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A MONTHLY DIGEST OF

FREEMASONRY IN ALL ITS BRANCHES.

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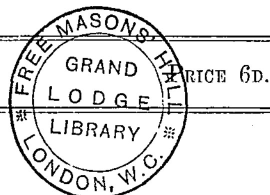

WALTER L'ESTRANGE.

IT is a happy day for a young man when he appears in the War Office *Gazette* as an officer in Her Majesty's Service! The hero of my story received the news in the morning-room of a little old-fashioned house in one of the southern counties, which, the house of his ancestors for many generations, was now his inheritance as the only son of his deceased father. His father, an old soldier, had married a charming person who had predeceased him, and whom he soon followed to the grave, and Walter and Amy L'Estrange were left from early years orphans under the care of their father's sister and the guardianship of the old family solicitor, who had taken good care of the estate. Walter L'Estrange was not what the world called rich, for he had inherited but the remains of a once large property, in all about five hundred a year, and the interest of a small sum of money in the funds. His sister had a little portion of her own, and his aunt, who had been made the heiress of an old godmother cousin, had so comfortable a competence that the estate had been left to "nurse," and she had herself kept up all the expenses, and even provided for the education of her nephew and niece. Thus feelings of gratitude and affection bound that family party together, by sympathies and souvenirs which could never be undervalued or forgotten.

Mrs. L'Estrange's sister had married a noble lord of large possessions, and as she had been deeply attached to her sister, her children and old Miss L'Estrange had been in the habit of keeping Christmas at "Bel Endroit," the family seat of the ancient and noble family of Delorme. Hence it was that the young people had grown up in habits of close intimacy and interest with Walter and Amy L'Estrange. And now it was that at Christmas, some years ago, they were all going to Bel Endroit, to spend three weeks in family *réunion* and pleasant festivities.

It was to Lord Delorme that Walter L'Estrange owed the influence which had procured him the long wished for "post commission" in one of Her Majesty's regiments.

The news had been announced from "Bel Endroit," and great was the rejoicing at the "Mote," as Mr. L'Estrange's old-fashioned house was called. So that was a happy Christmastide for our hero.

The whole of the family was assembled at the stately mansion of the Delormes. The Earl and his Countess kindly and agreeable, the sons manly and good-natured and intelligent, the daughters graceful and charming.

And hence for Walter and his sister, the three weeks at Bel Endroit were weeks of unalloyed pleasure. Many were the gay gatherings, the pleasant dances, private theatricals, musical parties, frequent the uproarious carnival, and joyous the round games !

The old earl was specially kind to that good-looking high-spirited youth, so full of life and animation, and heart and intellect, and his aunt had almost a motherly affection for the only son of her cherished sister.

With the sons he was on the best of terms, and with his fair cousins, and especially with Lady Jane, the eldest daughter, was he in much favour.

It is not customary to indulge in the description of ladies now-a-days, but as Lady Jane is a favourite of mine, I venture to give you her hastily sketched portrait. No one could see her without looking at her a second time. Of exquisite proportions and befitting height, she had that stateliness of appearance, that erect and noble carriage which is ever so deeply to be admired. When she walked she seemed as if she was all elastic, and her every movement was full of grace. When she danced, it was as some one said, "she floated" more than she danced. Her clustering hair, her well shaped head, her marked eyebrows, her dark grey eyes, with their long eyelashes, the rose and lily of her complexion, her arch smile and winning manner were enough to charm susceptible young men out of their senses.

Indeed, an acute observer who had noticed that good-looking couple in the cozy chat of intimacy and the ceaseless whirling of the rapturous waltz, and had seen the light in her eyes and the radiant smile on her face, might have not unnaturally come to the conclusion that it was just within the bounds of possibility that Lady Jane might one day be mistress of the Mote.

But then, though such seemed to be the surface of things, it was not so in reality. All that was taking place was a matter of course and family intimacy. Lady Jane, as became her rank, would one day make a "proper marriage," and though such a state of things might be dangerous in common families, it was not so in theirs, and the parents had no fear as to any such inconceivable and objectionable results, which might seem at first sight not an unnatural carollary of events to those outside "the swim"; but their daughters had been "better brought up."

What Walter l'Estrange felt, or what she fancied, I cannot take upon myself to say. Certainly she never danced again in life with such happy fervour and such tender animation as when in the ball-room at Bel Endroit, as when he, poor fellow, entranced with her beauty and grace, and kindness and confidence (she who was the admiration of all), under that magic influence was supremely happy for the time.

And thus it was when the party broke up, as parties will break up. Whatever reflections Walter or she indulged in no one ever knew.

Everything went on in its usual way. He went off to Portsmouth and "drill" and "work," and at the usual time she went up to London to be the "belle of the season."

Walter at Portsmouth soon became as he was at Winchester, the head of the athletes. A famous captain, he won for Portsmouth with her garrison eleven more than one match, and few men had such a host of friends, and it is doubtful if he had an enemy. The sweetness of his temper, and the manfulness of his disposition, rendered him beloved in his regiment by all ranks and all conditions.

When Christmas came round again the party reassembled at Bel Endroit, and then for the first time poor Walter saw that a change had come.

Not that she was less kind or cheerful, but that he and she were not thrown so much together, and it was clear that for some reason or other the old people, with much kindness and goodwill, had interfered, for fear that by any chance Lady Jane and Walter could be induced to imagine that such an union could ever be thought of or approved in the "family."

When Christmas was over Walter returned to his regiment, and that same year the Crimean War broke out, and his regiment was one of the first sent to the East.

He received before he started several letters from the earl and the countess and his fair cousins, but her he saw not, and Amy herself, his sister, gentle and unsuspecting as she was, had been so sensible of the little constraint and drawing back, that this year she had made an excuse for not paying her London visit, and had stayed quietly and contentedly at the Mote.

I need not here dilate on the Crimean War. Walter l'Estrange, though slightly wounded at the Alma, got safely through Inkerman and the Redan, and in 1857, found himself, by the "fortune of war," by sickness, and by "death in action," the youngest captain in the English army.

It was at the very same time that the "Scruncher" was bringing home the regiment from Balaklava that the *Morning Post* was full of the brilliant marriage in high life, the Marquis of Clanmorris and lady Jane Champney.

Amy had been asked to be a bridesmaid, but as it was not pressed, all the others being sisters and titled cousins, she got out of it as best she could, and stayed quietly at home, looking after her pets and seeing to her old people.

Walter read the news when he landed at Gravesend, but said nothing to anyone; and when, soon after, he returned to the Mote, and looked the grave, sunburnt, bearded, soldierly fellow he was, no one could tell by his manner that he had any trouble, or any care. But to the keen sight of Amy and Miss l'Estrange—and women's eyes are very quick in such matters—there seemed to be a want of interest in matters he formerly cared much about, and a sort of wistful look would creep over his eyes and face when sitting still, as if he was searching for something he wanted very much indeed. He had received an invitation from the earl to go for Christmas to Bel Endroit, but for him that period never came.

Some of my readers may remember the outbreak of the Indian Mutiny in 1857, and Walter's regiment was one of the first sent off to repress that fearful uprising, wicked, senseless, and diabolical in the highest degree.

Perhaps some can hardly remember the excitement of that long summer in England, when each telegram startled us with deeds of horror, wretchedness, treachery, and shame, without a parallel almost in the history of the world.

How then were all our nerves strung and our feelings excited as we heard of gallant Havelock's noble advance, and the happy audacity of "fiery Neal." What emotions affected us as we heard of the massacres of Delhi, and the slaughter at Cawnpore, and the death of so many gallant men, poor women, and helpless children!

Walter l'Estrange's regiment reached Calcutta about August and went straight up to Lucknow.

It is distinguished, as will be seen in Lord Clyde's dispatches, by many an act of steadiness, gallantry, and devotion.

In a desperate struggle with some detached bands of mutineers, when forming part of a small moveable column in Oude, sent to clear the country of the mutinous and murderous Sepoys, poor Walter fell in gallant fight. He was buried that same evening, amid the sadness of many gallant comrades and the tears of his whole company.

And yet I do not know why we should utter one word of condolence. He fell as he wished to fall—at the head of his men. He fell doing his duty, and he lies buried where he fell with many other true-hearted comrades, and he has found a soldier's grave.

It has often occurred to me how little we sometimes think of what Englishmen have done and borne, and how they have died in India.

To Englishmen, India is sacred ground, for its plains are whitened with the bones of those goodly hosts who have maintained its honour against fearful odds, who have carried its flag triumphantly in irresistible advance, who,

though decimated by illness and weakened by climate, have never wavered, never failed to any appeal, but have asserted, with dominant vigour, the tolerant and kindly regime of the Feringhee.

How many, like Walter l'Estrange, have passed away, as in a tale of chivalry, or a romance of olden days.

Like the knight errant in other ages, fighting for his "ladye love;" like Ivanhoe, "by the help of Monseigneur St. George, the good knight," doing duty for honour, justice, right, and poor Rebecca; and like him who, on board the "Birkenhead," when there was nothing but the roaring surf and hungry sharks around, with the voice of a trumpet exclaimed, "Men, stand fast; women and children, to the boats. They must be saved!" And he and his men went calmly down to death, though the ship was settling, and the waves were pouring in!

At the Mote the news of poor Walter's death was received with great grief, but when Charles Hope, Walter's great friend, returned with his effects, and with one arm himself, having lost the other in the same hot skirmish, after a little, Amy, who had known him before as the son of their old clergyman, was not insensible to the bold soldier's tale; and Captain and Mrs. Hope now keep up the old house and seem likely to maintain the family name. The house is permeated by the remembrance of Walter, who is the cherished hero of that family circle.

There is a picture of him, by a young French artist at Calcutta, which is very striking. He is standing with his helmet in his hand, under evening stillness, with his bold, clear face, that wavy hair, and those wondrous eyes, as stately and as calm as "Sir Launcelot" ere he went on his last expedition.

Lady Clanmorris is still the admiration of all who know her. You may see her any day in the season in the most effective turn-out and with the prettiest children in London. Great as is her beauty, greater are her gifts; she is, as ever, kindly and stately, cold and sedate. No cloud has come upon her married life, no whisper of the smoking-room has affected her; she is above and beyond the scandal and tittle-tattle of society. But I, who remember her in her early grace and winning ways, in that wondrous development of interest, and animation, and wreathed smiles, and soft voice, and lighted eyes, often think, though I may be wrong, that there seems to be a sort of haze, a mist over them, as if for her the "light of other days has faded," never to return, leaving her really all alone to battle with the strife, and to pass through the crowds, so noisy, so vulgar, and so uninteresting who fill the great Vanity Fair of life.

It is just possible that through all these things and over all these things, wealth, rank, position, splendour, diamonds, and all that seems to attract us and rule us here, she is looking far, far away, to where, in his lonely grave, lies the noblest form that a British uniform ever covered, and where the truest heart in mortal breast is still for ever. I cannot say whether it is so or not. It has struck me that, like others, she has an outer and inner life of her own, and that she lives a twofold existence in the past and in the present. But she, too, in her place, does her duty, let us not doubt, and though my story is a very common one and trite one, very simple, very unpretending, and very dull, it may have a meaning for some as it has for myself—and that is why I tell it—the interest of a little veracious history of what often happens in Society to-day.

In our busy life and in our customary living, things so often seem to be in the natural order of things, that very few of us are inclined to see or to believe but that ours is not the very best of worlds, and so anything which appears abnormal or out of the common current of affairs, we think ought at once to be deprecated and disavowed. But the truth is that all the while our life is made up, if only we could see it, of countless romances, all true, all touching, and which appeal equally to our sentiment and our sensibility, all we are accustomed

to admire, all we are wont to uphold. In the very midst of Society's dullest routine, all through its garish grandeur and its tinsel ornamentation, under its empty show and base affectation, its cruel treacheries and its base deceits, there is a life for us all, which is full, as in our story, of all that can attract and adorn, elevate and spiritualize humanity.

With us, and close around us, is that inner life, even here, which uses the world as not abusing it, and which is not allured by its flatteries or disconcerted by its frowns.

To some of us of shallow minds, weak views, and perverted opinions, Walter l'Estrange may have seemed to live in vain. But not so; on the contrary we have in his career the epitome of all true life here, courage in despondency, faith in hopelessness, cheerfulness in disappointment, duty in life, and self-devotion in death.

Like many another simple-minded hero, real and true and brave, buried away in the nooks and corners of the earth, in battle-fields and under the stormy waves, unknown, unmarked, forgotten of men, he has marched on triumphantly to the golden gates of the "land of the leal."

A MASON'S STORY.

IT was a beauteous moonlight night. Gloriously the pale orb of night was shedding her lustrous beams o'er the landscape, flooding moorland and fell, meadow and forest, church and houses, with her mellow light. We all love moonlight nights. They seem to come so naturally, bringing the spell of music, and poetry, and romance, with them. We, who are old, can cast our thoughts back to the time when we were not old; we can remember times which cause the heart to throb, it may be with intense pain, or it may be with a lingering feeling of pleasure, or perchance a mixture of both; for it tells of hours passed which can never be recalled, save in dreams, when we wandered arm-linked with those who have perhaps gone before. It tells of those to whom we were all in all, and who were all in all to us. It brings back to us "scenes of our early days which never depart." And I for one love the moonlight. It is my greatest happiness to walk in it, or lying awake to be cheered and comforted by its presence. It seems to me also that it shadows forth an emblem of the peaceful life at last, when all care and trouble shall be thrown away; when we shall walk amid the streets of fine gold, where "they need not the light of the sun, neither the moon, for the Lamb, which is in the midst of it, shall light them." But to turn to my narrative. I observed that the moon was shining, and that remark caused me to digress on to a learned homily regarding the beauties of that particular light, superior to any electric light yet discovered or to be discovered.

Let me try to describe the scene as I intended to describe it when interrupted by my momentary flight into the realms of moralization and prosy garrulity.

It was a quiet little market town in one of our northern shires, where our narrative first opens. The moon was casting her beams over the roof, and gables, and spire of Trinity Church, in that town. Over the fields could be seen, stretching away into the west, the bleak and solitarily grand mountains of Cumberland. Eastward could be observed the towering form of Ingleboro' rising from a multitudinous group of lesser hills. Northward you could discern the snow-capped summit of Coniston Old Man, and behind him, Helvellyn, while to the south, bonnie Morecambe Bay, dotted with the countless sails of

innumerable fishing boats, stretched out, revealing a long range of sands, which shimmered and gleamed with a silvery sheen in the delicious moonlight. And under the shadow of the venerable old church (which has long ago yielded to the rude hand of the "restorer") paced slowly a youthful couple. It was the old, old, story being enacted over again. Love, and that under, well, not exactly difficulties, but rather impracticabilites. But I must not anticipate; my story will relate itself best in its own way.

Of these two, the young man might, at a first glance, have been taken for twenty-six or twenty-seven. This was not the case, however. Study and discontent with his own lot, in which it had pleased the Great Creator to place him, had combined to make him look old before his time. Perhaps an hereditary growth of beard helped to keep up the delusion. His age was at most but twenty-one summers. In stature he was rather short, with a strong tendency to corpulence, and his features were heavily cut, inspiring you at first with an almost instinctive dislike to him.

But those who formed a dislike to Penhryn Falconer (for such was his name) were invariably quickly undeceived. A kinder youth never trod this earth. Full of broad, humanitarian sympathies for his fellow-men, he would have scorned any action which would have harmed the meanest of his fellow creatures. He had been placed by his parents at a public school, and among two or three hundred boisterous specimens of humanity, whose sole ambition was to excel in cricket, football, or hockey, he, the retiring, studious, sensitive lad, had been obliged to rough it alone. By his bold and uncompromising love for truth, which, at times, prompted him to say things which were unpalatable to the ruling powers, he had brought himself in contact with the master in a way which was not calculated to make that functionary feel any reverence or like for him. Perhaps the master saw that the boy had a soul made for things above himself, and that would be sufficient to make him hate the lad. At any rate it was so, and often Penrhyn had undergone punishment for that which was not his fault. Nay, he had been repeatedly punished for defending himself against the tyrannical acts of his young companions.

