

**NARRATIVE AND MISCELLANEOUS  
PAPERS**

**VOLUME I**

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***Free***editorial 

## THE HOUSEHOLD WRECK

'To be weak,' we need not the great archangel's voice to tell us, 'is to be miserable.' All weakness is suffering and humiliation, no matter for its mode or its subject. Beyond all other weakness, therefore, and by a sad prerogative, as more miserable than what is most miserable in all, that capital weakness of man which regards the tenure of his enjoyments and his power to protect, even for a moment, the crown of flowers—flowers, at the best, how frail and few!—which sometimes settles upon his haughty brow. There is no end, there never will be an end, of the lamentations which ascend from earth and the rebellious heart of her children, upon this huge opprobrium of human pride—the everlasting mutabilities of all which man can grasp by his power or by his aspirations, the fragility of all which he inherits, and the hollowness visible amid the very raptures of enjoyment to every eye which looks for a moment underneath the draperies of the shadowy present, the hollowness, the blank treachery of hollowness, upon which all the pomps and vanities of life ultimately repose. This trite but unwearying theme, this impassioned commonplace of humanity, is the subject in every age of variation without end, from the poet, the rhetorician, the fabulist, the moralist, the divine, and the philosopher. All, amidst the sad vanity of their sighs and groans, labor to put on record and to establish this monotonous complaint, which needs not other record or evidence than those very sighs and groans. What is life? Darkness and formless vacancy for a beginning, or something beyond all beginning—then next a dim lotos of human consciousness, finding itself afloat upon the bosom of waters without a shore—then a few sunny smiles and many tears—a little love and infinite strife—whisperings from paradise and fierce mockeries from the anarchy of chaos—dust and ashes—and once more darkness circling round, as if from the beginning, and in this way rounding or making an island of our fantastic existence,—that is human life; that the inevitable amount of man's laughter and his tears—of what he suffers and he does—of his motions this way and that way—to the right or to the left—backwards or forwards—of all his seeming realities and all his absolute negations—his shadowy pomps and his pompous shadows—of whatsoever he thinks, finds, makes or mars, creates or animates, loves, hates, or in dread hope anticipates;—so it is, so it has been, so it will be, for ever and ever.

Yet in the lowest deep there still yawns a lower deep; and in the vast halls of man's frailty, there are separate and more gloomy chambers of a frailty more exquisite and consummate. We account it frailty that threescore years and ten make the upshot of man's pleasurable existence, and that, far before that time is reached, his beauty and his power have fallen among weeds and forgetfulness. But there is a frailty, by comparison with which this ordinary flux of the human race seems to have a vast duration. Cases there are, and those not rare, in which a single week, a day, an hour sweeps away all vestiges and landmarks of a memorable felicity; in which the ruin travels faster than the flying showers upon the mountain-side, faster 'than a musician scatters sounds;' in which 'it was' and 'it is not' are words of the self-same tongue, in the self-same minute; in which the sun that at noon beheld all sound and prosperous, long before its

setting hour looks out upon a total wreck, and sometimes upon the total abolition of any fugitive memorial that there ever had been a vessel to be wrecked, or a wreck to be obliterated.

These cases, though here spoken of rhetorically, are of daily occurrence; and, though they may seem few by comparison with the infinite millions of the species, they are many indeed, if they be reckoned absolutely for themselves; and throughout the limits of a whole nation, not a day passes over us but many families are robbed of their heads, or even swallowed up in ruin themselves, or their course turned out of the sunny beams into a dark wilderness. Shipwrecks and nightly conflagrations are sometimes, and especially among some nations, wholesale calamities; battles yet more so; earthquakes, the famine, the pestilence, though rarer, are visitations yet wider in their desolation. Sickness and commercial ill-luck, if narrower, are more frequent scourges. And most of all, or with most darkness in its train, comes the sickness of the brain—lunacy—which, visiting nearly one thousand in every million, must, in every populous nation, make many ruins in each particular day. 'Babylon in ruins,' says a great author, 'is not so sad a sight as a human soul overthrown by lunacy.' But there is a sadder even than that,—the sight of a family-ruin wrought by crime is even more appalling. Forgery, breaches of trust, embezzlement, of private or public funds—(a crime sadly on the increase since the example of Fauntleroy, and the suggestion of its great feasibility first made by him)—these enormities, followed too often, and countersigned for their final result to the future happiness of families, by the appalling catastrophe of suicide, must naturally, in every wealthy nation, or wherever property and the modes of property are much developed, constitute the vast majority of all that come under the review of public justice. Any of these is sufficient to make shipwreck of all peace and comfort for a family; and often, indeed, it happens that the desolation is accomplished within the course of one revolving sun; often the whole dire catastrophe, together with its total consequences, is both accomplished and made known to those whom it chiefly concerns within one and the same hour. The mighty Juggernaut of social life, moving onwards with its everlasting thunders, pauses not for a moment to spare—to pity—to look aside, but rushes forward for ever, impassive as the marble in the quarry—caring not for whom it destroys, for the how many, or for the results, direct and indirect, whether many or few. The increasing grandeur and magnitude of the social system, the more it multiplies and extends its victims, the more it conceals them; and for the very same reason: just as in the Roman amphitheatres, when they grew to the magnitude of mighty cities, (in some instances accommodating four hundred thousand spectators, in many a fifth part of that amount,) births and deaths became ordinary events, which, in a small modern theatre, are rare and memorable; and exactly as these prodigious accidents multiplied, *pari passu*, they were disregarded and easily concealed: for curiosity was no longer excited; the sensation attached to them was little or none.

From these terrific tragedies, which, like monsoons or tornadoes, accomplish the work of years in an hour, not merely an impressive lesson is derived, sometimes, perhaps, a warning, but also (and this is of universal application) some consolation. Whatever may have been the misfortunes or the sorrows of a man's life, he is still privileged to regard himself and his friends as amongst the fortunate by comparison, in so far as he has escaped these wholesale storms, either as an actor in producing them, or a contributor to their violence—or even more innocently, (though oftentimes not less miserably)—as a participator in the instant ruin, or in the long arrears of suffering which they entail.

The following story falls within the class of hasty tragedies, and sudden desolations here described. The reader is assured that every incident is strictly true: nothing, in that respect, has been altered; nor, indeed, anywhere except in the conversations, of which, though the results and general outline are known, the separate details have necessarily been lost under the agitating circumstances which produced them. It has been judged right and delicate to conceal the name of the great city, and therefore of the nation in which these events occurred, chiefly out of consideration for the descendants of one person concerned in the narrative: otherwise, it might not have been requisite: for it is proper to mention, that every person directly a party to the case has been long laid in the grave: all of them, with one solitary exception, upwards of fifty years.

It was early spring in the year 17—; the day was the 6th of April; and the weather, which had been of a wintry fierceness for the preceding six or seven weeks—cold indeed beyond anything known for many years, gloomy for ever, and broken by continual storms—was now by a Swedish transformation all at once bright, genial, heavenly. So sudden and so early a prelude of summer, it was generally feared, could not last. But that only made every body the more eager to lose no hour of an enjoyment that might prove so fleeting. It seemed as if the whole population of the place, a population among the most numerous in Christendom, had been composed of hibernating animals suddenly awakened by the balmy sunshine from their long winter's torpor. Through every hour of the golden morning the streets were resonant with female parties of young and old, the timid and the bold, nay, even of the most delicate valetudinarians, now first tempted to lay aside their wintry clothing together with their fireside habits, whilst the whole rural environs of our vast city, the woodlands, and the interminable meadows began daily to re-echo the glad voices of the young and jovial awaking once again, like the birds and the flowers, and universal nature, to the luxurious happiness of this most delightful season.

Happiness do I say? Yes, happiness; happiness to me above all others. For I also in those days was among the young and the gay; I was healthy; I was strong; I was prosperous in a worldly sense! I owed no man a shilling; feared no man's face; shunned no man's presence. I held a respectable station in society; I was myself, let me venture to say it, respected generally for my personal qualities, apart from any advantages I might draw from fortune or inheritance; I had reason to think myself popular amongst the very slender circle of my acquaintance; and finally, which perhaps was the crowning grace to all these elements of happiness, I suffered not from the presence of ennui, nor ever feared to suffer: for my temperament was constitutionally ardent; I had a powerful animal sensibility; and I knew the one great secret for maintaining its equipoise, viz., by powerful daily exercise; and thus I lived in the light and presence, or, (if I should not be suspected of seeking rhetorical expressions, I would say,) in one eternal solstice of unclouded hope.

These, you will say, were blessings; these were golden elements of felicity. They were so; and yet, with the single exception of my healthy frame and firm animal organization, I feel that I have mentioned hitherto nothing but what by comparison might be thought of a vulgar quality. All the other advantages that I have enumerated, had they been yet wanting, might have been acquired; had they been forfeited, might have been reconquered; had they been even irretrievably lost, might, by a philosophic effort, have been dispensed with; compensations might have been found for any of them, many equivalents, or if not, consolations at least, for their absence. But now it remains to speak of other blessings too mighty to be valued, not merely as transcending in rank and dignity all other constituents of happiness, but for a reason far sadder than that—because, once lost, they were incapable of restoration, and because not to be dispensed with; blessings in which 'either we must live or have no life:' lights to the darkness of our paths and to the infirmity of our steps—which, once extinguished, never more on this side the gates of Paradise can any man hope to see re-illuminated for himself. Amongst these I may mention an intellect, whether powerful or not in itself, at any rate most elaborately cultivated; and, to say the truth, I had little other business before me in this life than to pursue this lofty and delightful task. I may add, as a blessing, not in the same positive sense as that which I have just mentioned, because not of a nature to contribute so hourly to the employment of the thoughts, but yet in this sense equal, that the absence of either would have been an equal affliction,—namely, a conscience void of all offence. It was little indeed that I, drawn by no necessities of situation into temptations of that nature, had done no injury to any man. That was fortunate; but I could not much value myself upon what was so much an accident of my situation. Something, however, I might pretend to beyond this negative merit; for I had originally a benign nature; and, as I advanced in years and thoughtfulness, the gratitude which possessed me for my own exceeding happiness led me to do that by principle and system which I had already done upon blind impulse; and thus upon a double argument I was incapable of turning away from the prayer of the afflicted, whatever had been the sacrifice to myself. Hardly, perhaps, could it have been said in a sufficient sense at that time that I was a religious man: yet, undoubtedly, I had all the foundations within me upon which religion might hereafter have grown. My heart overflowed with thankfulness to Providence: I had a natural tone of unaffected piety; and thus far, at least, I might have been called a religious man, that in the simplicity of truth I could have exclaimed,

'O, Abner, I fear God, and I fear none beside.'

But wherefore seek to delay ascending by a natural climax to that final consummation and perfect crown of my felicity—that almighty blessing which ratified their value to all the rest? Wherefore, oh! wherefore do I shrink in miserable weakness from—what? Is it from reviving, from calling up again into fierce and insufferable light the images and features of a long-buried happiness? That would be a natural shrinking and a reasonable weakness. But how escape from reviving, whether I give it utterance or not, that which is for ever vividly before me? What need to call into artificial light that which, whether sleeping or waking, by night or by day, for eight-and-thirty years has seemed by its miserable splendor to scorch my brain? Wherefore shrink from giving language, simple vocal utterance, to that burden of anguish which by so long an endurance has lost no atom of its weight, nor can gain any most surely by the loudest publication? Need there can be none, after this, to say that the priceless blessing, which I have left to the

final place in this ascending review, was the companion of my life—my darling and youthful wife. Oh! dovelike woman! fated in an hour the most defenceless to meet with the ravening vulture,—lamb fallen amongst wolves,—trembling—fluttering fawn, whose path was inevitably to be crossed by the bloody tiger;—angel, whose most innocent heart fitted thee for too early a flight from this impure planet; if indeed it were a necessity that thou shouldst find no rest for thy footing except amidst thy native heavens, if indeed to leave what was not worthy of thee were a destiny not to be evaded—a summons not to be put by,—yet why, why, again and again I demand—why was it also necessary that this, thy departure, so full of wo to me, should also to thyself be heralded by the pangs of martyrdom? Sainted love, if, like the ancient children of the Hebrews, like Meshech and Abednego, thou wert called by divine command, whilst yet almost a child, to walk, and to walk alone, through the fiery furnace,—wherefore then couldst not thou, like that Meshech and that Abednego, walk unsinged by the dreadful torment, and come forth unharmed? Why, if the sacrifice were to be total, was it necessary to reach it by so dire a struggle? and if the cup, the bitter cup, of final separation from those that were the light of thy eyes and the pulse of thy heart might not be put aside,—yet wherefore was it that thou mightest not drink it up in the natural peace which belongs to a sinless heart?

But these are murmurings, you will say, rebellious murmurings against the proclamations of God. Not so: I have long since submitted myself, resigned myself, nay, even reconciled myself, perhaps, to the great wreck of my life, in so far as it was the will of God, and according to the weakness of my imperfect nature. But my wrath still rises, like a towering flame, against all the earthly instruments of this ruin; I am still at times as unresigned as ever to this tragedy, in so far as it was the work of human malice. Vengeance, as a mission for me, as a task for my hands in particular, is no longer possible; the thunderbolts of retribution have been long since launched by other hands; and yet still it happens that at times I do—I must—I shall perhaps to the hour of death, rise in maniac fury, and seek, in the very impotence of vindictive madness, groping as it were in blindness of heart, for that tiger from hell-gates that tore away my darling from my heart. Let me pause, and interrupt this painful strain, to say a word or two upon what she was—and how far worthy of a love more honorable to her (that was possible) and deeper (but that was not possible) than mine. When first I saw her, she—my Agnes—was merely a child, not much (if anything) above sixteen. But, as in perfect womanhood she retained a most childlike expression of countenance, so even then in absolute childhood she put forward the blossoms and the dignity of a woman. Never yet did my eye light upon creature that was born of woman, nor could it enter my heart to conceive one, possessing a figure more matchless in its proportions, more statuesque, and more deliberately and advisedly to be characterized by no adequate word but the word magnificent, (a word too often and lightly abused.) In reality, speaking of women, I have seen many beautiful figures, but hardly one except Agnes that could, without hyperbole, be styled truly and memorably magnificent. Though in the first order of tall women, yet, being full in person, and with a symmetry that was absolutely faultless, she seemed to the random sight as little above the ordinary height. Possibly from the dignity of her person, assisted by the dignity of her movements, a stranger would have been disposed to call her at a distance a woman of commanding presence; but never, after he had approached near enough to behold her face. Every thought of artifice, of practised effect, or of haughty pretension, fled before the childlike innocence, the sweet feminine timidity, and the more than cherub loveliness of that countenance, which yet in its lineaments was noble, whilst its expression was purely gentle and confiding. A shade of pensiveness there was about her; but that was in her manners, scarcely ever in her features; and the

exquisite fairness of her complexion, enriched by the very sweetest and most delicate bloom that ever I have beheld, should rather have allied it to a tone of cheerfulness. Looking at this noble creature, as I first looked at her, when yet upon the early threshold of womanhood

'With household motions light and free,

And steps of virgin liberty'

you might have supposed her some Hebe or young Aurora of the dawn. When you saw only her superb figure, and its promise of womanly development, with the measured dignity of her step, you might for a moment have fancied her some imperial Medea of the Athenian stage—some Volumnia from Rome,

'Or ruling bandit's wife amidst the Grecian isles.'

But catch one glance from her angelic countenance—and then combining the face and the person, you would have dismissed all such fancies, and have pronounced her a Pandora or an Eve, expressly accomplished and held forth by nature as an exemplary model or ideal pattern for the future female sex:—

'A perfect woman, nobly plann'd,

To warm, to comfort, to command:

And yet a spirit too, and bright

With something of an angel light.'

To this superb young woman, such as I have here sketched her, I surrendered my heart for ever, almost from my first opportunity of seeing her: for so natural and without disguise was her character, and so winning the simplicity of her manners, due in part to her own native dignity of mind, and in part to the deep solitude in which she had been reared, that little penetration was required to put me in possession of all her thoughts; and to win her love, not very much more than to let her see, as see she could not avoid, in connection with that chivalrous homage which at any rate was due to her sex and her sexual perfections, a

love for herself on my part, which was in its nature as exalted a passion and as profoundly rooted as any merely human affection can ever yet have been.

On the seventeenth birthday of Agnes we were married. Oh! calendar of everlasting months—months that, like the mighty rivers, shall flow on for ever, immortal as thou, Nile, or Danube, Euphrates, or St. Lawrence! and ye, summer and winter, day and night, wherefore do you bring round continually your signs, and seasons, and revolving hours, that still point and barb the anguish of local recollections, telling me of this and that celestial morning that never shall return, and of too blessed expectations, travelling like yourselves through a heavenly zodiac of changes, till at once and for ever they sank into the grave! Often do I think of seeking for some quiet cell either in the Tropics or in Arctic latitudes, where the changes of the year, and the external signs corresponding to them, express themselves by no features like those in which the same seasons are invested under our temperate climes: so that, if knowing, we cannot at least feel the identity of their revolutions. We were married, I have said, on the birthday—the seventeenth birthday—of Agnes; and pretty nearly on her eighteenth it was that she placed me at the summit of my happiness, whilst for herself she thus completed the circle of her relations to this life's duties, by presenting me with a son. Of this child, knowing how wearisome to strangers is the fond exultation of parents, I shall simply say, that he inherited his mother's beauty; the same touching loveliness and innocence of expression, the same chiselled nose, mouth, and chin, the same exquisite auburn hair. In many other features, not of person merely, but also of mind and manners, as they gradually began to open before me, this child deepened my love to him by recalling the image of his mother; and what other image was there that I so much wished to keep before me, whether waking or asleep? At the time to which I am now coming but too rapidly, this child, still our only one, and unusually premature, was within four months of completing his third year; consequently Agnes was at that time in her twenty-first year; and I may here add, with respect to myself, that I was in my twenty-sixth.

But, before I come to that period of wo, let me say one word on the temper of mind which so fluent and serene a current of prosperity may be thought to have generated. Too common a course I know it is, when the stream of life flows with absolute tranquillity, and ruffled by no menace of a breeze—the azure overhead never dimmed by a passing cloud, that in such circumstances the blood stagnates: life, from excess and plethora of sweets, becomes insipid: the spirit of action droops: and it is oftentimes found at such seasons that slight annoyances and molestations, or even misfortunes in a lower key, are not wholly undesirable, as means of stimulating the lazy energies, and disturbing a slumber which is, or soon will be, morbid in its character. I have known myself cases not a few, where, by the very nicest gradations, and by steps too silent and insensible for daily notice, the utmost harmony and reciprocal love had shaded down into fretfulness and petulance, purely from too easy a life, and because all nobler agitations that might have ruffled the sensations occasionally, and all distresses even on the narrowest scale that might have re-awakened the solitudes of love, by opening necessities for sympathy, for counsel, or for mutual aid, had been shut out by foresight too elaborate, or by prosperity too cloying. But all this, had it otherwise been possible with my particular mind, and at my early age, was utterly precluded by one remarkable peculiarity in my temper. Whether it were that I derived from nature some jealousy and suspicion of all happiness which seems too perfect and unalloyed—[a spirit of restless distrust, which in ancient times



often led men to throw valuable gems into the sea, in the hope of thus propitiating the dire deity of misfortune, by voluntarily breaking the fearful chain of prosperity, and led some of them to weep and groan when the gems thus sacrificed were afterwards brought back to their hand by simple fishermen, who had recovered them in the intestines of fishes—a portentous omen, which was interpreted into a sorrowful indication that the deity thus answered the propitiatory appeal, and made solemn proclamation that he had rejected it]—whether, I say, it were this spirit of jealousy awaked in me by too steady and too profound a felicity—or whether it were that great overthrows and calamities have some mysterious power to send forward a dim misgiving of their advancing footsteps, and really and indeed,

'That in to-day already walks to-morrow;'

or whether it were partly, as I have already put the case in my first supposition, a natural instinct of distrust, but irritated and enlivened by a particular shock of superstitious alarm; which, or whether any of these causes it were that kept me apprehensive, and on the watch for disastrous change, I will not here undertake to determine. Too certain it is that I was so. I never ridded myself of an over-mastering and brooding sense, shadowy and vague, a dim abiding feeling (that sometimes was and sometimes was not exalted into a conscious presentiment) of some great calamity travelling towards me; not perhaps immediately impending—perhaps even at a great distance; but already—dating from some secret hour—already in motion upon some remote line of approach. This feeling I could not assuage by sharing it with Agnes. No motive could be strong enough for persuading me to communicate so gloomy a thought with one who, considering her extreme healthiness, was but too remarkably prone to pensive, if not to sorrowful, contemplations. And thus the obligation which I felt to silence and reserve, strengthened the morbid impression I had received; whilst the remarkable incident I have adverted to served powerfully to rivet the superstitious chain which was continually gathering round me. The incident was this—and before I repeat it, let me pledge my word of honor, that I report to you the bare facts of the case, without exaggeration, and in the simplicity of truth:—There was at that time resident in the great city, which is the scene of my narrative, a woman, from some part of Hungary, who pretended to the gift of looking into futurity. She had made herself known advantageously in several of the greatest cities of Europe, under the designation of the Hungarian Prophetess; and very extraordinary instances were cited amongst the highest circles of her success in the art which she professed. So ample were the pecuniary tributes which she levied upon the hopes and the fears, or the simple curiosity of the aristocracy, that she was thus able to display not unfrequently a disinterestedness and a generosity, which seemed native to her disposition, amongst the humbler classes of her applicants; for she rejected no addresses that were made to her, provided only they were not expressed in levity or scorn, but with sincerity, and in a spirit of confiding respect. It happened, on one occasion, when a nursery-servant of ours was waiting in her anteroom for the purpose of taking her turn in consulting the prophetess professionally, that she had witnessed a scene of consternation and unaffected maternal grief in this Hungarian lady upon the sudden seizure of her son, a child of four or five years old, by a spasmodic inflammation of the throat (since called croup) peculiar to children, and in those days not very well understood by medical men. The poor Hungarian, who had lived chiefly in warm, or at least not damp, climates, and had never so much as heard of this complaint, was almost wild with alarm at the rapid increase of the symptoms which attend the paroxysms, and especially

of that loud and distressing sound which marks the impeded respiration. Great, therefore, was her joy and gratitude on finding from our servant that she had herself been in attendance more than once upon cases of the same nature, but very much more violent,—and that, consequently, she was well qualified to suggest and to superintend all the measures of instant necessity, such as the hot-bath, the peculiar medicines, &c., which are almost sure of success when applied in an early stage. Staying to give her assistance until a considerable improvement had taken place in the child, our servant then hurried home to her mistress. Agnes, it may be imagined, dispatched her back with such further and more precise directions as in a very short time availed to re-establish the child in convalescence. These practical services, and the messages of maternal sympathy repeatedly conveyed from Agnes, had completely won the heart of the grateful Hungarian, and she announced her intention of calling with her little boy, to make her personal acknowledgments for the kindness which had been shown to her. She did so, and we were as much impressed by the sultana-like style of her Oriental beauty, as she, on her part, was touched and captivated by the youthful loveliness of my angelic wife. After sitting for above an hour, during which time she talked with a simplicity and good feeling that struck us as remarkable in a person professing an art usually connected with so much of conscious fraud, she rose to take her leave. I must mention that she had previously had our little boy sitting on her knee, and had at intervals thrown a hasty glance upon the palms of his hands. On parting, Agnes, with her usual frankness, held out her hand. The Hungarian took it with an air of sad solemnity, pressed it fervently, and said:—'Lady, it is my part in this life to look behind the curtain of fate; and oftentimes I see such sights in futurity—some near, some far off—as willingly I would not see. For you, young and charming lady, looking like that angel which you are, no destiny can be equal to your deserts. Yet sometimes, true it is, God sees not as man sees; and he ordains, after his unfathomable counsels, to the heavenly-minded a portion in heaven, and to the children whom he loves a rest and a haven not built with hands. Something that I have seen dimly warns me to look no farther. Yet, if you desire it, I will do my office, and I will read for you with truth the lines of fate as they are written upon your hands.' Agnes was a little startled, or even shocked, by this solemn address; but, in a minute or so, a mixed feeling—one half of which was curiosity, and the other half a light-hearted mockery of her own mysterious awe in the presence of what she had been taught to view as either fraud or insanity—prompted her playfully to insist upon the fullest application of the Hungarian's art to her own case; nay, she would have the hands of our little Francis read and interpreted as well as her own, and she desired to hear the full professional judgment delivered without suppression or softening of its harshest awards. She laughed whilst she said all this; but she also trembled a little. The Hungarian first took the hand of our young child, and perused it with a long and steady scrutiny. She said nothing, but sighed heavily as she resigned it. She then took the hand of Agnes—looked bewildered and aghast—then gazed piteously from Agnes to her child—and at last, bursting into tears, began to move steadily out of the room. I followed her hastily, and remonstrated upon this conduct, by pointing her attention to the obvious truth—that these mysterious suppressions and insinuations, which left all shadowy and indistinct, were far more alarming than the most definite denunciations. Her answer yet rings in my ear:—'Why should I make myself odious to you and to your innocent wife? Messenger of evil I am, and have been to many; but evil I will not prophecy to her. Watch and pray! Much may be done by effectual prayer. Human means, fleshly arms, are vain. There is an enemy in the house of life,' [here she quitted her palmistry for the language of astrology;] 'there is a frightful danger at hand, both for your wife and your child. Already on that dark ocean, over which we are all sailing, I can see dimly the point at which the enemy's course shall cross your wife's. There is but little interval remaining—not many hours. All is finished; all is accomplished;

and already he is almost up with the darlings of your heart. Be vigilant, be vigilant, and yet look not to yourself, but to Heaven, for deliverance.'

This woman was not an impostor: she spoke and uttered her oracles under a wild sense of possession by some superior being, and of mystic compulsion to say what she would have willingly left unsaid; and never yet, before or since, have I seen the light of sadness settle with so solemn an expression into human eyes as when she dropped my wife's hand, and refused to deliver that burden of prophetic wo with which she believed herself to be inspired.

The prophetess departed; and what mood of mind did she leave behind her in Agnes and myself? Naturally there was a little drooping of spirits at first; the solemnity and the heart-felt sincerity of fear and grief which marked her demeanor, made it impossible, at the moment when we were just fresh from their natural influences, that we should recoil into our ordinary spirits. But with the inevitable elasticity of youth and youthful gaiety we soon did so; we could not attempt to persuade ourselves that there had been any conscious fraud or any attempt at scenical effect in the Hungarian's conduct. She had no motive for deceiving us; she had refused all offerings of money, and her whole visit had evidently been made under an overflow of the most grateful feelings for the attentions shown to her child. We acquitted her, therefore, of sinister intentions; and with our feelings of jealousy, feelings in which we had been educated, towards everything that tended to superstition, we soon agreed to think her some gentle maniac or sad enthusiast, suffering under some form of morbid melancholy. Forty-eight hours, with two nights' sleep, sufficed to restore the wonted equilibrium of our spirits; and that interval brought us onwards to the 6th of April—the day on which, as I have already said, my story

properly commences.

On that day, on that lovely 6th of April, such as I have described it, that 6th of April, about nine o'clock in the morning, we were seated at breakfast near the open window—we, that is, Agnes, myself, and little Francis; the freshness of morning spirits rested upon us; the golden light of the morning sun illuminated the room; incense was floating through the air from the gorgeous flowers within and without the house; there in youthful happiness we sat gathered together, a family of love, and there we never sat again. Never again were we three gathered together, nor ever shall be, so long as the sun and its golden light—the morning and the evening—the earth and its flowers endure.

Often have I occupied myself in recalling every circumstance the most trivial of this the final morning of what merits to be called my life. Eleven o'clock, I remember, was striking when Agnes came into my study, and said that she would go into the city, (for we lived in a quite rural suburb,) that she would execute some trifling commissions which she had received from a friend in the country, and would be at home again between one and two for a stroll which we had agreed to take in the neighboring meadows. About twenty minutes after this she again came into my study dressed for going abroad; for such was my admiration of her, that I had a fancy—fancy it must have been, and yet still I felt it to be real—that under every change she looked best; if she put on a shawl, then a shawl became the most feminine of ornaments; if she laid aside her shawl and her bonnet, then how nymph-like she seemed in her undisguised and unadorned beauty! Full-dress seemed for the time to be best, as bringing forward into relief the splendor of her person, and allowing the exposure of her arms; a simple morning-dress, again, seemed better still, as fitted to call out the childlike innocence of her face, by confining the attention to that. But all these are feelings of fond and blind affection, hanging with rapture over the object of something too like idolatry. God knows, if that be a sin, I was but too profound a sinner; yet sin it never was, sin it could not be, to adore a beauty such as thine, my Agnes. Neither was it her beauty by itself, and that only, which I sought at such times to admire; there was a peculiar sort of double relation in which she stood at moments of pleasurable expectation and excitement, since our little Francis had become of an age to join our party, which made some aspects of her character trebly interesting. She was a wife—and wife to one whom she looked up to as her superior in understanding and in knowledge of the world, whom, therefore, she leaned to for protection. On the other hand, she was also a mother. Whilst, therefore, to her child she supported the matronly part of guide, and the air of an experienced person; to me she wore, ingenuously and without disguise, the part of a child herself, with all the giddy hopes and unchastised imaginings of that buoyant

age. This double character, one aspect of which looks towards her husband and one to her children, sits most gracefully upon many a young wife whose heart is pure and innocent; and the collision between the two separate parts imposed by duty on the one hand, by extreme youth on the other, the one telling her that she is a responsible head of a family and the depository of her husband's honor in its tenderest and most vital interests, the other telling her, through the liveliest language of animal sensibility, and through the very pulses of her blood, that she is herself a child; this collision gives an inexpressible charm to the whole demeanor of many a young married woman, making her other fascinations more touching to her husband, and deepening the admiration she excites; and the more so, as it is a collision which cannot exist except among the very innocent. Years, at any rate, will irresistibly remove this peculiar charm, and gradually replace it by the graces of the matronly character. But in Agnes this change had not yet been effected, partly from nature, and partly from the extreme seclusion of her life. Hitherto she still retained the unaffected expression of her childlike nature; and so lovely in my eyes was this perfect exhibition of natural feminine character, that she rarely or never went out alone upon any little errand to town which might require her to rely upon her own good sense and courage, that she did not previously come to exhibit herself before me. Partly this was desired by me in that lover-like feeling of admiration already explained, which leads one to court the sight of a beloved object under every change of dress, and under all effects of novelty. Partly it was the interest I took in that exhibition of sweet timidity, and almost childish apprehensiveness, half disguised or imperfectly acknowledged by herself, which (in the way I have just explained) so touchingly contrasted with (and for that very reason so touchingly drew forth) her matronly character. But I hear some objector say at this point, ought not this very timidity, founded (as in part at least it was) upon inexperience and conscious inability to face the dangers of the world, to have suggested reasons for not leaving her to her own protection? And does it not argue, on my part, an arrogant or too blind a confidence in the durability of my happiness, as though charmed against assaults, and liable to no shocks of sudden revolution? I reply that, from the very constitution of society, and the tone of manners in the city which we inhabited, there seemed to be a moral impossibility that any dangers of consequence should meet her in the course of those brief absences from my protection, which only were possible; that even to herself any dangers, of a nature to be anticipated under the known circumstances of the case, seemed almost imaginary; that even she acknowledged a propriety in being trained, by slight and brief separations from my guardianship, to face more boldly those cases of longer separation and of more absolute consignment to her own resources which circumstances might arise to create necessarily, and perhaps abruptly. And it is evident that, had she been the wife of any man engaged in the duties of a profession, she might have been summoned from the very first, and without the possibility of any such gradual training, to the necessity of relying almost singly upon her own courage and discretion. For the other question, whether I did not depend too blindly and presumptuously upon my good luck in not at least affording her my protection so long as nothing occurred to make it impossible? I may reply, most truly, that all my feelings ran naturally in the very opposite channel. So far from confiding too much in my luck, in the present instance I was engaged in a task of writing upon some points of business which could not admit of further delay; but now, and at all times, I had a secret aversion to seeing so gentle a creature thrown even for an hour upon her own resources, though in situations which scarcely seemed to admit of any occasion for taxing those resources; and often I have felt anger towards myself for what appeared to be an irrational or effeminate timidity, and have struggled with my own mind upon occasions like the present, when I knew that I could not have acknowledged my tremors to a friend without something like shame, and a fear to excite his ridicule. No; if in anything I ran into excess, it was in this very point of anxiety as to all that regarded my wife's security. Her good sense,

her prudence, her courage, (for courage she had in the midst of her timidity,) her dignity of manner, the more impressive from the childlike character of her countenance, all should have combined to reassure me, and yet they did not. I was still anxious for her safety to an irrational extent; and to sum up the whole in a most weighty line of Shakspeare, I lived under the constant presence of a feeling which only that great observer of human nature (so far as I am aware) has ever noticed, viz., that merely the excess of my happiness made me jealous of its ability to last, and in that extent less capable of enjoying it; that in fact the prelibation of my tears, as a homage to its fragility, was drawn forth by my very sense that my felicity was too exquisite; or, in the words of the great master

'I wept to have' [absolutely, by anticipation, shed tears in  
possessing] 'what I so feared to lose.'

Thus end my explanations, and I now pursue my narrative: Agnes, as I have said, came into my room again before leaving the house—we conversed for five minutes—we parted—she went out—her last words being that she would return at half-past one o'clock; and not long after that time, if ever mimic bells—bells of rejoicing, or bells of mourning, are heard in desert spaces of the air, and (as some have said) in unreal worlds, that mock our own, and repeat, for ridicule, the vain and unprofitable motions of man, then too surely, about this hour, began to toll the funeral knell of my earthly happiness—its final hour had sounded.

