement.

Miss L. Engagement. Are you aware who this young person is? Are you aware that this person is under my charge?

Robert. I know that Mary has been living with you for several years.

Miss L. And is wholly dependent upon me.

Robert. She will soon cease to be so.

[Mary *attempts to leave the room.*

Miss L. (N.B.—*She is fond of emphasizing many words*). Miss Hope will be kind enough to remain. She may as well hear what I have to say to you, Mr. Robert Straight. (*Sits down.*) You had better take a chair—this one. (*Points to a chair.* Robert *declines to sit, and listens leaning on the chair-back.*) When I first saw Miss Hope—I am not about to bring any *charge* whatever, merely to state some *facts*—she was living with a worthy old lady, my aunt, a kind but *weak* woman—certainly *weak*—who had taken her at an early age out of *charity*, named her Mary Hope, brought her up very *comfortably*, and given her a *good*—perhaps much *too good*—education. (Mary *sighs;* Robert *looks in her direction.*) Mr. Straight, I trust you are favouring me with your attention. My aunt died rather suddenly, and *I* inherited her worldly possessions. The girl was left unprovided for, and *of course* had *no sort* of claim upon me whatsoever. *I took her.* Since that time she has lived under *my roof.* I would abstain from boasting, but I believe I have been *kind*—some, perhaps, would say *generous*—to her; and I cannot—I certainly *can not*—excuse her conduct in the present instance.

Mary. Oh, Miss Lovaine!

Robert. For what do you blame her?

Miss L. For encouraging your advances, sir.

Robert. She long discouraged them.

Miss L. She should not have *dreamed* of permitting them. She knew—she heard from myself—that your uncles occupy a most respectable position in society.

Robert. I hope so.

Miss L. And that your uncle, Sir Samuel, is enormously wealthy.

Mary (*sobbing*). I knew nothing—I thought nothing of his wealth.

Miss L. Oh, indeed! And what would Sir Samuel think of *me* if I knowingly encouraged or permitted such a thing as this? I am aware you are but a clerk, but you are also *his* nephew. Monstrous! disgraceful!

Robert (*moving*). Miss Lovaine, without offence, I must cut this short; there is, I repeat, nothing disgraceful. I met Mary Hope at first openly at your own and other houses; I have met her of late when and where I could, because I am in love with her. I am here now because she has promised to be my wife. I believe she is her own mistress?

Miss L. She has not a farthing in the world!

Robert. That is my affair.

Miss L. (*after a slight pause*). Ah! And your uncle?

Robert. I believe he will forgive me when he knows all.

Miss L. (*with a little start, and appearance of taking a fresh departure*). Oh—forgive you? Um! I can't listen to it for a moment! You know nothing of the girl's parentage.

Robert. I accept her own character as guarantee for that.

Miss L. What infatuation! Young man, you are out of your wits! Shall I tell you, and her (for she does not know it up to this moment), who her mother was—nay *is?*

Mary (*starting up excited*). My mother! Is she alive?

Miss L. Yes; your mother *is* alive.

Mary. Have I a mother?—and you have concealed it all this time! Oh, let me go to her! It was cruel to keep it from me. My mother!—my own mother!

Miss L. Go to your room, Miss Hope!

Mary. Not till you tell me more of my mother.

Robert. Mary, dearest, be calm.

Miss L. You try me beyond endurance, self-willed, obstinate, ungrateful young woman!

Robert. No more, Miss Lovaine! I won't allow it!

Miss L. What, sir! Leave my house!

Enter JAMES.

James. Mr. John Hopgood! [*Exit.*

Enter MR. JOHN HOPGOOD.

John. Your humble servant, Miss Lovaine.

Miss L. How do you do, Mr. Hopgood? You may well look astonished. Your nephew's conduct is——

John. Why, Bob, what does this mean?

Miss L. He has behaved disgracefully.

John (*to* ROBERT). Robert!

Miss L. He has contracted an engagement with this young person.

John (*to* ROBERT). Robert!

Robert. Honourable engagement.

John. Ay, Bob?

Miss L. Surreptitious and discreditable!

John. Robert!

Robert. I am proud of it.

John. Bravo, Bob!