And the hatred of the pedagogue to his pupil was fully returned. Penrhyn saw, and understood, and appreciated his master at his proper worth. Whilst his companions were content to think old Haslam a good fellow, whose only fault was a too liberal use of the cane, Penrhyn despised him for his littleness of soul, and—save in the rudiments of elementary education—ignorance. Often when addressing words of unprovoked insult to the lad, before his schoolmates, the master would be stopped by the contemptuous look darted on him by his pupil, or the flash of the eye which denoted a consciousness of superior genius to his teacher. Many a time he had striven to keep down the rebellious tears and stifle the prompting to tell his parents his trials. The longest night comes to an end, and so it was that Penrhyn Falconer finished his scholastic career, and at fifteen launched out on the world,

> To seek on the treacherous ocean his fate,
> And in life's busy scene take a part.

His father—a very peculiar man in his way, of whom I shall have to give an account, seeing he was mainly responsible for the shaping of our hero's ideas—decided that Penrhyn should be placed at a mercantile pursuit; and, in pursuance of this object he was bound apprentice to one of the leading merchants in his native town. If we say that Penrhyn hated his occupation with an intense hatred we shall only be speaking the literal truth. The fact was the lad had no liking for business. At the Church he would have shone as a brilliant orator; at the Bar he would have made a solid pleader; as a physician he would have been an earnest, painstaking practitioner; or in literature he would have made a name as a conscientious and eloquent writer. But the fiat had gone forth, and he knew that it would be worse than useless

to struggle against his father's will, and an earnest wish from his mother that he should do his duty decided him.

I have said his father was a peculiar man. His peculiarity consisted in his religion, in which he endeavoured to bring up his son. Early in life he endeavoured to instil ideas which were dangerous into the lad's mind. He would talk for hours, with a learned air of pomposity, on evolution, the growth of man, missing links, and other theories, which in speculative science or ordinary dreams would be well enough, but which, applied to religion cannot tend to edification. The mother, poor soul, whose hope was grounded on the mercies of that sure Rock — the great Creator — did all in her power to eradicate the mischievous teachings of her husband, but in vain, for the scientific facts had taken such a deep hold on Penrhyn's realistic brain that he found it impossible to discard them.

In his twentieth year he had made the acquaintance of the fair young being whom we see by his side in the moonlight this evening on which our story opens. As we have given such a lengthy description of our hero, it will only be fair to introduce our heroine likewise.

A fair young woman, of apparently four-and-twenty summers, taller than her companion, and graceful as Athene, was the vision that would have greeted you on that evening, could you but have seen her. Lustrous eyes, that rested lovingly on the face of her companion, as ever and anon she listened to his conversation, now and then throwing in a remark. Her form was—and it is much to say in these days of artificial lacing and tight stays—faultless. It was well for Penrhyn that he could not see the dimples that were playing hide and seek on her cheeks this night, otherwise I venture to predict that he would have become so self-conceited as not to be able to contain himself.

Just now he is criticising some sermon they have been hearing on prayer, and his ideas seem to be totally at variance with the preacher's. He is quoting Coleridge's beautiful lines :—

He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear Lord who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.

"Yes," she answers, "but you know that you do not believe in that Being. I think it must be terrible to live as you and your father do, believing in nothing greater than yourselves, and having no hope for the future—no hope of an immortality beyond the grave."

"Would that I could believe with you," he replies, "but unfortunately I cannot. I dare not say I believe when I do not, for if there *is* a God it must be an unpardonable sin to thus blaspheme His name by professing a trust in Him which you do not feel. I would give anything to experience that child-like, innocent faith of yours, which can trust everything to a Providence which is invisible."

"Whom, having not seen, we love," rejoined the girl, "and we are glad to love Him. We are glad to leave our sins on our Saviour, conscious that he, at least, can bear them, and pardon and forgive them."

"But it is of no use arguing the matter out," said Penrhyn; and, indeed, it was not for that purpose that I came up here to-night. Mary, you cannot have been ignorant of what my feelings towards you have long been. You must have seen that I have loved you, almost since I knew you, and this night I have determined to speak to you. I cannot give you riches, not even in comparison with what you now enjoy at home, but I *can* give you a loving heart, as loving as any which has ever been given to woman. Will you give me permission to speak to your father."

"Penrhyn, I cannot doubt your sincerity, and I do confess that I love you dearly, and I know that you love me; but you must also know that my father

has ever disliked—not you, for he speaks with the tenderest respect for you—but your religious opinions. I can admire those opinions, for I know that you hold them conscientiously, and I believe that they are as precious in God's eyes as mine are. I do not thing my father will give his consent to our engagement, for I heard him say the other day that no Atheist should ever marry his daughter."

"I will see him, darling," was Penrhyn's reply; "surely he cannot refuse you to me when he knows how earnestly we love each other. Beside, what are religious matters when compared to blighting the lives of two persons."

"My best wishes shall go with you, dear, and my prayers, but if aught is said bitter on his side do not return it. Remember, he is my father, and whatever he does he will do what he thinks best for my welfare."

Half-an-hour later Penrhyn Falconer was seated in Mr. Morton's study. Mr. Morton was a hard-featured, angular man, precise in his movements, and methodical in his habits. Predestination and election were visibly stamped on his face, and his countenance seemed to utter, as he motioned Penrhyn Falconer to a seat, "eternal reprobation." He was very polite, however, and the young man soon made known his errand.

Mr. Morton listened very attentively, and when Penrhyn had finished he said, "I will be frank with you, Penrhyn. Personally, as regards your moral character, I should be proud to call you my son. I cannot attempt to cope with your scholarly abilities, nor do I object to you on the score of your pecuniary circumstances. I can never see my daughter united to an Atheist, as I told her the other day, and when I say that you will understand that it is my sole objection to you."

"Am I to understand that this is your final, irrevocable resolve?" said Penrhyn.

"Such is my resolve," was the reply, "and I trust that you will not think me cruel if, in the interests of both Mary and yourself, you abstain from visiting here for the time. Pray do not think me uncourteous," he hastened to add, as he saw the effect his words produced, "but I do not think it would be wise, under the existing state of things, for you to go on meeting. It would only be productive of misery to both. You had better say 'Good-bye' to Mary now."

And so the curtain falls on the first act of our little drama, and much remained to be done ere the gold could be made ready to receive the diamond, but in the meantime, with vows of constancy on both sides, they parted.

(To be continued.)

THE POWER OF FREEMASONRY.

TO many people in this good world of ours "Freemasonry" is a sort of quasi mysterious social institution, famous for its hospitality and its excellent charities. As a mere matter of conversation in polite society, Freemasons are generally credited with being judges of a hospitality, as being kind and benevolent; but Freemasonry is looked upon as a great benefit order, with a system of affected secresy, and somewhat absurd exclusiveness.

As an old Mason, I, on the contrary, hold, as all Masons will, such ideas to be utterly unjust and derogatory to our good Order. Those of us who know it the best must be aware, after all, what a power for good it is in the world,

and what a "power" there is in Freemasonry in many respects and particulars, if only properly used and rightfully developed.

As I have been asked to send a paper to the *Masonic Magazine*, I tell a story which has a quiet moral of its own, which entirely supports my last statement, and may be of profit to some of us, who are rather inclined to forget that the "tongue is an unruly member," and sometimes brings us into trouble. I belonged to a lodge in other days which was about to celebrate its St. John's Festival, and elect its W.M. for the new year. For some time past this good lodge, which I will term the Lodge of Illumination, had been suffering from this lingual disease. It was not certain to those who noted and grieved over the symptoms, and realized the true "diagnosis" of affairs, whether this malady was confined to one or more, but sure it was that the lodge, once so harmonious and happy, was becoming disintegrated and divided, broken up into cliques and sections, while an undercurrent of gossip and unkindly scandal was undermining its sociality, and setting brother against brother and friend against friend.

It had been decided at the usual friendly and informal meeting to vote for a particular brother for the W.M.'s chair, and then at that very meeting it became apparent that some evil influence was at work to impair the concord and mar the prestige of the lodge. Accordingly, the day after, a few clear-headed brethren met together, and formed themselves into a "committee of vigilance and public security," to ascertain who this disturber, or these disturbers, of the lodge peace really and truly were.

I well remember the first evening we met how serious we all were. It all seemed to us so un-Masonic, so unreasonable, and so unwelcome, that we should leave other occupations in order to find out what member of the lodge, untrue to his Order, was ignoring and repudiating the very profession of Masonry he had openly and solemnly taken upon him.

However, there was no help for it, and so we began our uncongenial task. The first point to ascertain was, Was it only one, or more than one, associated with this state of things? Having drawn up an outline of the case, we adjourned for twenty-four hours, to a brother's house, to make the needful enquiries.

When we again assembled the following night it was clear by the manner of all that something had been discovered. And so we set to work. Gossip, and tittle-tattle, and scandal were all openly repeated and considered, letters were read and shewn, until it became perfectly clear that to one brother, and one brother alone, everything could be traced up! He was himself the originator of every story, every falsehood, the fomentor of all discord, the fautor of all intrigue; he was the mover both of Masonic sedition and the source of Masonic discontent. What was to be done?

We were quite clear about the fact. There was, moreover, no doubt about it, and yet something must be done? Unless by St. John's Festival all this under-current of queer feeling was stayed, we might expect more mischief in the new year. What the brother's motives were it seemed difficult to understand. To some of us it appeared a mere love of mischief; to others a morbid mind and an unrestrained temper suggested themselves; while the majority held, and held rightly, that it was to a very foolish and uncontrolable tongue that everything must be attributed. Oh, the power of the tongue for good, but how much more for evil!

We often complain of woman's abuse of the tongue; I, for one, fancy men are as much to blame, nay, I have known men whose actual abuse of the powers of speech were something fearful, even diabolical, to realize.

Well, after long deliberation, I'll tell you what we did. We appointed a select committee to see our brother, and put the case before him, and what we knew, and what we yet might discover. Our deputation were well chosen, for they were all "good men and true," and well versed in Masonic law and

Masonic practice. I forget after this lapse of time how exactly the meeting was arranged, but it was, and we met him and he met us. We soon plunged in "medias res."

Our spokesman, who knew well what he was about, introduced the matter in his most lucid and impressive manner, and our brother listened, and all listened, in silence.

His defence was very amusing, though very weak and fatal to himself. First of all he attempted to be facetious, and treated it all as a "canard." That would not do Then he threw himself upon common report. This was proved to be untenable, he himself being alone "common report." Then he denied our right to ask him such questions. The right we asserted, simply as a matter of fact, duty, and necessity; and lastly, he turned round and said he had done nothing to do anybody harm, he meant nothing personal, he did not mean to injure anyone,—it was all a good joke!

Our spokesman then pointed out to him the evil he had done, the wanton, foolish, cruel pain he had inflicted on others. He pointed out to him the real true principles of Freemasonry, how he had transgressed every one of them, and how, unless he could authorize us to make his peace with the brethren, he would surely have his name expunged, after trial, from the list of the members of the lodge.

"What is Freemasonry?" said our spokesman, among other suitable and seasonable remarks, "but a system founded on benevolence, directed by consideration for others, and elevated by brotherly love! Under the guise of a brother eagerly to listen to, credulously to receive, or calmly to disseminate scandal of an innoffensive brother, who, all unconscious, is associating with you on terms of Masonic sympathy and good-will, is an enormity! To sit in the same lodge with a brother, and to whisper a tale of slander, or to pass on an invention of mendacity, without thought or heed, is an offence not only against all laws human and divine, but contravenes the leading axioms, and uproots the very foundation of all true Freemasonry!"

Our brother listened and listened, until, as all saw, the perspiration standing on his forehead, and he said tremulously at last, "Brethren, I feel I have done wrong; I am very sorry, I am very contrite; I will make any reparation you may think proper to appoint." Our end was gained. Freemasonry is always forbearing and forgiving; it is always willing to accept apologies and permit of recantation. Taught by the experience of past ages, it is against pains and penalties, persecutions and excommunication, burnings and expulsions of all kinds, except where the latter is absolutely necessary, as it unfortunately is sometimes, for the need of example, or the requirement of warning, for the good of Freemasonry, for the safety of the Order! That St. John's Day Festival was the happiest meeting of that old lodge for many a long day. Our brother, who may be now a dignitary of the Order for all I know, never relapsed into the foolish love of gossip and tittle-tattle, and the harmony of the lodge renewed and cemented, has never since been broken.

How such things get about I know not, or how women hear of what takes place in lodge, I do not pretend to understand. This is a mystery I cannot fathom. Can any married brother? But then one fact is undoubted, that to this view, whenever the wife of his bosom wishes to "shut up," or bring our erring brother into subjection, she uses these words of mystic import to him—can any brother explain them?—"James, what a deal of evil there is in the power of the tongue, and how it can get a brother into trouble!"

I have penned this paper, to illustrate the "Power of Masonry" properly employed, to act as a healer of differences, and a redresser of evil, and therefore deem it not out of place in the interesting pages of the *Masonic Magazine.*

T. T. T.

THE BEACON FIRE.

A CHRISTMAS LEGEND OF DOVER CASTLE.

IT was Christmas Eve in the year 1065, the last year of Edward the Confessor's reign, the last Christmas that England saw under Saxon rule; for ere another twelve months had passed, William the Norman was in possession of the country.

Little dreaming, however, of the mighty and important changes at hand, a young soldier, on the night in question, was pacing with measured and martial tread upon the ramparts of Dover Castle. He was a sentinel on guard, and not a few were the impatient exclamations that burst from his lips as he contrasted the keen wintry air and lonely walk on the battlements which it was his lot to watch, with the warm, blazing fire and blithe wassail of the guard-room. The comparison was not favourable to his own situation, and the more he thought the more he grumbled. As he reached an angle of the wall that formed the boundary of his beat, he encountered the sharer of his cheerless vigil. Like our grumbler, he, too, was a Saxon, but he was his senior by a score of years, being a stout strongly-built man of forty.

"Well met, Adhelm!" cried the elder of the two, in a hearty tone, as he shifted his weapon from one shoulder to the other. "'Tis a bitter night, and in sooth I shall not be sorry when we are summoned from this breezy height to the snug guard-chamber below."

"Nor I," echoed the youth, and forthwith he resumed his grumblings, but he found no ready listener in the hardy giant beside him,

"Foolish boy!" exclaimed Sidroc, scornfully. "Thou, with thy young blood flowing hot and strong in thy veins, thou, to talk of a little frost as though thou wer't an old fellow of four-score years and ten!—go to, boy, thou art no better than a woman."

Young Adhelm had but recently begun his career as a soldier, and he found the cold windy heights of Dover rather different from the sheltered Sussex valley where he had spent his boyhood; consequently he felt resentful at the speech of the really good-natured, but blunt, straightforward Sidroc, who had passed all his life in roughing it, and was hardened to cold and privation by a long course of stern military discipline.

"I was but thinking just now of one as young, nay younger, than thou, who, long ago, on these very heights, set an example which many a Saxon youth in these days would do well to follow."

Adhelm was silent; he felt that this speech implied reproof, and he was in no mood to take it, so he turned on his heel and resumed his beat. Sidroc did the same, but in a few moments they met again at the same place.

Curiosity had got the better of anger, and Adhelm, who had too bold and daring a soul himself not to be moved at hearing of bravery in another, inquired of his comrade who the youth might be of whom he had spoken.

Sidroc replied by directing his attention to a partly ruined tower that stood upon the highest point of the cliff, at a short distance from the castle. It was an ancient beacon or pharos, said to have been built by Julius Cæsar when he invaded the shores of Britain, and although it was now crumbling into decay, it still reared its lofty head proudly, on the very crest of the precipitous cliff, whilst immediately at its foot, as if seeking shelter and protection from the winds that swept around that exposed hill, nestled the little church called St. Mary-in-Castro. Adhelm saw the tower, and replied,

"I have often marvelled at it; methinks it must have been a place of strength in former days."