One o'clock had arrived; fifteen minutes after, I strolled into the garden, and began to look over the little garden-gate in expectation of every moment descriing Agnes in the distance. Half an hour passed, and for ten minutes more I was tolerably quiet. From this time till half-past two I became constantly more agitated—agitated, perhaps, is too strong a word—but I was restless and anxious beyond what I should have chosen to acknowledge. Still I kept arguing, What is half an hour? what is an hour? A thousand things might have occurred to cause that delay, without needing to suppose any accident; or, if an accident, why not a very trifling one? She may have slightly hurt her foot—she may have slightly sprained her ankle. 'Oh, doubtless,' I exclaimed to myself, 'it will be a mere trifle, or perhaps nothing at all.' But I remember that, even whilst I was saying this, I took my hat and walked with nervous haste into the little quiet lane upon which our garden-gate opened. The lane led by a few turnings, and after a course of about five hundred yards, into a broad high-road, which even at that day had begun to assume the character of a street, and allowed an unobstructed range of view in the direction of the city for at least a mile. Here I stationed myself, for the air was so clear that I could distinguish dress and figure to a much greater distance than usual. Even on such a day, however, the remote distance was hazy and indistinct, and at any other season I should have been diverted with the various mistakes I made. From occasional combinations of color, modified by light and shade, and of course powerfully assisted by the creative state of the eye under this nervous apprehensiveness, I continued to shape into images of Agnes forms without end, that upon nearer approach presented the most grotesque contrasts to her impressive appearance. But I

had ceased even to comprehend the ludicrous; my agitation was now so overruling and engrossing that I lost even my intellectual sense of it; and now first I understood practically and feelingly the anguish of hope alternating with disappointment, as it may be supposed to act upon the poor shipwrecked seaman, alone and upon a desolate coast, straining his sight for ever to the fickle element which has betrayed him, but which only can deliver him, and with his eyes still tracing in the far distance,

'Ships, dim-discover'd, dropping from the clouds,'—

which a brief interval of suspense still for ever disperses into hollow pageants of air or vapor. One deception melted away only to be succeeded by another; still I fancied that at last to a certainty I could descry the tall figure of Agnes, her gipsy hat, and even the peculiar elegance of her walk. Often I went so far as to laugh at myself, and even to tax my recent fears with unmanliness and effeminacy, on recollecting the audible throbbings of my heart, and the nervous palpitations which had besieged me; but these symptoms, whether effeminate or not, began to come back tumultuously under the gloomy doubts that succeeded almost before I had uttered this self-reproach. Still I found myself mocked and deluded with false hopes; yet still I renewed my quick walk, and the intensity of my watch for that radiant form that was fated never more to be seen returning from the cruel city.

It was nearly half-past three, and therefore close upon two hours beyond the time fixed by Agnes for her return, when I became absolutely incapable of supporting the further torture of suspense, and I suddenly took the resolution of returning home and concerting with my female servants some energetic measures, though what I could hardly say, on behalf of their mistress. On entering the garden-gate I met our little child Francis, who unconsciously inflicted a pang upon me which he neither could have meditated nor have understood. I passed him at his play, perhaps even unaware of his presence, but he recalled me to that perception by crying aloud that he had just seen his mamma.

'When—where?' I asked convulsively.

'Up stairs in her bedroom,' was his instantaneous answer.

His manner was such as forbade me to suppose that he could be joking; and, as it was barely possible (though, for reasons well known to me, in the highest degree improbable) that Agnes might have returned by a by-path, which, leading through a dangerous and disreputable suburb, would not have coincided at any one point with the public road where I had been keeping my station. I sprang forward into the house, up stairs, and in rapid succession into every room where it was likely that she might be found; but everywhere there was a dead silence, disturbed only by myself, for, in my growing confusion of thought, I

believe that I rang the bell violently in every room I entered. No such summons, however, was needed, for the servants, two of whom at the least were most faithful creatures, and devotedly attached to their young mistress, stood ready of themselves to come and make inquiries of me as soon as they became aware of the alarming fact, that I had returned without her.

Until this moment, though having some private reasons for surprise that she should have failed to come into the house for a minute or two at the hour prefixed, in order to make some promised domestic arrangements for the day, they had taken it for granted that she must have met with me at some distance from home—and that either the extreme beauty of the day had beguiled her of all petty household recollections, or (as a conjecture more in harmony with past experiences) that my impatience and solicitations had persuaded her to lay aside her own plans for the moment at the risk of some little domestic inconvenience. Now, however, in a single instant vanished every mode of accounting for their mistress's absence; and the consternation of our looks communicated contagiously, by the most unerring of all languages, from each to the other what thoughts were uppermost in our panic-stricken hearts. If to any person it should seem that our alarm was disproportioned to the occasion, and not justified at least by anything as yet made known to us, let that person consider the weight due to the two following facts: First, that from the recency of our settlement in this neighborhood, and from the extreme seclusion of my wife's previous life at a vast distance from the metropolis, she had positively no friends on her list of visitors who resided in this great capital; secondly, and far above all beside, let him remember the awful denunciations, so unexpectedly tallying with this alarming and mysterious absence, of the Hungarian prophetess; these had been slighted—almost dismissed from our thoughts; but now in sudden reaction they came back upon us with a frightful power to lacerate and to sting—the shadowy outline of a spiritual agency, such as that which could at all predict the events, combining in one mysterious effect, with the shadowy outline of those very predictions. The power, that could have predicted, was as dim and as hard to grasp as was the precise nature of the evil that had been predicted.

An icy terror froze my blood at this moment when I looked at the significant glances, too easily understood by me, that were exchanged between the servants. My mouth had been for the last two hours growing more and more parched, so that at present, from mere want of moisture, I could not separate my lips to speak. One of the women saw the vain efforts I was making, and hastily brought me a glass of water. With the first recovery of speech, I asked them what little Francis had meant by saying that he had seen his mother in her bedroom. Their reply was, that they were as much at a loss to discover his meaning as I was; that he had made the same assertion to them, and with so much earnestness, that they had, all in succession, gone up stairs to look for her, and with the fullest expectation of finding her. This was a mystery which remained such to the very last; there was no doubt whatsoever that the child believed himself to have seen his mother; that he could not have seen her in her human bodily presence, there is as little doubt as there is, alas! that in this world he never did see her again. The poor child constantly adhered to his story, and with a circumstantiality far beyond all power of invention that could be presumed in an artless infant. Every attempt at puzzling him or entangling him in contradictions by means of cross-examination was but labor thrown away; though indeed, it is true enough that for those attempts, as will soon be seen, there was but a brief interval allowed.



Not dwelling upon this subject at present, I turned to Hannah—a woman who held the nominal office of cook in our little establishment, but whose real duties had been much more about her mistress's person—and with a searching look of appeal I asked her whether, in this moment of trial, when (as she might see) I was not so perfectly master of myself as perhaps always to depend upon seeing what was best to be done, she would consent to accompany me into the city, and take upon herself those obvious considerations of policy or prudence which might but too easily escape my mind, darkened, and likely to be darkened, as to its power of discernment by the hurricane of affliction now too probably at hand. She answered my appeal with the fervor I expected from what I had already known of her character. She was a woman of a strong, fiery, perhaps I might say of heroic mind, supported by a courage that was absolutely indomitable, and by a strength of bodily frame very unusual in a woman, and beyond the promise even of her person. She had suffered as deep a wrench in her own affections as a human being can suffer; she had lost her one sole child, a fair-haired boy of most striking beauty and interesting disposition, at the age of seventeen, and by the worst of all possible fates; he lived (as we did at that time) in a large commercial city overflowing with profligacy, and with temptations of every order; he had been led astray; culpable he had been, but by very much the least culpable of the set into which accident had thrown him, as regarded acts and probable intentions; and as regarded palliations from childish years, from total inexperience, or any other alleviating circumstances that could be urged, having everything to plead—and of all his accomplices the only one who had anything to plead. Interest, however, he had little or none; and whilst some hoary villains of the party, who happened to be more powerfully befriended, were finally allowed to escape with a punishment little more than nominal, he and two others were selected as sacrifices to the offended laws. They suffered capitally. All three behaved well; but the poor boy in particular, with a courage, a resignation, and a meekness, so distinguished and beyond his years as to attract the admiration and the liveliest sympathy of the public universally. If strangers could feel in that way, if the mere hardened executioner could be melted at the final scene,—it may be judged to what a fierce and terrific height would ascend the affliction of a doating mother, constitutionally too fervid in her affections. I have heard an official person declare, that the spectacle of her desolation and frantic anguish was the most frightful thing he had ever witnessed, and so harrowing to the feelings, that all who could by their rank venture upon such an irregularity, absented themselves during the critical period from the office which corresponded with the government; for, as I have said, the affair took place in a large provincial city, at a great distance from the capital. All who knew this woman, or who were witnesses to the alteration which one fortnight had wrought in her person as well as her demeanor, fancied it impossible that she could continue to live; or that, if she did, it must be through the giving way of her reason. They proved, however, to be mistaken; or, at least, if (as some thought) her reason did suffer in some degree, this result showed itself in the inequality of her temper, in moody fits of abstraction, and the morbid energy of her manner at times under the absence of all adequate external excitement, rather than in any positive and apparent hallucinations of thought. The charm which had mainly carried off the instant danger to her faculties, was doubtless the intense sympathy which she met with. And in these offices of consolation my wife stood foremost. For, and that was fortunate, she had found herself able, without violence to her own sincerest opinions in the case, to offer precisely that form of sympathy which was most soothing to the angry irritation of the poor mother; not only had she shown a direct interest in the boy, and not a mere interest of reflection from that which she took in the mother, and had expressed it by visits to his dungeon, and by every sort of attention to his comforts which his case called for, or the prison regulations

allowed; not only had she wept with the distracted woman as if for a brother of her own; but, which went farther than all the rest in softening the mother's heart, she had loudly and indignantly proclaimed her belief in the boy's innocence, and in the same tone her sense of the crying injustice committed as to the selection of the victims, and the proportion of the punishment awarded. Others, in the language of a great poet,

'Had pitied her, and not her grief;'

they had either not been able to see, or, from carelessness, had neglected to see, any peculiar wrong done to her in the matter which occasioned her grief,—but had simply felt compassion for her as for one summoned, in a regular course of providential and human dispensation, to face an affliction, heavy in itself, but not heavy from any special defect of equity. Consequently their very sympathy, being so much built upon the assumption that an only child had offended to the extent implied in his sentence, oftentimes clothed itself in expressions which she felt to be not consolations but insults, and, in fact, so many justifications of those whom it relieved her overcharged heart to regard as the very worst of enemies. Agnes, on the other hand, took the very same view of the case as herself; and, though otherwise the gentlest of all gentle creatures, yet here, from the generous fervor of her reverence for justice, and her abhorrence of oppression, she gave herself no trouble to moderate the energy of her language: nor did I, on my part, feeling that substantially she was in the right, think it of importance to dispute about the exact degrees of the wrong done or the indignation due to it. In this way it happened naturally enough that at one and the same time, though little contemplating either of these results, Agnes had done a prodigious service to the poor desolate mother by breaking the force of her misery, as well as by arming the active agencies of indignation against the depressing ones of solitary grief, and for herself had won a most grateful and devoted friend, who would have gone through fire and water to serve her, and was thenceforwards most anxious for some opportunity to testify how deep had been her sense of the goodness shown to her by her benign young mistress, and how incapable of suffering abatement by time. It remains to add, which I have slightly noticed before, that this woman was of unusual personal strength: her bodily frame matched with her intellectual: and I notice this now with the more emphasis, because I am coming rapidly upon ground where it will be seen that this one qualification was of more summary importance to us—did us more 'yeoman's service' at a crisis the most awful—than other qualities of greater name and pretension. Hannah was this woman's Christian name; and her name and her memory are to me amongst the most hallowed of my earthly recollections.

One of her two fellow-servants, known technically amongst us as the 'parlor maid,' was also, but not equally, attached to her mistress; and merely because her nature, less powerfully formed and endowed, did not allow her to entertain or to comprehend any service equally fervid of passion or of impassioned action. She, however, was good, affectionate, and worthy to be trusted. But a third there was, a nursery maid, and therefore more naturally and more immediately standing within the confidence of her mistress—her I could not trust: her I suspected. But of that hereafter. Meantime, Hannah, she upon whom I leaned as upon a staff in all which respected her mistress, ran up stairs, after I had spoken and received

her answer, in order hastily to dress and prepare herself for going out along with me to the city. I did not ask her to be quick in her movements: I knew there was no need: and, whilst she was absent, I took up, in one of my fretful movements of nervousness, a book which was lying upon a side-table: the book fell open of itself at a particular page; and in that, perhaps, there was nothing extraordinary, for it was a little portable edition of *Paradise Lost*; and the page was one which I must naturally have turned to many a time: for to Agnes I had read all the great masters of literature, especially those of modern times; so that few people knew the high classics more familiarly: and as to the passage in question, from its divine beauty I had read it aloud to her, perhaps, on fifty separate occasions. All this I mention to take away any appearance of a vulgar attempt to create omens; but still, in the very act of confessing the simple truth, and thus weakening the marvellous character of the anecdote, I must notice it as a strange instance of the 'Sortes Miltonianæ,'—that precisely at such a moment as this I should find thrown in my way, should feel tempted to take up, and should open, a volume containing such a passage as the following: and observe, moreover, that although the volume, once being taken up, would naturally open where it had been most frequently read, there were, however, many passages which had been read as frequently—or more so. The particular passage upon which I opened at this moment was that most beautiful one in which the fatal morning separation is described between Adam and his bride—that separation so pregnant with wo, which eventually proved the occasion of the mortal transgression—the last scene between our first parents at which both were innocent and both were happy—although the superior intellect already felt, and, in the slight altercation preceding this separation, had already expressed a dim misgiving of some coming change: these are the words, and in depth of pathos they have rarely been approached:—

'Oft he to her his charge of quick return  
Repeated; she to him as oft engag'd  
To be returned by noon amid the bow'r,  
And all things in best order to invite  
Noon-tide repast, or afternoon's repose.  
Oh much deceived, much failing, hapless Eve!  
Of thy presumed return, event perverse!  
Thou never from that hour in Paradise  
Found'st either sweet repast, or sound repose.'

'My Eve!' I exclaimed, 'partner in my paradise, where art thou? Much failing thou wilt not be found, nor much deceived; innocent in any case thou art; but, alas! too surely by this time hapless, and the victim of some diabolic wickedness.' Thus I murmured to myself; thus I ejaculated; thus I apostrophized my Agnes; then again came a stormier mood. I could not sit still; I could not stand in quiet; I threw the book from me with violence against the wall; I began to hurry backwards and forwards in a short uneasy walk, when

suddenly a sound, a step; it was the sound of the garden-gate opening, followed by a hasty tread. Whose tread? Not for a moment could it be fancied the oread step which belonged to that daughter of the hills—my wife, my Agnes; no, it was the dull massy tread of a man: and immediately there came a loud blow upon the door, and in the next moment, the bell having been found, a furious peal of ringing. Oh coward heart! not for a lease of immortality could I have gone forwards myself. My breath failed me; an interval came in which respiration seemed to be stifled—the blood to halt in its current; and then and there I recognised in myself the force and living truth of that Scriptural description of a heart consciously beset by evil without escape: 'Susannah sighed.' Yes, a long, long sigh—a deep, deep sigh—that is, the natural language by which the over-charged heart utters forth the wo that else would break it. I sighed—oh how profoundly! But that did not give me power to move. Who will go to the door? I whispered audibly. Who is at the door? was the inaudible whisper of my heart. Then might be seen the characteristic differences of the three women. That one, whom I suspected, I heard raising an upper window to look out and reconnoitre. The affectionate Rachael, on the other hand, ran eagerly down stairs; but Hannah, half dressed, even her bosom exposed, passed her like a storm; and before I heard any sound of opening a door, I saw from the spot where I stood the door already wide open, and a man in the costume of a policeman. All that he said I could not hear; but this I heard—that I was wanted at the police office, and had better come off without delay. He seemed then to get a glimpse of me, and to make an effort towards coming nearer; but I slunk away, and left to Hannah the task of drawing from him any circumstances which he might know. But apparently there was not much to tell, or rather, said I, there is too much, the much absorbs the many; some one mighty evil transcends and quells all particulars. At length the door was closed, and the man was gone. Hannah crept slowly along the passage, and looked in hesitatingly. Her very movements and stealthy pace testified that she had heard nothing which, even by comparison, she could think good news. 'Tell me not now, Hannah,' I said; 'wait till we are in the open air.' She went up stairs again. How short seemed the time till she descended! how I longed for further respite! 'Hannah!' I said at length when we were fairly moving upon the road, 'Hannah! I am too sure you have nothing good to tell. But now tell me the worst, and let that be in the fewest words possible.'

'Sir,' she said, 'we had better wait until we reach the office; for really I could not understand the man. He says that my mistress is detained upon some charge; but what, I could not at all make out. He was a man that knew something of you, Sir, I believe, and he wished to be civil, and kept saying, "Oh! I dare say it will turn out nothing at all, many such charges are made idly and carelessly, and some maliciously." "But what charges?" I cried, and then he wanted to speak privately to you. But I told him that of all persons he must not speak to you, if he had anything painful to tell; for that you were too much disturbed already, and had been for some hours, out of anxiety and terror about my mistress, to bear much more. So, when he heard that, he was less willing to speak freely than before. He might prove wrong, he said; he might give offence; things might turn out far otherwise than according to first appearances; for his part, he could not believe anything amiss of so sweet a lady. And after all, it would be better to wait till we reached the office.'

Thus much then was clear—Agnes was under some accusation. This was already worse than the worst I had anticipated. 'And then,' said I, thinking aloud to Hannah, 'one of two things is apparent to me; either

the accusation is one of pure hellish malice, without a color of probability or the shadow of a foundation, and that way, alas! I am driven in my fears by that Hungarian woman's prophecy; or, which but for my desponding heart I should be more inclined to think, the charge has grown out of my poor wife's rustic ignorance as to the usages then recently established by law with regard to the kind of money that could be legally tendered. This, however, was a suggestion that did not tend to alleviate my anxiety; and my nervousness had mounted to a painful, almost to a disabling degree, by the time we reached the office. Already on our road thither some parties had passed us who were conversing with eagerness upon the case: so much we collected from the many and ardent expressions about 'the lady's beauty,' though the rest of such words as we could catch were ill calculated to relieve my suspense. This, then, at least, was certain—that my poor timid Agnes had already been exhibited before a tumultuous crowd; that her name and reputation had gone forth as a subject of discussion for the public; and that the domestic seclusion and privacy within which it was her matronly privilege to move had already undergone a rude violation.

The office, and all the purlieu of the office, were occupied by a dense crowd. That, perhaps, was always the case, more or less, at this time of day; but at present the crowd was manifestly possessed by a more than ordinary interest; and there was a unity in this possessing interest; all were talking on the same subject, the case in which Agnes had so recently appeared in some character or other; and by this time it became but too certain in the character of an accused person. Pity was the prevailing sentiment amongst the mob; but the opinions varied much as to the probable criminality of the prisoner. I made my way into the office. The presiding magistrates had all retired for the afternoon, and would not reassemble until eight o'clock in the evening. Some clerks only or officers of the court remained, who were too much harassed by applications for various forms and papers connected with the routine of public business, and by other official duties which required signatures or attestations, to find much leisure for answering individual questions. Some, however, listened with a marked air of attention to my earnest request for the circumstantial details of the case, but finally referred me to a vast folio volume, in which were entered all the charges, of whatever nature, involving any serious tendency—in fact, all that exceeded a misdemeanor—in the regular chronological succession according to which they came before the magistrate. Here, in this vast calendar of guilt and misery, amidst the aliases or cant designations of ruffians, prostitutes, felons, stood the description, at full length, Christian and surnames all properly registered, of my Agnes—of her whose very name had always sounded to my ears like the very echo of mountain innocence, purity, and pastoral simplicity. Here in another column stood the name and residence of her accuser. I shall call him Barratt, for that was amongst his names, and a name by which he had at one period of his infamous life been known to the public, though not his principal name, or the one which he had thought fit to assume at this era. James Barratt, then, as I shall here call him, was a haberdasher—keeping a large and conspicuous shop in a very crowded and what was then considered a fashionable part of the city. The charge was plain and short. Did I live to read it? It accused Agnes M—— of having on that morning secreted in her muff, and feloniously carried away, a valuable piece of Mechlin lace, the property of James Barratt. And the result of the first examination was thus communicated in a separate column, written in red ink—'Remanded to the second day after to-morrow for final examination.' Everything in this sin-polluted register was in manuscript; but at night the records of each day were regularly transferred to a printed journal, enlarged by comments and explanatory descriptions from some one of the clerks, whose province it was to furnish this intelligence to the public journals. On that same night, therefore, would go forth to the world such an account of the case, and such a description of my

wife's person, as would inevitably summon to the next exhibition of her misery, as by special invitation and advertisement, the whole world of this vast metropolis—the idle, the curious, the brutal, the hardened amateur in spectacles of wo, and the benign philanthropist who frequents such scenes with the purpose of carrying alleviation to their afflictions. All alike, whatever might be their motives or the spirit of their actions, would rush (as to some grand festival of curiosity and sentimental luxury) to this public martyrdom of my innocent wife.

Meantime, what was the first thing to be done? Manifestly, to see Agnes: her account of the affair might suggest the steps to be taken. Prudence, therefore, at any rate, prescribed this course; and my heart would not have tolerated any other. I applied, therefore, at once, for information as to the proper mode of effecting this purpose without delay. What was my horror at learning that, by a recent regulation of all the police-offices, under the direction of the public minister who presided over that department of the national administration, no person could be admitted to an interview with any accused party during the progress of the official examinations; or, in fact, until the final committal of the prisoner for trial. This rule was supposed to be attended by great public advantages, and had rarely been relaxed—never, indeed, without a special interposition of the police minister authorizing its suspension. But was the exclusion absolute and universal? Might not, at least, a female servant, simply as the bearer of such articles as were indispensable to female delicacy and comfort, have access to her mistress? No; the exclusion was total and unconditional. To argue the point was manifestly idle; the subordinate officers had no discretion in the matter; nor, in fact, had any other official person, whatever were his rank, except the supreme one; and to him I neither had any obvious means of introduction, nor (in case of obtaining such an introduction) any chance of success; for the spirit of the rule, I foresaw it would be answered, applied with especial force to cases like the present.

Mere human feelings of pity, sympathy with my too visible agitation, superadded to something of perhaps reverence for the blighting misery that was now opening its artillery upon me—for misery has a privilege, and everywhere is felt to be a holy thing—had combined to procure for me some attention and some indulgence hitherto. Answers had been given with precision, explanations made at length, and anxiety shown to satisfy my inquiries. But this could not last; the inexorable necessities of public business coming back in a torrent upon the official people after this momentary interruption, forbade them to indulge any further consideration for an individual case, and I saw that I must not stay any longer. I was rapidly coming to be regarded as a hinderance to the movement of public affairs; and the recollection that I might again have occasion for some appeal to these men in their official characters, admonished me not to abuse my privilege of the moment. After returning thanks, therefore, for the disposition shown to oblige me, I retired.

Slowly did I and Hannah retrace our steps. Hannah sustained, in the tone of her spirits, by the extremity of her anger, a mood of feeling which I did not share. Indignation was to her in the stead of consolation and hope. I, for my part, could not seek even a momentary shelter from my tempestuous affliction in that temper of mind. The man who could accuse my Agnes, and accuse her of such a crime, I felt to be a

monster; and in my thoughts he was already doomed to a bloody atonement (atonement! alas! what atonement!) whenever the time arrived that her cause would not be prejudiced, or the current of public feeling made to turn in his favor by investing him with the semblance of an injured or suffering person. So much was settled in my thoughts with the stern serenity of a decree issuing from a judgment-seat. But that gave no relief, no shadow of relief, to the misery which was now consuming me. Here was an end, in one hour, to the happiness of a life. In one hour it had given way, root and branch—had melted like so much frost-work, or a pageant of vapory exhalations. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and yet for ever and ever, I comprehended the total ruin of my situation. The case, as others might think, was yet in suspense; and there was room enough for very rational hopes, especially where there was an absolute certainty of innocence. Total freedom from all doubt on that point seemed to justify almost more than hopes. This might be said, and most people would have been more or less consoled by it. I was not. I felt as certain, as irredeemably, as hopelessly certain of the final results as though I had seen the record in the books of Heaven. 'Hope nothing,' I said to myself; 'think not of hope in this world, but think only how best to walk steadily, and not to reel like a creature wanting discourse of reason, or incapable of religious hopes under the burden which it has pleased God to impose, and which in this life cannot be shaken off. The countenance of man is made to look upward and to the skies. Thither also point henceforwards your heart and your thoughts. Never again let your thoughts travel earthwards. Settle them on the heavens, to which your Agnes is already summoned. The call is clear, and not to be mistaken. Little in her fate now depends upon you, or upon anything that man can do. Look, therefore, to yourself; see that you make not shipwreck of your heavenly freight because your earthly freight is lost; and miss not, by any acts of wild and presumptuous despair, that final reunion with your Agnes, which can only be descried through vistas that open through the heavens.'

Such were the thoughts, thoughts often made audible, which came spontaneously like oracles from afar, as I strode homewards with Hannah by my side. Her, meantime, I seemed to hear; for at times I seemed and I intended to answer her. But answer her I did not; for not ten words of all that she said did I really and consciously hear. How I went through that night is more entirely a blank in my memory, more entirely a chapter of chaos and the confusion of chaos, than any other passage the most impressive in my life. If I even slumbered for a moment, as at intervals I did sometimes, though never sitting down, but standing or pacing about throughout the night, and if in this way I attained a momentary respite from self-consciousness, no sooner had I reached this enviable state of oblivion, than some internal sting of irritation as rapidly dispersed the whole fickle fabric of sleep; and as if the momentary trance—this fugitive beguilement of my wo—had been conceded by a demon's subtle malice only with the purpose of barbing the pang, by thus forcing it into a stronger relief through the insidious peace preceding it. It is a well known and most familiar experience to all the sons and daughters of affliction, that under no circumstances is the piercing, lancinating torment of a recent calamity felt so keenly as in the first moments of awaking in the morning from the night's slumbers. Just at the very instant when the clouds of sleep, and the whole fantastic illusions of dreaminess are dispersing, just as the realities of life are re-assuming their steadfast forms—re-shaping themselves—and settling anew into those fixed relations which they are to preserve throughout the waking hours; in that particular crisis of transition from the unreal to the real, the wo which besieges the brain and the life-springs at the heart rushes in afresh amongst the other crowd of realities, and has at the moment of restoration literally the force and liveliness of a new birth—the very same pang, and no whit feebler, as that which belonged to it when it was first

made known. From the total hush of oblivion which had buried it and sealed it up, as it were, during the sleeping hours, it starts into sudden life on our first awaking, and is to all intents and purposes a new and not an old affliction—one which brings with it the old original shock which attended its first annunciation.

That night—that first night of separation from my wife—how it passed, I know not; I know only that it passed, I being in our common bed-chamber, that holiest of all temples that are consecrated to human attachments, whenever the heart is pure of man and woman, and the love is strong—I being in that bedchamber, once the temple now the sepulchre of our happiness,—I there, and my wife—my innocent wife—in a dungeon. As the morning light began to break, somebody knocked at the door; it was Hannah: she took my hand—misery levels all feeble distinctions of station, sex, age—she noticed my excessive feverishness, and gravely remonstrated with me upon the necessity there was that I should maintain as much health as possible for the sake of 'others,' if not for myself. She then brought me some tea, which refreshed me greatly; for I had tasted nothing at all beyond a little water since the preceding morning's breakfast. This refreshment seemed to relax and thaw the stiff frozen state of cheerless, rayless despair in which I had passed the night; I became susceptible of consolation—that consolation which lies involved in kindness and gentleness of manner—if not susceptible more than before of any positive hope. I sat down; and, having no witnesses to my weakness but this kind and faithful woman, I wept, and I found a relief in tears; and she, with the ready sympathy of woman, wept along with me. All at once she ventured upon the circumstances (so far as she had been able to collect them from the reports of those who had been present at the examination) of our calamity. There was little indeed either to excite or to gratify any interest or curiosity separate from the personal interest inevitably connected with a case to which there were two such parties as a brutal, sensual, degraded ruffian, on one side in character of accuser, and on the other as defendant, a meek angel of a woman, timid and fainting from the horrors of her situation, and under the licentious gaze of the crowd—yet, at the same time, bold in conscious innocence, and in the very teeth of the suspicions which beset her, winning the good opinion, as well as the good wishes of all who saw her. There had been at this first examination little for her to say beyond the assigning her name, age, and place of abode; and here it was fortunate that her own excellent good sense concurred with her perfect integrity and intuitive hatred of all indirect or crooked courses in prompting her to an undisguised statement of the simple truth, without a momentary hesitation or attempt either at evasion or suppression. With equally good intentions in similar situations many a woman has seriously injured her cause by slight evasions of the entire truth, where nevertheless her only purpose has been the natural and ingenuous one of seeking to save the reputation untainted of a name which she felt to have been confided to her keeping. The purpose was an honorable one, but erroneously pursued. Agnes fell into no such error. She answered calmly, simply, and truly, to every question put by the magistrates; and beyond that there was little opportunity for her to speak; the whole business of this preliminary examination being confined to the deposition of the accuser as to the circumstances under which he alleged the act of felonious appropriation to have taken place. These circumstances were perfectly uninteresting, considered in themselves; but amongst them was one which to us had the most shocking interest, from the absolute proof thus furnished of a deep-laid plot against Agnes. But for this one circumstance there would have been a possibility that the whole had originated in error—error growing out of and acting upon a nature originally suspicious, and confirmed perhaps by an unfortunate experience. And in proportion as that was possible, the chances increased that the accuser might, as the examinations advanced, and the winning



character of the accused party began to develop itself, begin to see his error, and to retract his own over-hasty suspicions. But now we saw at a glance that for this hope there was no countenance whatever, since one solitary circumstance sufficed to establish a conspiracy. The deposition bore—that the lace had been secreted and afterwards detected in a muff; now it was a fact as well known to both of us as the fact of Agnes having gone out at all—that she had laid aside her winter's dress for the first time on this genial sunny day. Muff she had not at the time, nor could have had appropriately from the style of her costume in other respects. What was the effect upon us of this remarkable discovery! Of course there died at once the hope of any abandonment by the prosecutor of his purpose; because here was proof of a predetermined plot. This hope died at once; but then, as it was one which never had presented itself to my mind, I lost nothing by which I had ever been solaced. On the other hand, it will be obvious that a new hope at the same time arose to take its place, viz., the reasonable one that by this single detection, if once established, we might raise a strong presumption of conspiracy, and moreover that, as a leading fact or clue, it might serve to guide us in detecting others. Hannah was sanguine in this expectation; and for a moment her hopes were contagiously exciting to mine. But the hideous despondency which in my mind had settled upon the whole affair from the very first, the superstitious presentiment I had of a total blight brooding over the entire harvest of my life and its promises, (tracing itself originally, I am almost ashamed to own, up to that prediction of the Hungarian woman)—denied me steady light, anything—all in short but a wandering ray of hope. It was right, of course, nay, indispensable, that the circumstance of the muff should be strongly insisted upon at the next examination, pressed against the prosecutor, and sifted to the uttermost. An able lawyer would turn this to a triumphant account; and it would be admirable as a means of pre-engaging the good opinion as well as the sympathies of the public in behalf of the prisoner. But, for its final effect—my conviction remained, not to be shaken, that all would be useless; that our doom had gone forth, and was irrevocable.

Let me not linger too much over those sad times. Morning came on as usual; for it is strange, but true, that to the very wretched it seems wonderful that times and seasons should keep their appointed courses in the midst of such mighty overthrows, and such interruption to the courses of their own wonted happiness and their habitual expectations. Why should morning and night, why should all movements in the natural world be so regular, whilst in the moral world all is so irregular and anomalous? Yet the sun and the moon rise and set as usual upon the mightiest revolutions of empire and of worldly fortune that this planet ever beholds; and it is sometimes even a comfort to know that this will be the case. A great criminal, sentenced to an agonizing punishment, has derived a fortitude and a consolation from recollecting that the day would run its inevitable course—that a day after all was but a day—that the mighty wheel of alternate light and darkness must and would revolve—and that the evening star would rise as usual, and shine with its untroubled lustre upon the dust and ashes of what had indeed suffered, and so recently, the most bitter pangs, but would then have ceased to suffer. 'La Journée,' said Damien,

'La journée sera dure, mais elle se passera.'

'—Se passera:' yes, that is true, I whispered to myself; my day also, my season of trial will be hard to bear; but that also will have an end; that also 'se passera.' Thus I talked or thought so long as I thought at all; for the hour was now rapidly approaching, when thinking in any shape would for some time be at an end for me.

That day, as the morning advanced, I went again, accompanied by Hannah, to the police court and to the prison—a vast, ancient, in parts ruinous, and most gloomy pile of building. In those days the administration of justice was, if not more corrupt, certainly in its inferior departments by far more careless than it is at present, and liable to thousands of interruptions and mal-practices, supporting themselves upon old traditional usages which required at least half a century, and the shattering everywhere given to old systems by the French Revolution, together with the universal energy of mind applied to those subjects over the whole length and breadth of Christendom, to approach with any effectual reforms. Knowing this, and having myself had direct personal cognisance of various cases in which bribery had been applied with success, I was not without considerable hope that perhaps Hannah and myself might avail ourselves of this irregular passport through the gates of the prison. And, had the new regulation been of somewhat longer standing, there is little doubt that I should have been found right; unfortunately, as yet it had all the freshness of newborn vigor, and kept itself in remembrance by the singular irritation it excited. Besides this, it was a pet novelty of one particular minister, new to the possession of power, anxious to distinguish himself, proud of his creative functions within the range of his office, and very sensitively jealous on the point of opposition to his mandates. Vain, therefore, on this day were all my efforts to corrupt the jailers; and, in fact, anticipating a time when I might have occasion to corrupt some of them for a more important purpose and on a larger scale, I did not think it prudent to proclaim my character beforehand as one who tampered with such means, and thus to arm against myself those jealousies in official people, which it was so peculiarly important that I should keep asleep.