Miss L. You will be heartily ashamed of it! And so will you, Mr. Hopgood, when you know the truth. You thought this young person an orphan?

Robert. She thought herself so.

Miss L. She did. Her kind adoptive parent, my good but *weak* aunt, believed it best to conceal from her—I also believed it best to conceal from her—the *melancholy* and *degrading* truth.

Mary. Oh, Miss Lovaine, where is my mother?

Miss L. You have *forced* upon me the mention of her; and when I tell you the *whole truth, perhaps* you will repent of your behaviour to *me.* [MARY *sobs.*

Robert. Dearest Mary!

Mary. I knew it was too good to be true!

Robert. What—our love for each other? It's too good to be anything but truth itself—trust that!

Miss L. You will soon change that idea.

John. But—pardon me, Miss Lovaine—don't be too hard on the young folk; after all, there's no harm in being in love, is there? What's all this about Miss Hope's mother?

Mary. Oh, speak out, for mercy's sake!

Robert. It can make no difference to me.

Miss L. We shall see. Mary Hope, your mother, whom I saw not later than yesterday——

Enter James.

James. Sir Samuel Hopgood! [*Exit.*

Sir S. (*bowing profoundly*). Miss Lovaine, I have the honour to salute you. I trust, under Providence, that you are in perfect health. Well, brother John—well, nephew—Miss Hope (*bows*)—I trust that I have not intruded at an unfortunate moment?

Miss L. Sir Samuel, a visit from you is always regarded as at once an honour and a pleasure. But I shall not attempt to conceal from you that at the instant when you entered this room I was on the brink of a painful disclosure.

Sir S. May I ask of what nature?

Miss L. It chiefly concerns Miss Hope, but in some degree you also, Sir Samuel.

Sir S. Miss Lovaine, I think I understand you. I have very recently become aware of this complication to which, doubtless, you allude. With your permission, madam, I should wish to address some observations to my nephew, here and now. May I? A thousand thanks! Robert, I am not about to speak in passion. You have acted clandestinely——

Robert. Sir, I intended——

Sir S. Stop! You have acted undutifully——

Robert. Sir, I hoped——

Sir S. Stop! You have acted selfishly——

Robert. I felt sure that——

Sir S. Stop! You could have had no possible right to feel sure. But of what, then, did you feel so sure?

Robert. That if you once only knew, sir, the sweetest and honestest girl that ever lived——

Sir S. Well!

Robert. You would think her worthy, sir, to be your niece, and far more than worthy to be my wife.

Sir S. Very good. This is the young lady; pray, come forward, young lady. Miss Lovaine, will you excuse me, under the circumstances? I bear this young lady no ill-will; she is comely, and doubtless well behaved. I know and desire to know nothing further.

[Robert *and* Mary *look at each other in doubt.*

Miss L. (*aside*). H'm! Is he going to *forgive* them?

John. Don't do anything hasty, Samuel—pray don't!

Sir S. (*continues*). Permit me. Robert, stand here. Miss Hope, pray listen to what I have to say. My nephew is heir-presumptive to the greater portion of that not inconsiderable share of worldly wealth with which Providence has seen fit to endow me, though unworthy. My will to that effect is duly signed and executed. Further, a deed of partnership, admitting him to the firm of Hopgood and Company, is at this moment in my lawyer's hands. That will at once give him a good income; and if he does not live, under Providence, to be the richest man in Moneyborough, it will be his own fault. And now, pray observe, Miss Mary Hope—*if he marries you*, I sever my connection with this young gentleman, nephew though he be, at one stroke! He shall have no further hold on my business, my fortune, or my affection; and what I say I mean. Now give him your hand, if you like.

[Miss Lovaine *crosses her hands meekly and shuts her eyes, with a slight smile.*

Robert. She *will* give me her hand.

Mary. I cannot, Robert!

Robert. Then I will take it, for it is mine; you have already given it to me. Uncle, it grieves me bitterly to go

against your will. I meant always to tell you—I would have done so this very day if you had not learnt of my engagement by some other means.

John. I'm sure of that, Bob. (*Appeals to his brother.*) Samuel!——

Robert. This young lady is without money or position in the world; but for mind and person there is no man who might not be proud to call her his wife.

Miss L. What folly! What madness!

Robert. Mary, dearest!