"And many a beacon fire hath blazed from its summit," rejoined Sidroc. "It is said that in the days of King Alfred the 'Truth-teller,' there was a sentinel placed there to watch and give the alarm in the event of any Danish vessels appearing in sight; and once it was the scene of a deed of valour, and of treachery too; and further, it is said that the spirits of those concerned in this event still haunt the spot, though 'tis now nigh two hundred years since it happened."

"And dost thou believe the tale?" asked Adhelm, surprised at the grave, earnest tone and expression of his comrade.

"I cannot do otherwise than believe it; 'tis true I never saw the apparition with mine own eyes, but often have I heard my father tell, in terms that left no doubt in the minds of those who listened to him, of the thrilling scenes he witnessed on the top of the beacon tower, the Yule Eve of the year 1016, the year preceding that in which Edmund Ironsides was slain at Oxford, and Canute the Dane claimed the crown of England."

"And hath it not been seen since then?" asked the youth.

"No; when it appeareth 'tis always at Yuletide, and it bodes some great change or danger that menaceth the land within the coming year."

"And doth it always so happen?" said Adhelm, curiously.

"So far as I have heard, *always*," answered Sidroc, in a low, solemn tone. "The story haunts me ever as the season returns; and instinctively I have gazed at yonder tower each Yuletide I have passed on these heights, but never yet have I beheld the boding shades."

"Nor ever will, I warrant me!" cried the youth, laughing. "Comrade, methought thou wast above heeding such old wives' tales, which in these Christian days savour of paganism."

A dark frown gathered on Sidroc's brow, and he seemed about to reply in anger, but he checked himself, and laying his heavy hand on Adhelm's shoulder, he merely said,

"There is one below, boy, who will tell the the tale better than a blunt, rough fellow like myself; one who has himself witnessed the apparition; see when thou hast heard him, if thou callest it any longer an old dame's fable, or a heathen superstition."

The young soldier smiled incredulously, and shook his head with the superior wisdom of twenty years; but at that moment their watch was relieved, and they descended the dark, narrow staircase which led from the battlements. A few minutes more, and they were seated by the blazing fire in the guard-room, discussing a substantial repast. All the soldiers, save the few who were absent on duty, were taking their ease, and horns of foaming ale, stories and songs, were, as usual, occupying their attention.

When Sidroc and Adhelm had finished their supper, the latter reminded his comrade of the promised tale. The Saxon looked all round the room, apparently seeking something or somebody, and after peering vainly in every direction, he exclaimed, "Where is Osyth?" At this summons an old man emerged from the deep shadow of the chimney-corner, and advanced towards Sidroc. He presented a somewhat wild appearance, his hoary beard straggling in ragged locks far below his waist, and his hair white as flax, scattered in the same dishevelled manner over his shoulders; he was wrapped in a long blue mantle which completely enveloped him. Alike respected and beloved by the rough hardy warriors of the garrison, Osyth held an honoured place amongst them; his knowledge was accounted something wonderful, according to the ideas of the times, and who was so well acquainted with every Saxon tale and ballad as Osyth, the story-teller and minstrel of Dover Castle? He raised his dreamy blue eyes from the scroll he was perusing, and demanded, in a clear and somewhat imperious tone, "What would Sidroc have with Osyth, the son of Aidan?"

"Tell us the story of Leofwine the True-hearted," replied Sidroc.

The proposal met with universal approval.

"It is Yuletide," said the soldiers; "let us have a tale to pass away the time," and they gathered round the hearth, preparing to listen.

"The story of Leofwine," murmured the old man. "Knowest thou not, Sidroc, that this is the night he died?"

Sidroc nodded, and stroked his tawny beard in silence.

"The saints grant that his boding shade appear not to warn the land of coming evil as it did that night, more than fifty years ago, when I stood with thy father upon these very heights."

Osyth seated himself in the centre of a group of eager listeners, his dreamy eye kindling and his voice and action expressing fire and animation, as he proceeded to relate the following somewhat wild and curious tradition of the Beacon-tower. The attention and interest of the soldiers were rivetted by the spirited tones of the narrator; the subject, too, was one which found ready sympathy in their brave and warlike hearts.

Leofwine's Trust.

The clouds were lowering darkly in the sky; the sun struggling dimly through them, cast a vague, uncertain light upon the sea, the waves of which moaned restlessly at the the foot of the steep cliff; whilst, high above the solitary tower that crowned its summit, the sea-gulls wheeled and circled in the wintry air. Within the spacious hall of the castle, which stood at a short distance from the beacon, the soldiers of the garrison were gathered round a blazing fire, drinking, laughing, singing, and making merry, for it was Yuletide. The cheerful, crackling logs upon the hearth shed a ruddy glow on the bronzed, visage of many a veteran, grim and ancient, and on many a fair-faced, beardless Saxon youth. At length, when the revel was at its highest, one, who had been seated at a table somewhat withdrawn from the others, rose, and advancing, made a gesture with his hand to enforce silence. Instantly the joke and the song were hushed, for he who thus commanded was not one to be lightly disobeyed.

"Come hither, son Leofwine," said Denewulf, the Kentish chieftain, for he it was who had thus checked the revel of his soldiers. Upon this summons a youth detached himself from the rest of the group, and stood in an attitude of respectful attention before his father, to whom he bore some resemblance, though the likeness was well nigh lost, so great was the contrast between the gaunt, muscular frame and grizzled locks of the old warrior and the slight, though well-knit figure, the blue eyes and yellow hair of the younger one.

"Son!" said Denewulf, abruptly, "it is thy turn to watch the beacon tonight; never yet hast thou had the post; beware how thou guardest the trust committed to thy keeping; be not like Red Sweyn of old, who deserted his charge and went over to the Danes. Beware! I say; let thine eye be keen as the hawk's, let not slumber o'erwhelm thy senses, or ill shall it fare with thee, though thou art the son of Denewulf. If aught should occur, blaze abroad the signal fire without delay: much depends on thee, for 'tis rumoured the Danes are about again;" then, turning to the soldiers, he exclaimed, "Let mine own eyes be torn out if Leofwine is found neglecting his duty!"

"With my life will I guard my trust," said the young Saxon, solemnly, raising his hand to heaven, whilst his blue eye flashed and kindled with sudden light, and the colour rose to his cheek.

"Go, the sun hath already set," said Denewulf, hurriedly, adding in a low tone to himself, as he turned away, "And may the saints preserve thee from all harm,"

Leofwine left the hall amid the resounding shouts of the soldiers, for the boy was the idol of the rough but kindly fellows; and, further, they respected and admired the conduct of their chieftain, who, though, Leofwine

was his only child and the pride and joy of his heart, would on no account permit him to be exempted from the stern discipline and training to which the other youths under his command were subjected; and so it came to pass that since it was his turn to watch the beacon, Leofwine must go, no matter though it was Yule Eve or that he was Denewulf's son.

But no hardship did the young Saxon deem it. Waiting but to arm himself, he quitted the castle and lightly trod the pathway along the cliffs; bounding up the steep, narrow stone stairway, he soon gained the summit of the tower. Wide, indeed, was the view that met his gaze. Twilight was fast deepening into night; the distant coast-line of Gaul, generally visible from the beacon, had faded away into the mists that hovered over the sea. Far down below, at the foot of the cliff, the breakers gleamed white and ghostly; thick clouds, driven by a shrilly whistling wind, obscured the heavens. But little recked light-hearted Leofwine of wind or cloud: drawing his thick cloak around him he tramped to and fro on his limited beat, rather enjoying the keen freshness of the winter air and the wild dreariness of the scene around. Hour after hour passed on; the night was dark, save for an occasional glimpse of moonlight that struggled through the drifting mist and clouds, and the wind still moaned in fitful gusts, as if foretelling a coming tempest. Being the Eve of the Nativity, the monks were keeping a vigil in the little church at the foot of the tower, and the sound of the holy chants was borne, mingled with the sigh of the wind and the dash of the waves, to the ear of the young sentinel above. About three hours had passed since midnight, when Leofwine, leaning over the parapet and gazing across the sea, was startled at seeing a small boat shoot suddenly out of the mist and make for the shore. Scarcely had he time to wonder at its appearance, when the moon broke through the clouds, and shining for a moment in a comparatively clear piece of sky, revealed to Leofwine's quick eye a group of Danish galleys, which, under cover of the mist and darkness, were stealthily moving onwards, evidently making for the land. So silent and shadowy did they appear, however, that when the moon withdrew her light as suddenly as she had bestowed it, the hostile armament had passed away, vanishing like a vision into the mist. But Leofwine knew it was more than a vision; he had caught the glint of spears and helmets, packed closely together in the vessels, and he knew that if he did not give the alarm the invaders would soon be upon the unsuspecting inhabitants of Kent; so he caught up some fuel and hastened to kindle the beacon. "Thou saidst well, oh, my father; Leofwine shall not be found neglecting his duty," murmured the young sentinel, as he was in the act of lighting a torch, but the now rapidly rising wind extinguished the flickering flame repeatedly. At last it caught, but ere he could apply it to the fuel it was suddenly dashed from his hand by some unseen power behind. Turning in amazement, Leofwine beheld a tall form, in warlike accoutrements, standing beside him.

"Who art thou, and how camest thou hither?" cried the startled youth.

"Do as I shall bid thee. Make no resistance, refrain from giving the alarm, and I swear thy life shall be spared; resist, and I hurl the from this tower."

Leofwine snatched up the pine-torch flaring at his feet and surveyed his unexpected foe by its glowing light, but the object of his scrutiny shrank back into the shadow, like some ill-omened night-bird that shuns the day, and his eyes sought the ground like one ashamed. It was Red Sweyn, the false.

Like lightning it flashed across the mind of Leofwine that the solitary boat he had seen contained the traitor who now stood before him.

"I know thee, faithless one!" cried the young Saxon, with scorn; "thou art Red Sweyn! thou alone, of all thy Danish horde, knowest the secret path up this precipitous cliff, and the fastening of the tower door; doubtless thou thoughtest to surprise us into an easy defeat in this darkness, and to find in me one as willing as thyself to desert this post; but thou art mistaken, traitor will I never be!"

"Beware!" roared Sweyn, menacingly; "thou treatest mine offer of safety but lightly; bethink thee, hadst thou been another I had given no such terms; a blow from my mace had silenced thee for ever, but in pity to thy youth I spared thee."

"I thank thee for thy courtesy," laughed Leofwine, carelessly. "But," he added, indignantly, "think not I would avail myself of such an offer; honour is dearer a thousandfold than life to the son of Denewulf! Hearken, traitor! I scorn thee, I will not buy my safety at thy hands, and this fire shall not be quenched till the last spark of Leofwine's life is quenched also!"

Enraged beyond measure at the bold defiance of a youth whom he had flattered himself he could easily subdue, Sweyn made an effort to seize him with his huge hand and fling him over the parapet, but Leofwine was too nimble for him; he sprang lightly aside, and in another moment the fire was kindled. They struggled fiercely, Sweyn trying to extinguish the warning fire, Leofwine heaping on fuel with one hand, while with the other he endeavoured to keep his antagonist at bay. The wind fanned the flames and helped the sentinel to spread their war-signal far and wide; but it also blew them in the faces of the combatants, whose limbs and hair were scorched and singed by the heat. Hitherto Leofwine had made no further efforts against Sweyn than to keep him from putting out the fire, but when at last he saw an answering beacon shining on the cliffs to the west, he knew that the alarm had been caught; shouts, the blasts of horns, and the tramp of hurrying multitudes assured him that those in the castle had been aroused and were marching to meet their foes; then, indeed, he turned from the fire and regarded Sweyn with a look of triumph. As if by tacit consent they ceased the conflict, and paused to take breath. Sweyn leaned on his great mace, his broad chest heaving, his eyes rolling wildly with wrathful and vindictive glare at the defeat of his schemes, to which the distant gleam of the responding beacon and the martial sounds from the castle bore unmistakeable evidence. Leofwine stood opposite to him, resting on the handle of the bright two-headed battle-axe with which he was armed. The youth was well-nigh spent in his struggles with the gigantic Sweyn, and it was only his nimble activity that had saved him from defeat and utter annihilation; his breath came thick and short, his yellow locks were tossed in wild confusion over his burning brow, but his courage was as undaunted, his spirit as unsubdued as when the struggle first began, and there was a proud, triumphant light in his eye as he regarded with calm satisfaction the vexation and rage of his opponent.

"I have kept my trust; the castle is safe from thy harm; come on now, thou traitor, and do thy worst in fair combat! Heaven judge 'twixt the false and true!"

With these words the young Saxon swung his gleaming axe around his head; Sweyn, finding his mace of little avail, drew his dagger, and the two combatants closed in a deadly embrace. The tower seemed to sway beneath them, the sky reeled overhead, and the moon looked down from the tempest-driven clouds. Storm above and storm below!

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Fierce and long was the conflict that raged upon the shore that night between Saxon and Dane—wind and wave—a wild turmoil that passes all description. Towards morning the wind sank. It seemed as if Heaven had been fighting for the Saxons, and helping them in the defence of their island home; for the war of the elements ceased not until the shouts of the Saxons proclaimed that they were victorious over the invader. Backward they drove them, till conqueror and conquered were struggling together knee-deep in the seething foam of the stormy waves. Woe betide the warrior who fell exhausted in the combat, for, as he fell, the waters rushed over his prostrate form, and if he had not the strength to rise again he was hopelessly lost. Many a soldier, too,

who, as a last resource, plunged desperately into the roaring billows, endeavouring to regain his vessel, sank ere he reached it; and thus it was that between the sea and the Saxons, the havoc was great amongst the Danes.

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The morning was breaking when the Saxons who had survived the conflict of the night stood on the cliffs watching the retreating sails of the Danish ships. As the last vessel vanished over the horizon, the sun rose, grand and glorious, bathing the sea and sky in golden light, and glancing back from the arms of the assembled warriors. And what a scene was that which greeted the sun that Christmas morning! Alas, was it meet that its first rays, bringing the message of "Peace and goodwill on earth," should be reflected from the blood-stained weapons of those fierce soldiers?

The storm was over, and the angry waves were now comparatively smooth, but they still heaved with a long heavy swell, and seemed as though sighing over the traces of death and carnage which they endeavoured to obliterate, thus aiding the monks, who were already on the shore seeking for the wounded who might perchance have escaped drowning, and bearing to burial the dead bodies that were washed up, so that, in reverence to the holy morning, as little as possible might remain of the bloodshed and contest of the previous night. Rocking on the tide, and rising and falling with every billow as it swept towards the shore, were the shattered remains of several of the Danish galleys that had been wrecked during the storm.

Denewulf, who had been for some moments watching the rising sun in silence, suddenly turned to those around him, and pointing to the watch-tower, he said, "Our country is saved once more from those pillaging Danes; yonder beacon gave us timely warning last night, else had we been all dead men ere now; 'twas young Leofwine's first night—he hath quitted him well. I marvel he hath not yet joined us to learn how we routed the Danes in the fight; yet I see not his form on the battlement." He raised his voice, and shouted in tones loud enough to be heard even on the lofty summit of the beacon; but no answer was returned, and no figure appeared upon the tower.

"Perchance the youth sleepeth; the vigil was long for one so young," suggested an old Saxon.

"Perchance the wind sleepeth when the tempest is raging," retorted Denewulf, dismissing the idea contemptuously. "'Tis strange," he added in a lower tone, and with an ill-defined uneasiness at his heart he entered the tower, followed by his men, they too filled with unaccountable misgivings. A startling sight greeted their eyes as they reached the summit. Stretched on the ground, amid the smouldering ashes of the beacon-fire, lay the young Saxon who had guarded his trust so faithfully. A little distance off was the corpse of the false Sweyn—cloven through the head by Leofwine's battle-axe. Denewulf sprang forward in amazement, knelt beside his son, and raised him in his arms.

"What hath happened?—what treachery hath done this, my son?" he cried.

At the sound of his father's voice, Leofwine opened his eyes and gazed around him.