All that day, however, I lingered about the avenues and vast courts in the precincts of the prison, and near one particular wing of the building, which had been pointed out to me by a jailer as the section allotted to those who were in the situation of Agnes; that is, waiting their final commitment for trial. The building generally he could indicate with certainty, but he professed himself unable to indicate the particular part of it which 'the young woman brought in on the day previous' would be likely to occupy; consequently he could not point out the window from which her cell (her 'cell!' what a word!) would be lighted. 'But, master,' he went on to say, 'I would advise nobody to try that game.' He looked with an air so significant, and at the same time used a gesture so indicative of private understanding, that I at once apprehended his meaning, and assured him that he had altogether misconstrued my drift; that, as to attempts at escape, or at any mode of communicating with the prisoner from the outside, I trusted all that was perfectly needless; and that at any rate in my eyes it was perfectly hopeless. 'Well, master,' he replied, 'that's neither here nor there. You've come down handsomely, that I will say; and where a gentleman acts like a gentleman, and behaves himself as such, I'm not the man to go and split upon him for a word. To be sure it's quite nat'ral that a gentleman—put case that a young woman is his fancy woman—it's nothing but nat'ral that he should want to get her out of such an old rat-hole as this, where many's the fine-timbered creature, both he and she, that has lain to rot, and has never got out of the old trap at all, first or last'—

'How so?' I interrupted him; 'surely they don't detain the corpses of prisoners?' 'Ay, but mind you—put case that he or that she should die in this rat-trap before sentence is past, why then the prison counts them as its own children, and buries them in its own chapel—that old stack of pigeon-holes that you see up yonder to the right hand.' So then, after all, thought I, if my poor Agnes should, in her desolation and solitary confinement to these wretched walls, find her frail strength give way—should the moral horrors of her situation work their natural effect upon her health, and she should chance to die within this dungeon, here within this same dungeon will she lie to the resurrection, and in that case her prison-doors have already closed upon her for ever. The man, who perhaps had some rough kindness in his nature, though tainted by the mercenary feelings too inevitably belonging to his situation, seemed to guess at the character of my ruminations by the change of my countenance, for he expressed some pity for my being 'in so much trouble;' and it seemed to increase his respect for me that this trouble should be directed to the case of a woman, for he appeared to have a manly sense of the peculiar appeal made to the honor and gallantry of man, by the mere general fact of the feebleness and the dependence of woman. I looked at him more attentively in consequence of the feeling tone in which he now spoke, and was surprised that I had not more particularly noticed him before; he was a fine looking, youngish man, with a bold Robin-hood style of figure and appearance; and, morally speaking, he was absolutely transfigured to my eyes by the effect worked upon him for the moment, through the simple calling up of his better nature. However, he recurred to his cautions about the peril in a legal sense of tampering with the windows, bolts, and bars of the old decaying prison; which, in fact, precisely according to the degree in which its absolute power over its prisoners was annually growing less and less, grew more and more jealous of its own reputation, and punished the attempts to break loose with the more severity, in exact proportion as they were the more tempting by the chances of success. I persisted in disowning any schemes of the sort, and especially upon the ground of their hopelessness. But this, on the other hand, was a ground that in his inner thoughts he treated with scorn; and I could easily see that, with a little skilful management of opportunity, I might, upon occasion, draw from him all the secrets he knew as to the special points of infirmity in this old ruinous building. For the present, and until it should certainly appear that there was some use to be derived from this species of knowledge, I forbore to raise superfluous suspicions by availing myself further of his communicative disposition. Taking, however, the precaution of securing his name, together with his particular office and designation in the prison, I parted from him as if to go home, but in fact to resume my sad roamings up and down the precincts of the jail.

What made these precincts much larger than otherwise they would have been, was the circumstance that, by a usage derived from older days, both criminal prisoners and those who were prisoners for debt, equally fell under the custody of this huge caravanserai for the indifferent reception of crime, of misdemeanor, and of misfortune. And those who came under the two first titles, were lodged here through all stages of their connection with public justice; alike when mere objects of vague suspicion to the police, when under examination upon a specific charge, when fully committed for trial, when convicted and under sentence, awaiting the execution of that sentence, and, in a large proportion of cases, even through their final stage of punishment, when it happened to be of any nature compatible with in-door confinement. Hence it arose that the number of those who haunted the prison gates, with or without a title to admission, was enormous; all the relatives, or more properly the acquaintances and connections of the criminal population within the prison, being swelled by all the families of needy debtors who came daily, either to offer the consolation of their society, or to diminish their common expenditure by uniting their

slender establishments. One of the rules applied to the management of this vast multitude that were every day candidates for admission was, that to save the endless trouble as well as risk, perhaps, of opening and shutting the main gates to every successive arrival, periodic intervals were fixed for the admission by wholesale; and as these periods came round every two hours, it would happen at many parts of the day that vast crowds accumulated waiting for the next opening of the gate. These crowds were assembled in two or three large outer courts, in which also were many stalls and booths, kept there upon some local privilege of ancient inheritance, or upon some other plea made good by gifts or bribes—some by Jews and others by Christians, perhaps equally Jewish. Superadded to these stationary elements of this miscellaneous population, were others drawn thither by pure motives of curiosity, so that altogether an almost permanent mob was gathered together in these courts; and amid this mob it was,—from I know not what definite motive, partly because I thought it probable that amongst these people I should hear the cause of Agnes peculiarly the subject of conversation; and so, in fact, it did really happen,—but partly, and even more, I believe, because I now awfully began to shrink from solitude. Tumult I must have, and distraction of thought. Amid this mob, I say, it was that I passed two days. Feverish I had been from the first—and from bad to worse, in such a case, was, at any rate, a natural progress; but, perhaps, also amongst this crowd of the poor, the abjectly wretched, the ill-fed, the desponding, and the dissolute, there might be very naturally a larger body of contagion lurking than according to their mere numerical expectations. There was at that season a very extensive depopulation going on in some quarters of this great metropolis, and in other cities of the same empire, by means of a very malignant typhus. This fever is supposed to be the peculiar product of jails; and though it had not as yet been felt as a scourge and devastator of this particular jail, or at least the consequent mortality had been hitherto kept down to a moderate amount, yet it was highly probable that a certain quantity of contagion, much beyond the proportion of other popular assemblages less uniformly wretched in their composition, was here to be found all day long; and doubtless my excited state, and irritable habit of body, had offered a peculiar predisposition that favored the rapid development of this contagion. However this might be, the result was, that on the evening of the second day which I spent in haunting the purlieus of the prison, (consequently the night preceding the second public examination of Agnes,) I was attacked by ardent fever in such unmitigated fury, that before morning I had lost all command of my intellectual faculties. For some weeks I became a pitiable maniac, and in every sense the wreck of my former self; and seven entire weeks, together with the better half of an eighth week, had passed over my head whilst I lay unconscious of time and its dreadful freight of events, excepting in so far as my disordered brain, by its fantastic coinages, created endless mimicries and mockeries of these events—less substantial, but oftentimes less afflicting, or less agitating. It would have been well for me had my destiny decided that I was not to be recalled to this world of wo. But I had no such happiness in store. I recovered, and through twenty and eight years my groans have recorded the sorrow I feel that I did.

I shall not rehearse circumstantially, and point by point, the sad unfolding, as it proceeded through successive revelations to me, of all which had happened during my state of physical incapacity. When I first became aware that my wandering senses had returned to me, and knew, by the cessation of all throbbings, and the unutterable pains that had so long possessed my brain, that I was now returning from the gates of death, a sad confusion assailed me as to some indefinite cloud of evil that had been hovering

over me at the time when I first fell into a state of insensibility. For a time I struggled vainly to recover the lost connection of my thoughts, and I endeavored ineffectually to address myself to sleep. I opened my eyes, but found the glare of light painful beyond measure. Strength, however, it seemed to me that I had, and more than enough, to raise myself out of bed. I made the attempt, but fell back, almost giddy with the effort. At the sound of the disturbance which I had thus made, a woman whom I did not know came from behind a curtain, and spoke to me. Shrinking from any communication with a stranger, especially one whose discretion I could not estimate in making discoveries to me with the requisite caution, I asked her simply what o'clock it was.

'Eleven in the forenoon,' she replied.

'And what day of the month?'

'The second,' was her brief answer.

I felt almost a sense of shame in adding—; 'The second! but of what month?'

'Of June,' was the startling rejoinder.

On the 8th of April I had fallen ill, and it was now actually the 2d of June. Oh! sickening calculation! revolting register of hours! for in that same moment which brought back this one recollection, perhaps by steadying my brain, rushed back in a torrent all the other dreadful remembrances of the period, and now the more so, because, though the event was still uncertain as regarded my knowledge, it must have become dreadfully certain as regarded the facts of the case, and the happiness of all who were concerned. Alas! one little circumstance too painfully assured me that this event had not been a happy one. Had Agnes been restored to her liberty and her home, where would she have been found but watching at my bed-side? That too certainly I knew, and the inference was too bitter to support.

On this same day, some hours afterwards, upon Hannah's return from the city, I received from her, and heard with perfect calmness, the whole sum of evil which awaited me. Little Francis—she took up her tale at that point—'was with God:' so she expressed herself. He had died of the same fever which had attacked me—had died and been buried nearly five weeks before. Too probably he had caught the infection from me. Almost—such are the caprices of human feeling—almost I could have rejoiced that this young memorial of my vanished happiness had vanished also. It gave me a pang, nevertheless, that

the grave should thus have closed upon him before I had seen his fair little face again. But I steeled my heart to hear worse things than this. Next she went on to inform me that already, on the first or second day of our calamity, she had taken upon herself, without waiting for authority, on observing the rapid approaches of illness in me, and arguing the state of helplessness which would follow, to write off at once a summons in the most urgent terms to the brother of my wife. This gentleman, whom I shall call Pierpoint, was a high-spirited, generous young man as I have ever known. When I say that he was a sportsman, that at one season of the year he did little else than pursue his darling amusement of fox-hunting, for which indeed he had almost a maniacal passion—saying this, I shall already have prejudged him in the opinions of many, who fancy all such persons the slaves of corporeal enjoyments. But, with submission, the truth lies the other way. According to my experience, people of these habits have their bodies more than usually under their command, as being subdued by severe exercise; and their minds, neither better nor worse on an average than those of their neighbors, are more available from being so much more rarely clogged by morbid habits in that uneasy yoke-fellow of the intellectual part—the body. He at all events was a man to justify in his own person this way of thinking; for he was a man not only of sound, but even of bold and energetic intellect, and in all moral respects one whom any man might feel proud to call his friend. This young man, Pierpoint, without delay obeyed the summons; and on being made acquainted with what had already passed, the first step he took was to call upon Barratt, and without further question than what might ascertain his identity, he proceeded to inflict upon him a severe horsewhipping. A worse step on his sister's account he could not have taken. Previously to this the popular feeling had run strongly against Barratt, but now its unity was broken. A new element was introduced into the question: Democratic feelings were armed against this outrage; gentlemen and nobles, it was said, thought themselves not amenable to justice; and again, the majesty of the law was offended at this intrusion upon an affair already under solemn course of adjudication. Everything, however, passes away under the healing hand of time, and this also faded from the public mind. People remembered also that he was a brother, and in that character, at any rate, had a right to some allowances for his intemperance; and what quickened the oblivion of the affair was, which in itself was sufficiently strange, that Barratt did not revive the case in the public mind by seeking legal reparation for his injuries. It was, however, still matter of regret that Pierpoint should have indulged himself in this movement of passion, since undoubtedly it broke and disturbed the else uniform stream of public indignation, by investing the original aggressor with something like the character of an injured person; and therefore with some set-off to plead against his own wantonness of malice;—his malice might now assume the nobler aspect of revenge.

Thus far, in reporting the circumstances, Hannah had dallied—thus far I had rejoiced that she dallied, with the main burden of the wo; but now there remained nothing to dally with any longer—and she rushed along in her narrative, hurrying to tell—I hurrying to hear. A second, a third examination had ensued, then a final committal—all this within a week. By that time all the world was agitated with the case; literally not the city only, vast as that city was, but the nation was convulsed and divided into parties upon the question, Whether the prosecution were one of mere malice or not? The very government of the land was reported to be equally interested, and almost equally divided in opinion. In this state of public feeling came the trial. Image to yourself, oh reader, whosoever you are, the intensity of the excitement which by that time had arisen in all people to be spectators of the scene—then image to yourself the effect of all this, a perfect consciousness that in herself as a centre was settled the whole mighty interest of the

exhibition—that interest again of so dubious and mixed a character—sympathy in some with mere misfortune—sympathy in others with female frailty and guilt, not perhaps founded upon an absolute unwavering belief in her innocence, even amongst those who were most loud and positive as partisans in affirming it,—and then remember that all this hideous scenical display and notoriety settled upon one whose very nature, constitutionally timid, recoiled with the triple agony of womanly shame—of matronly dignity—of insulted innocence, from every mode and shape of public display. Combine all these circumstances and elements of the case, and you may faintly enter into the situation of my poor Agnes. Perhaps the best way to express it at once is by recurring to the case of a young female Christian martyr, in the early ages of Christianity, exposed in the bloody amphitheatre of Rome or Verona, to 'fight with wild beasts,' as it was expressed in mockery—she to fight the lamb to fight with lions! But in reality the young martyr had a fight to maintain, and a fight (in contempt of that cruel mockery) fiercer than the fiercest of her persecutors could have faced perhaps—the combat with the instincts of her own shrinking, trembling, fainting nature. Such a fight had my Agnes to maintain; and at that time there was a large party of gentlemen in whom the gentlemanly instinct was predominant, and who felt so powerfully the cruel indignities of her situation, that they made a public appeal in her behalf. One thing, and a strong one, which they said, was this:—'We all talk and move in this case as if, because the question appears doubtful to some people, and the accused party to some people wears a doubtful character, it would follow that she therefore had in reality a mixed character composed in joint proportions of the best and the worst that is imputed to her. But let us not forget that this mixed character belongs not to her, but to the infirmity of our human judgments—they are mixed—they are dubious—but she is not—she is, or she is not, guilty—there is no middle case—and let us consider for a single moment, that if this young lady (as many among us heartily believe) is innocent, then and upon that supposition let us consider how cruel we should all think the public exposure which aggravates the other injuries (as in that case they must be thought) to which her situation exposes her.' They went on to make some suggestions for the officers of the court in preparing the arrangements for the trial, and some also for the guidance of the audience, which showed the same generous anxiety for sparing the feelings of the prisoner. If these did not wholly succeed in repressing the open avowal of coarse and brutal curiosity amongst the intensely vulgar, at least they availed to diffuse amongst the neutral and indifferent part of the public a sentiment of respect and forbearance which, emanating from high quarters, had a very extensive influence upon most of what met the eye or the ear of my poor wife. She, on the day of trial, was supported by her brother; and by that time she needed support indeed. I was reported to be dying; her little son was dead; neither had she been allowed to see him. Perhaps these things, by weaning her from all further care about life, might have found their natural effect in making her indifferent to the course of the trial, or even to its issue. And so, perhaps, in the main, they did. But at times some lingering sense of outraged dignity, some fitful gleams of old sympathies, 'the hectic of a moment,' came back upon her, and prevailed over the deadening stupor of her grief. Then she shone for a moment into a starry light—sweet and woful to remember. Then——but why linger? I hurry to the close: she was pronounced guilty; whether by a jury or a bench of judges, I do not say—having determined, from the beginning, to give no hint of the land in which all these events happened; neither is that of the slightest consequence. Guilty she was pronounced: but sentence at that time was deferred. Ask me not, I beseech you, about the muff or other circumstances inconsistent with the hostile evidence. These circumstances had the testimony, you will observe, of my own servants only; nay, as it turned out, of one servant exclusively: that naturally diminished their value. And, on the other side, evidence was arrayed, perjury was suborned, that would have wrecked a wilderness of simple truth trusting to its own unaided forces. What followed? Did this judgment of the court settle the opinion of the

public? Opinion of the public! Did it settle the winds? Did it settle the motion of the Atlantic? Wilder, fiercer, and louder grew the cry against the wretched accuser: mighty had been the power over the vast audience of the dignity, the affliction, the perfect simplicity, and the Madonna beauty of the prisoner. That beauty so childlike, and at the same time so saintly, made, besides, so touching in its pathos by means of the abandonment—the careless abandonment and the infinite desolation of her air and manner—would of itself, and without further aid, have made many converts. Much more was done by the simplicity of her statements, and the indifference with which she neglected to improve any strong points in her own favor—the indifference, as every heart perceived, of despairing grief. Then came the manners on the hostile side—the haggard consciousness of guilt, the drooping tone, the bravado and fierce strut which sought to dissemble all this. Not one amongst all the witnesses, assembled on that side, had (by all agreement) the bold natural tone of conscious uprightness. Hence it could not be surprising that the storm of popular opinion made itself heard with a louder and a louder sound. The government itself began to be disturbed; the ministers of the sovereign were agitated; and, had no menaces been thrown out, it was generally understood that they would have given way to the popular voice, now continually more distinct and clamorous. In the midst of all this tumult, obscure murmurs began to arise that Barratt had practised the same or similar villainies in former instances. One case in particular was beginning to be whispered about, which at once threw a light upon the whole affair: it was the case of a young and very beautiful married woman, who had been on the very brink of a catastrophe such as had befallen my own wife, when some seasonable interference, of what nature was not known, had critically delivered her. This case arose 'like a little cloud no bigger than a man's hand,' then spread and threatened to burst in tempest upon the public mind, when all at once, more suddenly even than it had arisen, it was hushed up, or in some way disappeared. But a trifling circumstance made it possible to trace this case:—in after times, when means offered, but unfortunately no particular purpose of good, nor any purpose, in fact, beyond that of curiosity, it was traced; and enough was soon ascertained to have blown to fragments any possible conspiracy emanating from this Barratt, had that been of any further importance. However, in spite of all that money or art could effect, a sullen growl continued to be heard amongst the populace of villainies many and profound that had been effected or attempted by this Barratt; and accordingly, much in the same way as was many years afterwards practised in London, when a hosier had caused several young people to be prosecuted to death for passing forged bank-notes, the wrath of the people showed itself in marking the shop for vengeance upon any favorable occasion offering through fire or riots, and in the mean time in deserting it. These things had been going on for some time when I awoke from my long delirium; but the effect they had produced upon a weak and obstinate and haughty government, or at least upon the weak and obstinate and haughty member of the government who presided in the police administration, was, to confirm and rivet the line of conduct which had been made the object of popular denunciation. More energetically, more scornfully, to express that determination of flying in the face of public opinion and censure, four days before my awakening, Agnes had been brought up to receive her sentence. On that same day (nay, it was said in that same hour,) petitions, very numerous signed, and various petitions from different ranks, different ages, different sexes, were carried up to the throne, praying, upon manifold grounds, but all noticing the extreme doubtfulness of the case, for an unconditional pardon. By whose advice or influence, it was guessed easily, though never exactly ascertained, these petitions were unanimously, almost contemptuously rejected. And to express the contempt of public opinion as powerfully as possible, Agnes was sentenced by the court, reassembled in full pomp, order, and ceremonial costume, to a punishment the severest that the laws allowed—viz. hard labor for ten years. The people raged more than ever; threats public and private were conveyed to the ears



of the minister chiefly concerned in the responsibility, and who had indeed, by empty and ostentatious talking, assumed that responsibility to himself in a way that was perfectly needless.

Thus stood matters when I awoke to consciousness: and this was the fatal journal of the interval—interval so long as measured by my fierce calendar of delirium—so brief measured by the huge circuit of events which it embraced, and their mightiness for evil. Wrath, wrath immeasurable, unimaginable, unmitigable, burned at my heart like a cancer. The worst had come. And the thing which kills a man for action—the living in two climates at once—a torrid and a frigid zone—of hope and fear—that was past. Weak—suppose I were for the moment: I felt that a day or two might bring back my strength. No miserable tremors of hope now shook my nerves: if they shook from that inevitable rocking of the waters that follows a storm, so much might be pardoned to the infirmity of a nature that could not lay aside its fleshly necessities, nor altogether forego its homage to 'these frail elements,' but which by inspiration already lived within a region where no voices were heard but the spiritual voices of transcendent passions—of

'Wrongs unrevenged, and insults unredress'd.'

Six days from that time I was well—well and strong. I rose from bed; I bathed; I dressed; dressed as if I were a bridegroom. And that was in fact a great day in my life. I was to see Agnes. Oh! yes: permission had been obtained from the lordly minister that I should see my wife. Is it possible? Can such condescensions exist? Yes: solicitations from ladies, eloquent notes wet with ducal tears, these had won from the thrice-radiant secretary, redolent of roseate attar, a countersign to some order or other, by which I—yes I—under license of a fop, and supervision of a jailer—was to see and for a time to converse with my own wife.

The hour appointed for the first day's interview was eight o'clock in the evening. On the outside of the jail all was summer light and animation. The sports of children in the streets of mighty cities are but sad, and too painfully recall the circumstances of freedom and breezy nature that are not there. But still the pomp of glorious summer, and the presence, 'not to be put by,' of the everlasting light, that is either always present, or always dawning—these potent elements impregnate the very city life, and the dim reflex of nature which is found at the bottom of well-like streets, with more solemn powers to move and to soothe in summer. I struck upon the prison gates, the first among multitudes waiting to strike. Not because we struck, but because the hour had sounded, suddenly the gate opened; and in we streamed. I, as a visitor for the first time, was immediately distinguished by the jailers, whose glance of the eye is fatally unerring. 'Who was it that I wanted?' At the name a stir of emotion was manifest, even there: the dry bones stirred and moved: the passions outside had long ago passed to the interior of this gloomy prison: and not a man but had his hypothesis on the case; not a man but had almost fought with some comrade (many had literally fought) about the merits of their several opinions.

If any man had expected a scene at this reunion, he would have been disappointed. Exhaustion, and the ravages of sorrow, had left to dear Agnes so little power of animation or of action, that her emotions were rather to be guessed at, both for kind and for degree, than directly to have been perceived. She was in fact a sick patient, far gone in an illness that should properly have confined her to bed; and was as much past the power of replying to my frenzied exclamations, as a dying victim of fever of entering upon a strife of argument. In bed, however, she was not. When the door opened she was discovered sitting at a table placed against the opposite wall, her head pillowed upon her arms, and these resting upon the table. Her beautiful long auburn hair had escaped from its confinement, and was floating over the table and her own person. She took no notice of the disturbance made by our entrance, did not turn, did not raise her head, nor make an effort to do so, nor by any sign whatever intimate that she was conscious of our presence, until the turnkey in a respectful tone announced me. Upon that a low groan, or rather a feeble moan, showed that she had become aware of my presence, and relieved me from all apprehension of causing too sudden a shock by taking her in my arms. The turnkey had now retired; we were alone. I knelt by her side, threw my arms about her, and pressed her to my heart. She drooped her head upon my shoulder, and lay for some time like one who slumbered; but, alas! not as she had used to slumber. Her breathing, which had been like that of sinless infancy, was now frightfully short and quick; she seemed not properly to breathe, but to gasp. This, thought I, may be sudden agitation, and in that case she will gradually recover; half an hour will restore her. Wo is me! she did not recover; and internally I said—she never will recover. The arrows have gone too deep for a frame so exquisite in its sensibility, and already her hours are numbered.

At this first visit I said nothing to her about the past; that, and the whole extent to which our communications should go, I left rather to her own choice. At the second visit, however, upon some word or other arising which furnished an occasion for touching on this hateful topic, I pressed her, contrary to my own previous intention, for as full an account of the fatal event as she could without a distressing effort communicate. To my surprise she was silent—gloomily—almost it might have seemed obstinately silent. A horrid thought came into my mind; could it, might it have been possible that my noble-minded wife, such she had ever seemed to me, was open to temptations of this nature? Could it have been that in some moment of infirmity, when her better angel was away from her side, she had yielded to a sudden impulse of frailty, such as a second moment for consideration would have resisted, but which unhappily had been followed by no such opportunity of retrieval? I had heard of such things. Cases there were in our own times (and not confined to one nation), when irregular impulses of this sort were known to have haunted and besieged natures not otherwise ignoble and base. I ran over some of the names amongst those which were taxed with this propensity. More than one were the names of people in a technical sense held noble. That, nor any other consideration abated my horror. Better, I said, better, (because more compatible with elevation of mind,) better to have committed some bloody act—some murderous act. Dreadful was the panic I underwent. God pardon the wrong I did; and even now I pray to him—as though the past thing were a future thing and capable of change—that he would forbid her for ever to know what was the derogatory thought I had admitted. I sometimes think, by recollecting a momentary blush that suffused her marble countenance,—I think—I fear that she might have read what was fighting in my mind. Yet that would admit of another explanation. If she did read the very worst, meek saint! she suffered no complaint or sense of that injury to escape her. It might, however, be that perception, or it might be that fear which roused her to an effort that otherwise had seemed too revolting to undertake. She

now rehearsed the whole steps of the affair from first to last; but the only material addition, which her narrative made to that which the trial itself had involved, was the following:—On two separate occasions previous to the last and fatal one, when she had happened to walk unaccompanied by me in the city, the monster Barratt had met her in the street. He had probably—and this was, indeed, subsequently ascertained—at first, and for some time afterwards, mistaken her rank, and had addressed some proposals to her, which, from the suppressed tone of his speaking, or from her own terror and surprise, she had not clearly understood; but enough had reached her alarmed ear to satisfy her that they were of a nature in the last degree licentious and insulting. Terrified and shocked rather than indignant, for she too easily presumed the man to be a maniac, she hurried homewards; and was rejoiced, on first venturing to look round when close to her own gate, to perceive that the man was not following. There, however, she was mistaken; for either on this occasion, or on some other, he had traced her homewards. The last of these rencontres had occurred just three months before the fatal 6th of April; and if, in any one instance, Agnes had departed from the strict line of her duty as a wife, or had shown a defect of judgment, it was at this point—in not having frankly and fully reported the circumstances to me. On the last of these occasions I had met her at the garden-gate, and had particularly remarked that she seemed agitated; and now, at recalling these incidents, Agnes reminded me that I had noticed that circumstance to herself, and that she had answered me faithfully as to the main fact. It was true she had done so; for she had said that she had just met a lunatic who had alarmed her by fixing his attention upon herself, and speaking to her in a ruffian manner; and it was also true that she did sincerely regard him in that light. This led me at the time to construe the whole affair into a casual collision with some poor maniac escaping from his keepers, and of no future moment, having passed by without present consequences. But had she, instead of thus reporting her own erroneous impression, reported the entire circumstances of the case, I should have given them a very different interpretation. Affection for me, and fear to throw me needlessly into a quarrel with a man of apparently brutal and violent nature—these considerations, as too often they do with the most upright wives, had operated to check Agnes in the perfect sincerity of her communications. She had told nothing but the truth—only, and fatally it turned out for us both, she had not told the whole truth. The very suppression, to which she had reconciled herself, under the belief that thus she was providing for my safety and her own consequent happiness, had been the indirect occasion of ruin to both. It was impossible to show displeasure under such circumstances, or under any circumstances, to one whose self-reproaches were at any rate too bitter; but certainly, as a general rule, every conscientious woman should resolve to consider her husband's honor in the first case, and far before all other regards whatsoever; to make this the first, the second, the third law of her conduct, and his personal safety but the fourth or fifth. Yet women, and especially when the interests of children are at stake upon their husbands' safety, rarely indeed are able to take this Roman view of their duties.

To return to the narrative. Agnes had not, nor could have, the most remote suspicion of this Barratt's connection with the shop which he had not accidentally entered; and the sudden appearance of this wretch it was, at the very moment of finding herself charged with so vile and degrading an offence, that contributed most of all to rob her of her natural firmness, by suddenly revealing to her terrified heart the depth of the conspiracy which thus yawned like a gulf below her. And not only had this sudden horror, upon discovering a guilty design in what before had seemed accident, and links uniting remote incidents which else seemed casual and disconnected, greatly disturbed and confused her manner, which confusion again had become more intense upon her own consciousness that she was confused, and that her manner

was greatly to her disadvantage; but—which was the worst effect of all, because the rest could not operate against her, except upon those who were present to witness it, whereas this was noted down and recorded—so utterly did her confusion strip her of all presence of mind, that she did not consciously notice (and consequently could not protest against at the moment when it was most important to do so, and most natural) the important circumstance of the muff. This capital objection, therefore, though dwelt upon and improved to the utmost at the trial, was looked upon by the judges as an after-thought; and merely because it had not been seized upon by herself, and urged in the first moments of her almost incapacitating terror on finding this amongst the circumstances of the charge against her—as if an ingenuous nature, in the very act of recoiling with horror from a criminal charge the most degrading, and in the very instant of discovering, with a perfect rapture of alarm, the too plausible appearance of probability amongst the circumstances, would be likely to pause, and with attorney-like dexterity, to pick out the particular circumstance that might admit of being proved to be false, when the conscience proclaimed, though in despondence for the result, that all the circumstances were, as to the use made of them, one tissue of falsehoods. Agnes, who had made a powerful effort in speaking of the case at all, found her calmness increase as she advanced; and she now told me, that in reality there were two discoveries which she made in the same instant, and not one only, which had disarmed her firmness and ordinary presence of mind. One I have mentioned—the fact of Barratt, the proprietor of the shop, being the same person who had in former instances persecuted her in the street; but the other was even more alarming—it has been said already that it was not a pure matter of accident that she had visited this particular shop. In reality, that nursery-maid, of whom some mention has been made above, and in terms expressing the suspicion with which even then I regarded her, had persuaded her into going thither by some representations which Agnes had already ascertained to be altogether unwarranted. Other presumptions against this girl's fidelity crowded dimly upon my wife's mind at the very moment of finding her eyes thus suddenly opened. And it was not five minutes after her first examination, and in fact five minutes after it had ceased to be of use to her, that she remembered another circumstance which now, when combined with the sequel, told its own tale,—the muff had been missed some little time before the 6th of April. Search had been made for it; but, the particular occasion which required it having passed off, this search was laid aside for the present, in the expectation that it would soon reappear in some corner of the house before it was wanted: then came the sunny day, which made it no longer useful, and would perhaps have dismissed it entirely from the recollection of all parties, until it was now brought back in this memorable way. The name of my wife was embroidered within, upon the lining, and it thus became a serviceable link to the hellish cabal against her. Upon reviewing the circumstances from first to last, upon recalling the manner of the girl at the time when the muff was missed, and upon combining the whole with her recent deception, by which she had misled her poor mistress into visiting this shop, Agnes began to see the entire truth as to this servant's wicked collusion with Barratt, though, perhaps, it might be too much to suppose her aware of the unhappy result to which her collusion tended. All this she saw at a glance when it was too late, for her first examination was over. This girl, I must add, had left our house during my illness, and she had afterwards a melancholy end.

One thing surprised me in all this. Barratt's purpose must manifestly have been to create merely a terror in my poor wife's mind, and to stop short of any legal consequences, in order to profit of that panic and confusion for extorting compliances with his hideous pretensions. It perplexed me, therefore, that he did not appear to have pursued this manifestly his primary purpose, the other being merely a mask to conceal

his true ends, and also (as he fancied) a means for effecting them. In this, however, I had soon occasion to find that I was deceived. He had, but without the knowledge of Agnes, taken such steps as were then open to him, for making overtures to her with regard to the terms upon which he would agree to defeat the charge against her by failing to appear. But the law had travelled too fast for him, and too determinately; so that, by the time he supposed terror to have operated sufficiently in favor of his views, it had already become unsafe to venture upon such explicit proposals as he would otherwise have tried. His own safety was now at stake, and would have been compromised by any open or written avowal of the motives on which he had been all along acting. In fact, at this time he was foiled by the agent in whom he confided; but much more he had been confounded upon another point—the prodigious interest manifested by the public. Thus it seems—that, whilst he meditated only a snare for my poor Agnes, he had prepared one for himself; and finally, to evade the suspicions which began to arise powerfully as to his true motives, and thus to stave off his own ruin, had found himself in a manner obliged to go forward and consummate the ruin of another.

The state of Agnes, as to health and bodily strength, was now becoming such that I was forcibly warned—whatsoever I meditated doing, to do quickly. There was this urgent reason for alarm: once conveyed into that region of the prison in which sentences like hers were executed, it became hopeless that I could communicate with her again. All intercourse whatsoever, and with whomsoever, was then placed under the most rigorous interdict; and the alarming circumstance was, that this transfer was governed by no settled rules, but might take place at any hour, and would certainly be precipitated by the slightest violence on my part, the slightest indiscretion, or the slightest argument for suspicion. Hard indeed was the part I had to play, for it was indispensable that I should appear calm and tranquil, in order to disarm suspicions around me, whilst continually contemplating the possibility that I myself might be summoned to extremities which I could not so much as trust myself to name or distinctly to conceive. But thus stood the case: the Government, it was understood, angered by the public opposition, resolute for the triumph of what they called 'principle,' had settled finally that the sentence should be carried into execution. Now that she, that my Agnes, being the frail wreck that she had become, could have stood one week of this sentence practically and literally enforced—was a mere chimera. A few hours probably of the experiment would have settled that question by dismissing her to the death she longed for; but because the suffering would be short, was I to stand by and to witness the degradation—the pollution—attempted to be fastened upon her. What! to know that her beautiful tresses would be shorn ignominiously—a felon's dress forced upon her—a vile taskmaster with authority to——; blistered be the tongue that could go on to utter, in connection with her innocent name, the vile dishonors which were to settle upon her person! I, however, and her brother had taken such resolutions that this result was one barely possible; and yet I sickened (yes, literally I many times experienced the effect of physical sickness) at contemplating our own utter childish helplessness, and recollecting that every night during our seclusion from the prison the last irreversible step might be taken—and in the morning we might find a solitary cell, and the angel form that had illuminated it gone where we could not follow, and leaving behind her the certainty that we should see her no more. Every night, at the hour of locking up, she, at least, manifestly

had a fear that she saw us for the last time; she put her arms feebly about my neck, sobbed convulsively, and, I believe, guessed—but, if really so, did not much reprove or quarrel with the desperate purposes which I struggled with in regard to her own life. One thing was quite evident—that to the peace of her latter days, now hurrying to their close, it was indispensable that she should pass them undivided from me; and possibly, as was afterwards alleged, when it became easy to allege any thing, some relenting did take place in high quarters at this time; for upon some medical reports made just now, a most seasonable indulgence was granted, viz. that Hannah was permitted to attend her mistress constantly; and it was also felt as a great alleviation of the horrors belonging to this prison, that candles were now allowed throughout the nights. But I was warned privately that these indulgences were with no consent from the police minister; and that circumstances might soon withdraw the momentary intercession by which we profited. With this knowledge, we could not linger in our preparations; we had resolved upon accomplishing an escape for Agnes, at whatever risk or price; the main difficulty was her own extreme feebleness, which might forbid her to co-operate with us in any degree at the critical moment; and the main danger was—delay. We pushed forward, therefore, in our attempts with prodigious energy, and I for my part with an energy like that of insanity.