[*She grows faint.* ROBERT *attends to her.*

John. Poor girl!

Sir S. Permit me, Miss Lovaine, to express my gratification at hearing such admirable sentiments from your mouth. I felt confident that you had no part in this.

Miss L. I, Sir Samuel, have a part in entrapping a nephew of *yours* into so degrading a connection!

Robert. You have no right to use such words, madam. You cruelly insult this young lady!

Miss L. (*with extreme scorn*). 'Young lady!'

Robert. As good a lady as you!

[MISS LOVAINE *rings angrily.*

Enter JAMES.

Miss L. Has the woman come?

Mary. Woman!

James. Yes'm; she's in the 'all.

Miss L. Show her in.

James. Yes'm. But, if you please'm, she's rayther——

Miss L. Show her in at once.

James. Yes'm. [*Exit.*

John. Bob, my boy, keep quiet, whatever happens.

Miss L. When you entered this apartment, Sir Samuel, I was about most reluctantly to reveal the fact, hitherto kept secret, that Miss Hope's maternal parent survives, and has

at intervals called upon me with pecuniary objects in view. She is come to-day by appointment, having come yesterday without any; and here she is. Here is your mother-in-law, Mr. Robert Straight!

[MARY *starts up, and makes some hasty steps towards the door.* JAMES *shows in an odd-looking, poor* WOMAN, *in queer bonnet and shawl, and exit.*

Woman (*in strong brogue*). Where is me darlin' chile?

Miss L. There is your daughter.

Mary. Are you my mother?

Woman. Sure, it's meself that's in it, honey; and come to me arrums! I've not set eyes on ye this many a long year!

[*Embraces* MARY, *who faints.* ROBERT *supports her;* MR. JOHN HOPGOOD *trying to assist.*

Sir S. Here we see a striking example of Vice, Deception, Punishment!

Woman. Oh, me poor darlin' chile! She's fainted coul' dead!

John. Come, I don't see how the girl's to blame.

Sir S. Brother, I see here, though you may not, the Finger of Providence. The moral laws have been violated; the inevitable punishment has followed. I repeat—the finger of Providence! Miss Lovaine, I think, will understand me?

Miss L. Perfectly, Sir Samuel; and, permit me to say, I most thoroughly agree in the views which you have so admirably expressed.

Woman. Bring us a dhrop o' somethin' to moisten her lips!

Sir S. Vice! Deception!——

Woman. Bad luck to yer! what do ye mane be that?

Sir S. Punishment!

Robert. Silence, sir! the lady is recovering. There has been neither vice nor deception on her part.

Miss L. What madness!

Sir S. For the last time, Robert Straight, will you give up this girl?

Robert. Never! [*Busies himself with* MARY.

Sir S. (*half aside in a tone of deep pain*). Oh, Robert! (*Recovering his hard, severe manner.*) Then from this moment you cease to be my nephew.

John. He's mine still, by Jove!

Sir S. John Hopgood, do you set your will and judgment against mine?

John. Not at all; but I must beg leave to keep my own.

Sir S. Brother, I have often had occasion to lament your low moral tone.

John. Oh, devil take it, Sam.

Sir S. I must repeat, that I have always lamented your moral tone. Such a marriage as my unfortunate—as this unfortunate young man contemplates, is shocking to every well-regulated mind; a marriage without the consent—nay, against the known wishes and intentions of his family. (JOHN *offers to speak.*) John, I fear yours is not a well-regulated mind. (JOHN *offers to speak.*) May I beg, as a personal favour, that you will not continue this conversation? Robert Straight, you are henceforth a stranger to me. Madam, perhaps you will permit me to withdraw.

Miss L. I was about to ask your permission.

Sir S. May I have the honour? [*Offers his arm.*

Miss L. (*as they go out together*). You are right, Sir Samuel—you are always right. I trust I have acted in this painful matter so as to meet with your approval.

Sir S. Entirely, madam, entirely.

[*Exeunt* SIR S. *and* MISS L.

John. Bob, this is a bad business! but I'll stick to you as far as I can.

Woman. Oh, the Lord love you! you've a lucky face! [*Tries to embrace him.*

John. That'll do, ma'am; that'll do! What's your name?