"I have kept my trust," he murmured feebly.

"Ay, I doubt not thy faith, but why this spectacle of horror?" inquired the old warrior, in bewilderment.

The youth slowly raised himself, and pointing with a triumphant smile to his fallen foe:—"Red Sweyn," he said.

Two of the soldiers had been examining the body of the prostrate man, and at that moment corroborated Leofwine's assertion in accents of astonishment and indignation.

"And 'twas he who slew thee, the treacherous villain!" muttered Denewulf, with a dark frown.

"He could not buy my faith," said the wounded Saxon; and then, revived by a draught of water, he related how, in the darkness, Sweyn had stolen up to the tower and tried to keep him from giving the alarm by promises of safety. As the listening soldiers clustered closer around him, he told his father of the struggle; how at last he had stricken Sweyn to the ground, and had then fallen himself, dizzy, exhausted, and wounded by his false foe; and how he heard his father calling him, but could not summon strength to answer.

The rough, stalwart Saxons heard his account with admiration, but it was mingled with sadness, for they saw that the youth was wounded mortally; the dagger of the treacherous Sweyn had done its work.

"Thy first combat, and thy last;" moaned Denewulf.

"No matter, so long as it hath ended with honour," replied Leofwine, with a bright smile.

"Thou sayest well," responded his father, stifling the groan that rose to his lips, and regarding the prostrate lad with melancholy pride.

At that moment a monk appeared to quiet and console the passing spirit of the brave boy warrior, and the soldiers drew back respectfully that he might do his office. As the priest concluded his prayer, a shaft of sunlight shot athwart the lofty beacon, and lighted up the face of Leofwine, as he lay listening earnestly to the words of the monk. From the church below the breeze brought the echo of the holy chant, "Gloria in excelsis." The youth turned his head to catch the sound as it floated up on its Heavenward journey.

"It is Yuletide," he murmured, faintly; then pointing to a spark that still flickered amid the ashes of the expiring watch-fire,—his wan, white face beaming with the brightness of a proud sweet smile,—he raised himself slightly, and exclaimed, "I vowed not to let the fire be quenched till the last spark of mine own life had faded also. See! I have kept my word. I die for my country and King Alfred." Exhausted with this effort, Leofwine fell backward into the arms of his father. "It is gone now—quite gone," he whispered; and as the little spark vanished, the spirit of the speaker passed away.

For awhile there was silence; the monk covered his face with his flowing robe; the rough soldiers turned away to hide the feelings they were ashamed to shew. Denewulf alone knelt by the dead boy, like one in a dream. He parted the shining locks from the pale brow, and gazed at the burnt and wounded hands that still grasped the broken handle of the battle-axe. "Poor boy, and was it for *this* I sent thee hither?" he murmured to himself; "Alas! my child, my only child!" and then for awhile the father bowed his head beneath the weight of a woe too deep for words. The holy hymn still swelled sweet and clear through the wintry air, and an enduring smile rested on the features of the dead Saxon, whilst the sunbeams hovered warm and golden around him, like a glorious halo. At last Denewulf arose, as if angry with his own weakness. "He hath died as I would have had him die," said the old soldier, solemnly. "It is well, let him be laid honourably in his grave."

Leofwine was borne to his burial with all the martial honours that the Saxons were wont to bestow upon their departed chieftains; his soldier's cloak formed his shroud, and his bier, carried on the shoulders of four stalwart warriors, was followed by a long file of his comrades from the castle, whose bowed heads, dejected mien, and drooping spears, gave token of the sorrow and respect they felt, for young Leofwine had been beloved by all the Kentish men-at-arms.

And so the true-hearted Saxon youth was laid to his rest in the little God's Acre attached to the church of St. Mary-in-Castro, close by the scene of his noble deed on the Beacon-tower; and the maidens of Dover wept and strewed flowers over his grave, the stern warriors standing round with glistening eyes as they paid the last honours to him they had loved and lost.

As for Red Sweyn, the traitor, his corpse was cast into the sea, to be tossed hither and thither by the waves.

Thus it was that Leofwine the True saved his country from an incursion of the Danes in the year 874, and his spirit still haunts the Beacon when any danger menaces the land.

As Osyth concluded the legend a murmur of approbation ran through the assembled group of soldiers; but Adhelm, though he had listened with interest to the tale of the young Saxon's valour, was still unconvinced, and laughed incredulously at the idea of a ghost.

Osyth appeared displeased. "Take heed, young man!" said he, gravely; "If thou hadst seen what I saw on this same night, fifty years ago, thou hadst not laughed thus lightly."

"When I see it with mine own eyes, I will believe it, but not until then; yet why turn so pale, old man?—art shocked at mine unbelief?"

The latter part of this speech was addressed to Osyth, who, pale as death, seemed as if his eyes were rivetted on something in the open doorway. "The saints guard us!" he exclaimed at last, with a deep sigh of relief. It is gone!"

"What is gone?" inquired the soldiers in alarm.

"A pale figure, that beckoned—comrades, something is about to befall our land—it was the shade of Leofwine!" said Osyth, solemnly.

"Methought I saw something white," muttered one, crossing himself, with a shudder.

"Why should we fear the spirit of a brave warrior like ourselves?" exclaimed Osyth. "Let us to the battlements at once, and see if the warning shade appeareth; midnight draweth on apace." So saying, the minstrel rose, followed by most of the soldiers, who were ashamed to linger behind when an old man led the way.

Adhelm laughingly whispered to Sidroc "that, for his part he believed the ghost lived only in the brain of Osyth;" but his comrade shook his head, and bid him be silent.

They emerged upon the ramparts of the Castle; the moon was shining clear and bright in a cloudless sky, the stars twinkling and glittering like gems in the frosty air, and the ground was white with snow. All was silence; only the far distant splash of the waves broke the stillness of the winter night, and nothing unusual was to be seen.

"'Tis passing cold here," said Adhelm. "I see nought extraordinary. I shall descend again; this ghost of Osyth's is but a myth of Pagan days." But as he turned to go, Sidroc seized his arm, and a simultaneons cry arose from those assembled.

"See! it comes—'tis the hour of midnight," said the minstrel in an awe-struck voice.

Adhelm paused, and gazed in the direction indicated by the old man's outstretched finger. From one of the towers of the Castle there issued forth a shadowy figure; the postern-door was closed, yet the strange phantom seemed to pass through it with ease, and emerging from the shadow of the wall, pursued its way in the clear moonlight towards the Beacon-tower. In hushed and breathless silence the group on the battlements watched its progress. The figure was, as Osyth had described it in his tale, that of a Saxon youth, tall and slightly made, and wearing the light brass armour and head-piece of the days of King Alfred; over one shoulder it bore a bright two-headed battle-axe, and from the other hung a short mantle. It had long, pale yellow hair, that fell over its neck and shoulders, and as it turned its head for an instant towards the Castle, they could see that the face was fair and handsome, although a strange, supernatural, statue-like expression seemed to be graven on every feature; its mien was noble and free. It reached the tower, vanished for a moment, and then reappeared on the summit. A bright unearthly light seemed to blaze for a time upon the Beacon—a blue, flickering

flame that enveloped the figure in a misty indistinctness. Suddenly a second form appeared, it was of far greater stature than the first, and its arm was raised with a menacing gesture.

"That must be the shade of Red Sweyn," muttered Sidroc to the minstrel. For an instant the strange, weird fire flared up wildly against the sky, shewing the two figures standing on the rugged summit of the tower, and confronting each other in warlike array, their shining arms reflecting the ghostly radiance of the flames; and then a mist seemed to conceal them from view, and they faded away into the air.

"Dost thou believe *now?*" asked Osyth, in a low earnest voice, turning to Adhelm as the vision disappeared. The young Saxon was standing with his arms folded on his breast, his eyes fixed intently on the tower.

"I said I would believe if I saw. I have seen, and I *do* believe," he replied, gravely.

"Some great unknown danger threatens our king or our country within the coming year," said Osyth, sadly. "Would we knew it, that we might avert it, even as did Leofwine the True-hearted, on that Yule Eve in the days of King Alfred."

What that danger was, historians have often told.

A. S. T.

COUSIN ANN.

IT is a great many years ago since, at a Christmas and New Year party, the little incident occurred to which this story relates, and my readers must bear with me if I seem rather prolix, and, as often happens with us all, linger too much and too fondly amid the things of the past.

J. Beresford, in an old song now almost forgotten, asks so pathetically in other days—

> Had you ever a cousin Tom?
> And did your cousin happen to sing?

and then proceeds to describe, in moving words, his finale, in a somewhat similar episode a good many more years ago—

> For if I had said half what I might say,
> So sad were the lesson 'twould give,
> That it would keep you from loving for many a day,
> And from cousins as long as you live.

Thus history always, we observe, repeats itself.

Ann Norton, at the time I am writing, was about as charming a girl as you can see anywhere. Tall, not too tall, lithe and active, with the most graceful of figures and the most winning of smiles, she always attracted admiration wherever she went.

I do not know how it was, but somehow she seemed to do things differently to all around her. There was a character in all she uttered and all she accomplished, in her most common deeds, in her most trifling words. I often called her "Una," and she came nearer to Spenser's idea of "Una" than anyone I think I have ever met.

There was a speaking power in her dark grey eyes, with a sort of blue ray in them, which was very dominating. Her head was set on her shoulders in such a way that she was always erect and perfect in form and appearance; and though she was up to anything, from "riding straight," so straight as to alarm many of the gentlemen in our old hunt, she was passionately fond of music, her drawings were inimitable, and her love of fun unconquerable.

Is it then to be wondered if I, an excitable collegian just settling in life, should, during the party at my good old uncle and aunt's, have indulged in sundry pleasant, if ecstatic, visions, in which Ann formed the principal figure, and to which she lent the perfect colouring? It would have been very strange had it been otherwise, and so thought Captain Dering and Major Carew, both friends of mine and friends of the family, and grave admirers of my fair cousin.

I do not dwell on those two excellent friends and rivals of mine, because they were, like myself, destined to be eclipsed and forgotten when the "conquering hero" really appeared; though, personally, I then had no fear of them, or, in fact, of anyone else.

> She smiled on many just for fun,
> *I* knew that there was nothing in it;
> I was the first, the only one
> Her heart had thought of for a minute.
> I knew it, for she told me so
> In phrase which was divinely moulded.
> She wrote a charming hand—and oh!
> How sweetly all her notes were folded.

To say the truth, that family gathering had brought us nearer and closer than we had ever been in our life. We had been always great friends, firm allies, fast mates, as years had gone on, and as she had reached nineteen and I twenty-three, it seemed the most natural thing in the world that we should "come together." But, as usual, there were difficulties in the way. There always are. The old folk on both sides disapproved of the marriage of cousins, and then, like all charming and spoilt young women, my fair cousin was a little wilful.

I shall always think she cared for me as much as I cared for her, but, as a good many other people have done before her, and some will do after, she was sometimes inclined to think that life was meant to be rather grander, more gay and exciting than an ordinary profession or humdrum station would permit. Like a great many other fair beings, she sighed for change, for life with its splendours and its greatness, its brilliant prospects and its gay hours, and, must I not add, its garish tinsel and its withering flowers.

Alas, yes! How many a life has been shipwrecked because that bright girl would not see that all she pictured to herself so fondly might, after all, be a dream; because in truth she was unwilling to realize, that when the music was hushed, and the garlands faded, and the viands cold, and the guests vanished, there was nothing left for her, as in the story of old, but the skeleton with its mocking finger to beckon her to a crumbling heap of dust and ashes.

I think that but for that county ball I might have left the old hall a happy man; but that unlucky event intervened, and all my hopes, and those of Captain Dering and Major Carew, were doomed to be extinguished for ever. We all went over, a large party, and very soon after I saw Ann waltzing away, with a radiant face, with a certain Lieutenant Maulevrier, a younger brother of an old county family, and in a cavalry regiment in India, whither he was returning shortly. He had dined once before at the hall, and had paid great attention to Ann, but as everybody did so, that was a matter of course to us all.

Well—now I can write calmly—after all, I will not deny, that that young "interloper" was as good-looking a young man as can well be. Captain Dering, who was inclined to be stout, said he was a "puppy"; Major Carew, who was sententious, declared he was a "fribble"; but I will be candid, and I must be just, and I am bound to admit that everything was in his favour. He had a little money of his own, he came of a good family, and he was a well-informed, kindly hearted, frank, pleasant-faced young man.

I like to say all this, because, after it was all over, I felt pretty sure that Ann was in safe hands, and with one who could admire her, appreciate her, and advise her.

One fine morning—I remember it as if it were but yesterday—my good old aunt took me into her snuggery, and telling me she had something to say to me, asked me to sit down. I think I see her still, with her kind smile and her little nervous way, and those friendly eyes, as if she felt the news she had to tell me might try me somewhat.

"Frank," she said at last, "I think it best to let you know first of all that Ann is going to marry Mr. Maulevrier. She has asked me to tell you. It was settled yesterday. They are to be married immediately, and are to go to India soon after."

How odd it is in life, the things we dread the most do not affect us as much as we feared; while petty affairs, twopenny-halfpenny things, worry us and annoy us for days. But as I was partly prepared for the news, I took it, as I thought, calmly and philosophically. I suppose, however, that I looked rather blank and miserable, for my good old relative went on at once to say,

"You know, Frank, much as we love you and like you, we could never have given our consent to the marriage of two cousins, and I believe Ann had quite come round to our opinion. As it could not have been, we hope that you will take it now as we take it, as it is quite approved by us all, and that you will stay and make us all happy, for Ann, you know, is very fond of you, and wishes you particularly to be present at her marriage."

What could I say or do, kind reader?

I never could quite understand why young ladies wish those whom they know to be somewhat upset by their marriage with another, always to be present at their marriage; but so it is; let anyone explain it who can or will. It has always been to me a deep and striking mystery in female pyschology.

However, I stayed and saw Ann duly married, gave her my present, and was warmly thanked.

Even at this hour her graceful appearance seems to me a picture from the old past; so beautiful, so striking, and so affecting. It has gone with me through life; I believe it will linger with me to the grave!

Poor Ann, who was married so happily and went off from her old home under cheery auspices, died in India, a young, fair wife, leaving her husband and her friends disconsolate. Indeed, I think the blow killed the old people at the Hall!

I have gone there since, but always unwillingly, for every room is full of "Ann." Her own little boudoir, the "idle club" of glad days, is still kept much as she left it, for the squire, her brother, like to us all, believes that there never was any one like her, and never will be again. One always expects to see Ann appear, to hear her silvery voice, to watch her merry smile! But alas, no! such things once are in the history of life, they are not, they disappear, they never return!

The wife of my bosom who faces me, sedate and serene, comely and compact, pleasant and presentable, the best of friends and the truest of help-mates, is and has been all a man can desire. But I fear me; yes, I fear me, that very often to-day, when I sit, surrounded by all the world calls happiness, such is the waywardness of the human will, such the perversity of the human heart, that my thoughts are far, far away, and overleaping intervening space, are lingering in an old house with that fairest and best of creatures, with whom I communed so pleasantly in life's young morn, who was the ideal of my dreams and the guiding star of roving days; she who left us all too young—charming, capricious, loving, and lamented Cousin Ann.

KING GELIMER'S DEATH LAY.

BY BRO. KENNETH R. H. MACKENZIE, IX.°

BRIGHT were the African skies. The sun stood in the heavens watching the earth like a careful guardian. The streamlets rattled down from the mountains, and moistened the hot dry earth with their life-giving waters. The palm trees bowed their crowns in adoration before the great God. The breath of God came softly sighing amid the branches and stealing over the tall grass, playfully casting into the air the fine sand of the plains. It was a lovely morning, that morning in Africa; a morning on which bird, beast, and tree alike worshipped the great Creator of all.

All worshipped save the enemy of the proud Vandal, conqueror of the land of Numidia. The animals of the wilds lay in their caves and thickets, rejoicing in the day of rest appointed them, but the Numidians watched for their prey, encircled their victim like the gliding serpent, and awaited a fitting time for his destruction.