The first attempt we made was upon the fidelity to his trust of the chief jailer. He was a coarse, vulgar man, brutal in his manners, but with vestiges of generosity in his character—though damaged a good deal by his daily associates. Him we invited to a meeting at a tavern in the neighborhood of the prison, disguising our names as too certain to betray our objects, and baiting our invitation with some hints which we had ascertained were likely to prove temptations under his immediate circumstances. He had a graceless young son whom he was most anxious to wean from his dissolute connections, and to steady, by placing him in some office of no great responsibility. Upon this knowledge we framed the terms of our invitation.

These proved to be effectual, as regarded our immediate object of obtaining an interview of persuasion. The night was wet; and at seven o'clock, the hour fixed for the interview, we were seated in readiness, much perplexed to know whether he would take any notice of our invitation. We had waited three quarters of an hour, when we heard a heavy lumbering step ascending the stair. The door was thrown open to its widest extent, and in the centre of the door-way stood a short stout-built man, and the very broadest I ever beheld—staring at us with bold inquiring eyes. His salutation was something to this effect.

'What the hell do you gay fellows want with me? What the blazes is this humbugging letter about? My son, and be hanged! What do you know of my son?'

Upon this overture we ventured to request that he would come in and suffer us to shut the door, which we also locked. Next we produced the official paper nominating his son to a small place in the customs,—not

yielding much, it was true, in the way of salary, but fortunately, and in accordance with the known wishes of the father, unburdened with any dangerous trust.

'Well, I suppose I must say thank ye: but what comes next? What am I to do to pay the damages?' We informed him that for this particular little service we asked no return.

'No, no,' said he, 'that'll not go down: that cat'll not jump. I'm not green enough for that. So, say away—what's the damage?' We then explained that we had certainly a favor and a great one to ask: ['Ay, I'll be bound you have,' was his parenthesis:] but that for this we were prepared to offer a separate remuneration; repeating that with respect to the little place procured for his son, it had not cost us anything, and therefore we did really and sincerely decline to receive anything in return; satisfied that, by this little offering, we had procured the opportunity of this present interview. At this point we withdrew a covering from the table upon which we had previously arranged a heap of gold coins, amounting in value to twelve hundred English guineas: this being the entire sum which circumstances allowed us to raise on so sudden a warning: for some landed property that we both had was so settled and limited, that we could not convert it into money either by way of sale, loan, or mortgage. This sum, stating to him its exact amount, we offered to his acceptance, upon the single condition that he would look aside, or wink hard, or (in whatever way he chose to express it) would make, or suffer to be made, such facilities for our liberating a female prisoner as we would point out. He mused: full five minutes he sat deliberating without opening his lips. At length he shocked us by saying, in a firm, decisive tone, that left us little hope of altering his resolution,—'No: gentlemen, it's a very fair offer, and a good deal of money for a single prisoner. I think I can guess at the person. It's a fair offer—fair enough. But, bless your heart! if I were to do the thing you want—why perhaps another case might be overlooked: but this prisoner, no: there's too much depending. No, they would turn me out of my place. Now the place is worth more to me in the long run than what you offer: though you bid fair enough, if it were only for my time in it. But look here: in case I can get my son to come into harness, I'm expecting to get the office for him after I've retired. So I can't do it. But I'll tell you what: you've been kind to my son: and therefore I'll not say a word about it. You're safe for me. And so good-night to you.' Saying which, and standing no further question, he walked resolutely out of the room and down stairs.

Two days we mourned over this failure, and scarcely knew which way to turn for another ray of hope;—on the third morning we received intelligence that this very jailer had been attacked by the fever, which, after long desolating the city, had at length made its way into the prison. In a very few days the jailer was lying without hope of recovery: and of necessity another person was appointed to fill his station for the present. This person I had seen, and I liked him less by much than the one he succeeded: he had an Italian appearance, and he wore an air of Italian subtlety and dissimulation. I was surprised to find, on proposing the same service to him, and on the same terms, that he made no objection whatever, but closed instantly with my offers. In prudence, however, I had made this change in the articles: a sum equal to two hundred English guineas, or one-sixth part of the whole money, he was to receive beforehand as a retaining fee; but the remainder was to be paid only to himself, or to anybody of his appointing, at the very moment of

our finding the prison gates thrown open to us. He spoke fairly enough, and seemed to meditate no treachery; nor was there any obvious or known interest to serve by treachery; and yet I doubted him grievously.

The night came: it was chosen as a gala night, one of two nights throughout the year in which the prisoners were allowed to celebrate a great national event: and in those days of relaxed prison management the utmost license was allowed to the rejoicing. This indulgence was extended to prisoners of all classes, though, of course, under more restrictions with regard to the criminal class. Ten o'clock came—the hour at which we had been instructed to hold ourselves in readiness. We had been long prepared. Agnes had been dressed by Hannah in such a costume externally (a man's hat and cloak, &c.) that, from her height, she might easily have passed amongst a mob of masquerading figures in the debtors' halls and galleries for a young stripling. Pierpoint and myself were also to a certain degree disguised; so far, at least, that we should not have been recognized at any hurried glance by those of the prison officers who had become acquainted with our persons. We were all more or less disguised about the face; and in that age when masks were commonly used at all hours by people of a certain rank, there would have been nothing suspicious in any possible costume of the kind in a night like this, if we could succeed in passing for friends of debtors.

I am impatient of these details, and I hasten over the ground. One entire hour passed away, and no jailer appeared. We began to despond heavily; and Agnes, poor thing! was now the most agitated of us all. At length eleven struck in the harsh tones of the prison-clock. A few minutes after, we heard the sound of bolts drawing, and bars unfastening. The jailer entered—drunk, and much disposed to be insolent. I thought it advisable to give him another bribe, and he resumed the fawning insinuation of his manner. He now directed us, by passages which he pointed out, to gain the other side of the prison. There we were to mix with the debtors and their mob of friends, and to await his joining us, which in that crowd he could do without much suspicion. He wished us to traverse the passages separately; but this was impossible, for it was necessary that one of us should support Agnes on each side. I previously persuaded her to take a small quantity of brandy, which we rejoiced to see had given her, at this moment of starting, a most seasonable strength and animation. The gloomy passages were more than usually empty, for all the turnkeys were employed in a vigilant custody of the gates, and examination of the parties going out. So the jailer had told us, and the news alarmed us. We came at length to a turning which brought us in sight of a strong iron gate, that divided the two main quarters of the prison. For this we had not been prepared. The man, however, opened the gate without a word spoken, only putting out his hand for a fee; and in my joy, perhaps, I gave him one imprudently large. After passing this gate, the distant uproar of the debtors guided us to the scene of their merriment; and when there, such was the tumult and the vast multitude assembled, that we now hoped in good earnest to accomplish our purpose without accident. Just at this moment the jailer appeared in the distance; he seemed looking towards us, and at length one of our party could distinguish that he was beckoning to us. We went forward, and found him in some agitation, real or counterfeit. He muttered a word or two quite unintelligible about the man at the wicket, told us we must wait a while, and he would then see what could be done for us. We were beginning to demur, and to express the suspicions which now too seriously arose, when he, seeing, or affecting to see some object of



alarm, pushed us with a hurried movement into a cell opening upon the part of the gallery at which we were now standing. Not knowing whether we really might not be retreating from some danger, we could do no otherwise than comply with his signals; but we were troubled at finding ourselves immediately locked in from the outside, and thus apparently all our motions had only sufficed to exchange one prison for another.

We were now completely in the dark, and found, by a hard breathing from one corner of the little dormitory, that it was not unoccupied. Having taken care to provide ourselves separately with means for striking a light, we soon had more than one torch burning. The brilliant light falling upon the eyes of a man who lay stretched on the iron bedstead, woke him. It proved to be my friend the under-jailer, Ratcliffe, but no longer holding any office in the prison. He sprang up, and a rapid explanation took place. He had become a prisoner for debt; and on this evening, after having caroused through the day with some friends from the country, had retired at an early hour to sleep away his intoxication. I on my part thought it prudent to intrust him unreservedly with our situation and purposes, not omitting our gloomy suspicions. Ratcliffe looked, with a pity that won my love, upon the poor wasted Agnes. He had seen her on her first entrance into the prison, had spoken to her, and therefore knew from what she had fallen, to what. Even then he had felt for her; how much more at this time, when he beheld, by the fierce light of the torches, her wo-worn features!

'Who was it,' he asked eagerly, 'you made the bargain with? Manasseh?'

'The same.'

'Then I can tell you this—not a greater villain walks the earth. He is a Jew from Portugal; he has betrayed many a man, and will many another, unless he gets his own neck stretched, which might happen, if I told all I know.'

'But what was it probable that this man meditated? Or how could it profit him to betray us?'

'That's more than I can tell. He wants to get your money, and that he doesn't know how to bring about without doing his part. But that's what he never will do, take my word for it. That would cut him out of all chance for the head-jailer's place.' He mused a little, and then told us that he could himself put us outside the prison walls, and would do it without fee or reward. 'But we must be quiet, or that devil will bethink him of me. I'll wager something he thought that I was out merry-making like the rest; and if he should chance to light upon the truth, he'll be back in no time.' Ratcliffe then removed an old fire-grate, at the back of which was an iron plate, that swung round into a similar fire-place in the contiguous cell. From

that, by a removal of a few slight obstacles, we passed, by a long avenue, into the chapel. Then he left us, whilst he went out alone to reconnoitre his ground. Agnes was now in so pitiable a condition of weakness, as we stood on the very brink of our final effort, that we placed her in a pew, where she could rest as upon a sofa. Previously we had stood upon graves, and with monuments more or less conspicuous all around us: some raised by friends to the memory of friends—some by subscriptions in the prison—some by children, who had risen into prosperity, to the memory of a father, brother, or other relative, who had died in captivity. I was grieved that these sad memorials should meet the eye of my wife at this moment of awe and terrific anxiety. Pierpoint and I were well armed, and all of us determined not to suffer a recapture, now that we were free of the crowds that made resistance hopeless. This Agnes easily perceived; and that, by suggesting a bloody arbitration, did not lessen her agitation. I hoped therefore, that, by placing her in the pew, I might at least liberate her for the moment from the besetting memorials of sorrow and calamity. But, as if in the very teeth of my purpose, one of the large columns which supported the roof of the chapel, had its basis and lower part of the shaft in this very pew. On the side of it, and just facing her as she lay reclining on the cushions, appeared a mural tablet, with a bas-relief in white marble, to the memory of two children, twins, who had lived and died at the same time, and in this prison—children who had never breathed another air than that of captivity, their parents having passed many years within these walls, under confinement for debt. The sculptures were not remarkable, being a trite, but not the less affecting, representation of angels descending to receive the infants; but the hallowed words of the inscription, distinct and legible—'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God'—met her eye, and, by the thoughts they awakened, made me fear that she would become unequal to the exertions which yet awaited her. At this moment Ratcliffe returned, and informed us that all was right; and that, from the ruinous state of all the buildings which surrounded the chapel, no difficulty remained for us, who were, in fact, beyond the strong part of the prison, excepting at a single door, which we should be obliged to break down. But had we any means arranged for pursuing our flight, and turning this escape to account when out of confinement? All that, I assured him, was provided for long ago. We proceeded, and soon reached the door. We had one crow-bar amongst us, but beyond that had no better weapons than the loose stones found about some new-made graves in the chapel. Ratcliffe and Pierpoint, both powerful men, applied themselves by turns to the door, whilst Hannah and I supported Agnes. The door did not yield, being of enormous strength; but the wall did, and a large mass of stonework fell outwards, twisting the door aside; so that, by afterwards working with our hands, we removed stones many enough to admit of our egress. Unfortunately this aperture was high above the ground, and it was necessary to climb over a huge heap of loose rubbish in order to profit by it. My brother-in-law passed first in order to receive my wife, quite helpless at surmounting the obstacle by her own efforts, out of my arms. He had gone through the opening, and, turning round so as to face me, he naturally could see something that I did not see. 'Look behind!' he called out rapidly. I did so, and saw the murderous villain Manasseh with his arm uplifted, and in the act of cutting at my wife, nearly insensible as she was, with a cutlass. The blow was not for me, but for her, as the fugitive prisoner; and the law would have borne him out in the act. I saw, I comprehended the whole. I groped, as far as I could without letting my wife drop, for my pistols; but all that I could do would have been unavailing, and too late—she would have been murdered in my arms. But—and that was what none of us saw—neither I, nor Pierpoint, nor the hound Manasseh—one person stood back in the shade; one person had seen, but had not uttered a word on seeing Manasseh advancing through the shades; one person only had forecast the exact succession of all that was coming; me she saw embarrassed and my hands preoccupied—Pierpoint and Ratcliffe useless by position—and the gleam of the dog's eye directed her to his aim. The crow-bar was leaning against the

shattered wall. This she had silently seized. One blow knocked up the sword; a second laid the villain prostrate. At this moment appeared another of the turnkeys advancing from the rear, for the noise of our assault upon the door had drawn attention in the interior of the prison, from which, however, no great number of assistants could on this dangerous night venture to absent themselves. What followed for the next few minutes hurried onwards, incident crowding upon incident, like the motions of a dream:—Manasseh, lying on the ground, yelled out, 'The bell! the bell!' to him who followed. The man understood, and made for the belfry-door attached to the chapel; upon which Pierpoint drew a pistol, and sent the bullet whizzing past his ear so truly, that fear made the man obedient to the counter-orders of Pierpoint for the moment. He paused and awaited the issue. In a moment had all cleared the wall, traversed the waste ground beyond it, lifted Agnes over the low railing, shaken hands with our benefactor Ratcliffe, and pushed onwards as rapidly as we were able to the little dark lane, a quarter of a mile distant, where had stood waiting for the last two hours a chaise-and-four.

Ratcliffe, before my story closes, I will pursue to the last of my acquaintance with him, according to the just claims of his services. He had privately whispered to me, as we went along, that he could speak to the innocence of that lady, pointing to my wife, better than anybody. He was the person whom (as then holding an office in the prison) Barratt had attempted to employ as agent in conveying any messages that he found it safe to send—obscurely hinting the terms on which he would desist from prosecution. Ratcliffe had at first undertaken the negotiation from mere levity of character. But when the story and the public interest spread, and after himself becoming deeply struck by the prisoner's affliction, beauty, and reputed innocence, he had pursued it only as a means of entrapping Barratt into such written communications and such private confessions of the truth as might have served Agnes effectually. He wanted the art, however, to disguise his purposes: Barratt came to suspect him violently, and feared his evidence so far, even for those imperfect and merely oral overtures which he had really sent through Ratcliffe—that on the very day of the trial, he, as was believed, though by another nominally, contrived that Ratcliffe should be arrested for debt; and, after harassing him with intricate forms of business, had finally caused him to be conveyed to prison. Ratcliffe was thus involved in his own troubles at the time; and afterwards supposed that, without written documents to support his evidence, he could not be of much service to the re-establishment of my wife's reputation. Six months after his services in the night-escape from the prison, I saw him, and pressed him to take the money so justly forfeited to him by Manasseh's perfidy. He would, however, be persuaded to take no more than paid his debts. A second and a third time his debts were paid by myself and Pierpoint. But the same habits of intemperance and dissolute pleasure which led him into these debts, finally ruined his constitution; and he died, though otherwise of a fine generous manly nature, a martyr to dissipation at the early age of twenty-nine. With respect to his prison confinement, it was so frequently recurring in his life, and was alleviated by so many indulgences, that he scarcely viewed it as a hardship: having once been an officer of the prison, and having thus formed connections with the whole official establishment, and done services to many of them, and being of so convivial a turn, he was, even as a prisoner, treated with distinction, and considered as a privileged son of the house.

It was just striking twelve o'clock as we entered the lane where the carriage was drawn up. Rain, about the profoundest I had ever witnessed, was falling. Though near to midsummer, the night had been unusually dark to begin with, and from the increasing rain had become much more so. We could see nothing; and at first we feared that some mistake had occurred as to the station of the carriage—in which case we might have sought for it vainly through the intricate labyrinth of the streets in that quarter. I first descried it by the light of a torch, reflected powerfully from the large eyes of the leaders. All was ready. Horse-keepers were at the horses' heads. The postilions were mounted; each door had the steps let down: Agnes was lifted in: Hannah and I followed: Pierpoint mounted his horse; and at the word—Oh! how strange a word!—'All's right,' the horses sprang off like leopards, a manner ill-suited to the slippery pavement of a narrow street. At that moment, but we valued it little indeed, we heard the prison-bell ringing out loud and clear. Thrice within the first three minutes we had to pull up suddenly, on the brink of formidable accidents, from the dangerous speed we maintained, and which, nevertheless, the driver had orders to maintain, as essential to our plan. All the stoppages and hinderances of every kind along the road had been anticipated previously, and met by contrivance, of one kind or other; and Pierpoint was constantly a little ahead of us to attend to anything that had been neglected. The consequence of these arrangements was—that no person along the road could possibly have assisted to trace us by any thing in our appearance: for we passed all objects at too flying a pace, and through darkness too profound, to allow of any one feature in our equipage being distinctly noticed. Ten miles out of town, a space which we traversed in forty-four minutes, a second relay of horses was ready; but we carried on the same postilions throughout. Six miles ahead of this distance we had a second relay; and with this set of horses, after pushing two miles further along the road, we crossed by a miserable lane five miles long, scarcely even a bridge road, into another of the great roads from the capital; and by thus crossing the country, we came back upon the city at a point far distant from that at which we left it. We had performed a distance of forty-two miles in three hours, and lost a fourth hour upon the wretched five miles of cross-road. It was, therefore, four o'clock, and broad daylight, when we drew near the suburbs of the city; but a most happy accident now favored us; a fog the most intense now prevailed; nobody could see an object six feet distant; we alighted in an uninhabited new-built street, plunged into the fog, thus confounding our traces to any observer. We then stepped into a hackney-coach which had been stationed at a little distance. Thence, according to our plan, we drove to a miserable quarter of the town, whither the poor only and the wretched resorted; mounted a gloomy dirty staircase, and, befriended by the fog, still growing thicker and thicker, and by the early hour of the morning, reached a house previously hired, which, if shocking to the eye and the imagination from its squalid appearance and its gloom, still was a home—a sanctuary—an asylum from treachery, from captivity, from persecution. Here Pierpoint for the present quitted us: and once more Agnes, Hannah, and I, the shattered members of a shattered family, were thus gathered together in a house of our own.

Yes: once again, daughter of the hills, thou sleptst as heretofore in my encircling arms; but not again in that peace which crowned thy innocence in those days, and should have crowned it now. Through the whole of our flying journey, in some circumstances at its outset strikingly recalling to me that blessed one which followed our marriage, Agnes slept away unconscious of our movements. She slept through all that day and the following night; and I watched over her with as much jealousy of all that might disturb her, as a mother watches over her new-born baby; for I hoped, I fancied, that a long—long rest, a rest, a halcyon calm, a deep, deep Sabbath of security, might prove healing and medicinal. I thought wrong; her

breathing became more disturbed, and sleep was now haunted by dreams; all of us, indeed, were agitated by dreams; the past pursued me, and the present, for high rewards had been advertised by Government to those who traced us; and though for the moment we were secure, because we never went abroad, and could not have been naturally sought in such a neighborhood, still that very circumstance would eventually operate against us. At length, every night I dreamed of our insecurity under a thousand forms; but more often by far my dreams turned upon our wrongs; wrath moved me rather than fear. Every night, for the greater part, I lay painfully and elaborately involved, by deep sense of wrong,

'—in long orations, which I pleaded

Before unjust tribunals.'

And for poor Agnes, her also did the remembrance of mighty wrongs occupy through vast worlds of sleep in the same way—though colored by that tenderness which belonged to her gentler nature. One dream in particular—a dream of sublime circumstances—she repeated to me so movingly, with a pathos so thrilling, that by some profound sympathy it transplanted itself to my own sleep, settled itself there, and is to this hour a part of the fixed dream scenery which revolves at intervals through my sleeping life. This it was:—She would hear a trumpet sound—though perhaps as having been the prelude to the solemn entry of the judges at a town which she had once visited in her childhood; other preparations would follow, and at last all the solemnities of a great trial would shape themselves and fall into settled images. The audience was assembled, the judges were arrayed, the court was set. The prisoner was cited. Inquest was made, witnesses were called; and false witnesses came tumultuously to the bar. Then again a trumpet was heard, but the trumpet of a mighty archangel; and then would roll away thick clouds and vapors. Again the audience, but another audience, was assembled; again the tribunal was established; again the court was set; but a tribunal and a court—how different to her! That had been composed of men seeking indeed for truth, but themselves erring and fallible creatures; the witnesses had been full of lies, the judges of darkness. But here was a court composed of heavenly witnesses—here was a righteous tribunal—and then at last a judge that could not be deceived. The judge smote with his eye a person who sought to hide himself in the crowd; the guilty man stepped forward; the poor prisoner was called up to the presence of the mighty judge; suddenly the voice of a little child was heard ascending before her. Then the trumpet sounded once again; and then there were new heavens and a new earth; and her tears and her agitation (for she had seen her little Francis) awoke the poor palpitating dreamer.

Two months passed on: nothing could possibly be done materially to raise the standard of those wretched accommodations which the house offered. The dilapidated walls, the mouldering plaster, the blackened mantel-pieces, the stained and polluted wainscots—what could be attempted to hide or to repair all this by those who durst not venture abroad? Yet whatever could be done, Hannah did; and, in the mean time, very soon indeed my Agnes ceased to see or to be offended by these objects. First of all her sight went from her; and nothing which appealed to that sense could ever more offend her. It is to me the one only consolation I have, that my presence and that of Hannah, with such innocent frauds as we concerted together, made her latter days pass in a heavenly calm, by persuading her that our security was absolute, and that all search after us had ceased, under a belief on the part of Government that we had gained the shelter of a foreign land. All this was a delusion; but it was a delusion—blessed be Heaven! which lasted exactly as long as her life, and was just commensurate with its necessity. I hurry over the final circumstances.

There was fortunately now, even for me, no fear that the hand of any policeman or emissary of justice could effectually disturb the latter days of my wife; for, besides pistols always lying loaded in an inner room, there happened to be a long narrow passage on entering the house, which, by means of a blunderbuss, I could have swept effectually, and cleared many times over; and I know what to do in a last extremity. Just two months it was, to a day, since we had entered the house; and it happened that the medical attendant upon Agnes, who awakened no suspicion by his visits, had prescribed some opiate or anodyne which had not come; being dark early, for it was now September, I had ventured out to fetch it. In this I conceived there could be no danger. On my return I saw a man examining the fastenings of the door. He made no opposition to my entrance, nor seemed much to observe it—but I was disturbed. Two hours after, both Hannah and I heard a noise about the door, and voices in low conversation. It is remarkable that Agnes heard this also—so quick had grown her hearing. She was agitated, but was easily calmed; and at ten o'clock we were all in bed. The hand of Agnes was in mine; so only she felt herself in security. She had been restless for an hour, and talking at intervals in sleep. Once she certainly wakened, for she pressed her lips to mine. Two minutes after, I heard something in her breathing which did not please me. I rose hastily—brought a light—raised her head—two long, long gentle sighs, that scarcely moved the lips, were all that could be perceived. At that moment, at that very moment, Hannah called out to me that the door was surrounded. 'Open it!' I said; six men entered; Agnes it was they sought; I pointed to the bed; they advanced, gazed, and walked away in silence.

After this I wandered about, caring little for life or its affairs, and roused only at times to think of vengeance upon all who had contributed to lay waste my happiness. In this pursuit, however, I was confounded as much by my own thoughts as by the difficulties of accomplishing my purpose. To assault and murder either of the two principal agents in this tragedy, what would it be, what other effect could it have, than to invest them with the character of injured and suffering people, and thus to attract a pity or a forgiveness at least to their persons which never otherwise could have illustrated their deaths? I remembered, indeed, the words of a sea-captain who had taken such vengeance as had offered at the moment upon his bitter enemy and persecutor (a young passenger on board his ship), who had informed against him at the Custom-house on his arrival in port, and had thus effected the confiscation of his ship,

and the ruin of the captain's family. The vengeance, and it was all that circumstances allowed, consisted in coming behind the young man clandestinely and pushing him into the deep waters of the dock, when, being unable to swim, he perished by drowning. 'And the like,' said the captain, when musing on his trivial vengeance, 'and the like happens to many an honest sailor.' Yes, thought I, the captain was right. The momentary shock of a pistol-bullet—what is it? Perhaps it may save the wretch after all from the pangs of some lingering disease; and then again I shall have the character of a murderer, if known to have shot him; he will with many people have no such character, but at worst the character of a man too harsh (they will say), and possibly mistaken in protecting his property. And then, if not known as the man who shot him, where is the shadow even of vengeance? Strange it seemed to me, and passing strange, that I should be the person to urge arguments in behalf of letting this man escape. For at one time I had as certainly, as inexorably, doomed him as ever I took any resolution in my life. But the fact is, and I began to see it upon closer view, it is not easy by any means to take an adequate vengeance for any injury beyond a very trivial standard; and that with common magnanimity one does not care to avenge. Whilst I was in this mood of mind, still debating with myself whether I should or should not contaminate my hands with the blood of this monster, and still unable to shut my eyes upon one fact, viz. that my buried Agnes could above all things have urged me to abstain from such acts of violence, too evidently useless, listlessly and scarcely knowing what I was in quest of, I strayed by accident into a church where a venerable old man was preaching at the very moment I entered; he was either delivering as a text, or repeating in the course of his sermon, these words—'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.' By some accident also he fixed his eyes upon me at the moment; and this concurrence with the subject then occupying my thoughts so much impressed me, that I determined very seriously to review my half-formed purposes of revenge; and well it was that I did so: for in that same week an explosion of popular fury brought the life of this wretched Barratt to a shocking termination, pretty much resembling the fate of the De Witts in Holland. And the consequences to me were such, and so full of all the consolation and indemnification which this world could give me, that I have often shuddered since then at the narrow escape I had had from myself intercepting this remarkable retribution. The villain had again been attempting to play off the same hellish scheme with a beautiful young rustic which had succeeded in the case of my ill-fated Agnes. But the young woman in this instance had a high, and, in fact, termagant spirit. Rustic as she was, she had been warned of the character of the man; everybody, in fact, was familiar with the recent tragedy. Either her lover or her brother happened to be waiting for her outside the window. He saw in part the very tricks in the act of perpetration by which some article or other, meant to be claimed as stolen property, was conveyed into a parcel she had incautiously laid down. He heard the charge against her made by Barratt, and seconded by his creatures—heard her appeal—sprang to her aid—dragged the ruffian into the street, when in less time than the tale could be told, and before the police (though tolerably alert) could effectually interpose for his rescue, the mob had so used or so abused the opportunity they had long wished for, that he remained the mere disfigured wreck of what had once been a man, rather than a creature with any resemblance to humanity. I myself heard the uproar at a distance, and the shouts and yells of savage exultation; they were sounds I shall never forget, though I did not at that time know them for what they were, or understood their meaning. The result, however, to me was something beyond this, and worthy to have been purchased with my heart's blood. Barratt still breathed; spite of his mutilations he could speak; he was rational. One only thing he demanded—it was that his dying confession might be taken. Two magistrates and a clergyman attended. He gave a list of those whom he had trepanned, and had failed to trepan, by his artifices and threats, into the sacrifice of their honor. He expired before the record was closed, but not before he had placed my wife's name in the

latter list as the one whose injuries in his dying moments most appalled him. This confession on the following day went into the hands of the hostile minister, and my revenge was perfect.

## THE SPANISH NUN

Why is it that Adventures are so generally repulsive to people of meditative minds? It is for the same reason that any other want of law, that any other anarchy is repulsive. Floating passively from action to action, as helplessly as a withered leaf surrendered to the breath of winds, the human spirit (out of which comes all grandeur of human motions) is exhibited in mere Adventures, as either entirely laid asleep, or as acting only by lower organs that regulate the means, whilst the ends are derived from alien sources, and are imperiously predetermined. It is a case of exception, however, when even amongst such adventures the agent reacts upon his own difficulties and necessities by a temper of extraordinary courage, and a mind of premature decision. Further strength arises to such an exception, if the very moulding accidents of the life, if the very external coercions are themselves unusually romantic. They may thus gain a separate interest of their own. And, lastly, the whole is locked into validity of interest, even for the psychological philosopher, by complete authentication of its truth. In the case now brought before him, the reader must not doubt; for no memoir exists, or personal biography, that is so trebly authenticated by proofs and attestations direct and collateral. From the archives of the Royal Marine at Seville, from the autobiography or the heroine, from contemporary chronicles, and from several official sources scattered in and out of Spain, some of them ecclesiastical, the amplest proofs have been drawn, and may yet be greatly extended, of the extraordinary events here recorded. M. de Ferrer, a Spaniard of much research, and originally incredulous as to the facts, published about seventeen years ago a selection from the leading documents, accompanied by his palinode as to their accuracy. His materials have been since used for the basis of more than one narrative, not inaccurate, in French, German and Spanish journals of high authority. It is seldom the case that French writers err by prolixity. They have done so in this case. The present narrative, which contains no sentence derived from any foreign one, has the great advantage of close compression; my own pages, after equating the size, being as 1 to 3 of the shortest continental form. In the mode of narration, I am vain enough to flatter myself that the reader will find little reason to hesitate between us. Mine at least, weary nobody; which is more than can be always said for the continental versions.

On a night in the year 1592, (but which night is a secret liable to 365 answers,) a Spanish 'son of somebody,' in the fortified town of St. Sebastian, received the disagreeable intelligence from a nurse, that his wife had just presented him with a daughter. No present that the poor misjudging lady could possibly have made him was so entirely useless for any purpose of his. He had three daughters already, which



happened to be more by 2+1 than his reckoning assumed as a reasonable allowance of daughters. A supernumerary son might have been stowed away; but daughters in excess were the very nuisance of Spain. He did, therefore, what in such cases every proud and lazy Spanish gentleman was apt to do—he wrapped the new little daughter, odious to his paternal eyes, in a pocket handkerchief; and then, wrapping up his own throat with a good deal more care, off he bolted to the neighboring convent of St. Sebastian, not merely of that city, but also (amongst several convents) the one dedicated to that saint. It is well that in this quarrelsome world we quarrel furiously about tastes; since agreeing too closely about the objects to be liked and appropriated would breed much more fighting than is bred by disagreeing. That little human tadpole, which the old toad of a father would not suffer to stay ten minutes in his house, proved as welcome at the nunnery of St. Sebastian as she was odious elsewhere. The superior of the convent was aunt, by the mother's side, to the new-born stranger. She, therefore, kissed and blessed the little lady. The poor nuns, who were never to have any babies of their own, and were languishing for some amusement, perfectly doated on this prospect of a wee pet. The superior thanked the hidalgo for his very splendid present. The nuns thanked him each and all; until the old crocodile actually began to cry and whimper sentimentally at what he now perceived to be excess of munificence in himself. Munificence, indeed, he remarked, was his foible next after parental tenderness.

What a luxury it is sometimes to a cynic that there go two words to a bargain. In the convent of St. Sebastian all was gratitude; gratitude (as aforesaid) to the hidalgo from all the convent for his present, until at last the hidalgo began to express gratitude to them for their gratitude to him. Then came a rolling fire of thanks to St. Sebastian; from the superior, for sending a future saint; from the nuns, for sending such a love of a plaything; and, finally, from papa, for sending such substantial board and well-bolted lodgings, 'from which,' said the malicious old fellow, 'my pussy will never find her way out to a thorny and dangerous world.' Won't she? I suspect, son of somebody, that the next time you see 'pussy,' which may happen to be also the last, will not be in a convent of any kind. At present, whilst this general rendering of thanks was going on, one person only took no part in them. That person was 'pussy,' whose little figure lay quietly stretched out in the arms of a smiling young nun, with eyes nearly shut, yet peering a little at the candles. Pussy said nothing. It's of no great use to say much, when all the world is against you. But if St. Sebastian had enabled her to speak out the whole truth, pussy would have said: 'So, Mr. Hidalgo, you have been engaging lodgings for me; lodgings for life. Wait a little. We'll try that question, when my claws are grown a little longer.'

Disappointment, therefore, was gathering ahead. But for the present there was nothing of the kind. That noble old crocodile, papa, was not in the least disappointed as regarded his expectation of having no anxiety to waste, and no money to pay, on account of his youngest daughter. He insisted on his right to forget her; and in a week had forgotten her, never to think of her again but once. The lady superior, as regarded her demands, was equally content, and through a course of several years; for, as often as she asked pussy if she would be a saint, pussy replied that she would, if saints were allowed plenty of sweetmeats. But least of all were the nuns disappointed. Everything that they had fancied possible in a human plaything fell short of what pussy realized in racketing, racing, and eternal plots against the peace of the elder nuns. No fox ever kept a hen-roost in such alarm as pussy kept the dormitory of the senior

sisters; whilst the younger ladies were run off their legs by the eternal wiles, and had their chapel gravity discomposed, even in chapel, by the eternal antics of this privileged little kitten.