Woman. Mrs. Cassidy, your honour—Judy Cassidy, a poor widda-wumman, an' nobody in the wide worl' but *her* (*points to* MARY). Oh, darlin' gintleman; you won't see me poor chile wrong'd? [*Tries to kneel to* JOHN.

John (*draws away*). That'll do, Mrs. Cassidy! that'll do!

Robert. Dearest Mary, you are better—are you not? but don't move yet, let me put this cushion under your head. All will come right, dear; all will come right.

Mrs. C. Oh, my poor dear darlin' chile! the blessin's o' the saints on yer honour! [*Tries to embrace* ROBERT.

John (*getting between*). Do be quiet, Mrs. Cassidy.

Enter JAMES.

James. Miss Lovaine's compliments, and will be glad if Miss 'Ope will find it convenient to leave the 'ouse in the course of the hevening. [*Exit.*

Robert. Good heavens! what a situation!

Mary (*standing up, bewildered*). I should like to leave at once. I've not much to pack up; but—but——

[*Looks round, sees* MRS. CASSIDY, *groans, and covers her face with her hands.*

Mrs. C. Oh, wirra-sthrua! where is she to go to? Shure I've nowheres to take her to at all, at all! I niver was in these parts afore yisterday.

Robert (*to* MARY). Have you seen her before? Do you remember her?

Mary. Yes—yes, I do, dimly; a very long time ago, when I was quite a little girl.

Mrs C. To be shure you do, darlin'. And wasn't it for yer good I stayed away all this time—what else?—and shure I was often near ye when ye knowed nothin' about it.

John (*aside to* ROBERT). She's her mother, Bob, sure enough. They've been paying her to keep away, and now it seems Miss Lovaine has got tired of her *protégée*, and wants to get rid of her in a hurry. That's about it.

Confound Miss Lovaine! I see her game with your Uncle Sam. 'Twas she wrote to tell him. And confound Mrs. Cassidy, too! What the devil's to be done?

Mrs. C. I'm without a brass farden to bless myself wid. I haven't the manes to hire a conveyance, let alone a lodgin'. I'm a sthranger in the place.

[JOHN *takes her aside, and gives her money. She goes out.*

Robert. Look here, Uncle John, you often said you had a liking for me.

John. More than a liking, Bob.

Robert. Then show it now, Uncle John. I love Mary Hope.

John. Charming girl, egad!

Robert. And she loves me.

John. Lucky fellow!

Robert. I never knew her mother was alive——

John. Confound her mother!

Robert. Till ten minutes ago.

Mary. I knew it as little as you, Robert. I told you all I knew.

Robert. I know you did, Mary.

John. A sweet, honest, lovely creature!

Robert. Mary and I would have been content to wait; but now——

John. Ay, now?

Robert. The earlier our wedding-day the better.

John. Bravo, Bob!—that is, how do you intend to manage?

Robert. I have a thousand pounds. We shall emigrate.

John. H'm! and in the meantime?—where, for instance, is Mary to go to-night? Miss Lovaine (confound Miss Lovaine!) is waiting at this moment to lock the door after her.

Mary. I must pack up my things! Will you pardon me?

[*Exit.*

Robert. Come back soon, Mary. Oh, if she were once my wife!

John. Sweet girl, certainly. Look here!—must do something. I know a respectable lodging where Mary and her mother (confound her mother!)——Oh, here she is! Well, Mrs. Cassidy?

Enter MRS. CASSIDY, *followed by* JAMES.

Mrs. C. I've got a fly at the dure, if it's plasin' to ye; but where are we to dhrive to when we're in it?

John. I'll let you know that, Mrs. Cassidy.

Robert. Where's Mary? Why is she so long? (*Enter* MARY *with a light box in her hand.*) Oh, Mary, dear! when you're out of my sight, I fear I have lost you for ever!

Mary. 'Tis like a dream to me, Robert.

Mrs. C. The Lord bless them for a party pair!

Robert. Come, Mary.

Mary. Where?

Mrs. C. Shure, the fly's at the dure, darlin'.

John. Miss Hope, let me offer you my arm. I can explain the proposed arrangement as we go. I hope you will find it tolerable. You know I am Bob's uncle. Has Bob ever spoken to you of me?