The Numidian host lay watchful about the fortified camp in the mountains, and within the camp was the victim, the devoted Gelimer, King of the Vandals, with the remainder of his men, the victorious in the battle.

The Numidians shouted and laughed; they were winning. Their work was nearly ended, the enemy nearly extirpated, their beautiful country almost their own again. Yes, indeed, the Numidians might rejoice, for they were the winners.

Why have the Vandals left their own land?

They were roving about the world, sowing the seeds of future progress; they came as religious teachers, telling of the One and the Universal; they came as political teachers, to do as best they might and make known everywhere that virtue and courage, consistency and honesty of heart, should alone indicate the ruler of a tribe. They came, these Vandals, to testify of the truth after their way, and to mete out with no sparing hand the best things they could.

What had the Numidians done at any time?

Brute force had prevailed among them from the beginning; children of the desert, wild and sorrowful, what scope was there for intellectual improvement? And no wonder that wild and unconquerable nomads combined against the opponents of lawlessness!

And so there lay the Numidians, and there the Vandal camp in the midst, and there was consultation both within and without. Then the council met in the Numidian tents, and crafty words were spoken as to the proper method to pursue with these strangers from the East.

And it was resolved to attack and vanquish them at once, and put their young men and maidens, their grey-pates and their priests to the sword that the land might be ridden of their race for ever. So an attack was made that same day, while the sun was shining, the birds singing and praising the Creator of all, and the wild beasts making holiday in their lairs.

Then the Vandal, Gelimer, fought desperately.

But the Numidians drew off at nightfall, weary and dispirited, for they had made but little impression upon the stranger tribe, and many of their own brethren had bitten the dust and slept their last sleep on the sands of the African mountains. When the sun rose again, the sight was grievous to see, for Death had entered those glorious confine and sullied those fair regions.

And the Numidians took counsel again, and sent off messengers to the tribes, and a great gathering was made to cut off the Vandal host with the edge of the sword and utterly destroy it. So the Numidians came up from the West far away, from the uttermost parts of the earth, where stands, say the bards, the ancient man upon whose shoulders are supported both heaven and earth. From the south, where sands cover the track of the traveller, where whited bones alone teach the road, where water is not, and the palm trees are few, come a host of black horsemen to fight against Gelimer. From the east, where the ancient buildings of the Egyptians lie half buried in sand, and where magic and might hold their ruined state, come clouds of warriors, like flights of locusts, eating up the lands.

Yet Gelimer lies quietly in his encampment and his stout heart never fails him.

Then with one accord the Numidians and Africans attacked Gelimer, and Gelimer saw that his death hour had come. His chiefs were slain, his men were starving, his children dying; and thereupon he resolved upon a Vandal's death.

From the gates, then, see approach a haggard train of ragged men, with jaws starved to terrible conclusions; with solemn tread they wend their way to the Numidian camp. Audience is given them.

They ask not for food, for life, for freedom, for mercy, for as they desire not life they have food enough, as their life is in their own hand they crave not for freedom which a dagger could give them in a moment, and mercy is not wanted by men who have freedom.

They ask for the gift of a harp, that, like the swan, they may sing and die.

Shouts of laughter arose from the Numidian lips at this request. "What is this fooling that the proud King Gelimer, vanquished though he be, puts upon us?"

But the request is granted, the harp received, and the emissaries again return to their stronghold amid the mountains, and a truce of one day was proclaimed.

Now there was in the camp of the Vandals a sorcerer of mighty power, a man cunning in the preparation of poison and of skill in the arts of destruction.

King Gelimer reposed in the shade of a palm-tree, and summoned Rualac to his presence, and said:

"Behold, Rualac, how great and glorious is the One we worship. To the hosts of Gelimer, although vanquished, hath he decreed victory. For my people shall die like men, unconquered by the potent poison, dealing destruction the while. Rualac, man of might, cunning magician, prepare a poison of power. Say, hast thou one, that will certainly kill, but kill slowly—not kill for one day? Speak, Rualac, and tell me?"

And Rualac answered and said, "Such a poison have I, King; and a poison which, if taken at dawn, will not kill till sunset."

Then said Gelimer: "Speed thee, Rualac, and make it ready, for by it will we vanquish the barbarians!"

And Rualac hastened to prepare the poison, while Gelimer spake to his men in such words as these: "Men of the east! bow yourselves before the decrees of the Holy One!" And they bowed themselves, ere he continued. "The Numidians have come up with great strength against us, and they have reduced our number and harassed our tribe. There is no way of escape, think ye? Yes, indeed, is there a way of escape! We have our freedom, and a glorious one. We cannot pass away to the peaceful country of our ancestors, but we can follow our ancestors to the throne of the All-powerful! Our road is a short and easy one into the presence of His countenance! Rualac will prepare poison which we will drink. His poison will grant us one day to live, and for that day, steeled against the pangs of hunger, the fears of slavery,

the sorrows of the enemy's yoke, will we fight desperately. Speak, Vandal men, is it not so?"

And a shout which struck terror into the multitude of the Numidians echoed amidst the mountains.

Then spake Gelimer once more: "This night, my countrymen, will we pray to God the Only One. He will put strength into our arms and smite our enemies with confusion."

And these freemen, free to the end, supplicated the Almighty.

* * * * * * *

The sun arose and found Rualac administering draughts of poison to Gelimer the King, and the Vandal tribe. The sun rose higher, and the Vandals armed for the last time, for all combats they were to fight on earth.

The earth was glorious and smiling, but the Vandals regretted not their departure from it. If the earth were so beautiful, how much more lovely that unknown world where dwelt the great and noble Creator!

And King Gelimer sang to the harp, of the mysteries of religion and the glories of immortality; the greatness of freedom and the love of purity.

"For every blow you give or take you will have a reward in Heaven! For the life here needily had below, a new life, more perfect, above! With the sword will you cut your way to the land of everlasting peace, where you may sit at the feet of the Creator of the earth and sky!"

And Gelimer and his men fought against the Numidians and vanquished them. But at the setting of the sun, when Nature went to rest until the morrow, the bodies of the Vandals lay on the sands, and their souls had risen to eternal freedom and happiness in Heaven!

AFTER ALL.

BY HENRY CALVERT APPLEBY,

Hon. Librarian of the Hull Literary Club, and Author of "A Queer Courtship," "The Fatal Picture," etc.

CHAPTER V.

Music . . . the food of love.—*Twelfth Night.*

FROM Shakespeare himself we have the fact that music, that mystic and influential but inarticulate language, is intimately connected with the subtle and undefined yet powerful passion called love. Not only the "sweet bard of Avon," but hosts before and after him, have sung with eloquence of the potent charms of music as a stimulant to love. "Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast," says conscientious Congreve, as great Homer, voluptuous Ovid, and sedate Virgil had proved before him. Nor need we mention the beautiful Apollo, the sprightly Terpsichore, the warlike Pan, the powerful Amphion, the famous Orpheus, and many others, to show how ancient is the belief in the power of sweet music. Solinus, Pliny's imitator, Mersenne the fanciful, harmonious Haydn, reliable Playford, learned Sir William Jones, and hundreds of others have added their testimony. The celebrated Linnæus, noted Dr. Archer, observant Dr. Cramer, veracious Isaac Disraeli, learned Abbè Olivet, and the ingenious Pelisson, have related wonderful stories concerning the influence of music. Strange tales are told by quaint Sir Thomas Browne,

credulous Kircheus, melodious Swinburne, philosophic Theophrastus, enterprising De Mairan, antiquarian Bianchini, diplomatic Sir W. Temple, experimental M. Burcette, martial Varro, inflexible Cato, handsome Pindar, venerable Æsculapius, enchanting Farinelli, and melancholy Philip V. of Spain, reliable M. Dodart, and investigating Vigneul de Marville. All these persons, so widely different in character and station, concur in crediting music with an immense influence. Most extraordinary are the relations of eminent Dr. Willis, scholastic Scaliger, industrious Boyle, and others. We learn further wonders from the eccentric Carlyle, peculiar Pythagoras, historic Boetius, friendly Damon, painstaking Plutarch, inventive Terpander, and others. Again we have strange anecdotes from precocious Malcolm, sympathetic Carl Anton, Florian Becker, and versatile Pope. We also hear peculiar legends of the imperious Emperor Theodosius and the peaceful Flavianus, and astonishing tales from the noted D'Aubigny, skilful Claude le Jeune, and the gallant Duc de Joyeuse, the excitable Eric, King of Denmark, clever Antigenidas and conquering Alexander, impressive Zimotheus, authoritative Iamblichus, and unfortunate Empedocles. We might make our list much longer, and still by no means exhaust the subject.

It is highly poetical; let us see what the poets say of music and love, by way of diversion. Brilliant Byron, after pleasant Richard Lovelace and famous Sir Thomas Browne, speaks as follows, describing Zulieka in "The Bride of Abydos":

> The light of love, the purity of grace,
> The mind, the music breathing from her face,
> The heart whose softness harmonized the whole.

Lovelace has the following in his "Orpheus to Beasts":

> Oh! could you view the melody
> Of every grace,
> And music of her face,
> You'd drop a tear;
> Seeing more harmony
> In her bright eye
> Than now you hear.

Browne in his "Religio Medici" says, "There is music in the beauty and the silent note which Cupid strikes, far sweeter than the sound of an instrument."

Byron again has these lines in "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage:"

> Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
> Soft eyes looked love to eyes which spake again,
> And all went merry as a marriage-bell.

Tennyson, our worthy laureate, in "The Princess: a Medley," speaking of a beloved and winning woman, in his own elegant language, says,

> all male minds perforce
> Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,
> And girdled her with music.

The serenade has always been a favourite method with wooing lovers possessing rich voices to win their peerless maids. Love-songs we have by millions. Listen to the inimitable Tennyson once more in "The Princess":

> O, swallow, swallow, if I could follow and 'light
> Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
> And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

and again:

> O, swallow, flying from the golden woods,
> Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her mine,
> And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.

But answered the princess of the poem :

> Knaves are men,
> That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,
> And dress the victim to the offering up,
> And paint the gates of hell with Paradise,
> And play the slave to gain the tyranny.
> Poor soul! I had a maid of honour once;
> She wept her true eyes blind for such a one,
> A rogue of canzonets and serenades;

and yet again she sneers :

> for song
> Is duer unto freedom, force and growth
> Of spirit than to junketing and love.

The immortal Shakespeare, too, did not forget the serenade, for in the "Two Gentlemen of Verona" we have the following lines, addressed to a despairing lover by his friends (act iii., scene 2) :

> Visit by night your lady's chamber window
> With some sweet concert; to their instruments
> Tune a deploring dump; the night's dead silence
> Will well become such sweet complaining grievance.
> This, or else nothing, will inherit her;

and later in act iv., scene 2, of the same play :

> now must we to her window,
> And give some evening music to her ear.

In "Twelfth Night: or, What You Will" (act i., scene 1), Orsino, the Duke of Illyria, says :

> If music be the food of love, play on;
> Give me excess of it, that, surfeiting,
> The appetite may sicken, and so die.
> That strain again; it had a dying fall;
> Oh! it came o'er my ear like the sweet south
> That breathes upon a bank of violets,
> Stealing and giving odour.

Later, the Duke asks Viola (act ii., scene 4) :

> How dost thou like this tune?
> VIOLA. It gives a very echo to the seat
> Where love is throned.

It is "The sea-maids' music," fable tells us, that entices the unwary sailor to the fatal arms of the syren. In "As you like it" (act v., scene 4), the swan of Avon speaks of a "Wedlock-hymn." Could a sweeter musical love-passage be imagined than the exquisite scene between Lorenzo and Jessica, Shylock's daughter, in "The Merchant of Venice" (act v., scene 1)?

> My friend Stephano, signify, I pray you,
> Within the house, your mistress is at hand;
> And bring your music forth into the air. (*Exit* STEPHANO.)
> How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
> Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
> Creep in our ears; soft stillness and the night
> Become the touches of sweet harmony.
> Sit, Jessica: look, how the floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold;
> There's not the smallest orb which thou beholdest,
> But in his motion like an angel sings,
> Still quiring to the young-ey'd cherubims:
> Such harmony is in immortal souls!
> But, whilst the muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close us in, we cannot hear it.

(Enter Musicians.)

Come, ho, and wake Diana with a hymn,
With sweetest touches pierce your mistress' ear,
And draw her home with music.

Again, we have the serenade in "Cymbeline" (act ii., scene 3), where Cloten makes love to Imogen:—

I would this music would come: I am advis'd to give her music o' mornings; they say it will penetrate.

(Enter Musicians.)

Come on; tune: If you can penetrate her with you fingering, so, we'll try with tongue too. If none will do, let her remain; but I'll never give o'er. First, a very excellent, good, conceited, thing; after, a wonderful sweet air, with admirable rich words to it—and then let her consider.

SONG.

Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phoebus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chalic'd flowers that lies.
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes,
With everything that pretty bin:
My lady sweet, arise;
Arise, arise.

So, get you gone: if this penetrate I will consider your music the better.

He afterwards says in answer to the King, her father:—

I have assailed her with music, but she vouchsafes no notice.

The play of "Romeo and Juliet" is a musical love poem from beginning to end, where:

Silver sweet sound lover's tongues by night,
Like softest music to attending ears.

and they constantly:

let rich music's tongue
Unfold the imagined happiness that both
Receive in either,

by their "dear encounters."

Ophelia too, in her bewailing soliloquy in "Hamlet" (act iii., scene 1), expresses the same thought when she confesses herself

of ladies most deject and wretched,
That suck'd the honey of his music vows.

These extracts are only a tithe from the rich stores of the poets who prove the sweet bond of sympathy between music and love. After our somewhat lengthy dissertation, however, or rather digression, it is almost time to exclaim *Revenons à nos moutons*, or the reader will be getting impatient. But "gentle reader," remember what original Lawrence Sterne says, which may even apply to our pages: "Digressions are incontestably the sunshine, they are the life, the soul of reading." After that we will resume. But this, like the last, is essentially a musical chapter, though of a somewhat different cast.

As we have already noticed, Arthur Humberton had much "music in himself," and, therefore, "the motions of his spirit" were not quite as "dull as night," nor "his affections dark as Erebus," for he loved a fair-haired, innocent beauty, and was trusted in return. He often had sweet communion with his church organ, and rolled forth its harmonies into the noble building, whose Gothic arches trembled with their sweetness, and echoed in unison; anon the music swelled out in fascinating fugues, rapidly interweaving, entwining, and repeating; intoxicating in their delicious melody; saturating the atmo-

sphere with their ringing sounds, which the comfort-coaxing cushions drank in and absorbed. Then the "palpitating treble" of the smaller pipes would trill out their joyful songs, and gradually subside almost into silence, like angels hymning their glad praises above, and the hollow flute-voiced tubes would throat their mellow notes in liquid cadences, floating on the air and charming the ear with their enchanting lullaby, like the ripple of a distant rivulet. With all these arts was Arthur Humberton conversant, and he often became completely absorbed in his performance on the beautiful instrument at his command. The deep, reverberating bass would at times rush and roar like thunder, while the harsh-toned reeds lent their peculiar accompaniment; this would, in its turn, give place to harmonious melody throbbing in lovely airs. With the former he associated noble purposes, high deeds, and grand victories; and with the latter the soul of Olivia, light and impulsive, warm and clinging, beautiful and loving, was ever present. Here, then, was his consolation, his substitute-companion, his spirit-recaller.