The kitten had long ago received a baptismal name, which was Kitty; this is Catharine, or Kate, or Hispanice Catalina. It was a good name, as it recalled her original name of pussy. And, by the way, she had also an ancient and honorable surname, viz., De Erauso, which is to this day a name rooted in Biscay. Her father, the hidalgo, was a military officer in the Spanish service, and had little care whether his kitten should turn out a wolf or a lamb, having made over the fee simple of his own interest in the little Kate to St. Sebastian, 'to have and to hold,' so long as Kate should keep her hold of this present life. Kate had no apparent intention to let slip that hold, for she was blooming as a rose-bush in June, tall and strong as a young cedar. Yet, notwithstanding this robust health and the strength of the convent walls, the time was drawing near when St. Sebastian's lease in Kate must, in legal phrase, 'determine;' and any chateaux en Espagne, that the Saint might have built on the cloisteral fidelity of his pet Catalina, must suddenly give way in one hour, like many other vanities in our own days of Spanish bonds and promises. After reaching her tenth year, Catalina became thoughtful, and not very docile. At times she was even headstrong and turbulent, so that the gentle sisterhood of St. Sebastian, who had no other pet or plaything in the world, began to weep in secret—fearing that they might have been rearing by mistake some future tigress—for as to infancy, that, you know, is playful and innocent even in the cubs of a tigress. But there the ladies were going too far. Catalina was impetuous and aspiring, but not cruel. She was gentle, if people would let her be so. But woe to those that took liberties with her! A female servant of the convent, in some authority, one day, in passing up the aisle to matins, wilfully gave Kate a push; and in return, Kate, who never left her debts in arrear, gave the servant for a keepsake a look which that servant carried with her in fearful remembrance to her grave. It seemed as if Kate had tropic blood in her veins, that continually called her away to the tropics. It was all the fault of that 'blue rejoicing sky,' of those purple Biscayan mountains, of that tumultuous ocean, which she beheld daily from the nunnery gardens. Or, if only half of it was their fault, the other half lay in those golden tales, streaming upwards even into the sanctuaries of convents, like morning mists touched by earliest sunlight, of kingdoms overshadowing a new world which had been founded by her kinsmen with the simple aid of a horse and a lance. The reader is to remember that this is no romance, or at least no fiction, that he is reading; and it is proper to remind the reader of real romances in Ariosto or our own Spenser, that such martial ladies as the Marfisa, or Bradamant of the first, and Britomart of the other, were really not the improbabilities that modern society imagines. Many a stout man, as you will soon see, found that Kate, with a sabre in hand, and well mounted, was but too serious a fact.

The day is come—the evening is come—when our poor Kate, that had for fifteen years been so tenderly rocked in the arms of St. Sebastian and his daughters, and that henceforth shall hardly find a breathing space between eternal storms, must see her peaceful cell, must see the holy chapel, for the last time. It was at vespers, it was during the chanting of the vesper service, that she finally read the secret signal for her departure, which long she had been looking for. It happened that her aunt, the Lady Principal, had forgotten her breviary. As this was in a private 'scrutoire, she did not choose to send a servant for it, but gave the key to her niece. The niece, on opening the 'scrutoire, saw, with that rapidity of eye-glance for

the one thing needed in any great emergency, which ever attended her through life, that now was the moment for an attempt which, if neglected, might never return. There lay the total keys, in one massive trousseau, of that fortress impregnable even to armies from without. Saint Sebastian! do you see what your pet is going to do? And do it she will, as sure as your name is St. Sebastian. Kate went back to her aunt with the breviary and the key; but taking good care to leave that awful door, on whose hinge revolved her whole life, unlocked. Delivering the two articles to the Superior, she complained of a headache—[Ah, Kate! what did you know of headaches, except now and then afterwards from a stray bullet, or so?—upon which her aunt, kissing her forehead, dismissed her to bed. Now, then, through three-fourths of an hour Kate will have free elbow-room for unanchoring her boat, for unshipping her oars, and for pulling ahead right out of St. Sebastian's cove into the main ocean of life.

Catalina, the reader is to understand, does not belong to the class of persons in whom chiefly I pretend to an interest. But everywhere one loves energy and indomitable courage. I, for my part, admire not, by preference, anything that points to this world. It is the child of reverie and profounder sensibility who turns away from the world as hateful and insufficient, that engages my interest: whereas Catalina was the very model of the class fitted for facing this world, and who express their love to it by fighting with it and kicking it from year to year. But, always, what is best in its kind one admires, even though the kind be disagreeable. Kate's advantages for her role in this life lay in four things, viz., in a well-built person, and a particularly strong wrist; 2d, in a heart that nothing could appal; 3d, in a sagacious head, never drawn aside from the hoc age [from the instant question of life] by any weakness of imagination; 4th, in a tolerably thick skin—not literally, for she was fair and blooming, and decidedly handsome, having such a skin as became a young woman of family in northernmost Spain. But her sensibilities were obtuse as regarded some modes of delicacy, some modes of equity, some modes of the world's opinion, and all modes whatever of personal hardship. Lay a stress on that word some—for, as to delicacy, she never lost sight of the kind which peculiarly concerns her sex. Long afterwards she told the Pope himself, when confessing without disguise her sad and infinite wanderings to the paternal old man (and I feel convinced of her veracity), that in this respect, even then, at middle age, she was as pure as is a child. And, as to equity, it was only that she substituted the equity of camps for the polished (but often more iniquitous) equity of courts and towns. As to the third item—the world's opinion—I don't know that you need lay a stress on some; for, generally speaking, all that the world did, said, or thought, was alike contemptible in her eyes, in which, perhaps, she was not so very far wrong. I must add, though at the cost of interrupting the story by two or three more sentences, that Catalina had also a fifth advantage, which sounds humbly, but is really of use in a world, where even to fold and seal a letter adroitly is not the least of accomplishments. She was a handy girl. She could turn her hand to anything, of which I will give you two memorable instances. Was there ever a girl in this world but herself that cheated and snapped her fingers at that awful Inquisition, which brooded over the convents of Spain, that did this without collusion from outside, trusting to nobody, but to herself, and what? to one needle, two hanks of thread, and a very inferior pair of scissors? For, that the scissors were bad, though Kate does not say so in her memoirs, I knew by an a priori argument, viz., because all scissors were bad in the year 1607. Now, say all decent logicians, from a universal to a particular valet consequentia, all scissors were bad: ergo, some scissors were bad. The second instance of her handiness will surprise you even more:—She once stood upon a scaffold, under sentence of death—[but, understand, on the evidence of false witnesses]. Jack Ketch was absolutely tying the knot under her ear, and the shameful man of ropes fumbled so deplorably, that Kate

(who by much nautical experience had learned from another sort of 'Jack' how a knot should be tied in this world,) lost all patience with the contemptible artist, told him she was ashamed of him, took the rope out of his hand, and tied the knot irreproachably herself. The crowd saluted her with a festal roll, long and loud, of vivas; and this word viva of good augury—but stop; let me not anticipate.

From this sketch of Catalina's character, the reader is prepared to understand the decision of her present proceeding. She had no time to lose: the twilight favored her; but she must get under hiding before pursuit commenced. Consequently she lost not one of her forty-five minutes in picking and choosing. No shilly-shally in Kate. She saw with the eyeball of an eagle what was indispensable. Some little money perhaps to pay the first toll-bar of life: so, out of four shillings in Aunty's purse, she took one. You can't say that was exorbitant. Which of us wouldn't subscribe a shilling for poor Katy to put into the first trouser pockets that ever she will wear? I remember even yet, as a personal experience, that when first arrayed, at four years old, in nankeen trousers, though still so far retaining hermaphrodite relations of dress as to wear a petticoat above my trousers, all my female friends (because they pitied me, as one that had suffered from years of ague) filled my pockets with half-crowns, of which I can render no account at this day. But what were my poor pretensions by the side of Kate's? Kate was a fine blooming girl of fifteen, with no touch of ague, and, before the next sun rises, Kate shall draw on her first trousers, and made by her own hand; and, that she may do so, of all the valuables in Aunty's repository she takes nothing beside the shilling, quantum sufficit of thread, one stout needle, and (as I told you before, if you would please to remember things) one bad pair of scissors. Now she was ready; ready to cast off St. Sebastian's towing-rope; ready to cut and run for port anywhere. The finishing touch of her preparations was to pick out the proper keys: even there she showed the same discretion. She did do no gratuitous mischief. She did not take the wine-cellar key, which would have irritated the good father confessor; she took those keys only that belonged to her, if ever keys did; for they were the keys that locked her out from her natural birthright of liberty. 'Show me,' says the Romish Casuist, 'her right in law to let herself out of that nunnery.' 'Show us,' we reply, 'your right to lock her in.'

Right or wrong, however, in strict casuistry, Kate was resolved to let herself out; and did so; and, for fear any man should creep in whilst vespers lasted, and steal the kitchen grate, she locked her old friends in. Then she sought a shelter. The air was not cold. She hurried into a chestnut wood, and upon withered leaves slept till dawn. Spanish diet and youth leaves the digestion undisordered, and the slumbers light. When the lark rose, up rose Catalina. No time to lose, for she was still in the dress of a nun, and liable to be arrested by any man in Spain. With her armed finger, [aye, by the way, I forgot the thimble; but Kate did not]—she set to work upon her amply-embroidered petticoat. She turned it wrong side out; and with the magic that only female hands possess, she had soon sketched and finished a dashing pair of Wellington trousers. All other changes were made according to the materials she possessed, and quite sufficiently to disguise the two main perils—her sex, and her monastic dedication. What was she to do next. Speaking of Wellington trousers would remind us, but could hardly remind her, of Vittoria, where she dimly had heard of some maternal relative. To Vittoria, therefore, she bent her course; and, like the Duke of Wellington, but arriving more than two centuries earlier, [though he too is an early riser,] she gained a great victory at that place. She had made a two days' march, baggage far in the rear, and no

provisions but wild berries; she depended for anything better, as light-heartedly as the Duke, upon attacking, sword in hand, storming her dear friend's entrenchments, and effecting a lodgment in his breakfast-room, should he happen to have one. This amiable relative, an elderly man, had but one foible, or perhaps one virtue in this world; but that he had in perfection,—it was pedantry. On that hint Catalina spoke: she knew by heart, from the services of the convent, a few Latin phrases. Latin!—Oh, but that was charming; and in one so young! The grave Don owned the soft impeachment; relented at once, and clasped the hopeful young gentleman in the Wellington trousers to his uncular and rather angular breast. In this house the yarn of life was of a mingled quality. The table was good, but that was exactly what Kate cared little about. The amusement was of the worst kind. It consisted chiefly in conjugating Latin verbs, especially such as were obstinately irregular. To show him a withered frost-bitten verb, that wanted its preterite, wanted its supines, wanted, in fact, everything in this world, fruits or blossoms, that make a verb desirable, was to earn the Don's gratitude for life. All day long he was marching and countermarching his favorite brigades of verbs—verbs frequentative, verbs inceptive, verbs desiderative—horse, foot, and artillery; changing front, advancing from the rear, throwing out skirmishing parties, until Kate, not given to faint, must have thought of such a resource, as once in her life she had thought so seasonably of a vesper headache. This was really worse than St. Sebastian's. It reminds one of a French gayety in Thiebault or some such author, who describes a rustic party, under equal despair, as employing themselves in conjugating the verb *s'ennuyer*,—*Je m'ennuie, tu t'ennuies, il s'ennuit; nous nous ennuyons, &c.*; thence to the imperfect—*Je m'ennuyois, tu t'ennuyois, &c.*; thence to the imperative—*Qu'il s'ennuye, &c.*; and so on through the whole melancholy conjugation. Now, you know, when the time comes that, *nous nous ennuyons*, the best course is, to part. Kate saw that; and she walked off from the Don's [of whose amorous passion for defective verbs one would have wished to know the catastrophe], and took from his mantel-piece rather more silver than she had levied on her aunt. But the Don also was a relative; and really he owed her a small cheque on his banker for turning out on his field-days. A man, if he is a kinsman, has no right to bore one gratis.

From Vittoria, Kate was guided by a carrier to Valladolid. Luckily, as it seemed at first, but it made little difference in the end, here, at Valladolid, were the King and his Court. Consequently, there was plenty of regiments and plenty of regimental bands. Attracted by one of these, Catalina was quietly listening to the music, when some street ruffians, in derision of the gay colors and the form of her forest-made costume—[rascals! one would like to have seen what sort of trousers they would have made with no better scissors!]  
—began to pelt her with stones. Ah, my friends, of the genus blackguard, you little know who it is that you are selecting for experiments. This is the one creature of fifteen in all Spain, be the other male or female, whom nature, and temper, and provocation have qualified for taking the conceit out of you. This she very soon did, laying open a head or two with a sharp stone, and letting out rather too little than too much of bad Valladolid blood. But mark the constant villany of this world. Certain Alguazils—very like some other Alguazils that I know nearer home—having stood by quietly to see the friendless stranger insulted and assaulted, now felt it their duty to apprehend the poor nun for murderous violence: and had there been such a thing as a treadmill in Valladolid, Kate was booked for a place on it without further inquiry. Luckily, injustice does not always prosper. A gallant young cavalier, who had witnessed from his windows the whole affair, had seen the provocation, and admired Catalina's behavior—equally patient at first and bold at last—hastened into the street, pursued the officers, forced them to release their prisoner, upon stating the circumstances of the case, and instantly offered Catalina a situation amongst his retinue.

He was a man of birth and fortune; and the place offered, that of an honorary page, not being at all degrading even to a 'daughter of somebody,' was cheerfully accepted. Here Catalina spent a happy month. She was now splendidly dressed in dark blue velvet, by a tailor that did not work within the gloom of a chestnut forest. She and the young cavalier, Don Francisco de Cardenas, were mutually pleased, and had mutual confidence. All went well—when one evening, but, luckily, not until the sun had been set so long as to make all things indistinct, who should march into the ante-chamber of the cavalier but that sublime of crocodiles, Papa, that we lost sight of fifteen years ago, and shall never see again after this night. He had his crocodile tears all ready for use, in working order, like a good industrious fire-engine. It was absolutely to Catalina herself that he advanced; whom, for many reasons, he could not be supposed to recognise—lapse of years, male attire, twilight, were all against him. Still, she might have the family countenance; and Kate thought he looked with a suspicious scrutiny into her face, as he inquired for the young Don. To avert her own face, to announce him to Don Francisco, to wish him on the shores of that ancient river for crocodiles, the Nile, furnished but one moment's work to the active Catalina. She lingered, however, as her place entitled her to do, at the door of the audience chamber. She guessed already, but in a moment she heard from papa's lips what was the nature of his errand. His daughter Catharine, he informed the Don, had eloped from the convent of St. Sebastian, a place rich in delight. Then he laid open the unparalleled ingratitude of such a step. Oh, the unseen treasure that had been spent upon that girl! Oh, the untold sums of money that he had sunk in that unhappy speculation! The nights of sleeplessness suffered during her infancy! The fifteen years of solicitude thrown away in schemes for her improvement! It would have moved the heart of a stone. The hidalgo wept copiously at his own pathos. And to such a height of grandeur had he carried his Spanish sense of the sublime, that he disdained to mention the pocket-handkerchief which he had left at St. Sebastian's fifteen years ago, by way of envelope for 'pussy,' and which, to the best of pussy's knowledge, was the one sole memorandum of papa ever heard of at St. Sebastian's. Pussy, however, saw no use in revising and correcting the text of papa's remembrances. She showed her usual prudence, and her usual incomparable decision. It did not appear, as yet, that she would be reclaimed, or was at all suspected for the fugitive by her father. For it is an instance of that singular fatality which pursued Catalina through life, that, to her own astonishment, (as she now collected from her father's conference,) nobody had traced her to Valladolid, nor had her father's visit any connection with suspicious travelling in that direction. The case was quite different. Strangely enough, her street row had thrown her into the one sole household in all Spain that had an official connection with St. Sebastian's. That convent had been founded by the young cavalier's family; and, according to the usage of Spain, the young man (as present representative of his house) was the responsible protector of the establishment. It was not to the Don, as harbinger of his daughter, but to the Don, as ex officio visitor of the convent, that the hidalgo was appealing. Probably Kate might have staid safely some time longer. Yet, again, this would but have multiplied the clues for tracing her; and, finally, she would too probably have been discovered; after which, with all his youthful generosity, the poor Don could not have protected her. Too terrific was the vengeance that awaited an abettor of any fugitive nun; but, above all, if such a crime were perpetrated by an official mandatory of the church. Yet, again, so far it was the more hazardous course to abscond, that it almost revealed her to the young Don as the missing daughter. Still, if it really had that effect, nothing at present obliged him to pursue her, as might have been the case a few weeks later. Kate argued (I dare say) rightly, as she always did. Her prudence whispered eternally, that safety there was none for her, until she had laid the Atlantic between herself and St. Sebastian's. Life was to be for her a Bay of Biscay; and it was odds but she had first embarked upon this billowy life from the literal Bay of Biscay. Chance ordered otherwise. Or, as a Frenchman says with eloquent ingenuity, in

connection with this story, 'Chance is but the pseudonyme of God for those particular cases which he does not subscribe openly with his own sign manual.' She crept up stairs to her bed-room. Simple are the travelling preparations of those that, possessing nothing, have no imperials to pack. She had Juvenal's qualification for carolling gaily through a forest full of robbers; for she had nothing to lose but a change of linen, that rode easily enough under her left arm, leaving the right free for answering any questions of impertinent customers. As she crept down stairs, she heard the Crocodile still weeping forth his sorrows to the pensive ear of twilight, and to the sympathetic Don Francisco. Now, it would not have been filial or lady-like for Kate to do what I am going to suggest; but what a pity that some gay brother page had not been there to turn aside into the room, armed with a roasted potato, and, taking a sportsman's aim, to have lodged it in the Crocodile's abominable mouth. Yet, what an anachronism! There were no roasted potatoes in Spain at that date, and very few in England. But anger drives a man to say anything.

Catalina had seen her last of friends and enemies in Valladolid. Short was her time there; but she had improved it so far as to make a few of both. There was an eye or two in Valladolid that would have glared with malice upon her, had she been seen by all eyes in that city, as she tripped through the streets in the dusk; and eyes there were that would have softened into tears, had they seen the desolate condition of the child, or in vision had seen the struggles that were before her. But what's the use of wasting tears upon our Kate? Wait till to-morrow morning at sunrise, and see if she is particularly in need of pity. What now should a young lady do—I propose it as a subject for a prize essay—that finds herself in Valladolid at nightfall, having no letters of introduction, not aware of any reason great or small for preferring any street in general, except so far as she knows of some reason for avoiding one or two streets in particular? The great problem I have stated, Kate investigated as she went along; and she solved it with the accuracy with which she ever applied to practical exigencies. Her conclusion was—that the best door to knock at in such a case was the door where there was no need to knock at all, as being unfastened, and open to all comers. For she argued that within such a door there would be nothing to steal, so that, at least, you could not be mistaken in the ark for a thief. Then, as to stealing from her, they might do that if they could.

Upon these principles, which hostile critics will in vain endeavor to undermine, she laid her hand upon what seemed a rude stable door. Such it proved. There was an empty cart inside, certainly there was, but you couldn't take that away in your pocket; and there were five loads of straw, but then of those a lady could take no more than her reticule would carry, which perhaps was allowed by the courtesy of Spain. So Kate was right as to the difficulty of being challenged for a thief. Closing the door as gently as she had opened it, she dropped her person, dressed as she was, upon the nearest heap of straw. Some ten feet further were lying two muleteers, honest and happy enough, as compared with the lords of the bed-chamber then in Valladolid: but still gross men, carnally deaf from eating garlic and onions, and other horrible substances. Accordingly, they never heard her, nor were aware, until dawn, that such a blooming person existed. But she was aware of them, and of their conversation. They were talking of an expedition for America, on the point of sailing under Don Ferdinand de Cordova. It was to sail from some Andalusian port. That was the very thing for her. At daylight she woke, and jumped up, needing no more toilet than the birds that already were singing in the gardens, or than the two muleteers, who, good, honest

fellows, saluted the handsome boy kindly—thinking no ill at his making free with their straw, though no leave had been asked.

With these philo-garlic men Kate took her departure. The morning was divine: and leaving Valladolid with the transports that befitted such a golden dawn, feeling also already, in the very obscurity of her exit, the pledge of her escape; she cared no longer for the Crocodile, or for St. Sebastian, or (in the way of fear) for the protector of St. Sebastian, though of him she thought with some tenderness; so deep is the remembrance of kindness mixed with justice. Andalusia she reached rather slowly; but many months before she was sixteen years old, and quite in time for the expedition. St. Lucar being the port of rendezvous for the Peruvian expedition, thither she went. All comers were welcome on board the fleet; much more a fine young fellow like Kate. She was at once engaged as a mate; and her ship, in particular, after doubling Cape Horn without loss, made the coast of Peru. Paita was the port of her destination. Very near to this port they were, when a storm threw them upon a coral reef. There was little hope of the ship from the first, for she was unmanageable, and was not expected to hold together for twenty-four hours. In this condition, with death before their faces, mark what Kate did; and please to remember it for her benefit, when she does any other little thing that angers you. The crew lowered the long-boat. Vainly the captain protested against this disloyal desertion of a king's ship, which might yet perhaps be run on shore, so as to save the stores. All the crew, to a man, deserted the captain. You may say that literally; for the single exception was not a man, being our bold-hearted Kate. She was the only sailor that refused to leave her captain, or the king of Spain's ship. The rest pulled away for the shore, and with fair hopes of reaching it. But one half-hour told another tale: just about that time came a broad sheet of lightning, which, through the darkness of evening, revealed the boat in the very act of mounting like a horse upon an inner reef, instantly filling, and throwing out the crew, every man of whom disappeared amongst the breakers. The night which succeeded was gloomy for both the representatives of his Catholic Majesty. It cannot be denied by the greatest of philosophers, that the muleteer's stable at Valladolid was worth twenty such ships, though the stable was not insured against fire, and the ship was insured against the sea and the wind by some fellow that thought very little of his engagements. But what's the use of sitting down to cry? That was never any trick of Catalina's. By daybreak, she was at work with an axe in her hand. I knew it, before ever I came to this place, in her memoirs. I felt, as sure as if I had read it, that when day broke, we should find Kate hard at work. Thimble or axe, trousers or raft, all one to her.

The Captain, though true to his duty, seems to have desponded. He gave no help towards the raft. Signs were speaking, however, pretty loudly that he must do something; for notice to quit was now served pretty liberally. Kate's raft was ready; and she encouraged the captain to think that it would give both of them something to hold by in swimming, if not even carry double. At this moment, when all was waiting for a start, and the ship herself was waiting for a final lurch, to say Good-bye to the King of Spain, Kate went and did a thing which some misjudging people will object to. She knew of a box laden with gold coins, reputed to be the King of Spain's, and meant for contingencies in the voyage out. This she smashed open with her axe, and took a sum equal to one hundred guineas English; which, having well secured in a pillow-case, she then lashed firmly to the raft. Now this, you know, though not flotsam, because it would not float, was certainly, by maritime law, 'jetsom.' It would be the idlest of scruples to fancy that the sea



or a shark had a better right to it than a philosopher, or a splendid girl who showed herself capable of writing a very fair 8vo, to say nothing of her decapitating in battle several of the king's enemies, and recovering the king's banner. No sane moralist would hesitate to do the same thing under the same circumstances, on board an English vessel, though the First Lord of the Admiralty should be looking on. The raft was now thrown into the sea. Kate jumped after it, and then entreated the captain to follow her. He attempted it; but, wanting her youthful agility, he struck his head against a spar, and sank like lead, giving notice below that his ship was coming. Kate mounted the raft, and was gradually washed ashore, but so exhausted, as to have lost all recollection. She lay for hours until the warmth of the sun revived her. On sitting up, she saw a desolate shore stretching both ways—nothing to eat, nothing to drink, but fortunately the raft and the money had been thrown near her; none of the lashings having given way—only what is the use of a guinea amongst tangle and sea-gulls? The money she distributed amongst her pockets, and soon found strength to rise and march forward. But which was forward? and which backward? She knew by the conversation of the sailors that Paita must be in the neighborhood; and Paita, being a port, could not be in the inside of Peru, but, of course, somewhere on its outside—and the outside of a maritime land must be the shore; so that, if she kept the shore, and went far enough, she could not fail of hitting her foot against Paita at last, in the very darkest night, provided only she could first find out which was up and which was down; else she might walk her shoes off, and find herself six thousand miles in the wrong. Here was an awkward case, all for want of a guide-post. Still, when one thinks of Kate's prosperous horoscope, that after so long a voyage, she only, out of the total crew, was thrown on the American shore, with one hundred and five pounds in her purse of clear gain on the voyage, a conviction arises that she could not guess wrongly. She might have tossed up, having coins in her pocket, heads or tails? but this kind of sortilege was then coming to be thought irreligious in Christendom, as a Jewish and a Heathen mode of questioning the dark future. She simply guessed, therefore; and very soon a thing happened which, though adding nothing to strengthen her guess as a true one, did much to sweeten it if it should prove a false one. On turning a point of the shore, she came upon a barrel of biscuit washed ashore from the ship. Biscuit is about the best thing I know, but it is the soonest spoiled; and one would like to hear counsel on one puzzling point, why it is that a touch of water utterly ruins it, taking its life, and leaving a caput mortuum corpse! Upon this caput Kate breakfasted, though her case was worse than mine; for any water that ever plagued me was always fresh; now hers was a present from the Pacific ocean. She, that was always prudent, packed up some of the Catholic king's biscuit, as she had previously packed up far too little of his gold. But in such cases a most delicate question occurs, pressing equally on medicine and algebra. It is this: if you pack up too much, then, by this extra burthen of salt provisions, you may retard for days your arrival at fresh provisions; on the other hand, if you pack up too little, you may never arrive at all. Catalina hit the juste milieu; and about twilight on the second day, she found herself entering Paita, without having had to swim any river in her walk.

The first thing, in such a case of distress, which a young lady does, even if she happens to be a young gentleman, is to beautify her dress. Kate always attended to that, as we know, having overlooked her in the chestnut wood. The man she sent for was not properly a tailor, but one who employed tailors, he himself furnishing the materials. His name was Urquiza, a fact of very little importance to us in 1847, if it had stood only at the head and foot of Kate's little account. But unhappily for Kate's *début* on this vast American stage, the case was otherwise. Mr. Urquiza had the misfortune (equally common in the old world and the new) of being a knave; and also a showy specious knave. Kate, who had prospered under

sea allowances of biscuit and hardship, was now expanding in proportions. With very little vanity or consciousness on that head, she now displayed a really fine person; and, when drest anew in the way that became a young officer in the Spanish service, she looked the representative picture of a Spanish caballador. It is strange that such an appearance, and such a rank, should have suggested to Urquiza the presumptuous idea of wishing that Kate might become his clerk. He did, however wish it; for Kate wrote a beautiful hand; and a stranger thing is, that Kate accepted his proposal. This might arise from the difficulty of moving in those days to any distance in Peru. The ship had been merely bringing stores to the station of Paita; and no corps of the royal armies was readily to be reached, whilst something must be done at once for a livelihood. Urquiza had two mercantile establishments, one at Trujillo, to which he repaired in person, on Kate's agreeing to undertake the management of the other in Paita. Like the sensible girl, that we have always found her, she demanded specific instructions for her guidance in duties so new. Certainly she was in a fair way for seeing life. Telling her beads at St. Sebastian's, manoeuvring irregular verbs at Vittoria, acting as gentleman-usher at Valladolid, serving his Spanish Majesty round Cape Horn, fighting with storms and sharks off the coast of Peru, and now commencing as book-keeper or commis to a draper at Paita, does she not justify the character that I myself gave her, just before dismissing her from St. Sebastian's, of being a 'handy' girl? Mr. Urquiza's instructions were short, easy to be understood, but rather comic; and yet, which is odd, they led to tragic results. There were two debtors of the shop, (many, it is to be hoped, but two meriting his affectionate notice,) with respect to whom he left the most opposite directions. The one was a very handsome lady; and the rule as to her was, that she was to have credit unlimited, strictly unlimited. That was plain. The other customer, favored by Mr. Urquiza's valedictory thoughts, was a young man, cousin to the handsome lady, and bearing the name of Reyes. This youth occupied in Mr. Urquiza's estimate the same hyperbolic rank as the handsome lady, but on the opposite side of the equation. The rule as to him was—that he was to have no credit; strictly none. In this case, also, Kate saw no difficulty; and when she came to know Mr. Reyes a little, she found the path of pleasure coinciding with the path of duty. Mr. Urquiza could not be more precise in laying down the rule than Kate was in enforcing it. But in the other case a scruple arose. Unlimited might be a word, not of Spanish law, but of Spanish rhetoric; such as 'Live a thousand years,' which even annuity offices hear, and perhaps utter, without a pang. Kate, therefore, wrote to Trujillo, expressing her honest fears, and desiring to have more definite instructions. These were positive. If the lady chose to send for the entire shop, her account was to be debited instantly with that. She had, however, as yet, not sent for the shop, but she began to manifest strong signs of sending for the shop man. Upon the blooming young Biscayan had her roving eye settled; and she was in a course of making up her mind to take Kate for a sweetheart. Poor Kate saw this with a heavy heart. And, at the same time that she had a prospect of a tender friend more than she wanted, she had become certain of an extra enemy that she wanted quite as little. What she had done to offend Mr. Reyes, Kate could not guess, except as to the matter of the credit; but then, in that, she only executed her instructions. Still Mr. Reyes was of opinion that there were two ways of executing orders: but the main offence was unintentional on Kate's part. Reyes, though as yet she did not know it, had himself been a candidate for the situation of clerk; and intended probably to keep the equation precisely as it was with respect to the allowance of credit, only to change places with the handsome lady—keeping her on the negative side, himself on the affirmative—an arrangement that you know could have made no sort of pecuniary difference to Urquiza.

Thus stood matters, when a party of strolling players strolled into Paita. Kate, as a Spaniard, being one held of the Paita aristocracy, was expected to attend. She did so; and there also was the malignant Reyes. He came and seated himself purposely so as to shut out Kate from all view of the stage. She, who had nothing of the bully in her nature, and was a gentle creature when her wild Biscayan blood had not been kindled by insult, courteously requested him to move a little; upon which Reyes remarked that it was not in his power to oblige the clerk as to that, but that he could oblige him by cutting his throat. The tiger that slept in Catalina wakened at once. She seized him, and would have executed vengeance on the spot, but that a party of young men interposed to part them. The next day, when Kate (always ready to forget and forgive) was thinking no more of the row, Reyes passed; by spitting at the window, and other gestures insulting to Kate, again he roused her Spanish blood. Out she rushed, sword in hand—a duel began in the street, and very soon Kate's sword had passed into the heart of Reyes. Now that the mischief was done, the police were, as usual, all alive for the pleasure of avenging it. Kate found herself suddenly in a strong prison, and with small hopes of leaving it, except for execution. The relations of the dead man were potent in Paita, and clamorous for justice, so that the corregidor, in a case where he saw a very poor chance of being corrupted by bribes, felt it his duty to be sublimely incorruptible. The reader knows, however, that, amongst the relatives of the deceased bully, was that handsome lady, who differed as much from her cousin in her sentiments as to Kate, as she did in the extent of her credit with Mr. Urquiza. To her Kate wrote a note; and, using one of the Spanish King's gold coins for bribing the jailor, got it safely delivered. That, perhaps, was unnecessary; for the lady had been already on the alert, and had summoned Urquiza from Trujillo. By some means, not very luminously stated, and by paying proper fees in proper quarters, Kate was smuggled out of the prison at nightfall, and smuggled into a pretty house in the suburbs. Had she known exactly the footing she stood on as to the law, she would have been decided. As it was, she was uneasy, and jealous of mischief abroad; and, before supper, she understood it all. Urquiza briefly informed his clerk, that it would be requisite for him to marry the handsome lady. But why? Because, said Urquiza, after talking for hours with the corregidor, who was infamous for obstinacy, he had found it impossible to make him 'hear reason,' and release the prisoner, until this compromise of marriage was suggested. But how could public justice be pacified for the clerk's unfortunate homicide of Reyes, by a female cousin of the deceased man engaging to love, honor, and obey the clerk for life? Kate could not see her way through this logic. 'Nonsense, my friend,' said Urquiza, 'you don't comprehend. As it stands, the affair is a murder, and hanging the penalty. But, if you marry into the murdered man's house, then it becomes a little family murder, all quiet and comfortable amongst ourselves. What has the corregidor to do with that? or the public either? Now, let me introduce the bride.' Supper entered at that moment, and the bride immediately after. The thoughtfulness of Kate was narrowly observed, and even alluded to, but politely ascribed to the natural anxieties of a prisoner, and the very imperfect state of liberation even yet from prison surveillance. Kate had, indeed, never been in so trying a situation before. The anxieties of the farewell night at St. Sebastian were nothing to this; because, even if she had failed then, a failure might not have been always irreparable. It was but to watch and wait. But now, at this supper table, she was not more alive to the nature of the peril than she was to the fact, that if, before the night closed, she did not by some means escape from it, she never would escape with life. The deception as to her sex, though resting on no motive that pointed to these people, or at all concerned them, would be resented as if it had. The lady would resent the case as a mockery; and Urquiza would lose his opportunity of delivering himself from an imperious mistress. According to the usages of the times and country, Kate knew that in twelve hours she would be assassinated.

People of infirmer resolution would have lingered at the supper table, for the sake of putting off the evil moment of final crisis. Not so Kate. She had revolved the case on all its sides in a few minutes, and had formed her resolution. This done, she was as ready for the trial at one moment as another; and, when the lady suggested that the hardships of a prison must have made repose desirable, Kate assented, and instantly rose. A sort of procession formed, for the purpose of doing honor to the interesting guest, and escorting him in pomp to his bedroom. Kate viewed it much in the same light as the procession to which for some days she had been expecting an invitation from the corregidor. Far ahead ran the servant-woman as a sort of outrider. Then came Urquiza, like a Pasha of two tails, who granted two sorts of credit, viz. unlimited and none at all, bearing two wax-lights, one in each hand, and wanting only cymbals and kettle-drums to express emphatically the pathos of his Castilian strut. Next came the bride, a little in advance of the clerk, but still turning obliquely towards him, and smiling graciously into his face. Lastly, bringing up the rear, came the prisoner—our Kate—the nun, the page, the mate, the clerk, the homicide, the convict; and, for this day only, by particular desire, the bridegroom elect.