Mary. Often, sir.

John. And can you trust me?

Mary. I can, Sir.

John (*puts her hand*). Bob, give Mrs. Cassidy your arm.

[*They move to go out.* JAMES *opens door, other servants seen peeping and grinning.* SARAH *with apron to her eyes. These disappear as* SIR SAMUEL *and* MISS LOVAINE *appear at another door, looking in with disdainful expression.*

Mrs. C. (*to* ROBERT, *as they move to go out, pointing to* MR. JOHN HOPGOOD.) Is yon yer uncle, darlin'?

Robert. He is.

Mrs. C. And what's his name now?

Robert. Mr. Hopgood.

Mrs. C. (*stops, faces round, and looks at* Robert). Say that agin.

Robert. Hopgood—Mr. John Hopgood.

Mrs. C. And the other one—there he is—what do they call *him?*

John (*looking back*). Come along, Robert, what are you waiting for?

Mrs. C. (*excited*). What do you call him, I say? Why don't you spake?

Robert. That's Sir Samuel Hopgood.

Mrs. C. Samyel Hopgood! (*Shrieks.*) Oh, glory be to goodness! is this Samyel Hopgood? Oh, wirra-sthrua! are you Samyel Hopgood?

Sir S. (*coming down with* Miss L.) Take the woman away.

Robert. Come along, Mrs. Cassidy.

James (*puts his hand on her*). Now then!

Mrs. C. (*gives him a buffet*). Now then!

Sir S. Woman!

Mrs. C. Man! mind what ye're about, afore ye lay a finger on Judy Cassidy! I know yer face now, though it's twinty year oulder and more. Stand back, I tell yez! Look at that girl! Dee ya know who she is? Before God and the Saints, she's yer own daughter!

Miss L. The creature is intoxicated.

Mrs. C. (*snaps her fingers*). *That* for ya, you stuck-up oul' tabby-cat! She's yer daughter, Samyel Hopgood, as sure as there's bones in a herrin'!

John. Look here! do you mean to say Sir Samuel Hopgood is your husband?

Mrs. C. No, I don't! and Mary's none o' my daughter, naythar. God forgive me for letting on! but 'twas all for yer good I was, me darlin' chile!

Sir S. Come, woman, no more of this! You have lost this lady's protection, gained by a falsehood, and would try another trick. Take care you don't find yourself in trouble. Leave the house quickly.

Mrs. C. Take care *you* don't find yerself in throuble, Samyel Hopgood—in the worst throuble ye iver was in in yer life! Will I spake a word to ye in private?

Sir S. Certainly not.

Mrs. C. 'Tis for your own sake I'm axin' it.

Miss L. Really, Sir Samuel! Shall I (*in a lower tone*) send for a constable?

Sir S. If you would be so good.

Miss L. James, fetch a constable.

Mrs. C. James, wait a minute first, and hearken what I've to say. Ye'll find it a dvoll sthory! Two an' twinty year since, come Candlemas, I was livin' in a place they call Marlington——

Miss L. That will do, James, till I ring.

[James *goes out reluctantly.*

Do you know Marlington, Sir Samuel?

Sir S. Not in the least.

Mrs. C. Wait a minute. Ah, ye'll know enough. I was in sarvice at that time in a little inn in the town. Och, if you could see what I was like *this*, dear Mr. Hopgood (*to* Mr. John H.), you wuldn't know 'twas the same wumman that's spakin' to ye!

John. I dare say not, Mrs. Cassidy. Pray go on with your story.

Mrs. C. I was fresh from Oul' Irelan'—why did ever I quit it? (*groans.*)

John. Can't say, I'm sure, Mrs. Cassidy: don't mind that, now.

Robert. Do go on!

Mrs. C. Well, then, wan night—I'll never forgit it—there come a dacent-luckin' young wumman, an' a bag in her han',

by th' evenin' thrain. She was dead tired, and we giv' her some refreshment and soon got her to bed.

Mary. Oh, Robert, dear!

Sir S. Well?—well?

Mrs. C. Well, then, Samyel Hopgood, to make a long story short, her maiden name, you understan', was Emma Franklin, and off that bed she never riz.

Sir S. Emma Franklin!