Here he sat on Sabbath mornings and sustained the sweet-voiced choir singing praises to heaven; or the mysterious music murmured along the "long-drawn aisle," as the solemn prayer ascended to the throne of Deity. Then, when the impressive service was ended, would it burst forth into glad noise, awakening dead souls to a sense of their duty, and inspiring them with courage for fresh and faithful work in this transient world. Truly an important position, and Arthur filled it well. The Phanes were always delighted with his manipulation of the "king of instruments," and Olivia now felt a new pleasure in listening to him. Not much did she hear of the minister's homily on the Sunday succeeding the evening party at which she had seen Arthur Humberton. Nor was the latter attentive either; his eyes were almost always fixed on the sequestered pew below, so dear to his heart, and the sermon might have been a love poem, for he thought of nothing but *her*. But when the service was concluded Arthur commenced to play his new march. It had an effective and pompous opening which compelled its hearers to listen, and scores of worshippers stayed in their seats. The air and rich running harmony seemed to have a language of their own; an argument deeper, truer than the sermon; a lesson too good to be told; and when it sunk to a sympathetic *pianissimo* and limpid airs fell down in thrilling rills, sobbing with compassion, and imploring in its eloquence, then was its audience touched; then the quiet tears trickled down many a face, as they felt that an Orpheus was amongst them. One, was more affected than the rest. Olivia Phane was filled with emotion, which gradually increased beyond her control, and when the pleading, beseeching agony of the music brought the tears from other eyes, she was unable any longer to listen and support her feelings, and she swooned, and was carried into the vestry. Happily Arthur was ignorant of this at the time, and continued playing to the end of his composition, which gradually roused all his hearers from the melancholy lethargy into which he had plunged them, and filled them with lively, bright, and happy feelings.

Olivia's first words on slightly recovering were, "Oh! Arthur!" and then she lapsed into silence. Soon she was considerably better, and able to be conducted home, when her anxious parents questioned her further as to her sudden illness. The two words she had allowed to pass her lips had been some index to her feelings and thoughts, and they soon found out that she was in love with the clever young musician. She, for her part, confessed the whole of their proceedings, and left them to muse over and discuss the new state of affairs, while she went to her quiet little room and passionately wept for she knew not what!

Chapter VI.

The course of true love.—*Shakespeare.*

After his extraordinary performance, at the effect of which he was as much astonished as any of them, the talented organist received a perfect ovation. Many of the congregation crowded round him, and pressed him for the name of the composer of the piece, and when he explained to them that it was a little sketch of his own, astonishment and incredulity were depicted on their faces, and for some time they could hardly believe it. When, however, they had somewhat recovered from their unbelief, but not their astonishment, they were enthusiastic in their congratulations, and begged him to quickly publish the splendid march, Arthur Humberton was overwhelmed by their eager appreciation of his composition, and surprised at its marvellous influence. He had, indeed, put all his energy and ingenuity into both the composing and the rendition of it, and had been very proud of it; but the result of his performance exceeded his most ambitious expectations. He felt, while playing it, that *one* was listening to him in whose eyes he wished to shine to the greatest advantage, and nervous as he was, he brought every ability to bear upon his performance, and when he had concluded it, he himself felt as if he had been in a trance, so thoroughly had his whole spirit gone with the music. No wonder that his professor, Cribton, could so hardly conceal his delight when he heard it played on his piano.

Amid crowds of admiring friends he walked along, though they would hardly allow him from their eagerness to question him; and each would have liked to have monopolized him. They felt that it was rather too much to ask him to play the piece again then, though had it not been a place of worship, their thundering plaudits would have expressed their keen and uncontrollable desire for an *encore.*

Certainly, Arthur Humberton had suddenly risen to notoriety, if not fame. They extracted a promise from him that he would play the march for them again after the evening service. He was wildly elated at his success, and felt like a conquering monarch; truly, he had achieved a wonder. What should hinder him now from rapidly rising to fame, and winning all before him? He felt that he had some solid ground on which to build his pardonable ærial castles, and he indulged in dreaming glorious golden vistas for the future. Now he would honour Olivia; she should be his queen and reign in splendour, while the multitude gazed in admiration and wonder. In fact he was perfectly dazed, and would have liked to have been left alone for a little time, that he might think over and weigh the events of the past few minutes. His position was indeed perplexing. All this time he was looking out for the Phanes, or rather for Olivia (for he by no means forgot her in his triumph; it was for her and through her he had achieved it; at least so he afterwards said). But they were nowhere to be seen. He felt very troubled about their absence, though he had no time to reflect during the puzzling clamour of his friends, Merrislope and Redtaper being amongst the number. As soon as ever he could edge the question at all appropriately, he inquired where the Phanes were. Merrislope related the incident, and Arthur, hardly knowing what he did, rushed off like a madman immediately, without any explanation. He tore along the streets on that bright Sunday morning to the surprise of the demure churchgoing population.

Gradually the sharp breeze fanned his fevered brow and cooled his excited imagination, and he began to think that he was hardly acting wisely in being so precipitate. So he walked on rather more sedately until he arrived at his destination, the house of Mr. Phane. Hesitatingly he ascended the steps, and presenting his card to the domestic, asked if Miss Phane had recovered. Mr. and Mrs. Phane received him kindly but quietly, though with a nervous manner observable, as they endeavoured to praise him for his unqualified success.

He could not help noticing their strange manner and reserve, but this he attributed to the event of the morning. Miss Phane was not to be seen, but she was considerably better; so, offering every apology, he reluctantly left. He could not understand or believe his good fortune all at once, and its surprising effect to all, as well as himself. He felt intensely sorry (though, paradoxical as it may seem, he was glad too), that Miss Phane should have fainted. It established his ability to influence, and showed him her impressive nature; and he imagined, rightly too, that she swooned more on his account than from the music.

His mind was in a wandering state as he slowly walked toward his lodgings. He was oblivious of all surroundings, and moved as one in a dream. His thoughts were of Miss Phane, and of what her opinion would be of him now. Though constantly thinking of her, he did not imagine that her emotion would be traced to its probably prime cause by her tender parents. He had more than a week to wait before he was to write to her; could he not make an excuse to write, asking if she had recovered? But no, it would be too presumptuous and egotistic to write on such grounds, especially after he had called and ascertained that she was better; and besides, had he not her supreme (to him) command not to write in less than a fortnight; and he would not break such a command or desire from her, under any ordinary circumstances, for worlds. No, he would be loyal and true to her wish, or else how could he ever be worthy of her if he disobeyed her so soon? No; he must wait. Ah! how long the days had seemed to him; and how many there were now in a fortnight! Another Sunday had to roll away first, and then how would Mr. and Mrs. Phane look upon the attachment? He longed for the day to come, and yet he feared its consequences; but rather would he know the worst than wait in torturing, silent suspense. He looked upon Mr. Phane with somewhat different eyes now from what he had formerly done. Before he had been a benevolent, tender-hearted, and genteel merchant and friend or patron. Now he had added a more imperious quality to his character in Arthur's eyes; now he was the owner of something Arthur coveted, of something dearer to him than life, and he felt that Mr. Phane, to whom he owed so much, held his happiness in his hands. On his master's word hung his joy or misery.

The mystic future would unfold it all in time; but Time, that fleet-winged phantom, was sluggish and slow to him. Waiting was agony. The tardy hours crept on like snails, seeming years in passing. Could he bear it and keep silent?

Thus did he live and wait in suspense; but he knew that he had achieved an extraordinary triumph with the musical public, and he was encouraged to labour on. All would come right in the end. Doubtless he would have to bear his share of misfortunes (had he not already?), but he would be manly, and conquer them all.

He was to play his piece again that night; yes, he would strive to throw even more spirit and passion into it; he would startle his audience still more.

Night came at last, and the church was crowded to excess. Humberton's fame had spread far and wide, and not a seat was to be had. The clergyman felt that his audience had not come to hear his sermon, but to listen to the organist, and he was accordingly unequal to the occasion. The church service approached to its close, but Arthur could see none of the Phanes there. In vain he scrutinized every corner of the building, imagining they might have changed their situation at this time, but nowhere were they to be seen. His heart was heavy, and he did not think he could play his march with such success as had marked his morning's performance. Still the Phanes might be there among that crowd; perhaps near the vestry, or in some part where he could not see, and he could not be sure they were not somewhere in that vast congregation. He saw and knew what a lot depended on him, and that the

people expected more from him than from the preacher, and at the end of the service, instead of the worshippers rising to depart as usual, they stood still as though *all was yet to come, and it did come.* Greater than ever was the success attending his march, and he was flattered more than his heart's content. He knew that night that his services for the future would be worth fifty pounds per annum. They were so pleased with him and afraid that others should engage his services, that they could not help voluntarily offering him this increase, and telling him there and then.

As to the audience, never was one so moved! all the eloquence of the learned divines who had preached for them had never touched their hearts as the music of that night. His continuance there would be the success of the church, and *that* would ultimately be his success. He saw this, and his hopes rose accordingly. That was, indeed, a red-letter day for him, but not marked so red in his mental calendar as his interview with Olivia. He could not analyse the fact why so much of his fate should depend on this beautiful girl; were there not many more like her? "No;" he would answer himself, "not to him," and yet he knew not why. He only knew that she was everything to him and that he could not do without her, even after the little he had seen of her. Although he knew it was romantic, yet in his "heart of hearts" he would not have it otherwise. Was it the hand of Fate that guided him there, and was he *sport for the gods?*

But he dismissed these idle thoughts from his mind, and determined, with the encouragement he had received fresh on his memory, that come what might he would work his own destiny, bravely, proudly, taking advantage of the present and not peering too far into the troublous and deceptive future. "Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof."

Had Arthur known what awaited him on the morrow, the whole tenour of his thoughts would have been changed. But the future is kindly veiled from us, or many of us would never have the courage to face it.

When he arrived at the office in the morning, Merrisslope and Redtaper were again loud in their congratulations. Arthur Humberton was now a decided genius in their opinion, and they looked up to him with more than their former respect. He had achieved marvels and must be honoured for it. His happiness was not to last long, however.

Mr. Phane had not been in the office long before the whistle shrieked, and Arthur Humberton was summoned, He seemed to imagine it was for something more than ordinary, and his heart beat quickly as he ascended to his master's room. Mr. Phane, though he had a quiet and determined look about him, seemed nervous and excited, and Arthur knew not what was coming.

"I want to have a little conversation with you," said Mr. Phane.

"Yes, sir."

"In connection with your clever performance of yesterday, and my daughter's consequent indisposition."

"Is she not better yet, sir?" asked Arthur, concernedly.

"Yes, she has almost recovered; but from her manner I found out that—in fact—that you have been secretly writing letters to her and other tomfoolery, and—no, it's no use saying anything—it must cease," said Mr. Phane, decisively.

"But, sir, your daughter is willing ——" began Arthur excitedly.

"She is no longer so; and beside, she is a minor, and you are both too young to know your minds."

"Do you doubt my honourable intentions?" demanded Arthur, warmly.

"Oh, no; but, as I said before, you must think no more of her."

"But I can't help it; she's my life, my soul," burst out Humberton.

"Bah! bosh and nonsense; don't talk like that to me, sir. I tell you she's nothing to you, any way, at present," said his employer, now getting angry.

"Do you mean to say she's false?" stammered Humberton.

"I mean to say nothing; false, how can she be false to one she has only seen a few hours?"

"But that was sufficient to ——"

"Sufficient to the devil! I tell you we'll have no romancing here."

"Mr. Phane, you've been my friend, so far," said Arthur, now white with suppressed passion, "and I should not like to make you my enemy."

"Mr. Humberton, just let's talk a little sense and don't interrupt me, for my words are decisive. I was young myself once, of course; I know you fancy you're different, but I tell you you're too young to think of my daughter, or she of you. I don't know what the future may turn out for you, but it depends mainly upon yourself how you will succeed. You have a fair start in life, and if you continue to work steadily there's very little doubt that you will soon earn a position; your feat of yesterday is a good sign. But until you have gained a position you must not think of my daughter, and in the meantime she is free to act as she likes, and you likewise. Do not be too much elated with sudden success, but continue to work steadily."

"But could not our relations remain the same, meanwhile," urged Humberton, now less excited, but terribly anxious.

"No; a thousand times, no!" thundered Mr. Phane; "I should not think of my daughter contracting any such relations for at least three years to come. You neither of you know your own minds yet. You must forget her."

"*Never!*" said Humberton, determinedly, but pale as death.

"Fool! are you mad? Mr. Humberton, I'm sorry to speak in this way, but just go down to your work and think over what I have said, for nothing can alter me. Be a man, and then you may some day win a woman."

"I go, sir; but let me tell you, your daughter ——"

"Not another word—go!" shouted Mr Phane, stamping his foot with rage.

Arthur's eyes flashed and he bit his lips as a rush of conflicting emotions swayed him; but he conquered himself, and turning his head away staggered to the door. When he reached the room below, his soul full of despair, all saw at once that something more than usual had affected him; but they forebore to say anything, hazarding a guess at the cause. Bulliker's little red eyes alone glistened with pleasure at Arthur's discomfiture.

Humberton went out into the street and tried to collect his thoughts; he was glad he had not made a fool of himself with Mr. Phane, though he felt very bitter against him; but he was his benefactor; that, however, weighed very little when he crossed his affairs in love. Of course, he had every right to do as he liked with his own daughter, but it was tyrannical and barbarous, he said; and he quoted Shakespeare to uphold his opinion.

Three years! it was enough to fill the stoutest heart with despair. How could she wait all that time for him, without a sign or word from him? No; he felt that it would be folly to hope it on such a short intimacy as theirs, and he despaired, madly despaired. It was no use working and waiting. No; he would elope: but that would be useless, he had no means to support her, and by no means knew whether she would be a consenting party; in fact, he knew there was no hope. What could he do? there was nothing but misery before him. What was the use of all his talent and industry if he lost her? What did he care for fame without her? It was an empty bauble!

As for Phane, he was a tyrant; what right had he to exercise supreme control over his daughter's affections? If she loved, too, why was she withheld by her parents? After all her father's kindness, too, to treat him as though he were only a paid slave, and not worthy of his daughter!

In fact, Arthur was miserable, madly miserable, and these incoherent and inconsistent soliloquies of his, rushed through his brain as they listed, without control. But he could not help listening to them, and their import drove him

nearly mad. He wandered listlessly along the streets, not caring for life' wishing for death, anything. What was there worth living for now? Nothing. He walked along recklessly through the busy thoroughfares, across the tracks of cabs and other vehicles, without the slightest care whether he was run over or not. In short, he rather wished it. Drivers shouted and stopped, but he took no warning, and it was a thousand wonders he arrived safely, at last, before his own dwelling. All who saw him thought him mad. Not knowing or caring what he did next or how he acted, he entered the house, and going into his sitting-room, flung himself into a chair and wished he might die there. Suddenly his eyes fell upon his last piece of music on the piano—his successful march.

"Ha! I'm known to fame, am I? By this I achieved a grand success, did I? and all for her! Doubtless they would like it to be published, but what care I? It is nothing to me now! I hate fame, and *it shall die!* Never more shall the genius they fondly credited me with sparkle for them; no, I will become a drudge. The higher arts shall become a dead letter to me! I care not now if am forgotten; all, all is gone! and this may *go* too!" exclaimed he, vehemently; and throwing his masterpiece into the fire, he watched it blaze into oblivion with a kind of melancholy satisfaction.

(To be continued).

IANTHE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I.

"I WONDER if Mr. Compton will come to-day," said a bright and graceful girl of eighteen to her kind old aunt, Miss Dalton, some few years ago, as she was arranging some beautiful flowers in a large basket in the bay window of a little cottage near the New Forest.

"Why, my dear Ianthe?" replied a kind voice, and which came from a most placid-looking, gentle, kindly, elderly woman, as she was knitting in an easy chair.

"Because—because," slowly replied Ianthe, "he is so nice, and he and I are such fast friends. But I suppose he has found some attraction at the Wimberton ball!" This she said almost bitterly, as far, really, as she could be bitter.

"My dear Ianthe," her relative rejoined, in words which expressed both tenderness and anxiety, "I do hope you are not allowing yourself to think too much of Mr. Compton. You are yourself so impulsive, and so unlearned at the same time in this world's ways, that I fear you often mistake the idle effusion of the moment for the sincerity of the heart. I, who, you know, have deeply suffered, and yet have, thank God, recovered, sometimes look on you with trembling. You positively appear to believe that all which foolish young men say, either selfishly or systematically, carelessly or half contemptuously, in the fervour of folly or the fullness of self-conceit, has anything in it, either of what is enduring, or real, or good in itself; any meaning, or any value, beyond the childish amusement of the passing hour."