It was Kate's fixed opinion, that, if for a moment she entered any bedroom having obviously no outlet, her fate would be that of an ox once driven within the shambles. Outside, the bullock might make some defence with his horns; but once in, with no space for turning, he is muffled and gagged. She carried her eye, therefore, like a hawk's, steady, though restless, for vigilant examination of every angle she turned. Before she entered any bedroom, she was resolved to reconnoiter it from the doorway, and, in case of necessity, show fight at once, before entering—as the best chance, after all, where all chances were bad. Everything ends; and at last the procession reached the bedroom door, the outrider having filed off to the rear. One glance sufficed to satisfy Kate that windows there were none, and, therefore, no outlet for escape. Treachery appeared even in that; and Kate, though unfortunately without arms, was now fixed for resistance. Mr. Urquiza entered first—'Sound the trumpets! Beat the drums!' There were, as we know already, no windows; but a slight interruption to Mr. Urquiza's pompous tread showed that there were steps downwards into the room. Those, thought Kate, will suit me even better. She had watched the unlocking of the bedroom door—she had lost nothing—she had marked that the key was left in the lock. At this moment, the beautiful lady, as one acquainted with the details of the house, turning with the air of a gracious monitress, held out her fair hand to guide Kate in careful descent of the steps. This had the air of taking out Kate to dance; and Kate, at that same moment, answering to it by the gesture of a modern waltzer, threw her arm behind the lady's waist, hurled her headlong down the steps right against Mr. Urquiza, draper and haberdasher; and then, with the speed of lightning, throwing the door home within its architrave, doubly locked the creditor and debtor into the rat-trap which they had prepared for herself.

The affrighted out-rider fled with horror: she already knew that the clerk had committed one homicide; a second would cost him still less thought; and thus it happened that egress was left easy. But, when out and free once more in the bright starry night, which way should Kate turn? The whole city would prove but a rat-trap for her, as bad as Mr. Urquiza's, if she was not off before morning. At a glance she comprehended that the sea was her only chance. To the port she fled. All was silent. Watchmen there were none. She jumped into a boat. To use the oars was dangerous, for she had no means of muffling them. But she

contrived to hoist a sail, pushed off with a boat-hook, and was soon stretching across the water for the mouth of the harbor before a breeze light but favorable. Having cleared the difficulties of exit she lay down, and unintentionally fell asleep. When she awoke the sun had been up three or four hours; all was right otherwise; but had she not served as a sailor, Kate would have trembled upon finding that, during her long sleep of perhaps seven or eight hours, she had lost sight of land; by what distance she could only guess; and in what direction, was to some degree doubtful. All this, however, seemed a great advantage to the bold girl, throwing her thoughts back on the enemies she had left behind. The disadvantage was—having no breakfast, not even damaged biscuit; and some anxiety naturally arose as to ulterior prospects a little beyond the horizon of breakfast. But who's afraid? As sailors whistle for a wind, Catalina really had but to whistle for anything with energy, and it was sure to come. Like Caesar to the pilot of Dyrrhachium, she might have said, for the comfort of her poor timorous boat, (though destined soon to perish,) 'Catalinam vehis, et fortunas ejus.' Meantime, being very doubtful as to the best course for sailing, and content if her course did but lie offshore, she 'carried on,' as sailors say, under easy sail, going, in fact, just whither and just how the Pacific breezes suggested in the gentlest of whispers. All right behind, was Kate's opinion; and, what was better, very soon she might say, all right ahead: for some hour or two before sunset, when dinner was for once becoming, even to Kate, the most interesting of subjects for meditation, suddenly a large ship began to swell upon the brilliant atmosphere. In those latitudes, and in those years, any ship was pretty sure to be Spanish: sixty years later the odds were in favor of its being an English buccaneer; which would have given a new direction to Kate's energy. Kate continued to make signals with a handkerchief whiter than the crocodile's of Ann. Dom. 1592, else it would hardly have been noticed. Perhaps, after all, it would not, but that the ship's course carried her very nearly across Kate's. The stranger lay-to for her. It was dark by the time Kate steered herself under the ship's quarter; and then was seen an instance of this girl's eternal wakefulness. Something was painted on the stern of her boat, she could not see what; but she judged that it would express some connection with the port that she had just quitted. Now it was her wish to break the chain of traces connecting her with such a scamp as Urquiza; since else, through his commercial correspondence, he might disperse over Peru a portrait of herself by no means flattering. How should she accomplish this? It was dark; and she stood, as you may see an Etonian do at times, rocking her little boat from side to side, until it had taken in water as much as might be agreeable. Too much it proved for the boat's constitution, and the boat perished of dropsy—Kate declining to tap it. She got a ducking herself; but what cared she? Up the ship's side she went, as gaily as ever, in those years when she was called pussy, she had raced after the nuns of St. Sebastian; jumped upon deck, and told the first lieutenant, when he questioned her about her adventures, quite as much truth as any man, under the rank of admiral, had a right to expect.

This ship was full of recruits for the Spanish army, and bound to Concepcion. Even in that destiny was an iteration, or repeating memorial of the significance that ran through Catalina's most casual adventures. She had enlisted amongst the soldiers; and, on reaching port, the very first person who came off from shore was a dashing young military officer, whom at once by his name and rank, (though she had never consciously seen him,) she identified as her own brother. He was splendidly situated in the service, being the Governor-General's secretary, besides his rank as a cavalry officer; and, his errand on board being to inspect the recruits, naturally, on reading in the roll one of them described as a Biscayan, the ardent young man came up with high-bred courtesy to Catalina, took the young recruit's hand with kindness, feeling that to be a compatriot at so great a distance was to be a sort of relative, and asked with emotion after old

boyish remembrances. There was a scriptural pathos in what followed, as if it were some scene of domestic re-union, opening itself from patriarchal ages. The young officer was the eldest son of the house, and had left Spain when Catalina was only three years old. But, singularly enough, Catalina it was, the little wild cat that he yet remembered seeing at St. Sebastian's, upon whom his earliest inquiries settled. 'Did the recruit know his family, the De Erausos?' O yes, every body knew them. 'Did the recruit know little Catalina?' Catalina smiled, as she replied that she did; and gave such an animated description of the little fiery wretch, as made the officer's eye flash with gratified tenderness, and with certainty that the recruit was no counterfeit Biscayan. Indeed, you know, if Kate couldn't give a good description of 'Pussy,' who could? The issue of the interview was—that the officer insisted on Kate's making a home of his quarters. He did other services for his unknown sister. He placed her as a trooper in his own regiment, and favored her in many a way that is open to one having authority. But the person, after all, that did most to serve our Kate, was Kate. War was then raging with Indians, both from Chili and Peru. Kate had always done her duty in action; but at length, in the decisive battle of Puren, there was an opening for doing something more. Havoc had been made of her own squadron: most of the officers were killed, and the standard was carried off. Kate gathered around her a small party—galloped after the Indian column that was carrying away the trophy—charged—saw all her own party killed—but (in spite of wounds on her face and shoulder) succeeded in bearing away the recovered standard. She rode up to the general and his staff; she dismounted; she rendered up her prize; and fainted away, much less from the blinding blood, than from the tears of joy which dimmed her eyes, as the general, waving his sword in admiration over her head, pronounced our Kate on the spot an Alferaz, or standard-bearer, with a commission from the King of Spain and the Indies. Bonny Kate! Noble Kate! I would there were not two centuries laid between us, so that I might have the pleasure of kissing thy fair hand.

Kate had the good sense to see the danger of revealing her sex, or her relationship, even to her own brother. The grasp of the Church never relaxed, never 'prescribed,' unless freely and by choice. The nun, if discovered, would have been taken out of the horse-barracks, or the dragoon-saddle. She had the firmness, therefore, for many years, to resist the sisterly impulses that sometimes suggested such a confidence. For years, and those years the most important of her life—the years that developed her character—she lived undetected as a brilliant cavalry officer under her brother's patronage. And the bitterest grief in poor Kate's whole life, was the tragical (and, were it not fully attested, one might say the ultra-scenical,) event that dissolved their long connection. Let me spend a word of apology on poor Kate's errors. We all commit many; both you and I, reader. No, stop; that's not civil. You, reader, I know, are a saint; I am not, though very near it. I do err at long intervals; and then I think with indulgence of the many circumstances that plead for this poor girl. The Spanish armies of that day inherited, from the days of Cortez and Pizarro, shining remembrances of martial prowess, and the very worst of ethics. To think little of bloodshed, to quarrel, to fight, to gamble, to plunder, belonged to the very atmosphere of a camp, to its indolence, to its ancient traditions. In your own defence, you were obliged to do such things. Besides all these grounds of evil, the Spanish army had just there an extra demoralization from a war with savages—faithless and bloody. Do not think, I beseech you, too much, reader, of killing a man. That word 'kill' is sprinkled over every page of Kate's own autobiography. It ought not to be read by the light of these days. Yet, how if a man that she killed were——? Hush! It was sad; but is better hurried over in a few words. Years after this period, a young officer one day dining with Kate, entreated her to become his second in a duel. Such things were every-day affairs. However, Kate had reasons for declining the service, and did so.

But the officer, as he was sullenly departing, said—that, if he were killed, (as he thought he should be,) his death would lie at Kate's door. I do not take his view of the case, and am not moved by his rhetoric or his logic. Kate was, and relented. The duel was fixed for eleven at night, under the walls of a monastery. Unhappily the night proved unusually dark, so that the two principals had to tie white handkerchiefs round their elbows, in order to descry each other. In the confusion they wounded each other mortally. Upon that, according to a usage not peculiar to Spaniards, but extending (as doubtless the reader knows) for a century longer to our own countrymen, the two seconds were obliged in honor to do something towards avenging their principals. Kate had her usual fatal luck. Her sword passed sheer through the body of her opponent: this unknown opponent falling dead, had just breath left to cry out, 'Ah, villain, you have killed me,' in a voice of horrific reproach; and the voice was the voice of her brother!

The monks of the monastery, under whose silent shadows this murderous duel had taken place, roused by the clashing of swords and the angry shouts of combatants, issued out with torches to find one only of the four officers surviving. Every convent and altar had a right of asylum for a short period. According to the custom, the monks carried Kate, insensible with anguish of mind, to the sanctuary of their chapel. There for some days they detained her; but then, having furnished her with a horse and some provisions, they turned her adrift. Which way should the unhappy fugitive turn? In blindness of heart she turned towards the sea. It was the sea that had brought her to Peru; it was the sea that would perhaps carry her away. It was the sea that had first showed her this land and its golden hopes; it was the sea that ought to hide from her its fearful remembrances. The sea it was that had twice spared her life in extremities; the sea it was that might now if it chose, take back the bauble that it had spared in vain.

#### KATE'S PASSAGE OVER THE ANDES.

Three days our poor heroine followed the coast. Her horse was then almost unable to move; and on his account, she turned inland to a thicket for grass and shelter. As she drew near to it, a voice challenged—'Who goes there?' Kate answered, 'Spain.' 'What people?' 'A friend.' It was two soldiers, deserters, and almost starving. Kate shared her provisions with these men: and, on hearing their plan, which was to go over the Cordilleras, she agreed to join the party. Their object was the wild one of seeking the river Dorado, whose waters rolled along golden sands, and whose pebbles were emeralds. Hers was to throw herself upon a line the least liable to pursuit, and the readiest for a new chapter of life in which oblivion might be found for the past. After a few days of incessant climbing and fatigue, they found themselves in the regions of perpetual snow. Summer would come as vainly to this kingdom of frost as to the grave of her brother. No fire, but the fire of human blood in youthful veins, could ever be kept burning in these aerial solitudes. Fuel was rarely to be found, and kindling a secret hardly known except to Indians. However, our Kate can do everything, and she's the girl, if ever girl did such a thing, or ever girl did not such a thing, that I back at any odds for crossing the Cordilleras. I would bet you something now, reader, if I thought you would deposit your stakes by return of post, (as they play at chess through the post-office,) that Kate does the trick, that she gets down to the other side; that the soldiers do not: and that the horse, if preserved at all, is preserved in a way that will leave him very little to boast of.

The party had gathered wild berries and esculent roots at the foot of the mountains, and the horse was of very great use in carrying them. But this larder was soon emptied. There was nothing then to carry; so that the horse's value, as a beast of burthen, fell cent per cent. In fact, very soon he could not carry himself, and it became easy to calculate when he would reach the bottom on the wrong side the Cordilleras. He took three steps back for one upwards. A council of war being held, the small army resolved to slaughter their horse. He, though a member of the expedition, had no vote, and if he had the votes would have stood three to one—majority, two against him. He was cut into quarters; which surprises me; for, unless one quarter was considered his own share, it reminds one too much of this amongst the many facetiæ of English midshipmen, who ask (on any one of their number looking sulky) 'if it is his intention to marry and retire from the service upon a superannuation of £4 4s. 4 1/2d. a year, paid quarterly by way of bothering the purser.' The purser can't do it with the help of farthings. And as respects aliquot parts, four shares among three persons are as incommensurable as a guinea is against any attempt at giving change in half-crowns. However, this was all the preservation that the horse found. No saltpetre or sugar could be had: but the frost was antiseptic. And the horse was preserved in as useful a sense as ever apricots were preserved or strawberries.

On a fire, painfully devised out of broom and withered leaves, a horse-steak was dressed, for drink, snow as allowed a discretion. This ought to have revived the party, and Kate, perhaps, it did. But the poor deserters were thinly clad, and they had not the boiling heart of Catalina. More and more they drooped. Kate did her best to cheer them. But the march was nearly at an end for them, and they were going in one half hour to receive their last billet. Yet, before this consummation, they have a strange spectacle to see; such as few places could show, but the upper chambers of the Cordilleras. They had reached a billowy scene of rocky masses, large and small, looking shockingly black on their perpendicular sides as they rose out of the vast snowy expanse. Upon the highest of these, that was accessible, Kate mounted to look around her, and she saw—oh, rapture at such an hour!—a man sitting on a shelf of rock with a gun by his side. She shouted with joy to her comrades, and ran down to communicate the joyful news. Here was a sportsman, watching, perhaps, for an eagle; and now they would have relief. One man's cheek kindled with the hectic of sudden joy, and he rose eagerly to march. The other was fast sinking under the fatal sleep that frost sends before herself as her merciful minister of death; but hearing in his dream the tidings of relief, and assisted by his friends, he also staggeringly arose. It could not be three minutes' walk, Kate thought, to the station of the sportsman. That thought supported them all. Under Kate's guidance, who had taken a sailor's glance at the bearings, they soon unthreaded the labyrinth of rocks so far as to bring the man within view. He had not left his resting-place; their steps on the soundless snow, naturally, he could not hear; and, as their road brought them upon him from the rear, still less could he see them. Kate hailed him; but so keenly was he absorbed in some speculation, or in the object of his watching, that he took no notice of them, not even moving his head. Kate began to think there would be another man to rouse from sleep. Coming close behind him, she touched his shoulder, and said, 'My friend, are you sleeping?' Yes, he was sleeping; sleeping the sleep from which there is no awaking; and the slight touch of Kate having disturbed the equilibrium of the corpse, down it rolled on the snow: the frozen body rang like a hollow iron cylinder; the face uppermost and blue with mould, mouth open, teeth ghastly and bleaching in the frost, and a frightful grin upon the lips. This dreadful spectacle finished the struggles of the weaker man, who sank and died at once. The other made an effort with so much spirit, that, in Kate's opinion, horror had acted upon him beneficially as a stimulant. But it was not really so. It was a spasm of morbid



strength; a collapse succeeded; his blood began to freeze; he sat down in spite of Kate, and he also died without further struggle. Gone are the poor suffering deserters; stretched and bleaching upon the snow; and insulted discipline is avenged. Great kings have long arms; and sycophants are ever at hand for the errand of the potent. What had frost and snow to do with the quarrel? Yet they made themselves sycophantic servants of the King of Spain; and they dogged his deserters up to the summit of the Cordilleras, more surely than any Spanish bloodhound, or any Spanish tirailleur's bullet.

Now is our Kate standing alone on the summits of the Andes, in solitude that is shocking, for she is alone with her own afflicted conscience. Twice before she had stood in solitude as deep upon the wild—wild waters of the Pacific; but her conscience had been then untroubled. Now, is there nobody left that can help; her horse is dead—the soldiers are dead. There is nobody that she can speak to except God; and very soon you will find that she does speak to him; for already on these vast aerial deserts He has been whispering to her. The condition of Kate is exactly that of Coleridge's 'Ancient Mariner.' But possibly, reader, you may be amongst the many careless readers that have never fully understood what that condition was. Suffer me to enlighten you, else you ruin the story of the mariner; and by losing all its pathos, lose half the jewels of its beauty.

There are three readers of the 'Ancient Mariner.' The first is gross enough to fancy all the imagery of the mariner's visions delivered by the poet for actual facts of experience; which being impossible, the whole pulverizes, for that reader, into a baseless fairy tale. The second reader is wiser than that; he knows that the imagery is not baseless; it is the imagery of febrile delirium; really seen, but not seen as an external reality. The mariner had caught the pestilential fever, which carried off all his mates; he only had survived—the delirium had vanished; but the visions that had haunted the delirium remained. 'Yes,' says the third reader, 'they remained; naturally they did, being scorched by fever into his brain; but how did they happen to remain on his belief as gospel truths? The delirium had vanished: why had not the painted scenery of the delirium vanished, except as visionary memorials of a sorrow that was cancelled? Why was it that craziness settled upon this mariner's brain, driving him, as if he were a Cain, or another Wandering Jew, to 'pass like night—from land to land;' and, at uncertain intervals, wrenching him until he made rehearsal of his errors, even at the hard price of 'holding children from their play, and old men from the chimney corner?' That craziness, as the third reader deciphers, rose out of a deeper soil than any bodily affection. It had its root in penitential sorrow. Oh, bitter is the sorrow to a conscientious heart, when, too late, it discovers the depth of a love that has been trampled under foot! This mariner had slain the creature that, on all the earth, loved him best. In the darkness of his cruel superstition he had done it, to save his human brothers from a fancied inconvenience; and yet, by that very act of cruelty, he had himself called destruction upon their heads. The Nemesis that followed punished him through them—him, that wronged, through those that wrongfully he sought to benefit. That spirit who watches over the sanctities of love is a strong angel—is a jealous angel; and this angel it was

'That lov'd the bird, that lov'd the man,

That shot him with his bow.'

He it was that followed the cruel archer into silent and slumbering seas;

'Nine fathom deep he had follow'd him

Through the realms of mist and snow.'

This jealous angel it was that pursued the man into noon-day darkness, and the vision of dying oceans, into delirium, and finally, (when recovered from disease) into an unsettled mind.

Such, also, had been the offence of Kate; such, also was the punishment that now is dogging her steps. She, like the mariner, had slain the one sole creature that loved her upon the whole wide earth; she, like the mariner, for this offence, had been hunted into frost and snow—very soon will be hunted into delirium; and from that (if she escapes with life) will be hunted into the trouble of a heart that cannot rest. There was the excuse of one darkness for her; there was the excuse of another darkness for the mariner. But, with all the excuses that earth, and the darkness of earth, can furnish, bitter it would be for you or me, reader, through every hour of life, waking or dreaming, to look back upon one fatal moment when we had pierced the heart that would have died for us. In this only the darkness had been merciful to Kate—that it had hidden for ever from her victim the hand that slew him. But now in such utter solitude, her thoughts ran back to their earliest interview. She remembered with anguish, how, on first touching the shores of America, almost the very first word that met her ear had been from him, the brother whom she had killed, about the 'Pussy' of times long past; how the gallant young man had hung upon her words, as in her native Basque she described her own mischievous little self, of twelve years back; how his color went and came, whilst his loving memory of the little sister was revived by her own descriptive traits, giving back, as in a mirror, the fawn-like grace, the squirrel-like restlessness, that once had kindled his own delighted laughter; how he would take no denial, but showed on the spot, that, simply to have touched—to have kissed—to have played with the little wild thing, that glorified, by her innocence, the gloom of St. Sebastian's cloisters, gave a right to his hospitality; how, through him only, she had found a welcome in camps; how, through him, she had found the avenue to honor and distinction. And yet this brother, so loving and generous, it was that she had dismissed from life. She paused; she turned round, as if looking back for his grave; she saw the dreadful wildernesses of snow which already she had traversed.

Silent they were at this season, even as in the panting heats of noon, the Zaarrahs of the torrid zone are oftentimes silent. Dreadful was the silence; it was the nearest thing to the silence of the grave. Graves were at the foot of the Andes, that she knew too well; graves were at the summit of the Andes, that she saw too well. And, as she gazed, a sudden thought flashed upon her, when her eyes settled upon the corpses of the poor deserters—could she, like them, have been all this while unconsciously executing

judgment upon herself? Running from a wrath that was doubtful, into the very jaws of a wrath that was inexorable? Flying in panic—and behold! there was no man that pursued? For the first time in her life, Kate trembled. Not for the first time, Kate wept. Far less for the first time was it, that Kate bent her knee—that Kate clasped her hands—that Kate prayed. But it was the first time that she prayed as they pray, for whom no more hope is left but in prayer.

Here let me pause a moment for the sake of making somebody angry. A Frenchman, who sadly misjudges Kate, looking at her through a Parisian opera-glass, gives it as his opinion—that, because Kate first records her prayer on this occasion, therefore, now first of all she prayed. I think not so. I love this Kate, blood-stained as she is; and I could not love a woman that never bent her knee in thankfulness or in supplication. However, we have all a right to our own little opinion; and it is not you, 'mon cher,' you Frenchman, that I am angry with, but somebody else that stands behind you. You, Frenchman, and your compatriots, I love oftentimes for your festal gaiety of heart; and I quarrel only with your levity and that eternal worldliness that freezes too fiercely—that absolutely blisters with its frost—like the upper air of the Andes. You speak of Kate only as too readily you speak of all women; the instinct of a natural scepticism being to scoff at all hidden depths of truth. Else you are civil enough to Kate; and your 'homage' (such as it may happen to be) is always at the service of a woman on the shortest notice. But behind you, I see a worse fellow; a gloomy fanatic; a religious sycophant that seeks to propitiate his circle by bitterness against the offences that are most unlike his own. And against him, I must say one word for Kate to the too hasty reader. This villain, whom I mark for a shot if he does not get out of the way, opens his fire on our Kate under shelter of a lie. For there is a standing lie in the very constitution of civil society, a necessity of error, misleading us as to the proportions of crime. Mere necessity obliges man to create many acts into felonies, and to punish them as the heaviest offences, which his better sense teaches him secretly to regard as perhaps among the lightest. Those poor deserters, for instance, were they necessarily without excuse? They might have been oppressively used; but in critical times of war, no matter for the individual palliations, the deserter from his colors must be shot: there is no help for it: as in extremities of general famine, we shoot the man (alas! we are obliged to shoot him) that is found robbing the common stores in order to feed his own perishing children, though the offence is hardly visible in the sight of God. Only blockheads adjust their scale of guilt to the scale of human punishments. Now, our wicked friend the fanatic, who calumniates Kate, abuses the advantage which, for such a purpose, he derives from the exaggerated social estimate of all violence. Personal security being so main an object of social union, we are obliged to frown upon all modes of violence as hostile to the central principle of that union. We are obliged to rate it, according to the universal results towards which it tends, and scarcely at all, according to the special condition of circumstances, in which it may originate. Hence a horror arises for that class of offences, which is (philosophically speaking) exaggerated; and by daily use, the ethics of a police-office translate themselves, insensibly, into the ethics even of religious people. But I tell that sycophantish fanatic—not this only, viz., that he abuses unfairly, against Kate, the advantage which he has from the inevitably distorted bias of society; but also, I tell him this second little thing, viz., that upon turning away the glass from that one obvious aspect of Kate's character, her too fiery disposition to vindicate all rights by violence, and viewing her in relation to general religious capacities, she was a thousand times more promisingly endowed than himself. It is impossible to be noble in many things, without having many points of contact with true religion. If you deny that you it is that calumniate religion. Kate was noble in many things. Her worst errors never took a shape of self-interest or deceit. She

was brave, she was generous, she was forgiving, she bore no malice, she was full of truth—qualities that God loves either in man or woman. She hated sycophants and dissemblers. I hate them; and more than ever at this moment on her behalf. I wish she were but here—to give a punch on the head to that fellow who traduces her. And, coming round again to the occasion from which this short digression has started, viz., the question raised by the Frenchman—whether Kate were a person likely to pray under other circumstances than those of extreme danger? I offer it as my opinion that she was. Violent people are not always such from choice, but perhaps from situation. And, though the circumstances of Kate's position allowed her little means for realizing her own wishes, it is certain that those wishes pointed continually to peace and an unworldly happiness, if that were possible. The stormy clouds that enveloped her in camps, opened overhead at intervals—showing her a far distant blue serene. She yearned, at many times, for the rest which is not in camps or armies; and it is certain, that she ever combined with any plans or day-dreams of tranquillity, as their most essential ally, some aid derived from that dovelike religion which, at St. Sebastian's, as an infant and through girlhood, she had been taught so profoundly to adore.

Now, let us rise from this discussion of Kate against libellers, as Kate herself is rising from prayer, and consider, in conjunction with her, the character and promise of that dreadful ground which lies immediately before her. What is to be thought of it? I could wish we had a theodolite here, and a spirit-level, and other instruments, for settling some important questions. Yet no: on consideration, if one had a wish allowed by that kind fairy, without whose assistance it would be quite impossible to send, even for the spirit-level, nobody would throw away the wish upon things so paltry. I would not put the fairy upon any such errand: I would order the good creature to bring no spirit-level, but a stiff glass of spirits for Kate—a palanquin, and relays of fifty stout bearers—all drunk, in order that they might not feel the cold. The main interest at this moment, and the main difficulty—indeed, the 'open question' of the case—was, to ascertain whether the ascent were yet accomplished or not; and when would the descent commence? or had it, perhaps, long commenced? The character of the ground, in those immediate successions that could be connected by the eye, decided nothing; for the undulations of the level had been so continual for miles, as to perplex any eye but an engineer's, in attempting to judge whether, upon the whole, the tendency were upwards or downwards. Possibly it was yet neither way; it is, indeed, probable, that Kate had been for some time travelling along a series of terraces, that traversed the whole breadth of the topmost area at that point of crossing the Cordilleras, and which perhaps, but not certainly, compensated any casual tendencies downwards by corresponding reascents. Then came the question—how long would these terraces yet continue? and had the ascending parts really balanced the descending?—upon that seemed to rest the final chance for Kate. Because, unless she very soon reached a lower level, and a warmer atmosphere, mere weariness would oblige her to lie down, under a fierceness of cold, that would not suffer her to rise after once losing the warmth of motion; or, inversely, if she even continued in motion, mere extremity of cold would, of itself, speedily absorb the little surplus energy for moving, which yet remained unexhausted by weariness.

At this stage of her progress, and whilst the agonizing question seemed yet as indeterminate as ever, Kate's struggle with despair, which had been greatly soothed by the fervor of her prayer, revolved upon her in deadlier blackness. All turned, she saw, upon a race against time, and the arrears of the road; and

she, poor thing! how little qualified could she be, in such a condition, for a race of any kind; and against two such obstinate brutes as time and space! This hour of the progress, this noontide of Kate's struggle, must have been the very crisis of the whole. Despair was rapidly tending to ratify itself. Hope, in any degree, would be a cordial for sustaining her efforts. But to flounder along a dreadful chaos of snow-drifts, or snow-chasms, towards a point of rock, which, being turned, should expose only another interminable succession of the same character—might that be endured by ebbing spirits, by stiffening limbs, by the ghastly darkness that was now beginning to gather upon the inner eye? And, if once despair became triumphant, all the little arrear of physical strength would collapse at once.

Oh! verdure of human fields, cottages of men and women, (that now suddenly seemed all brothers and sisters,) cottages with children around them at play, that are so far below—oh! summer and spring, flowers and blossoms, to which, as to his symbols, God has given the gorgeous privilege of rehearsing for ever upon earth his most mysterious perfection—Life, and the resurrections of Life—is it indeed true, that poor Kate must never see you more? Mutteringly she put that question to herself. But strange are the caprices of ebb and flow in the deep fountains of human sensibilities. At this very moment, when the utter incapacitation of despair was gathering fast at Kate's heart, a sudden lightening shot far into her spirit, a reflux almost supernatural, from the earliest effects of her prayer. A thought had struck her all at once, and this thought prompted her immediately to turn round. Perhaps it was in some blind yearning after the only memorials of life in this frightful region, that she fixed her eye upon a point of hilly ground by which she identified the spot near which the three corpses were lying. The silence seemed deeper than ever. Neither was there any phantom memorial of life for the eye or for the ear, nor wing of bird, nor echo, nor green leaf, nor creeping thing, that moved or stirred, upon the soundless waste. Oh, what a relief to this burthen of silence would be a human groan! Here seemed a motive for still darker despair. And yet, at that very moment, a pulse of joy began to thaw the ice at her heart. It struck her, as she reviewed the ground, that undoubtedly it had been for some time slowly descending. Her senses were much dulled by suffering; but this thought it was, suggested by a sudden apprehension of a continued descending movement, which had caused her to turn round. Sight had confirmed the suggestion first derived from her own steps. The distance attained was now sufficient to establish the tendency. Oh, yes, yes, to a certainty she had been descending for some time. Frightful was the spasm of joy which whispered that the worst was over. It was as when the shadow of midnight, that murderers had relied on, is passing away from your beleaguered shelter, and dawn will soon be manifest. It was as when a flood, that all day long has raved against the walls of your house, has ceased (you suddenly think) to rise; yes! measured by a golden plummet, it is sinking beyond a doubt, and the darlings of your household are saved. Kate faced round in agitation to her proper direction. She saw, what previously, in her stunning confusion, she had not seen, that, hardly two stones' throw in advance, lay a mass of rock, split as into a gateway. Through that opening it now became probable that the road was lying. Hurrying forward, she passed within the natural gates. Gates of paradise they were. Ah, what a vista did that gateway expose before her dazzled eye? what a revelation of heavenly promise? Full two miles long, stretched a long narrow glen, everywhere descending, and in many parts rapidly. All was now placed beyond a doubt. She was descending—for hours, perhaps, had been descending insensibly, the mighty staircase. Yes, Kate is leaving behind her the kingdom of frost and the victories of death. Two miles farther there may be rest, if there is not shelter. And very soon, as the crest of her new-born happiness, she distinguished at the other end of that rocky vista, a pavilion-shaped mass of dark green foliage—a belt of trees, such as we see in the lovely parks of

England, but islanded by a screen (though not everywhere occupied by the usurpations) of a thick bushy undergrowth. Oh, verdure of dark olive foliage, offered suddenly to fainting eyes, as if by some winged patriarchal herald of wrath relenting—solitary Arab's tent, rising with saintly signals of peace, in the dreadful desert, must Kate indeed die even yet, whilst she sees but cannot reach you? Outpost on the frontier of man's dominions, standing within life, but looking out upon everlasting death, wilt thou hold up the anguish of thy mocking invitation, only to betray? Never, perhaps, in this world was the line so exquisitely grazed, that parts salvation and ruin. As the dove to her dove-cot from the swooping hawk—as the Christian pinnacle to Christian batteries, from the bloody Mahometan corsair, so flew—so tried to fly towards the anchoring thickets, that, alas! could not weigh their anchors and make sail to meet her—the poor exhausted Kate from the vengeance of pursuing frost.

And she reached them; staggering, fainting, reeling, she entered beneath the canopy of umbrageous trees. But, as oftentimes, the Hebrew fugitive to a city of refuge, flying for his life before the avenger of blood, was pressed so hotly that, on entering the archway of what seemed to him the heavenly city-gate, as he kneeled in deep thankfulness to kiss its holy merciful shadow, he could not rise again, but sank instantly with infant weakness into sleep—sometimes to wake no more; so sank, so collapsed upon the ground, without power to choose her couch, and with little prospect of ever rising again to her feet, the martial nun. She lay as luck had ordered it, with her head screened by the undergrowth of bushes, from any gales that might arise; she lay exactly as she sank, with her eyes up to heaven; and thus it was that the nun saw, before falling asleep, the two sights that upon earth are fittest for the closing eyes of a nun, whether destined to open again, or to close for ever. She saw the interlacing of boughs overhead forming a dome, that seemed like the dome of a cathedral. She saw through the fretwork of the foliage, another dome, far beyond, the dome of an evening sky, the dome of some heavenly cathedral, not built with hands. She saw upon this upper dome the vesper lights, all alive with pathetic grandeur of coloring from a sunset that had just been rolling down like a chorus. She had not, till now, consciously observed the time of day; whether it were morning, or whether it were afternoon, in her confusion she had not distinctly known. But now she whispered to herself—'It is evening;' and what lurked half unconsciously in these words might be—'The sun, that rejoices, has finished his daily toil; man, that labors, has finished his; I, that suffer, have finished mine.' That might be what she thought, but what she said was—'It is evening; and the hour is come when the Angelus is sounding through St. Sebastian.' What made her think of St. Sebastian, so far away in depths of space and time? Her brain was wandering, now that her feet were not; and, because her eyes had descended from the heavenly to the earthly dome, that made her think of earthly cathedrals, and of cathedral choirs, and of St. Sebastian's chapel, with its silvery bells that carried the Angelus far into mountain recesses. Perhaps, as her wanderings increased, she thought herself back in childhood; became 'pussy' once again; fancied that all since then was a frightful dream; that she was not upon the dreadful Andes, but still kneeling in the holy chapel at vespers; still innocent as then; loved as then she had been loved; and that all men were liars, who said her hand was ever stained with blood. Little enough is mentioned of the delusions which possessed her; but that little gives a key to the impulse which her palpitating heart obeyed, and which her rambling brain for ever reproduced in multiplying mirrors. Restlessness kept her in waking dreams for a brief half hour. But then, fever and delirium would wait no longer; the killing exhaustion would no longer be refused; the fever, the delirium, and the exhaustion, swept in together with power like an army with banners; and the nun ceased through the gathering

twilight any more to watch the cathedrals of earth, or the more solemn cathedrals that rose in the heavens above.