Mrs. C. Ay, that was her maiden name—ye know it well enough—though 'twasn't that name she giv' at the inn.

Miss L. What does the woman mean?

Sir S. Let her—let her proceed.

Mrs. C. She was tuk bad that night, and she was dead afore the nixt—the Lord be marciful to her sowl, poor dear! But the baby lived and throve and grew to as nice a little colleen as iver laugh'd, and 'twas meself that fairly worshipt her!

Sir S. What more?

Mrs. C. I don't know what money was in the bag along wid the baby-linen, but there was a good lot, and the landlady kep' all as quiet as possible. Few questions was axed, and she was thought mighty kind for keepin' the little wan from the workhouse. But after some years, having a risin' family of her own, she got to care less for little Mary (*Smith* it was then), and meself was out of humour wid the situation; so wan day we runs away togither, and takes to arnin' our livin' in a new line of life, by ballad-singin'——

Miss L. And begging.

Mrs. C. 'Twould be a mighty clivir beggar 'ud git a pinny out of *your* claws!

Mary. Can she be speaking of me?

Robert. Don't tremble, dear.

Sir S. Go on.

Mrs. C. Well, we wor in Hull, singin' in the street, whin a worthy lady tuk great notice iv us intirely, an' th' ind o' it was she tuk little Mary into her own house all as wan as her own chile. Och, sure 'twas an unlucky day for us both, dear (*to* MARY) whin she died—the Lord have mercy on her sowl, amin!

Robert. What has all this to do with my uncle?

Mrs. C. Luk at his face, young man, an' ye might guess. Whin we opened the bag that night there was something in it I slipt into my breast unbeknownst and hid away—a bundle o' letters. I'm no great scholard, but I made out the most part, and more than wun was signed, 'Yer devoted husband, Samyel Hopgood.' I kep' 'em safe, and I have 'em here; and yer piether, too.

Sir S. Why was I not informed of this?

[*Sinks into a chair and hides his face.*

Miss L. Gracious heavens!

[MR. JOHN HOPGOOD *takes* MRS. CASSIDY *aside and talks with her. She shows him letters, etc.*

Miss L. Is this the truth, Sir Samuel Hopgood?

Sir S. I believe it is.

Miss L. Was the young woman this person refers to your —wife?

Sir S. She was.

Miss L. A low, clandestine marriage!

Sir S. (*after a pause and in a humble tone*). I truly meant to acknowledge her. I was dilatory—shamefully, culpably dilatory. I was afraid of my father and my family. She fled from her home when I was abroad on business. I heard of her death some time after it happened. I never heard of her child. Oh, child! oh, daughter! can you forgive me?

John. Poor Sam! (*He still detains* MRS. CASSIDY *in the background.*) Stay, Mrs. Cassidy, and you tell me——

Mary. Oh, dear father!

Sir S. Robert—my children—I am more gently used than I deserve. I will faithfully endeavour to make the future of my life some compensation for the errors of the past.

Miss L. Oh, what humiliation!

Sir S. I have earned humiliation, nay, punishment. May Heaven forgive me, and make me worthy of a daughter's love! I wronged your mother, Mary, but I have suffered, too. I have not been so hard and cold as people thought.

John (who has come forward, pressing his arm). I know it, Sam—I know it.

Miss L. This is disgusting! Sir Samuel Hopgood, our acquaintance must from this moment cease for ever!

[*Exit.* MR. JOHN H. *opens door for* MISS L., who *passes him disdainfully.*

Mrs. C. (in the background.) Oh, the divil go wid ye for company!

Sir S. Let us go home. (*Takes* MARY'S *hand, then gives her to* ROBERT.) No, Robert, yours is the first claim; but you will not take her from me altogether?

Mary. He shall not, father!

Robert. And he will not.

[*She gives a hand to each.*

John (shaking hands warmly with ROBERT). So Hopgood and Company have a new partner.

Sir S. (putting his arm round MARY.) Two.

Mrs. C. (coming forward.) An' what's to become o' poor Judy Cassidy?

John. We'll take care of you, Mrs. Cassidy.

Mrs. C. Long life to Hopgood an' Company!

[*Falls on her knees and tries to kiss* MR. JOHN HOPGOOD'S *hand. Group.*

CURTAIN.

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