"Ah, aunt," said Ianthe, slowly moving round and facing her, "Mr. Compton knows what he is talking about, and means all he tells me. He has, in fact, half proposed to me, and I know intends to do so completely on the next occasion. Can you wonder, therefore, that I am, as I confess, a little

excited, knowing him as well as I do, and liking him better than anyone else?"

"Ianthe, Ianthe," repeated Miss Dalton, "I am very sorry for you."

"But why, dear aunt?"

"Simply because, as I said before,"—Miss Dalton now spoke slowly and severely for her—"it is a passing fancy, a pleasant dream, just as the shadow falls on the ferns on our heath and passes away in a moment. And remember that I, who have bought experience bitterly, now warn you that hasty marriages generally end badly, and that the love which is built up on the caprice of a pretty face, of a few soft hours of pleasing, of enervating society, is not worth having, is certain one day to give way, to fade, to die."

At this moment a ring at the bell roused Ianthe, and Topsy, and the servants, and the young lady, blushing and delighted, exclaimed in a somewhat tremulous voice, "Aunt, it's Mr. Compton."

And here for a moment we leave our "actors," and give our readers an idea of the "real situation of affairs," most important as it is for the understanding of this "novelette."

Ianthe Meadows was the only child of Lieutenant-Colonel Meadows, who had married Ianthe Dalton, Miss Mary Dalton's only sister. Ianthe had had the misfortune to lose her parents at an early age, and had lived henceforth under the loving care of the best of aunts. She had an uncle, Prebendary Dalton, who lived at Winchester, a kind but stately soul, who had married an heiress, and was well-to-do, sleek, and comfortable. He took things easy, and admired Ianthe, whom his only son, James Dalton admired too. But Ianthe, for some reason or other, would not respond to Prebendary Dalton's wishes or James Dalton's tender sighs.

When, then, our tale opens, Ianthe and her aunt had accustomed themselves to a rural life and an isolated domicile, in however the most lovable of spots, and had contented themselves with the vicar, his wife and daughter, and Colonel and Mrs. Chartley, old friends of Colonel Meadows.

Mr. Compton had only recently returned to Longworth, which had long been unoccupied, with his invalid mother, as, since the death of his father, they had been abroad in Algiers, at Mentone, at Malaga, and at Naples, always changing the scene, and seeking a mild climate.

Chapter II.

After this little pause and retrogression, I will go on with my story.

Mr. Compton was soon introduced by "Eleanor," who did everything; old Robert confining himself to the garden, the stables, the cows and the pigs, with the help of a shock-headed lad called "Jim"—James Snow. Warm was his reception by Ianthe, stately and measured by Miss Dalton. But it was soon quite clear that he had come for a purpose, and Ianthe, like a knowing young lady at such matters, as they mostly are, made an excuse for going into the garden, leaving Mr. Compton alone with Miss Dalton, much to that good lady's evident discomfort and distress. But so it was, and so it often is, in the affairs of life, that when unwelcome truths are to be told, and unpalatable difficulties are to be faced, or uncongenial facts are to be realized, we all alike shrink from the season of confidences, or the moment of exposure. Alas, in this world of ours, great, pretentious, noisy, callous as it is, what moral cowards we all are!

"Miss Dalton," Mr. Compton began "you cannot be insensible of my admiration for Ianthe. I am come, therefore, to-day, to ask you to give consent to our marriage. Ianthe is herself, she tells me, not unwilling, and my mother quite approves; may I ask your kind adhesion, knowing well what a good friend and guardian of Ianthe's young hours you have been?" and without pausing, hardly, Mr. Compton went on to say, "You know, too, I hope, how

much I admire her, and will feel with me, how much she merits my admiration. I admit that our acquaintance has been short, shorter than perhaps might well be, than I could wish, or you would approve of, but it has been really a case of love at first sight; so say the word, dear lady, and you will make two people very happy."

But Miss Dalton spoke not. For the truth is, she was thinking of a little episode which had occurred only eight months before, when Ianthe had met a Lieutentant Monckton, R.N., and who was now in H.M.S. "Isis," somewhere on the coast of China, and who, introduced to her by Colonel Chartley, had, for a time, until duty summoned him away, "nolens volens," been a daily visitor, and a devoted admirer, even, perhaps, somewhat more, of Ianthe. Indeed it was usually understood that they were engaged, and she certainly wore a little gold anchor as a breloque, set in turquoises!

But as Ianthe had said nothing to her aunt, her aunt had said nothing to her; but it was this remembrance of the past, and the fear of Ianthe's impulsive and changeable nature, which startled that clear and thoughtful mind, as if presaging future unhappiness and misery to all. Ianthe probably—perhaps Lieutenant Monckton himself—really thought no more about those pleasant if rather susceptible hours. Like the poet, they treated that little momentary halucination as a past and pleasant dream of their lives, and felt inclined to say,

> Our lives were like most other lives,
>   A little glow, a little shiver,
> A rosebud, and a pair of gloves,
>   And "Fly-not-yet" upon the river;
> Some jealousy of some-one's heir,
>   Some hopes of dying broken-hearted;
> A miniature, a lock of hair,
>   The usual vows—and then we parted.
>
> We parted; months and years rolled by;
>   We met again four summers after.
> Our parting was all sob and sigh,
>   Our meeting was all mirth and laughter;
> For in my heart's most secret cell,
>   There had been many other lodgers,
> And she was not the ball-room belle,
>   But only—Mrs. Something Rogers.

Miss Dalton probably had never heard of this admirable poet, or, if she had, she did not agree with his views of the matter, which I confess are somewhat unsentimental and slightly cynical, if at the bottom, after all, replete with common sense.

So after an awkward pause and silence she said very gracefully, "Mr. Compton, I do not in the least object to your proposal for Ianthe's hand, which, however, I cannot formally decide upon, but must refer to her two trustees, though I anticipate no objection from them whatever. But I cannot help saying that you and Ianthe have known each other a very short time, and marriage, in my opinion," said the good old dame, and here too her voice faltered, "is so serious a thing; it may be productive of so much happiness or misery, lasting happiness or misery, Mr. Compton, that I could have wished you had both known each other intimately a little longer."

And here the kind aunt paused for breath, and from her feelings, which, as someone as has said, "were too heavy for her."

"Ah! Miss Dalton," replied that enthusiastic lover, "there is no fear for Ianthe and myself; we have the same tastes, the same sympathies, the same ideas of all things, and there is nothing in which we disagree. Do not delay our happiness."

"I hope it may all turn out as you say," Miss Dalton once more said, "but I still wish you had known each other a little longer!"

The answer was not long in coming from the trustees, as both the Prebendary and the old family solicitor thought it a most admirable marriage. James Dalton, who had been introduced to a "pleasant-looking young lady with money," was easily consoled.

Mrs. Compton made no difficulties, but heartily welcomed Ianthe (who was indeed charming), and after innumerable presents and a great but dignified marriage, performed honourably by her uncle, the Prebendary, assisted by the meek and excellent old vicar, Ianthe, radiant and charming, after a tender leave-taking with her aunt, went off to catch the London train, in the most becoming of dresses, and for a happy tour in the Tyrol.

Three years passed away, and after Ianthe had come of age, and all the money matters were settled, Mr. and Mrs. Compton, who had been roving about, came for a short visit to Longworth.

Miss Dalton was asked to meet them, and went.

But from the first moment she saw Ianthe, her mind misgave her, as she called to mind her old forebodings. Indeed so strong had they been on the marriage day itself, then when all else were gay, and all seemed so full of the promise of earthly happiness and human love, Eleanor had heard her say to herself in her room, "God help my poor child. God help my poor child."

Ianthe was handsomer than ever, and seemingly gayer, and Compton all pride and contentment. They had no children, which was a great disappointment to Mr. Compton, and Miss Dalton thought she discerned in Ianthe a sort of weariness and discontent, a sort of subdued excitement and love of society, a distaste for home and domestic companionship, which was hidden rather than apparent, and was expressed not so much in acts or actual words, as by certain incontestable signs, which that tried and accurate woman, Miss Dalton, read too surely and too distinctly. And so, after a short visit at Longworth, and a still shorter one at The Cottage, they started again on one of their summer excursions.

Miss Dalton had heard from the Prebendary that Ianthe was the admired of the admired everywhere, and that her charming portrait in the exhibition had drawn crowds of admiring loungers and competent critics. All this only made her more anxious.

Compton and his wife were to go to Ems and then to the Black Forest, and finish at Ostend, and then home.

One evening in late summer Miss Dalton was sitting in her little open drawing-room, musing somewhat sadly about that dear fair girl far away, and listening to the bees, and the gentle "susurrus" of the leaves, when Eleanor came in as white as a sheet, to say that a man on horseback had brought a telegram from Osterley, the nearest station, of great importance. All it said was, "Come to me immediately. From Ianthe Compton, Hotel de la Poste, Ostend, To Miss Dalton, The Cottage, Osterley, Winchester, Hampshire, England."

Poor Miss Dalton! She had never been abroad in her life. What could she do? Go she must. But how? When? So, dismissing the messenger, she had herself driven over to Colonel Chartley's, who, she remembered, knew Ostend well, and was an "old campaigner," and very fond of Ianthe.

Colonel Chartley was luckily at home, and agreed to go with her that very night. "My dear," he said, to his good wife, "I am afraid Compton has got into a scrape. They say he is dreadfully jealous of her," However, he packed up, and taking his soldier servant, Hutton, a knowing and cool old gunner, who had been with him for years, away he and Miss Dalton and Eleanor started by the mail train, and reached Ostend about two the next afternoon. They went straight to the Hotel de la Poste, and then they heard the dreadful news. Owing to some attentions which a certain Baron de Wurms had paid to Ianthe at Ems, which he had repeated at Ostend, Mr. Compton had struck him. They had had a duel at Blankenburgh, and poor Mr. Compton lay dying at Ostend, the Baron was dead at Blankenburgh. The

Belgian police, hearing of Mr. Compton's state, had not interfered, and when Miss Dalton and Colonel Chartley reached the hotel, they found Ianthe in despair, like a ghost in paleness and tears, watching the ebbing life of her all unconscious husband.

He had been brought back early the morning before, hence the telegram, and though conscious for a few hours, in which he had recognized Ianthe, had remained ever since almost unconscious, speechless, pale, and passing away, and so he died. The mourning party, with the sad funeral convoy, left for England and landed at Southampton, and poor Henry Compton is resting amid his fathers in the old Compton mausoleum.

His poor mother's bad health gave way, and with the exception of a large jointure all the Compton property has passed away to a distant cousin.

Nothing could exceed Colonel Chartley and Aunt Mary's kindness to the poor widow!

They are still living at The Cottage.

Ianthe has never recovered the shock, and sees no one, except the clergyman and Colonel Chartley.

Though, strictly speaking, she was very little to blame; yet it was quite clear that she had been thoughtless, imprudent, and wayward. She moreover refused to listen to the entreaties and warnings of her husband, and had angered him greatly, and saddened the last hours of his life.

And, therefore, there came to her, as there comes to us all, those sad hours of retrospection, when the dark, or the erring, or the ghastly past comes up before us in haunting memories of a lost happiness which we cannot regain, unhappy words that we cannot recall, and acts for which we cannot atone here.

Poor Ianthe! she will probably never smile again; but we may well leave her in the care of that kindest of relatives and to the good Providence of God. She has been erring, let us feel for her; she is suffering and penitent, let us forgive her!

PHŒBE WALTON.*

I WILL a tale unfold of Masonry—
Of ill-found hatred for the Royal Art
Changed into love and deepest reverence.
A tale it is that claims and will receive
The rapt attention of the many friends
I see around me—members of a Craft
Whose origin is veil'd in mystery.
So say, at least, the learned chroniclers,
And *they* should know.

Full twenty years have passed
Since Willie Walton led his fair young bride
Home to his modest farm, a little west
Of that great city on the banks of Hudson,
Founded of old by Dutch adventurers,

* The story was originally published in an American Masonic Journal. I may have slightly altered some of the details, but what I have chiefly sought to do has been to place before the readers of the *Masonic Magazine* a version that might be useful for recitation.

But since, in honour of the luckless James—
Brother of Charles the second of his name—
Rechristened "City of New York." The pair
Were young and hopeful, resolute to win
Great store of wealth and purchase other land.
No sordid love of gain prompted the wish,
But honest pride to earn a competence,
If any family were born to them.
Comely they were too. Walton was a kind
And gentle man, of nervous energy,
Who knew not what was meant by failure. She
Was provident as well as fair, and helped
Her husband cheerfully. No wonder then
They prosper'd and became more affluent.
The modest farm swell'd to a large estate,
Their children grew to sturdy adolescence,
And labour'd skilfully, as 'tis most like
The sons and daughters of a skilful man
Would know to labour.

Yet a blot there was
That marred the beauty of their homely life.
In early manhood, years before he saw
His future helpmeet, Walton had become
A brother, versed in all our mysteries
And all the many duties of the lodge.
Honour succeeded honour, and at length
He rose to be the Master. How he fill'd
That high position—how his energy
And kindliness of heart won him esteem
From all his fellows, need not be chronicled.
A better man and Mason never graced
The Chair of Solomon. Prudence alone
Restrained him from a use too liberal
Of those resources he was bless'd withal ;
Yet many a kindly deed of charity
Was done by him in secret, and unknown
Even by those he gave his bounty to.

One day—he had not long been married then—
A friend, who proved to be a brother, called
At Walton's house to plead the cause of one
Who sorely needed help ; and then it was
That Phœbe—so I call her, though her name
Is not recorded in the pretty tale
I've, all too feebly, tried to reproduce—
Then first it was that Phoebe ascertain'd
Her husband was a member of the Craft.
The news aggrieved her. She had always heard
That Masons were a godless set of men,
And, in her anger, was provoked to say
That, had she known that Walton had been one,
She ne'er had wedded him. In vain he strove
To moderate her wrath. In vaid he urg'd
That Masons sought to benefit mankind,
To succour the distress'd and indigent,
To feed and clothe and educate the young

Who had no guardians to protect them.
Anger'd beyond expression of her thoughts,
She rose and quitted hastily the room,
Leaving her husband and his visitor
To mutual interchange of sympathy

The fleeting years pass'd on. Walton had thriv'n,
Or so it seemed to those who did not know
The loss he had sustained in making good
The defalcations of an ancient friend—
One who had prov'd unfaithful to the trust
Repos'd in him. One day, as was his wont
At times, he started to obtain some news
Of serious moment to his fair repute.
But Providence had will'd he ne'er again
Should lovingly embrace his family :
A terrible catastrophe befel
The train in which he was a passenger,
And he, alas! was number'd with the dead.

When home was brought her faithful husband's corpse
Poor Phœbe's grief was piteous to behold.
His children, too, were inconsolable;
Nor knew till then how deeply they had lov'd
One who had been so worthy of their love.
But need I dwell upon so sad a picture?
They bore him to his final resting-place
With full Masonic honours. For his wife—
However so disposed she might have been,
Had it been trusted to her own arrangement—
Made no objection to his written wish
For burial by his lodge.

There followed then
A strict inquiry into his estate.
The widow and the fatherless were left
With scanty store to meet their heavy needs
And even that was heavily encumber'd.
But darkest is the hour before the dawn ;
And no long time had pass'd ere once again
The widow was restored to affluence.
It boots not how the kindly deed was done,
But they who did it were the very men—
Members of that mysterious Mason Craft—
Whom Phœbe Walton had decried so long
And bitterly.

What more I have to tell
Is quickly told. Never again was heard
From Widow Walton's lips the stern regret
She'd wed a brother of the Mystic Tie.
'Tis even said, she'll never give consent
To any daughter's marriage with a man
Who's not a brother; and that all her sons,
If worthy they be found, have vowed to join
A lodge of Free and Ancient Masonry.