All night long she slept in her verdurous St. Bernard's hospice without awaking, and whether she would ever awake seemed to depend upon an accident. The slumber that towered above her brain was like that fluctuating silvery column which stands in scientific tubes sinking, rising, deepening, lightening, contracting, expanding; or like the mist that sits, through sultry afternoons, upon the river of the American St. Peter, sometimes rarefying for minutes into sunny gauze, sometimes condensing for hours into palls of funeral darkness. You fancy that, after twelve hours of any sleep, she must have been refreshed; better at least than she was last night. Ah! but sleep is not always sent upon missions of refreshment. Sleep is sometimes the secret chamber in which death arranges his machinery. Sleep is sometimes that deep mysterious atmosphere, in which the human spirit is slowly unsettling its wings for flight from earthly tenements. It is now eight o'clock in the morning; and, to all appearance, if Kate should receive no aid before noon, when next the sun is departing to his rest, Kate will be departing to hers; when next the sun is holding out his golden Christian signal to man, that the hour is come for letting his anger go down, Kate will be sleeping away for ever into the arms of brotherly forgiveness.

What is wanted just now for Kate, supposing Kate herself to be wanted by this world, is, that this world would be kind enough to send her a little brandy before it is too late. The simple truth was, and a truth which I have known to take place in more ladies than Kate, who died or did not die, accordingly, as they had or had not an adviser like myself, capable of giving so sound an opinion, that the jewel star of life had descended too far down the arch towards setting, for any chance of re-ascending by spontaneous effort. The fire was still burning in secret, but needed to be rekindled by potent artificial breath. It lingered, and might linger, but would never culminate again without some stimulus from earthly vineyards. Kate was ever lucky, though ever unfortunate; and the world, being of my opinion that Kate was worth saving, made up its mind about half-past eight o'clock in the morning to save her. Just at that time, when the night was over, and its sufferings were hidden—in one of those intermitting gleams that for a moment or two lightened the clouds of her slumber, Kate's dull ear caught a sound that for years had spoken a familiar language to her. What was it? It was the sound, though muffled and deadened, like the ear that heard it, of horsemen advancing. Interpreted by the tumultuous dreams of Kate, was it the cavalry of Spain, at whose head so often she had charged the bloody Indian scalpers? Was it, according to the legend of ancient days, cavalry that had been sown by her brother's blood, cavalry that rose from the ground on an inquest of retribution, and were racing up the Andes to seize her? Her dreams that had opened sullenly to the sound waited for no answer, but closed again into pompous darkness. Happily, the horsemen had caught the glimpse of some bright ornament, clasp, or aiguillette, on Kate's dress. They were hunters and foresters from below; servants in the household of a beneficent lady; and in some pursuit of flying game had wandered beyond their ordinary limits. Struck by the sudden scintillation from Kate's dress played upon by the morning sun, they rode up to the thicket. Great was their surprise, great their pity, to see a young officer in uniform stretched within the bushes upon the ground, and perhaps dying. Borderers from childhood on this dreadful frontier, sacred to winter and death, they understood the case at once. They dismounted: and with the tenderness of women, raising the poor frozen cornet in their

arms, washed her temples with brandy, whilst one, at intervals, suffered a few drops to trickle within her lips. As the restoration of a warm bed was now most likely to be successful, they lifted the helpless stranger upon a horse, walking on each side with supporting arms. Once again our Kate is in the saddle; once again a Spanish Caballador. But Kate's bridle-hand is deadly cold. And her spurs, that she had never unfastened since leaving the monastic asylum, hung as idle as the flapping sail that fills unsteadily with the breeze upon a stranded ship.

This procession had some miles to go, and over difficult ground; but at length it reached the forest-like park and the chateau of the wealthy proprietress. Kate was still half-frozen and speechless, except at intervals. Heavens! can this corpse-like, languishing young woman, be the Kate that once, in her radiant girlhood, rode with a handful of comrades into a column of two thousand enemies, that saw her comrades die, that persisted when all were dead, that tore from the heart of all resistance the banner of her native Spain? Chance and change have 'written strange defeatures in her face.' Much is changed; but some things are not changed: there is still kindness that overflows with pity: there is still helplessness that asks for this pity without a voice: she is now received by a Senora, not less kind than that maternal aunt, who, on the night of her birth, first welcomed her to a loving home; and she, the heroine of Spain, is herself as helpless now as that little lady who, then at ten minutes of age, was kissed and blessed by all the household of St. Sebastian.

Let us suppose Kate placed in a warm bed. Let us suppose her in a few hours recovering steady consciousness; in a few days recovering some power of self-support; in a fortnight able to seek the gay saloon, where the Senora was sitting alone, and rendering thanks, with that deep sincerity which ever characterized our wild-hearted Kate, for the critical services received from that lady and her establishment.

This lady, a widow, was what the French call a *métisse*, the Spaniards a *mestizza*; that is, the daughter of a genuine Spaniard, and an Indian mother. I shall call her simply a creole, which will indicate her want of pure Spanish blood sufficiently to explain her deference for those who had it. She was a kind, liberal woman; rich rather more than needed where there were no opera boxes to rent—a widow about fifty years old in the wicked world's account, some forty-four in her own; and happy, above all, in the possession of a most lovely daughter, whom even the wicked world did not accuse of more than sixteen years. This daughter, Juana, was—But stop—let her open the door of the saloon in which the Senora and the cornet are conversing, and speak for herself. She did so, after an hour had passed; which length of time, to her that never had any business whatever in her innocent life, seemed sufficient to settle the business of the old world and the new. Had Pietro Diaz (as Catalina now called herself) been really a Peter, and not a sham Peter, what a vision of loveliness would have rushed upon his sensibilities as the door opened! Do not expect me to describe her, for which, however, there are materials extant, sleeping in archives, where they have slept for two hundred and twenty years. It is enough that she is reported to have united the stately tread of Andalusian women with the innocent voluptuousness of Peruvian eyes. As to her complexion and figure, be it known that Juana's father was a gentleman from Grenada, having in his veins



the grandest blood of all this earth, blood of Goths and Vandals, tainted (for which Heaven be thanked!) twice over with blood of Arabs—once through Moors, once through Jews; whilst from her grandmother, Juana drew the deep subtle melancholy and the beautiful contours of limb which belong to the Indian race—a race destined silently and slowly to fade from the earth. No awkwardness was or could be in this antelope, when gliding with forest grace into the room—no town-bred shame—nothing but the unaffected pleasure of one who wishes to speak a fervent welcome, but knows not if she ought—the astonishment of a Miranda, bred in utter solitude, when first beholding a princely Ferdinand—and just so much reserve as to remind you, that if Catalina thought fit to dissemble her sex, she did not. And consider, reader, if you look back and are a great arithmetician, that whilst the Senora had only fifty per cent of Spanish blood, Juana had seventy-five; so that her Indian melancholy after all was swallowed up for the present by her Vandal, by her Arab, by her Spanish fire.

Catalina, seared as she was by the world, has left it evident in her memoirs that she was touched more than she wished to be by this innocent child. Juana formed a brief lull for Catalina in her too stormy existence. And if for her in this life the sweet reality of a sister had been possible, here was the sister she would have chosen. On the other hand, what might Juana think of the cornet? To have been thrown upon the kind hospitalities of her native home, to have been rescued by her mother's servants from that fearful death which, lying but a few miles off, had filled her nursery with traditionary tragedies,—that was sufficient to create an interest in the stranger. But his bold martial demeanor, his yet youthful style of beauty, his frank manners, his animated conversation that reported a hundred contests with suffering and peril, wakened for the first time her admiration. Men she had never seen before, except menial servants, or a casual priest. But here was a gentleman, young like herself, that rode in the cavalry of Spain—that carried the banner of the only potentate whom Peruvians knew of—the King of the Spains and the Indies—that had doubled Cape Horn, that had crossed the Andes, that had suffered shipwreck, that had rocked upon fifty storms, and had wrestled for life through fifty battles.

The reader knows all that followed. The sisterly love which Catalina did really feel for this young mountaineer was inevitably misconstrued. Embarrassed, but not able, from sincere affection, or almost in bare propriety, to refuse such expressions of feeling as corresponded to the artless and involuntary kindnesses of the ingenuous Juana, one day the cornet was surprised by mamma in the act of encircling her daughter's waist with his martial arm, although waltzing was premature by at least two centuries in Peru. She taxed him instantly with dishonorably abusing her confidence. The cornet made but a bad defence. He muttered something about 'fraternal affection,' about 'esteem,' and a great deal of metaphysical words that are destined to remain untranslated in their original Spanish. The good Senora, though she could boast only of forty-four years' experience, was not altogether to be 'had' in that fashion—she was as learned as if she had been fifty, and she brought matters to a speedy crisis. 'You are a Spaniard,' she said, 'a gentleman, therefore; remember that you are a gentleman. This very night, if your intentions are not serious, quit my house. Go to Tucuman; you shall command my horses and servants; but stay no longer to increase the sorrow that already you will have left behind you. My daughter loves you. That is sorrow enough, if you are trifling with us. But, if not, and you also love her, and can be happy in our solitary mode of life, stay with us—stay for ever. Marry Juana with my free consent. I ask

not for wealth. Mine is sufficient for you both.' The cornet protested that the honor was one never contemplated by him—that it was too great—that—. But, of course, reader, you know that 'gammon' flourishes in Peru, amongst the silver mines, as well as in some more boreal lands that produce little better than copper and tin. 'Tin,' however, has its uses. The delighted Senora overruled all objections, great and small; and she confirmed Juana's notion that the business of two worlds could be transacted in an hour, by settling her daughter's future happiness in exactly twenty minutes. The poor, weak Catalina, not acting now in any spirit of recklessness, grieving sincerely for the gulf that was opening before her, and yet shrinking effeminately from the momentary shock that would be inflicted by a firm adherence to her duty, clinging to the anodyne of a short delay, allowed herself to be installed as the lover of Juana. Considerations of convenience, however, postponed the marriage. It was requisite to make various purchases; and for this, it was requisite to visit Tucuman, where, also, the marriage ceremony could be performed with more circumstantial splendor. To Tucuman, therefore, after some weeks' interval, the whole party repaired. And at Tucuman it was that the tragical events arose, which, whilst interrupting such a mockery for ever, left the poor Juana still happily deceived, and never believing for a moment that hers was a rejected or a deluded heart.

One reporter of Mr. De Ferrer's narrative forgets his usual generosity, when he says that the Senora's gift of her daughter to the Alferez was not quite so disinterested as it seemed to be. Certainly it was not so disinterested as European ignorance might fancy it: but it was quite as much so as it ought to have been, in balancing the interests of a child. Very true it is—that, being a genuine Spaniard, who was still a rare creature in so vast a world as Peru, being a Spartan amongst Helots, an Englishman amongst Savages, an Alferez would in those days have been a natural noble. His alliance created honor for his wife and for his descendants. Something, therefore, the cornet would add to the family consideration. But, instead of selfishness, it argued just regard for her daughter's interest to build upon this, as some sort of equipoise to the wealth which her daughter would bring.

Spaniard, however, as he was, our Alferez on reaching Tucuman found no Spaniards to mix with, but instead twelve Portuguese.

Catalina remembered the Spanish proverb—'Subtract from a Spaniard all his good qualities, and the remainder makes a pretty fair Portuguese;' but, as there was nobody else to gamble with, she entered freely into their society. Very soon she suspected that there was foul play: all modes of doctoring dice had been made familiar to her by the experience of camps. She watched; and, by the time she had lost her final coin, she was satisfied that she had been plundered. In her first anger she would have been glad to switch the whole dozen across the eyes; but, as twelve to one were too great odds, she determined on limiting her vengeance to the immediate culprit. Him she followed into the street; and coming near enough to distinguish his profile reflected on a wall, she continued to keep him in view from a short distance. The light-hearted young cavalier whistled, as he went, an old Portuguese ballad of romance; and in a quarter of an hour came up to an house, the front door of which he began to open with a pass-key. This operation was the signal for Catalina that the hour of vengeance had struck; and, stepping hastily up,

she tapped the Portuguese on the shoulder, saying—'Senor, you are a robber!' The Portuguese turned coolly round, and, seeing his gaming antagonist, replied—'Possibly, Sir; but I have no particular fancy for being told so,' at the same time drawing his sword. Catalina had not designed to take any advantage; and the touching him on the shoulder, with the interchange of speeches, and the known character of Kate, sufficiently imply it. But it is too probable in such cases, that the party whose intention has been regularly settled from the first, will, and must have an advantage unconsciously over a man so abruptly thrown on his defence. However this might be, they had not fought a minute before Catalina passed her sword through her opponent's body; and without a groan or a sigh, the Portuguese cavalier fell dead at his own door. Kate searched the street with her ears, and (as far as the indistinctness of night allowed) with her eyes. All was profoundly silent; and she was satisfied that no human figure was in motion. What should be done with the body? A glance at the door of the house settled that: Fernando had himself opened it at the very moment when he received the summons to turn round. She dragged the corpse in, therefore, to the foot of the staircase, put the key by the dead man's side, and then issuing softly into the street, drew the door close with as little noise as possible. Catalina again paused to listen and to watch, went home to the hospitable Senora's house, retired to bed, fell asleep, and early the next morning was awakened by the Corregidor and four alguazils.

The lawlessness of all that followed strikingly exposes the frightful state of criminal justice at that time, wherever Spanish law prevailed. No evidence appeared to connect Catalina in any way with the death of Fernando Acosta. The Portuguese gamblers, besides that perhaps they thought lightly of such an accident, might have reasons of their own for drawing off public attention from their pursuits in Tucuman: not one of these men came forward openly; else the circumstances at the gaming table, and the departure of Catalina so closely on the heels of her opponent, would have suggested reasonable grounds for detaining her until some further light should be obtained. As it was, her imprisonment rested upon no colorable ground whatever, unless the magistrate had received some anonymous information, which, however, he never alleged. One comfort there was, meantime, in Spanish injustice: it did not loiter. Full gallop it went over the ground: one week often sufficed for informations—for trial—for execution; and the only bad consequence was, that a second or a third week sometimes exposed the disagreeable fact that everything had been 'premature;' a solemn sacrifice had been made to offended justice, in which all was right except as to the victim; it was the wrong man; and that gave extra trouble; for then all was to do over again, another man to be executed, and, possibly, still to be caught.

Justice moved at her usual Spanish rate in the present case. Kate was obliged to rise instantly; not suffered to speak to anybody in the house, though, in going out, a door opened, and she saw the young Juana looking out with saddest Indian expression. In one day the trial was all finished. Catalina said (which was true) that she hardly knew Acosta; and that people of her rank were used to attack their enemies face to face, not by murderous surprises. The magistrates were impressed with Catalina's answers (yet answered to what?) Things were beginning to look well, when all was suddenly upset by two witnesses, whom the reader (who is a sort of accomplice after the fact, having been privately let into the truths of the case, and having concealed his knowledge), will know at once to be false witnesses, but whom the old Spanish buzwigs doated on as models of all that could be looked for in the best. Both were very ill-looking

fellows, as it was their duty to be. And the first deposed as follows:—That through his quarter of Tucuman, the fact was notorious of Acosta's wife being the object of a criminal pursuit on the part of the Alferez (Catalina): that, doubtless, the injured husband had surprised the prisoner, which, of course, had led to the murder, to the staircase, to the key—to everything, in short, that could be wished; no—stop! what am I saying?—to everything that ought to be abominated. Finally—for he had now settled the main question—that he had a friend who would take up the case where he himself, from short-sightedness, was obliged to lay it down.' This friend, the Pythias of this short-sighted Damon started up in a frenzy of virtue at this summons, and, rushing to the front of the alguazils, said, 'That since his friend had proved sufficiently the fact of the Alferez having been lurking in the house, and having murdered a man, all that rested upon him to show was, how that murderer got out of the house; which he could do satisfactorily; for there was a balcony running along the windows on the second floor, one of which windows he himself, lurking in a corner of the street, saw the Alferez throw up, and from the said balcony take a flying leap into the said street.' Evidence like this was conclusive; no defence was listened to, nor indeed had the prisoner any to produce. The Alferez could deny neither the staircase nor the balcony: the street is there to this day, like the bricks in Jack Cade's Chimney, testifying all that may be required; and, as to our friend who saw the leap, there he was; nobody could deny him. The prisoner might indeed have suggested that she never heard of Acosta's wife, nor had the existence of such a wife been ripened even into a suspicion. But the bench were satisfied; chopping logic was of no use; and sentence was pronounced—that on the eighth day from the day of arrest, the Alferez should be executed in the public square.

It was not amongst the weaknesses of Catalina—who had so often inflicted death, and, by her own journal, thought so lightly of inflicting it (if not under cowardly advantages)—to shrink from facing death in her own person. Many incidents in her career show the coolness and even gaiety with which, in any case where death was apparently inevitable, she would have gone to meet it. But in this case she had a temptation for escaping it, which was probably in her power. She had only to reveal the secret of her sex, and the ridiculous witnesses, beyond whose testimony there was nothing at all against her, must at once be covered with derision. Catalina had some liking for fun; and a main inducement to this course was, that it would enable her to say to the judges, 'Now you see what old fools you've made of yourselves; every woman and child in Peru will soon be laughing at you.' I must acknowledge my own weakness; this last temptation I could not have withstood; flesh is weak, and fun is strong. But Catalina did. On consideration she fancied, that although the particular motive for murdering Acosta would be dismissed with laughter, still this might not clear her of the murder, which on some other motive she might have committed. But supposing that she were cleared altogether, what most of all she feared was, that the publication of her sex would throw a reflex light upon many past transactions in her life—would instantly find its way to Spain—and would probably soon bring her within the tender attentions of the Inquisition. She kept firm to the resolution of not saving her life by this discovery. And so far as her fate lay in her own hands, she would (as the reader will perceive from a little incident at the scaffold) have perished to a certainty. But even at this point, how strange a case! A woman falsely accused of an act which she really did commit! And falsely accused of a true offence upon a motive that was impossible!

As the sun set upon the seventh day, when the hours were numbered for the prisoner, there filed into her cell four persons in religious habits. They came on the charitable mission of preparing the poor convict for death. Catalina, however, watching all things narrowly, remarked something earnest and significant in the eye of the leader, as of one who had some secret communication to make. She contrived to clasp this man's hands, as if in the energy of internal struggles, and he contrived to slip into hers the very smallest of billets from poor Juana. It contained, for indeed it could contain, only these three words—'Do not confess. J.' This one caution, so simple and so brief, was a talisman. It did not refer to any confession of the crime; that would have been assuming what Juana was neither entitled nor disposed to assume, but, in the technical sense of the Church, to the act of devotional confession. Catalina found a single moment for a glance at it—understood the whole—resolutely refused to confess, as a person unsettled in her religious opinions, that needed spiritual instructions, and the four monks withdrew to make their report. The principal judge, upon hearing of the prisoner's impenitence, granted another day. At the end of that, no change having occurred either in the prisoner's mind, or in the circumstances, he issued his warrant for the execution. Accordingly, as the sun went down, the sad procession formed within the prison. Into the great square of Tucuman it moved, where the scaffold had been built, and the whole city had assembled for the spectacle. Catalina steadily ascended the ladder of the scaffold; even then she resolved not to benefit by revealing her sex; even then it was that she expressed her scorn for the lubberly executioner's mode of tying a knot; did it herself in a 'ship-shape,' orthodox manner; received in return the enthusiastic plaudits of the crowd, and so far ran the risk of precipitating her fate; for the timid magistrates, fearing a rescue from the impetuous mob, angrily ordered the executioner to finish the scene. The clatter of a galloping horse, however, at this instant forced them to pause. The crowd opened a road for the agitated horseman, who was the bearer of an order from the President of La Plata to suspend the execution until two prisoners could be examined. The whole was the work of the Senora and her daughter. The elder lady, having gathered informations against the witnesses, had pursued them to La Plata. There, by her influence with the Governor, they were arrested; recognised as old malefactors; and in their terror had partly confessed their perjury. Catalina was removed to La Plata; solemnly acquitted; and, by the advice of the President, for the present the connection with the Senora's family was postponed indefinitely.

Now was the last adventure approaching that ever Catalina should see in the new world. Some fine sights she may yet see in Europe, but nothing after this (which she has recorded) in America. Europe, if it had ever heard of her name (which very shortly it shall), Kings, Pope, Cardinals, if they were but aware of her existence (which in six months they shall be), would thirst for an introduction to our Catalina. You hardly thought now, reader, that she was such a great person, or anybody's pet but yours and mine. Bless you, Sir, she would scorn to look at us. I tell you, royalties are languishing to see her, or soon will be. But how can this come to pass, if she is to continue in her present obscurity? Certainly it cannot without some great peripeteia or vertiginous whirl of fortune; which, therefore, you shall now behold taking place in one turn of her next adventure. That shall let in a light, that shall throw back a Claude Lorraine gleam over all the past, able to make Kings, that would have cared not for her under Peruvian daylight, come to glorify her setting beams.

The Senora—and, observe, whatever kindness she does to Catalina speaks secretly from two hearts, her own and Juana's—had, by the advice of Mr. President Mendonia, given sufficient money for Catalina's travelling expenses. So far well. But Mr. M. chose to add a little codicil to this bequest of the Senora's, never suggested by her or by her daughter. 'Pray,' said this inquisitive President, who surely might have found business enough in La Plata, 'Pray, Senor Pietro Diaz, did you ever live at Concepcion? And were you ever acquainted there with Senor Miguel de Erauso? That man, Sir, was my friend.' What a pity that on this occasion Catalina could not venture to be candid! What a capital speech it would have made to say—'Friend were you? I think you could hardly be that, with seven hundred miles between you. But that man was my friend also; and, secondly, my brother. True it is I killed him. But if you happen to know that this was by pure mistake in the dark, what an old rogue you must be to throw that in my teeth, which is the affliction of my life!' Again, however, as so often in the same circumstances, Catalina thought that it would cause more ruin than it could heal to be candid; and, indeed, if she were really P. Diaz, Esq. , how came she to be brother to the late Mr. Erauso? On consideration, also, if she could not tell all, merely to have professed a fraternal connection which never was avowed by either whilst living together, would not have brightened the reputation of Catalina, which too surely required a scouring. Still, from my kindness for poor Kate, I feel uncharitably towards the president for advising Senor Pietro 'to travel for his health.' What had he to do with people's health? However, Mr. Peter, as he had pocketed the Senora's money, thought it right to pocket also the advice that accompanied its payment. That he might be in a condition to do so, he went off to buy a horse. He was in luck to-day. For beside money and advice, he obtained, at a low rate, a horse both beautiful and serviceable for a journey. To Paz it was, a city of prosperous name, that the cornet first moved. But Paz did not fulfil the promise of its name. For it laid the grounds of a feud that drove our Kate out of America.

Her first adventure was a bagatelle, and fitter for a jest-book than a history; yet it proved no jest either, since it led to the tragedy that followed. Riding into Paz, our gallant standard-bearer and her bonny black horse drew all eyes, *comme de raison*, upon their separate charms. This was inevitable amongst the indolent population of a Spanish town; and Kate was used to it. But, having recently had a little too much of the public attention, she felt nervous on remarking two soldiers eyeing the handsome horse and the handsome rider, with an attention that seemed too solemn for mere aesthetics. However, Kate was not the kind of person to let anything dwell on her spirits, especially if it took the shape of impudence; and, whistling gaily, she was riding forward—when, who should cross her path but the Alcalde! Ah! Alcalde, you see a person now that has a mission against you, though quite unknown to herself. He looked so sternly, that Kate asked if his worship had any commands. 'These men,' said the Alcalde, 'these two soldiers, say that this horse is stolen.' To one who had so narrowly and so lately escaped the balcony witness and his friend, it was really no laughing matter to hear of new affidavits in preparation. Kate was nervous, but never disconcerted. In a moment she had twitched off a saddle-cloth on which she sat; and throwing it over the horse's head, so as to cover up all between the ears and the mouth, she replied, 'that she had bought and paid for the horse at La Plata. But now, your worship, if this horse has really been stolen from these men, they must know well of which eye it is blind; for it can be only in the right eye or the left.' One of the soldiers cried out instantly, that it was the left eye; but the other said, 'No, no, you forget, it's the right.' Kate maliciously called attention to this little schism. But the men said, 'Ah, that was nothing—they were hurried; but now, on recollecting themselves, they were agreed that it was the left eye.' Did they stand to that? 'Oh yes, positive they were, left eye, left.'

Upon which our Kate, twitching off the horse-cloth, said gaily to the magistrate, 'Now, Sir, please to observe that this horse has nothing the matter with either eye.' And in fact it was so. Then his worship ordered his alguazils to apprehend the two witnesses, who posted off to bread and water, with other reversiary advantages, whilst Kate rode in quest of the best dinner that Paz could furnish.

This Alcalde's acquaintance, however, was not destined to drop here. Something had appeared in the young caballero's bearing, which made it painful to have addressed him with harshness, or for a moment to have entertained such a charge against such a person. He despatched his cousin, therefore, Don Antonio Calderon, to offer his apologies, and at the same time to request that the stranger, whose rank and quality he regretted not to have known, would do him the honor to come and dine with him. This explanation, and the fact that Don Antonio had already proclaimed his own position as cousin to the magistrate and nephew to the Bishop of Cuzco, obliged Catalina to say, after thanking the gentlemen for their obliging attentions, 'I myself hold the rank of Alferez in the service of his Catholic Majesty. I am a native of Biscay, and I am now repairing to Cuzco on private business.' 'To Cuzco!' exclaimed Don Antonio, 'how very fortunate! My cousin is a Basque like you; and, like you, he starts for Cuzco tomorrow morning; so that, if it is agreeable to you, Senor Alferez, we will travel together.' It was settled that they should. To travel—amongst 'balcony witnesses,' and anglers for 'blind horses'—not merely with a just man, but with the very abstract idea and riding allegory of justice, was too delightful to the storm-wearied cornet; and he cheerfully accompanied Don Antonio to the house of the magistrate, called Don Pedro de Chavarria. Distinguished was his reception; the Alcalde personally renewed his regrets for the ridiculous scene of the two scampish oculists, and presented him to his wife, a splendid Andalusian beauty, to whom he had been married about a year.

This lady there is a reason for describing; and the French reporter of Catalina's memoirs dwells upon the theme. She united, he says, the sweetness of the German lady with the energy of the Arabian, a combination hard to judge of. As to her feet, he adds, I say nothing; for she had scarcely any at all. 'Je ne parle point de ses pieds, elle n'en avait presque pas.' 'Poor lady!' says a compassionate rustic: 'no feet! What a shocking thing that so fine a woman should have been so sadly mutilated!' Oh, my dear rustic, you're quite in the wrong box. The Frenchman means this as the very highest compliment. Beautiful, however, she must have been; and a Cinderella, I hope, not a Cinderellula, considering that she had the inimitable walk and step of the Andalusians, which cannot be accomplished without something of a proportionate basis to stand upon.

The reason which there is (as I have said) for describing this lady, arises out of her relation to the tragic events which followed. She, by her criminal levity, was the cause of all. And I must here warn the moralizing blunderer of two errors that he is too likely to make: 1st, That he is invited to read some extract from a licentious amour, as if for its own interest; 2d, Or on account of Donna Catalina's memoirs, with a view to relieve their too martial character. I have the pleasure to assure him of his being so utterly

in the darkness of error, that any possible change he can make in his opinions, right or left, must be for the better: he cannot stir, but he will mend, which is a delightful thought for the moral and blundering mind. As to the first point, what little glimpse he obtains of a licentious amour is, as a court of justice will sometimes show him such a glimpse, simply to make intelligible the subsequent facts which depend upon it. Secondly, As to the conceit, that Catalina wished to embellish her memoirs, understand that no such practice then existed; certainly not in Spanish literature. Her memoirs are electrifying by their facts; else, in the manner of telling these facts, they are systematically dry.

Don Antonio Calderon was a handsome, accomplished cavalier. And in the course of dinner, Catalina was led to judge, from the behavior to each other of this gentleman and the lady, the Alcalde's beautiful wife, that they had an improper understanding. This also she inferred from the furtive language of their eyes. Her wonder was, that the Alcalde should be so blind; though upon that point she saw reason in a day or two to change her opinion. Some people see everything by affecting to see nothing. The whole affair, however, was nothing at all to her, and she would have dismissed it from her thoughts altogether, but for what happened on the journey.

From the miserable roads, eight hours a day of travelling was found quite enough for man and beast; the product of which eight hours was from ten to twelve leagues. On the last day but one of the journey, the travelling party, which was precisely the original dinner party, reached a little town ten leagues short of Cuzco. The Corregidor of this place was a friend of the Alcalde; and through his influence the party obtained better accommodations than those which they had usually had in a hovel calling itself a venta, or in the sheltered corner of a barn. The Alcalde was to sleep at the Corregidor's house; the two young cavaliers, Calderon and our Kate, had sleeping rooms at the public locanda; but for the lady was reserved a little pleasure-house in an enclosed garden. This was a plaything of a house; but the season being summer, and the house surrounded with tropical flowers, the lady preferred it (in spite of its loneliness) to the damp mansion of the official grandee, who, in her humble opinion, was quite as fusty as his mansion, and his mansion not much less so than himself.

After dining gaily together at the locanda, and possibly taking a 'rise' out of his worship the Corregidor, as a repeating echo of Don Quixote, (then growing popular in Spanish America,) the young man who was no young officer, and the young officer who was no young man, lounged down together to the little pavilion in the flower-garden, with the purpose of paying their respects to the presiding belle. They were graciously received, and had the honor of meeting there his Mustiness the Alcalde, and his Fustiness the Corregidor; whose conversation was surely improving, but not equally brilliant. How they got on under the weight of two such muffs, has been a mystery for two centuries. But they did to a certainty, for the party did not break up till eleven. Tea and turn out you could not call it; for there was the turn out in rigor, but not the tea. One thing, however, Catalina by mere accident had an opportunity of observing, and observed with pain. The two official gentlemen had gone down the steps into the garden. Catalina, having forgot her hat, went back into the little vestibule to look for it. There stood the lady and Don Antonio, exchanging a few final words (they were final) and a few final signs. Amongst the last Kate observed



distinctly this, and distinctly she understood it. First drawing Calderon's attention to the gesture, as one of significant pantomime, by raising her forefinger, the lady snuffed out one of the candles. The young man answered it by a look of intelligence, and all three passed down the steps together. The lady was disposed to take the cool air, and accompanied them to the garden-gate; but, in passing down the walk, Catalina noticed a second ill-omened sign that all was not right. Two glaring eyes she distinguished amongst the shrubs for a moment, and a rustling immediately after. 'What's that?' said the lady, and Don Antonio answered carelessly, 'A bird flying out of the bushes.'

Catalina, as usual, had read everything. Not a wrinkle or a rustle was lost upon her. And, therefore, when she reached the locanda, knowing to an iota all that was coming, she did not retire to bed, but paced before the house. She had not long to wait: in fifteen minutes the door opened softly, and out stepped Calderon. Kate walked forward, and faced him immediately; telling him laughingly that it was not good for his health to go abroad on this night. The young man showed some impatience; upon which, very seriously, Kate acquainted him with her suspicions, and with the certainty that the Alcalde was not so blind as he had seemed. Calderon thanked her for the information; would be upon his guard; but, to prevent further expostulation, he wheeled round instantly into the darkness. Catalina was too well convinced, however, of the mischief on foot, to leave him thus. She followed rapidly, and passed silently into the garden, almost at the same time with Calderon. Both took their stations behind trees; Calderon watching nothing but the burning candles, Catalina watching circumstances to direct her movements. The candles burned brightly in the little pavilion. Presently one was extinguished. Upon this, Calderon pressed forward to the steps, hastily ascended them, and passed into the vestibule. Catalina followed on his traces. What succeeded was all one scene of continued, dreadful dumb show; different passions of panic, or deadly struggle, or hellish malice absolutely suffocated all articulate words.

In a moment a gurgling sound was heard, as of a wild beast attempting vainly to yell over some creature that it was strangling. Next came a tumbling out at the door of one black mass, which heaved and parted at intervals into two figures, which closed, which parted again, which at last fell down the steps together. Then appeared a figure in white. It was the unhappy Andalusian; and she seeing the outline of Catalina's person, ran up to her, unable to utter one syllable. Pitying the agony of her horror, Catalina took her within her own cloak, and carried her out at the garden gate. Calderon had by this time died; and the maniacal Alcalde had risen up to pursue his wife. But Kate, foreseeing what he would do, had stepped silently within the shadow of the garden wall. Looking down the road to the town, and seeing nobody moving, the maniac, for some purpose, went back to the house. This moment Kate used to recover the locanda with the lady still panting in horror. What was to be done? To think of concealment in this little place was out of the question. The Alcalde was a man of local power, and it was certain that he would kill his wife on the spot. Kate's generosity would not allow her to have any collusion with this murderous purpose. At Cuzco, the principal convent was ruled by a near relative of the Andalusian; and there she would find shelter. Kate, therefore, saddled her horse rapidly, placed the lady behind, and rode off in the darkness. About five miles out of the town their road was crossed by a torrent, over which they could not hit the bridge. 'Forward!' cried the lady; and Kate repeating the word to the horse, the docile creature leaped down into the water. They were all sinking at first; but having its head free, the horse swam clear

of all obstacles through the midnight darkness, and scrambled out on the opposite bank. The two riders were dripping from the shoulders downward. But, seeing a light twinkling from a cottage window, Kate rode up; obtained a little refreshment, and the benefit of a fire, from a poor laboring man. From this man she also bought a warm mantle for the lady, who, besides her torrent bath, was dressed in a light evening robe, so that but for the horseman's cloak of Kate she would have perished. But there was no time to lose. They had already lost two hours from the consequences of their cold bath. Cuzco was still eighteen miles distant; and the Alcalde's shrewdness would at once divine this to be his wife's mark. They remounted: very soon the silent night echoed the hoofs of a pursuing rider; and now commenced the most frantic race, in which each party rode as if the whole game of life were staked upon the issue. The pace was killing: and Kate has delivered it as her opinion, in the memoirs which she wrote, that the Alcalde was the better mounted. This may be doubted. And certainly Kate had ridden too many years in the Spanish cavalry to have any fear of his worship's horsemanship; but it was a prodigious disadvantage that her horse had to carry double; while the horse ridden by her opponent was one of those belonging to the murdered Don Antonio, and known to Kate as a powerful animal. At length they had come within three miles at Cuzco. The road after this descended the whole way to the city, and in some places rapidly, so as to require a cool rider. Suddenly a deep trench appeared traversing the whole extent of a broad heath. It was useless to evade it. To have hesitated was to be lost. Kate saw the necessity of clearing it, but doubted much whether her poor exhausted horse, after twenty-one miles of work so severe, had strength for the effort. Kate's maxim, however, which never yet had failed, both figuratively for life, and literally for the saddle, was—to ride at everything that showed a front of resistance. She did so now. Having come upon the trench rather too suddenly, she wheeled round for the advantage of coming down upon it more determinately, rode resolutely at it, and gained the opposite bank. The hind feet of her horse were sinking back from the rottenness of the ground; but the strong supporting bridle-hand of Kate carried him forward; and in ten minutes more they would be in Cuzco. This being seen by the vicious Alcalde, who had built great hopes on the trench, he unslung his carbine, pulled up, and fired after the bonny black horse and its bonny fair riders. But this manoeuvre would have lost his worship any bet that he might have had depending on this admirable steeple-chase. Had I been stakeholder, what a pleasure it would have been, in fifteen minutes from this very vicious shot, to pay into Kate's hands every shilling of the deposits. I would have listened to no nonsense about referees or protests. The bullets, says Kate, whistled round the poor clinging lady en croupe—luckily none struck her; but one wounded the horse. And that settled the odds. Kate now planted herself well in her stirrups to enter Cuzco, almost dangerously a winner; for the horse was so maddened by the wound, and the road so steep, that he went like blazes; and it really became difficult for Kate to guide him with any precision through narrow episcopal paths. Henceforwards the wounded horse required Kate's continued attention; and yet, in the mere luxury of strife, it was impossible for Kate to avoid turning a little in her saddle to see the Alcalde's performance on this tight rope of the trench. His worship's horsemanship being perhaps rather rusty, and he not perfectly acquainted with his horse, it would have been agreeable to compromise the case by riding round, or dismounting. But all that was impossible. The job must be done. And I am happy to report, for the reader's satisfaction, the sequel—so far as Kate could attend the performance. Gathering himself up for mischief, the Alcalde took a sweep, as if ploughing out the line of some vast encampment, or tracing the pomærium for some future Rome; then, like thunder and lightning, with arms flying aloft in the air, down he came upon the trembling trench.