G. B. A.

THE VELOCIPEDE EXPEDITION OF PLAYFAIR AND PUGGINGS.

A little nonsense now and then
Is relish'd by the wisest men.
The New Tale of a Tub.

IT is the way of the world, or rather, of a great many of the people who are in it, to fancy that they are well adapted for vocations for which they are altogether unfit. Thus it was with our two friends, Messrs. Playfair and Puggings, who thought and said that if they had a velocipede they "could make the thing go," as Mr. Puggings expressed it, wiping his mouth with his silk pocket-handkerchief, after swallowing a glass of prime old port.

"What I propose," he continued, "is that we hire the three-wheeler which friend Shafto uses when he goes on his country clock-cleaning expeditions, and make a trial. We can but fail at the very worst, and a three-wheeler won't upset so readily as a bicycle would. So I say, let us try."

"My dear friend," replied Mr. Playfair, "I am quite agreeable to any proposition you may make. You propose invigorating ourselves, and exercising the muscles of our inferior extremities, as, I believe, anatomists call them, by teaching ourselves to ride a velocipede? So, having nothing much to do, let's call upon Shafto forthwith."

It may here be remarked that Mr. Playfair, and probably Mr. Puggings, too, like a very great many more men, never admitted that he was doing nothing. He had "nothing much to do," or nothing particular on hand, but never nothing to do. He would sit for hours, with pen in hand and paper before him, fully believing that he was doing, or just going to do something, but in reality merely reading the newspaper, or amusing himself with a book which was laid on the desk at his side, and into which he was "just peeping," or he would slumber in his armchair, "going" to do something "soon," though never doing it—a living proof of the poet Young's wise line, "Procrastination is the thief of time."

Like *Hamlet* in the play, he could reason better than act; or, like poor Oliver Goldsmith, lay down the wisest maxims for others to follow, but neglect them himself, as though he was the sport of some evil genius. "No man," he would say, "ought to go through the world with his time ill-employed. I have no opinion," which meant that that he had really a bad opinion, "of the man that can lounge through life doing nothing. I would send all such to penal servitude for the remainder of their days, without hope of a ticket-of-leave."

Good soul! to have been the means of sending anyone to penal servitude at all would have been to have made himself extremely miserable. He, like "my Uncle Toby, was a man patient of injuries," and, like that glorious character of Sterne's, "had scarce a heart to retaliate upon a fly."

The velocipede which Mr. Shafto, the watchmaker, was in the habit of using in going his periodical rounds of clock-cleaning in the country, was one of a rather novel construction. It was, as before stated, a three-wheeled one, and could carry two persons, one sitting astride on the saddle at the front to steer as well as paddle, and the other on the little box, in which Shafts carried his tools, between the two back wheels, working a pair of treadles with his feet. It was, to say the least of it, a very clumsy affair, made, from a drawing he had seen in the *Mechanics' Magazine*, by Brown, the blacksmith, who knew nothing of mechanics, and it was twice as hard work propelling it as walking. This machine, however, the two Mr. P.'s hired of Mr. Shafto to begin their practice upon.

Now Mr. Puggings got an idea into his head, with which Mr. Playfair quite coincided, that if they had a donkey to yoke at the front to pull it, they

would learn to paddle easier. Finally, it was agreed upon that the velocipede, with a donkey attached, should be in waiting for them, a few miles out of the town, on a specified day, if the weather was favourable for a peregrination.

The day fixed upon came, as all days will come, in due course, the weather was all that could be wished for, and the two gents set off, and soon reached their destination. The machine, to which the donkey was yoked by a novel contrivance, was ready in waiting, in charge of a ragged, unwashed lad, whose presence they first became aware of by seeing a pair of dirty bare feet sticking up in the air at a considerable distance above the ground, and a little further inspection showed the nature of the phenomenon, and that an additional elevation had been obtained by the help of a milestone, on the top of which he was standing on his head. On seeing them approach, however, he dismounted from his pedestal, and pulling his unkempt forelocks by way of obeisance, he stood right end upwards, to receive any orders they might have to give him. It was deemed advisable to dispense with his presence, and Mr. Puggings advised Mr. Playfair to give the lad a shilling, and to dismiss him for a time, which that gentleman did at once, telling him to be sure to return in two hours to resume his charge again; and the lad departed, whistling all the way he went, for, like the "handsome milkmaid" mentioned by good old Izaak Walton in his "Complete Angler," "he had not yet attained so much age and wisdom as to load his mind with any fears of many things that will never be, as too many men often do."

Now the place which the two friends had chosen for their first operations was a rather flat and comparatively smooth country road; it was very wide, and along one side ran a deep, broad ditch, the bottom of which was covered in summer with the blue-flowered brooklime, and between the road and the ditch was a pleasant looking wilderness of grass and broom, and whin and bramble bushes, and on the other side was what the farmers called a tolerable hedge, the kam or earthwork foundation of which was overgrown with primroses, daisies, and other wild flowers. It was not, under ordinary circumstances, at all unadapted for the purpose to which our friends, the Mr. P.'s, intended to put it.

"Now what are we to do?" asked Mr. Playfair, looking rather puzzled at the machine.

"Get into it, I should say," replied Mr. Puggings.

"Yes, yes; but how shall we ride? Which inside, and which on the saddle, or pad, or whatever they call it?" inquired Mr. Playfair.

"Oh, you must have the post of honour, of course," rejoined Mr Puggings, settling the question as he spoke by getting inside.

"Ah—hum—well, yes! Then I suppose I might as well get up," said Mr. Playfair.

"Certainly," replied his friend inside, who felt himself safe and all right.

Now Mr. Playfair found that it was one thing saying, and another doing it, for every time that he attempted to mount he either slipped his foot, came over the other side, or nearly brought the velocipede over upon himself. He got up at last, however, and no sooner had he done so than he discovered that the reins of the donkey were wrapped round the neck of that animal, and consequently one of them must dismount to get them. It had not, in fact, occurred to either of them until that moment that the donkey would require driving.

Mr. Puggings courteously dismounted, and handed the reins to Mr. Playfair, who, from their positions, was the only one who could use them, and he was not very keen of the job.

Mr. Puggings got in again, and Mr. Playfair gave a tug at the reins, and off they went.

The donkey did very well for awhile, and the two friends paddled away, and skinned their shins first-rate. But the donkey seemed to have been used to a good deal of its own way, and seeing a fine flowery thistle growing on the opposite side of the ditch, took it into its head to have it for a repast, and so

set off to drag the velocipede over the ditch. Mr. Playfair, of course, did his best to frustrate the donkey's design, and began to pull the reins with all his might, while Mr. Puggings paddled away his hardest, evidently thinking to keep the donkey back by so doing. It was an unequal match, however, for the two friends were only making their *début* in that line, and not understanding the machine, could "not get," as they termed it, "any force of power on," as though all power was not force, and all force power, of some sort.

How far the donkey is naturally a very stupid animal, and how far his habitual obstinacy has been engendered by long ages of ill-usage, is a problem one hopes will be gradually solved by the increase of enlightment among the people. Of most of those one meets with in Christian England, in this nineteenth century even, we may truthfully exclaim in the language of the elder Coleridge:

> Poor ass! thy master should have learnt to show
> Pity, best taught in fellowship of woe;
> For much I fear me that he lives like thee,
> Half-famish'd in a land of luxury.

Certainly the ass yoked to the velocipede, like his uncivilized owner, had benefited little by "the march of intellect," and as our friends paddled, or rather, attempted to paddle, forward, the animal, who was so far turned round as as to form an angle of ninety degrees with the vehicle, pulled quite in a contrary direction. The contest could not last long at this rate. The donkey was fast getting the best of it, and had already got his fore legs into the ditch, when Mr. Playfair jumped off, and keeping hold of the reins, and planting his heels firmly into a sod at the edge of the ditch, pulled with all his might backward. The donkey still persisted, and pulled forward. Mr. Playfair, almost doubled up, and sweating as though he was in a Turkish bath, kept pulling back "with might and main." The unwonted exertion was beginning to tell upon him; the buttons of his unmentionables were flying one by one, when he was joined by his friend, who clasped him round the waist, and bent into a like posture—that is to say, as much as a very fat gentleman could do so, and who, though he reinforced Mr. Playfair, lightened the vehicle considerably. The "tug of war" was at its height, when suddenly the reins snapped in two, and the sod upon which they were standing, which had been sinking unobserved for some time, gave way with them at the same moment, and the two friends were pitched head-first into the ditch, with as little ceremony as "a couple of Ford's knaves, his hinds," threw Falstaff from the buck-basket into the Thames at Datchet Mead.

The donkey finding himself at liberty, immediately darted forward with the velocipede, which overturned and stuck fast in the middle of the ditch, much to the delight of a group of mischief-loving lads, who, unobserved by the two friends, had been watching the whole proceedings from behind the hedge where they had been bird-nesting, and who now came running up, the foremost of whom, on arriving, shouted to his companions—

"Hurrah, lads! here's a jolly lark; three donkeys stuck i' the mud!"

Immediately there was a volley of cheers set up, amid which the two unfortunates managed to scramble up so as to regain their feet, and gazed from the ditch on their tormentors, who seemed merely to regard the whole affair as a capital bit of fun, and laughed, and shouted, and whistled, as Tom Hood truly sings

> Turning to mirth all things of earth,
> As only boyhood can.

The vehement demonstrations of rollicking mirth on the part of the lads, who were totally regardless of the feelings of the tormented (for most lads are sad wild Indians in this respect, all for the want of proper culture), was eventually quieted by the offer of a reward of five shillings to the first that should bring them help; upon which they all set off in a fine race to the nearest

farmhouse, from which they returned accompanied by four stout men bearing planks and ropes. The men at once laid the planks across the ditch, so as to form an improvised rustic bridge, and a stalwart labourer stalked along them until he reached our two distressed friends, who were stuck as fast, knee-deep in mud, as ever prisoners were in the stocks in "the good old times," and slipping the running noose of a cart rope round Mr. Puggings's fat belly, called out to his comrades to pull at the other end, which both they and the lads did with a hearty goodwill, nearly squeezing that gentleman to death by their rough efforts to save him. They, however, succeeded in landing him safely on the green sward.

Mr. Playfair had watched the whole proceeding in extricating his friend Puggings with the utmost loathing and indignation, and when the fellow advanced, rope in hand, to operate upon him, he gave such a desperate jump to get out of the way that he loosed himself from the mud in which he had been fixed so fast, and floundered over on to his back, just as the man threw the noose, which caught round his ankles, and poor Mr. Playfair was pulled out like a snow sledge, cutting a way through the mud as he went, and leaving a track like a swept road behind him. When at last placed upon his feet, he presented an appearance such as Lot's wife might be supposed to have done, excepting that she was covered over with salt instead of mud. He certainly was an object of pity to gaze upon as he stood dripping upon the sward.

The two gents having been extricated, the donkey was next to be thought about. It had, however, by some means or other, broke loose from the velocipede, and reached the opposite side in safety, where it stood eating nettles and thistles with the utmost complacency. It was decided, therefore, to leave it there for the present, until its ragged and unkempt groom should return, and to see to the velocipede, which, with some difficulty, was extricated, little the worse, except that a few spokes were broken in the wheels, and, of course, the entire machine was very muddy. The two friends, you may be sure, did not volunteer to take it home, preferring to leave it in charge of the rustics, whom they rewarded well for their trouble, as people always ought to do when they have in their power to do so.

Mr. Playfair and Mr. Puggings then set off home, which they reached in safety, taking all the backways they could to avoid observation, and walking quick "to keep up the circulation." Throwing off their wet clothes as soon as they arrived at their respective domiciles, putting their feet into warm water before getting into bed, and each swallowing a big basin of hot oatmeal gruel, into which a liberal allowance of good old Jamaica had been put, after getting between the blankets, "they slept like tops," and happily avoided bringing on a fever. They paid Mr. Shafto next day to his satisfaction, for the damage done to his lumbering machine, and, to adapt the conclusion of Cowper's humourous ballad on the diverting history of John Gilpin, "When they next do ride abroad, may we be there to see." O. L. T.

LITERARY GOSSIP.

LORD BEACONSFIELD'S new novel is somewhat of a disappointment. It presents as unprejudiced a picture of the political life of the last general tion as could be expected from so prominent a party man as its author; but it lacks the power which has made "Lothair" and others of the ex-Premier'- earlier writings so popular. It has been well said that the world is governet by great names, and we may safely affirm that had "Endymion" appealed ts the public as the work of an unknown writer it would either have been passed

unnoticed, or else "damned by faint praise." Whatever the intrinsic worth of the work, the mere mention of the fact that it had proceeded from the pen of one of the foremost men who has lived in these latter years was sufficient to assure its success, at least from a pecuniary point of view. It is "the correct thing" to be able to converse concerning the volumes; and so "all the world and his wife" are making themselves acquainted with their contents. Our verdict respecting "Endymion" is, that when, hereafter, Lord Beaconfield's literary reputation comes to be computed apart from the notoriety arising out of his position in political life, it will be but little enhanced by the recently published story.

What a plethora of ephemeral publications Christmas calls forth! To mention the mere names of the multitude of publications of this description which have passed through our hands would exhaust the space at our disposal. No household need lack an Annual or Christmas Number of some sort, for the supply is really enormous. A word or two about some of the best of these companions of the Christmastide chimney-corner will not be without interest. First amongst the illustrated annuals comes the Christmas number of *The Graphic*, a copy of which is hardly now obtainable for love or money. Its contents, both literary and artistic, are simply superb. The presentation plate, from the pencil of Mr. J. E. Millais, is a delightful study in child life called "Cherry Ripe." A clever representation of a little girl lost in "Wonderland" is given with the Christmas number of the veteran *Illustrated London News.* A fine coloured engraving, entitled "The Little Lovers," accompanies "Santa Claus," Messrs. Dupuy's spirited annual, and with this publication is also presented an envelope containing half-a-dozen tasteful Christmas cards, altogether making up a wonderful shilling's-worth. *The Queen*, *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic*, and all the ladies' weeklies, have good Christmas issues; and we must not omit to notice "Father Christmas" and "Danger," two very commendable illustrated annuals. The Messrs. Maxwell offer a genuine good thing in the "Mistletoe Bough," edited by Miss Braddon. The winter number of *Society*, issued under the taking title of "Round the Fireside," contains some readable stories and sketches, by far the best being a touching tale by Joseph Hatton, called "The Clang of the Wooden Shoon." "The International Annual," edited by this very popular writer, is one of the most enjoyable before the public. Messrs. Besant and Rice are again the authors of the Christmas Number of *All the Year Round*. It consists of a narrative named "Over the Sea with the Sailor," and a very interesting one it is. The same co-workers have supplied a leading feature of the Christmas Number of *The World*, in the shape of a tale entited "The Ten Year's Tenant." Here those who delight in the marvellous will find an ample literary treat. *The Green Room*, as one would expect, smacks strongly of the stage. Perhaps the most entertaining items presented by its editor, Mr. Clement Scott, are his own pathetic "Manager's Story;" "A Traveller's Tale," by F. C. Burnand; and Henry Irving's powerfully-written sketch "The Neighbour's Bairn." The *piece de resistance* in the "Belgravia Annual" is the highly-humourous description of a "Reduced Dinner Party," from the pen of James Payn. The *Gentleman* Christmas "special" contains three acceptable stories; Tinsley's "High Water Mark," abounds in incident; and the *London Society* Annual is above the average. The semi-religious Christmas Numbers, such as "The Golden Mask, "Good Cheer," "Paths of Peace," "Glad Time," and "Little Snowflakes," are all excellent reading. Among the more humourous may be commended "Judy Annual," "Hood's Comic," and "Fun Almanack." Of almanacks there is a plentiful and meretorious collection this year. Cassell's may be said to carry off the palm in London, while it would be difficult to find a better in the provinces than that issued in Nottingham under the title of "Shepherd's Illustrated Almanack," which contains interesting articles from the pens of Mr. H. C. Appleby and Mr. Thos. Trowsdale.