But the horse refused the leap; and, as the only compromise that his unlearned brain could suggest, he threw his worship right over his ears, lodging him safely in a sand-heap that rose with clouds of dust and screams of birds into the morning air. Kate had now no time to send back her compliments in a musical halloo. The Alcalde missed breaking his neck on this occasion very narrowly; but his neck was of no use to him in twenty minutes more, as the reader will soon find. Kate rode right onwards; and, coming in with a lady behind her, horse bloody, and pace such as no hounds could have lived with, she ought to have made a great sensation in Cuzco. But, unhappily, the people were all in bed.

The steeple-chase into Cuzco had been a fine headlong thing, considering the torrent, the trench, the wounded horse, the lovely lady, with her agonizing fears, mounted behind Kate, together with the meek dove-like dawn: but the finale crowded together the quickest succession of changes that out of a melodrama can ever have been witnessed. Kate reached the convent in safety; carried into the cloisters, and delivered like a parcel the fair Andalusian. But to rouse the servants caused delay; and on returning to the street through the broad gateway of the convent, whom should she face but the Alcalde! How he escaped the trench, who can tell? He had no time to write memoirs; his horse was too illiterate. But he had escaped; temper not at all improved by that adventure, and now raised to a hell of malignity by seeing that he had lost his prey. In the morning light he now saw how to use his sword. He attacked Kate with fury. Both were exhausted; and Kate, besides that she had no personal quarrel with the Alcalde, having now accomplished her sole object in saving the lady, would have been glad of a truce. She could with difficulty wield her sword: and the Alcalde had so far the advantage, that he wounded Kate severely. That roused her ancient blood. She turned on him now with determination. At that moment in rode two servants of the Alcalde, who took part with their master. These odds strengthened Kate's resolution, but weakened her chances. Just then, however, rode in, and ranged himself on Kate's side, the servant of the murdered Don Calderon. In an instant, Kate had pushed her sword through the Alcalde, who died upon the spot. In an instant the servant of Calderon had fled. In an instant the Alguazils had come up. They and the servants of the Alcalde pressed furiously on Kate, who now again was fighting for life. Against such odds, she was rapidly losing ground; when, in an instant, on the opposite side of the street, the great gates of the Episcopal palace rolled open. Thither it was that Calderon's servant had fled. The bishop and his attendants hurried across. 'Senor Caballador,' said the bishop, 'in the name of the Virgin, I enjoin you to surrender your sword.' 'My lord,' said Kate, 'I dare not do it with so many enemies about me.' 'But I,' replied the bishop, 'become answerable to the law for your safe keeping.' Upon which, with filial reverence, all parties dropped their swords. Kate being severely wounded, the bishop led her into his palace. In an instant came the catastrophe; Kate's discovery could no longer be delayed; the blood flowed too rapidly; the wound was in her bosom. She requested a private interview with the bishop; all was known in a moment; for surgeons and attendants were summoned hastily, and Kate had fainted. The good bishop pitied her, and had her attended in his palace; then removed to a convent; then to a second at Lima; and, after many months had passed, his report to the Spanish Government at home of all the particulars, drew from the King of Spain and from the Pope an order that the Nun should be transferred to Spain.

Yes, at length the warrior lady, the blooming cornet, this nun that is so martial, this dragoon that is so lovely, must visit again the home of her childhood, which now for seventeen years she has not seen. All

Spain, Portugal, Italy, rang with her adventures. Spain, from north to south, was frantic with desire to behold her fiery child, whose girlish romance, whose patriotic heroism electrified the national imagination. The King of Spain must kiss his faithful daughter, that would not suffer his banner to see dishonor. The Pope must kiss his wandering daughter, that henceforwards will be a lamb travelling back into the Christian fold. Potentates so great as these, when they speak words of love, do not speak in vain. All was forgiven; the sacrilege, the bloodshed, the flight and the scorn of St. Peter's keys; the pardons were made out, were signed, were sealed, and the chanceries of earth were satisfied.

Ah! what a day of sorrow and of joy was that one day, in the first week of November, 1624, when the returning Kate drew near to the shore of Andalusia—when, descending into the ship's barge, she was rowed to the piers of Cadiz by bargemen in the royal liveries—when she saw every ship, street, house, convent, church, crowded, like a day of judgment, with human faces, with men, with women, with children, all bending the lights of their flashing and their loving eyes upon herself. Forty myriads of people had gathered in Cadiz alone. All Andalusia had turned out to receive her. Ah! what joy, if she had not looked back to the Andes, to their dreadful summits, and their more dreadful feet. Ah! what sorrow, if she had not been forced by music, and endless banners, and triumphant clamors, to turn away from the Andes to the joyous shore which she approached!

Upon this shore stood, ready to receive her, in front of all this mighty crowd, the Prime Minister of Spain, the same Conde Olivarez, who but one year before had been so haughty and so defying to our haughty and defying Duke of Buckingham. But a year ago the Prince of Wales was in Spain, and he also was welcomed with triumph and great joy, but not with the hundredth part of that enthusiasm which now met the returning nun. And Olivarez, that had spoken so roughly to the English Duke, to her 'was sweet as summer.' Through endless crowds of festive compatriots he conducted her to the King. The King folded her in his arms, and could never be satisfied with listening to her. He sent for her continually to his presence—he delighted in her conversation, so new, so natural, so spirited—he settled a pension upon her at that time, of unprecedented amount, in the case of a subaltern officer; and by his desire, because the year 1625 was a year of jubilee, she departed in a few months from Madrid to Rome. She went through Barcelona; there and everywhere welcomed as the lady whom the King delighted to honor. She travelled to Rome, and all doors flew open to receive her. She was presented to his Holiness, with letters from his most Catholic majesty. But letters there needed none. The Pope admired her as much as all before had done. He caused her to recite all her adventures; and what he loved most in her account, was the sincere and sorrowing spirit in which she described herself as neither better nor worse than she had been. Neither proud was Kate, nor sycophantishly and falsely humble. Urban VIII. it was that then filled the chair of St. Peter. He did not neglect to raise his daughter's thoughts from earthly things—he pointed her eyes to the clouds that were above the dome of St. Peter's cathedral—he told her what the cathedral had told her in the gorgeous clouds of the Andes and the vesper lights, how sweet a thing, how divine a thing it was for Christ's sake to forgive all injuries, and how he trusted that no more she would think of bloodshed. He also said two words to her in Latin, which, if I had time to repeat a Spanish bishop's remark to Kate some time afterwards upon those two mysterious words, with Kate's most natural and ingenuous answer to the Bishop upon what she supposed to be their meaning, would make the reader smile not less than they made

myself. You know that Kate did understand a little Latin, which, probably, had not been much improved by riding in the Light Dragoons. I must find time, however, whether the press and the composers are in a fury or not, to mention that the Pope, in his farewell audience to his dear daughter, whom he was to see no more, gave her a general license to wear henceforth in all countries—even in *partibus Infidelium*—a cavalry officer's dress—boots, spurs, sabre, and sabretache; in fact, anything that she and the Horse Guards might agree upon. Consequently, reader, remember for your life never to say one word, nor suffer any tailor to say one word, against those Wellington trousers made in the chestnut forest; for, understand that the Papal indulgence, as to this point, runs backwards as well as forwards; it is equally shocking and heretical to murmur against trousers in the forgotten rear or against trousers yet to come.

From Rome, Kate returned to Spain. She even went to St. Sebastian's—to the city, but—whether it was that her heart failed her or not—never to the convent. She roamed up and down; everywhere she was welcome—everywhere an honored guest; but everywhere restless. The poor and humble never ceased from their admiration of her; and amongst the rich and aristocratic of Spain, with the King at their head, Kate found especial love from two classes of men. The Cardinals and Bishops all doated upon her—as their daughter that was returning. The military men all doated upon her—as their sister that was retiring.

Some time or other, when I am allowed more elbow-room, I will tell you why it is that I myself love this Kate. Now, at this moment, when it is necessary for me to close, if I allow you one question before laying down my pen—if I say, 'Come now, be quick, ask anything you have to ask, for, in one minute, I am going to write *Finis*, after which (unless the Queen wished it) I could not add a syllable'—twenty to one, I guess what your question will be. You will ask me, What became of Kate? What was her end?

Ah, reader! but, if I answer that question, you will say I have not answered it. If I tell you that secret, you will say that the secret is still hidden. Yet, because I have promised, and because you will be angry if I do not, let me do my best; and bad is the best. After ten years of restlessness in Spain, with thoughts always turning back to the Andes, Kate heard of an expedition on the point of sailing to Spanish America. All soldiers knew her, so that she had information of everything that stirred in camps. Men of the highest military rank were going out with the expedition; but they all loved Kate as a sister, and were delighted to hear that she would join their mess on board ship. This ship, with others, sailed, whither finally bound, I really forget. But, on reaching America, all the expedition touched at Vera Cruz. Thither a great crowd of the military went on shore. The leading officers made a separate party for the same purpose. Their intention was, to have a gay happy dinner, after their long confinement to a ship, at the chief hotel; and happy in perfection it could not be, unless Kate would consent to join it. She, that was ever kind to brother soldiers, agreed to do so. She descended into the boat along with them, and in twenty minutes the boat touched the shore. All the bevy of gay laughing officers, junior and senior, like schoolboys escaping from school, jumped on shore, and walked hastily, as their time was limited, up to the hotel. Arriving there, all turned round in eagerness, saying, 'Where is our dear Kate?' Ah, yes, my dear Kate, at that solemn moment, where, indeed, were you? She had certainly taken her seat in the boat: that was sure. Nobody, in the general confusion, was certain of having seen her on coming ashore. The sea was searched

for her—the forests were ransacked. The sea made no answer—the forests gave up no sign. I have a conjecture of my own; but her brother soldiers were lost in sorrow and confusion, and could never arrive even at a conjecture.

That happened two hundred and fourteen years ago! Here is the brief sum of all:—This nun sailed from Spain to Peru, and she found no rest for the sole of her foot. This nun sailed back from Peru to Spain, and she found no rest for the agitations of her heart. This nun sailed again from Spain to America, and she found—the rest which all of us find. But where it was, could never be made known to the father of Spanish camps, that sat in Madrid; nor to Kate's spiritual father, that sat in Rome. Known it is to the great Father that once whispered to Kate on the Andes; but else it has been a secret for two centuries; and to man it remains a secret for ever and ever!

## **FLIGHT OF A TARTAR TRIBE**

There is no great event in modern history, or perhaps it may be said more broadly, none in all history, from its earliest records, less generally known, or more striking to the imagination, than the flight eastwards of a principal Tartar nation across the boundless steppes of Asia in the latter half of the last century. The terminus a quo of this flight, and the terminus ad quem, are equally magnificent; the mightiest of Christian thrones being the one, the mightiest of Pagan the other. And the grandeur of these two terminal objects, is harmoniously supported by the romantic circumstances of the flight. In the abruptness of its commencement, and the fierce velocity of its execution, we read an expression of the wild barbaric character of the agents. In the unity of purpose connecting this myriad of wills, and in the blind but unerring aim at a mark so remote, there is something which recalls to the mind those Almighty instincts that propel the migrations of the swallow, or the life-withering marches of the locust. Then again, in the gloomy vengeance of Russia and her vast artillery, which hung upon the rear and the skirts of the fugitive vassals, we are reminded of Miltonic images—such, for instance, as that of the solitary hand pursuing through desert spaces and through ancient chaos a rebellious host, and overtaking with volleying thunders those who believed themselves already within the security of darkness and of distance.

We shall have occasion farther on to compare this event with other great national catastrophes as to the magnitude of the suffering. But it may also challenge a comparison with similar events under another relation, viz., as to its dramatic capabilities. Few cases, perhaps, in romance or history, can sustain a close collation with this as to the complexity of its separate interests. The great outline of the enterprise, taken

in connection with the operative motives, hidden or avowed, and the religious sanctions under which it was pursued, give to the case a triple character: 1st, That of a conspiracy, with as close a unity in the incidents, and as much of a personal interest in the moving characters, with fine dramatic contrasts, as belongs to Venice Preserved, or to the Fiesco of Schiller. 2dly, That of a great military expedition offering the same romantic features of vast distances to be traversed, vast reverses to be sustained, untried routes, enemies obscurely ascertained, and hardships too vaguely prefigured, which mark the Egyptian expedition of Cambyses—the anabasis of the younger Cyrus, and the subsequent retreat of the ten thousand to the Black Sea—the Parthian expeditions of the Romans, especially those of Crassus and Julian—or (as more disastrous than any of them, and in point of space as well as in amount of forces, more extensive,) the Russian anabasis and katabasis of Napoleon. 3dly, That of a religious Exodus, authorized by an oracle venerated throughout many nations of Asia, an Exodus, therefore, in so far resembling the great Scriptural Exodus of the Israelites, under Moses and Joshua, as well as in the very peculiar distinction of carrying along with them their entire families, women, children, slaves, their herds of cattle and of sheep, their horses and their camels.

This triple character of the enterprise naturally invests it with a more comprehensive interest. But the dramatic interest, which we ascribed to it, or its fitness for a stage representation, depends partly upon the marked variety and the strength of the personal agencies concerned, and partly upon the succession of scenical situations. Even the steppes, the camels, the tents, the snowy and the sandy deserts, are not beyond the scale of our modern representative powers, as often called into action in the theatres both of Paris and London; and the series of situations unfolded, beginning with the general conflagration on the Wolga—passing thence to the disastrous scenes of the flight (as it literally was in its commencement)—to the Tartar siege of the Russian fortress Koulagina—the bloody engagement with the Cossacks in the mountain passes at Ouchim—the surprisal by the Bashkirs and the advanced posts of the Russian army at Torgau—the private conspiracy at this point against the Khan—the long succession of running fights—the parting massacres at the lake of Tengis under the eyes of the Chinese—and finally, the tragical retribution to Zebek-Dorchi at the hunting-lodge of the Chinese emperor;—all these situations communicate a scenical animation to the wild romance, if treated dramatically; whilst a higher and a philosophic interest belongs to it as a case of authentic history, commemorating a great revolution for good and for evil, in the fortunes of a whole people—a people semi-barbarous, but simple-hearted, and of ancient descent.

On the 21st of January, 1761, the young Prince Oubacha assumed the sceptre of the Kalmucks upon the death of his father. Some part of the power attached to this dignity he had already wielded since his fourteenth year, in quality of Vice-Khan, by the express appointment, and with the avowed support of the Russian Government. He was now about eighteen years of age, amiable in his personal character, and not without titles to respect in his public character as a sovereign prince. In times more peaceable, and amongst a people more entirely civilized, or more humanized by religion, it is even probable that he might have discharged his high duties with considerable distinction. But his lot was thrown upon stormy times, and a most difficult crisis amongst tribes, whose native ferocity was exasperated by debasing forms of superstition, and by a nationality as well as an inflated conceit of their own merit absolutely

unparalleled, whilst the circumstances of their hard and trying position under the jealous surveillance of an irresistible lord paramount, in the person of the Russian Czar, gave a fiercer edge to the natural unamiableness of the Kalmuck disposition, and irritated its gloomier qualities into action under the restless impulses of suspicion and permanent distrust. No prince could hope for a cordial allegiance from his subjects, or a peaceful reign under the circumstances of the case; for the dilemma in which a Kalmuck ruler stood at present was of this nature; wanting the sanction and support of the Czar, he was inevitably too weak from without to command confidence from his subjects, or resistance to his competitors: on the other hand, with this kind of support, and deriving his title in any degree from the favor of the Imperial Court, he became almost in that extent an object of hatred at home, and within the whole compass of his own territory. He was at once an object of hatred for the past, being a living monument of national independence, ignominiously surrendered, and an object of jealousy for the future, as one who had already advertised himself to be a fitting tool for the ultimate purposes (whatsoever those might prove to be) of the Russian Court. Coming himself to the Kalmuck sceptre under the heaviest weight of prejudice from the unfortunate circumstances of his position, it might have been expected that Oubacha would have been pre-eminently an object of detestation; for besides his known dependence upon the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, the direct line of succession had been set aside, and the principle of inheritance violently suspended, in favor of his own father, so recently as nineteen years before the era of his own accession, consequently within the lively remembrance of the existing generation. He therefore, almost equally with his father, stood within the full current of the national prejudices, and might have anticipated the most pointed hostility. But it was not so: such are the caprices in human affairs, that he was even, in a moderate sense, popular,—a benefit which wore the more cheering aspect, and the promises of permanence, inasmuch as he owed it exclusively to his personal qualities of kindness and affability, as well as to the beneficence of his government. On the other hand, to balance this unlooked-for prosperity at the outset of his reign, he met with a rival in popular favor—almost a competitor—in the person of Zebek-Dorchi, a prince with considerable pretensions to the throne, and, perhaps it might be said, with equal pretensions. Zebek-Dorchi was a direct descendant of the same royal house as himself, through a different branch. On public grounds, his claim stood, perhaps, on a footing equally good with that of Oubacha, whilst his personal qualities, even in those aspects which seemed to a philosophical observer most odious and repulsive, promised the most effectual aid to the dark purposes of an intriguer or a conspirator, and were generally fitted to win a popular support precisely in those points where Oubacha was most defective. He was much superior in external appearance to his rival on the throne, and so far better qualified to win the good opinion of a semi-barbarous people; whilst his dark intellectual qualities of Machiavelian dissimulation, profound hypocrisy, and perfidy which knew no touch of remorse, were admirably calculated to sustain any ground which he might win from the simple-hearted people with whom he had to deal—and from the frank carelessness of his unconscious competitor.

At the very outset of his treacherous career, Zebek-Dorchi was sagacious enough to perceive that nothing could be gained by open declaration of hostility to the reigning prince: the choice had been a deliberate act on the part of Russia, and Elizabeth Petrowna was not the person to recall her own favors with levity or upon slight grounds. Openly, therefore, to have declared his enmity towards his relative on the throne, could have had no effect but that of arming suspicions against his own ulterior purposes in a quarter where it was most essential to his interest that, for the present, all suspicion should be hoodwinked. Accordingly, after much meditation, the course he took for opening his snares was this:—He raised a



rumor that his own life was in danger from the plots of several Saissang, (that is, Kalmuck nobles,) who were leagued together, under an oath to assassinate him; and immediately after, assuming a well-counterfeited alarm, he fled to Tcherkask, followed by sixty-five tents. From this place he kept up a correspondence with the Imperial Court; and, by way of soliciting his cause more effectually, he soon repaired in person to St. Petersburg. Once admitted to personal conferences with the Cabinet, he found no difficulty in winning over the Russian counsels to a concurrence with some of his political views, and thus covertly introducing the point of that wedge which was finally to accomplish his purposes. In particular, he persuaded the Russian Government to make a very important alteration in the constitution of the Kalmuck State Council, which in effect reorganized the whole political condition of the state, and disturbed the balance of power as previously adjusted. Of this Council—in the Kalmuck language called Sarga—there were eight members, called Sargatchi; and hitherto it had been the custom that these eight members should be entirely subordinate to the Khan; holding, in fact, the ministerial character of secretaries and assistants, but in no respect ranking as co-ordinate authorities. That had produced some inconveniences in former reigns; and it was easy for Zebek-Dorchi to point the jealousy of the Russian Court to others more serious which might arise in future circumstances of war or other contingencies. It was resolved, therefore, to place the Sargatchi henceforward on a footing of perfect independence, and therefore (as regarded responsibility) on a footing of equality with the Khan. Their independence, however, had respect only to their own sovereign; for towards Russia they were placed in a new attitude of direct duty and accountability, by the creation in their favor of small pensions (300 roubles a year), which, however, to a Kalmuck of that day were more considerable than might be supposed, and had a further value as marks of honorary distinction emanating from a great Empress. Thus far the purposes of Zebek-Dorchi were served effectually for the moment: but, apparently, it was only for the moment; since, in the further development of his plots, this very dependency upon Russian influence would be the most serious obstacle in his way. There was, however, another point carried which outweighed all inferior considerations, as it gave him a power of setting aside discretionally whatsoever should arise to disturb his plots: he was himself appointed President and Controller of the Sargatchi. The Russian Court had been aware of his high pretensions by birth, and hoped by this promotion to satisfy the ambition which, in some degree, was acknowledged to be a reasonable passion for any man occupying his situation.

Having thus completely blindfolded the Cabinet of Russia, Zebek-Dorchi proceeded in his new character to fulfil his political mission with the Khan of the Kalmucks. So artfully did he prepare the road for his favorable reception at the court of this Prince, that he was at once and universally welcomed as a public benefactor. The pensions of the counsellors were so much additional wealth poured into the Tartar exchequer; as to the ties of dependency thus created, experience had not yet enlightened these simple tribes as to that result. And that he himself should be the chief of these mercenary counsellors, was so far from being charged upon Zebek as any offence or any ground of suspicion, that his relative the Khan returned him hearty thanks for his services, under the belief that he could have accepted this appointment only with a view to keep out other and more unwelcome pretenders, who would not have had the same motives of consanguinity or friendship for executing its duties in a spirit of kindness to the Kalmucks. The first use which he made of his new functions about the Khan's person was to attack the Court of Russia, by a romantic villany not easy to be credited, for those very acts of interference with the council which he himself had prompted. This was a dangerous step: but it was indispensable to his further advance upon the gloomy path which he had traced out for himself. A triple vengeance was what he

meditated—1, Upon the Russian Cabinet for having undervalued his own pretensions to the throne—2, upon his amiable rival for having supplanted him—and 3, upon all those of the nobility who had manifested their sense of his weakness by their neglect, or their sense of his perfidious character by their suspicions. Here was a colossal outline of wickedness; and by one in his situation, feeble (as it might seem) for the accomplishment of its humblest parts, how was the total edifice to be reared in its comprehensive grandeur? He, a worm as he was, could he venture to assail the mighty behemoth of Muscovy, the potentate who counted three hundred languages around the footsteps of his throne, and from whose 'lion ramp' recoiled alike 'baptized and infidel'—Christendom on the one side, strong by her intellect and her organization, and the 'Barbaric East' on the other, with her unnumbered numbers? The match was a monstrous one; but in its very monstrosity there lay this germ of encouragement, that it could not be suspected. The very hopelessness of the scheme grounded his hope, and he resolved to execute a vengeance which should involve as it were, in the unity of a well-laid tragic fable, all whom he judged to be his enemies. That vengeance lay in detaching from the Russian empire the whole Kalmuck nation, and breaking up that system of intercourse which had thus far been beneficial to both. This last was a consideration which moved him but little. True it was that Russia to the Kalmucks had secured lands and extensive pasturage; true it was that the Kalmucks reciprocally to Russia had furnished a powerful cavalry. But the latter loss would be part of his triumph, and the former might be more than compensated in other climates under other sovereigns. Here was a scheme which, in its final accomplishment, would avenge him bitterly on the Czarina, and in the course of its accomplishment might furnish him with ample occasions for removing his other enemies. It may be readily supposed indeed that he, who could deliberately raise his eyes to the Russian autocrat as an antagonist in single duel with himself, was not likely to feel much anxiety about Kalmuck enemies of whatever rank. He took his resolution, therefore, sternly and irrevocably to effect this astonishing translation of an ancient people across the pathless deserts of Central Asia, intersected continually by rapid rivers, rarely furnished with bridges, and of which the fords were known only to those who might think it for their interest to conceal them, through many nations inhospitable or hostile; frost and snow around them, (from the necessity of commencing their flight in the winter,) famine in their front, and the sabre, or even the artillery of an offended and mighty empress, hanging upon their rear for thousands of miles. But what was to be their final mark, the port of shelter after so fearful a course of wandering? Two things were evident: it must be some power at a great distance from Russia, so as to make return even in that view hopeless; and it must be a power of sufficient rank to ensure them protection from any hostile efforts on the part of the Czarina for reclaiming them, or for chastising their revolt. Both conditions were united obviously in the person of Kien Long, the reigning Emperor of China, who was farther recommended to them by his respect for the head of their religion. To China, therefore, and as their first rendezvous to the shadow of the great Chinese Wall, it was settled by Zebek that they should direct their flight.

Next came the question of time; when should the flight commence:—and finally, the more delicate question as to the choice of accomplices. To extend the knowledge of the conspiracy too far, was to insure its betrayal to the Russian Government. Yet at some stage of the preparations it was evident that a very extensive confidence must be made, because in no other way could the mass of the Kalmuck population be persuaded to furnish their families with the requisite equipments for so long a migration. This critical step, however, it was resolved to defer up to the latest possible moment, and, at all events, to make no general communication on the subject until the time of departure should be definitely settled. In the

meantime, Zebek admitted only three persons to his confidence; of whom Oubacha, the reigning prince, was almost necessarily one; but him, from his yielding and somewhat feeble character, he viewed rather in the light of a tool than as one of his active accomplices. Those whom (if anybody) he admitted to an unreserved participation in his counsels, were two only, the great Lama among the Kalmucks, and his own father-in-law, Erempel, a ruling prince of some tribe in the neighborhood of the Caspian sea, recommended to his favor not so much by any strength of talent corresponding to the occasion, as by his blind devotion to himself, and his passionate anxiety to promote the elevation of his daughter and his son-in-law to the throne of a sovereign prince. A titular prince Zebek already was: but this dignity, without the substantial accompaniment of a sceptre, seemed but an empty sound to both of these ambitious rivals. The other accomplice, whose name was Loosang-Dchaltzan, and whose rank was that of Lama, or Kalmuck pontiff, was a person of far more distinguished pretensions; he had something of the same gloomy and terrific pride which marked the character of Zebek himself, manifesting also the same energy, accompanied by the same unflinching cruelty, and a natural facility of dissimulation even more profound. It was by this man that the other question was settled as to the time for giving effect to their designs. His own pontifical character had suggested to him, that in order to strengthen their influence with the vast mob of simple-minded men whom they were to lead into a howling wilderness, after persuading them to lay desolate their own ancient hearths, it was indispensable that they should be able, in cases of extremity, to plead the express sanction of God for their entire enterprise. This could only be done by addressing themselves to the great head of their religion, the Dalai-Lama of Tibet. Him they easily persuaded to countenance their schemes: and an oracle was delivered solemnly at Tibet, to the effect that no ultimate prosperity would attend this great Exodus unless it were pursued through the years of the tiger and the hare. Now, the Kalmuck custom is to distinguish their years by attaching to each a denomination taken from one of twelve animals, the exact order of succession being absolutely fixed, so that the cycle revolves of course through a period of a dozen years. Consequently, if the approaching year of the tiger were suffered to escape them, in that case the expedition must be delayed for twelve years more, within which period, even were no other unfavorable changes to arise, it was pretty well foreseen that the Russian Government would take the most effectual means for bridling their vagrant propensities by a ring fence of forts or military posts; to say nothing of the still readier plan for securing their fidelity (a plan already talked of in all quarters), by exacting a large body of hostages selected from the families of the most influential nobles. On these cogent considerations, it was solemnly determined that this terrific experiment should be made in the next year of the tiger, which happened to fall upon the Christian year 1771. With respect to the month, there was, unhappily for the Kalmucks, even less latitude allowed to their choice than with respect to the year. It was absolutely necessary, or it was thought so, that the different divisions of the nation, which pastured their flocks on both banks of the Wolga, should have the means of effecting an instantaneous junction; because the danger of being intercepted by flying columns of the Imperial armies was precisely the greatest at the outset. Now, from the want of bridges, or sufficient river craft for transporting so vast a body of men, the sole means which could be depended upon (especially where so many women, children, and camels were concerned,) was ice: and this, in a state of sufficient firmness, could not be absolutely counted upon before the month of January. Hence it happened that this astonishing Exodus of a whole nation, before so much as a whisper of the design had begun to circulate amongst those whom it most interested, before it was even suspected that any man's wishes pointed in that direction, had been definitively appointed for January of the year 1771. And almost up to the Christmas of 1770, the poor simple Kalmuck herdsmen and their families were going nightly to their peaceful beds without even dreaming that the fiat had already gone forth from their rulers which

consigned those quiet abodes, together with the peace and comfort which reigned within them, to a withering desolation, now close at hand.

Meantime war raged on a great scale between Russia and the Sultan. And, until the time arrived for throwing off their vassalage, it was necessary that Oubacha should contribute his usual contingent of martial aid. Nay, it had unfortunately become prudent that he should contribute much more than his usual aid. Human experience gives ample evidence that in some mysterious and unaccountable way no great design is ever agitated, no matter how few or how faithful may be the participators, but that some presentiment—some dim misgiving—is kindled amongst those whom it is chiefly important to blind. And, however it might have happened, certain it is, that already, when as yet no syllable of the conspiracy had been breathed to any man whose very existence was not staked upon its concealment, nevertheless, some vague and uneasy jealousy had arisen in the Russian Cabinet as to the future schemes of the Kalmuck Khan: and very probable it is—that, but for the war then raging, and the consequent prudence of conciliating a very important vassal, or, at least, of abstaining from what would powerfully alienate him, even at that moment such measures would have been adopted as must for ever have intercepted the Kalmuck schemes. Slight as were the jealousies of the Imperial Court, they had not escaped the Machiavelian eyes of Zebek and the Lama. And under their guidance, Oubacha, bending to the circumstances of the moment, and meeting the jealousy of the Russian Court with a policy corresponding to their own, strove by unusual zeal to efface the Czarina's unfavorable impressions. He enlarged the scale of his contributions; and that so prodigiously, that he absolutely carried to head-quarters a force of 35,000 cavalry fully equipped; some go further, and rate the amount beyond 40,000: but the smaller estimate is, at all events, within the truth.

With this magnificent array of cavalry, heavy as well as light, the Khan went into the field under great expectations; and these he more than realized. Having the good fortune to be concerned with so ill-organized and disorderly a description of force as that which at all times composed the bulk of a Turkish army, he carried victory along with his banners; gained many partial successes; and at last, in a pitched battle, overthrew the Turkish force opposed to him with a loss of 5000 men left upon the field.

These splendid achievements seemed likely to operate in various ways against the impending revolt. Oubacha had now a strong motive, in the martial glory acquired, for continuing his connection with the empire in whose service he had won it, and by whom only it could be fully appreciated. He was now a great marshal of a great empire, one of the Paladins around the imperial throne; in China he would be nobody, or (worse than that) a mendicant-alien, prostrate at the feet, and soliciting the precarious alms of a prince with whom he had no connection. Besides, it might reasonably be expected that the Czarina, grateful for the really efficient aid given by the Tartar prince, would confer upon him such eminent rewards as might be sufficient to anchor his hopes upon Russia, and to wean him from every possible seduction. These were the obvious suggestions of prudence and good sense to every man who stood neutral in the case. But they were disappointed. The Czarina knew her obligations to the Khan, but she

did not acknowledge them. Wherefore? That is a mystery, perhaps never to be explained. So it was, however. The Khan went unhonored; no ukase ever proclaimed his merits; and, perhaps, had he even been abundantly recompensed by Russia, there were others who would have defeated these tendencies to reconciliation. Erempel, Zebek, and Loosang the Lama, were pledged life-deep to prevent any accommodation; and their efforts were unfortunately seconded by those of their deadliest enemies. In the Russian Court there were at that time some great nobles pre-occupied with feelings of hatred and blind malice towards the Kalmucks, quite as strong as any which the Kalmucks could harbor towards Russia, and not, perhaps, so well-founded. Just as much as the Kalmucks hated the Russian yoke, their galling assumption of authority, the marked air of disdain, as towards a nation of ugly, stupid, and filthy barbarians, which too generally marked the Russian bearing and language; but above all, the insolent contempt, or even outrages which the Russian governors or great military commandants tolerated in their followers towards the barbarous religion and superstitious mummeries of the Kalmuck priesthood—precisely in that extent did the ferocity of the Russian resentment, and their wrath at seeing the trampled worm turn or attempt a feeble retaliation, re-act upon the unfortunate Kalmucks. At this crisis it is probable that envy and wounded pride, upon witnessing the splendid victories of Oubacha and Momotbacha over the Turks and Bashkirs, contributed strength to the Russian irritation. And it must have been through the intrigues of those nobles about her person, who chiefly smarted under these feelings, that the Czarina could ever have lent herself to the unwise and ungrateful policy pursued at this critical period towards the Kalmuck Khan. That Czarina was no longer Elizabeth Petrowna, it was Catharine the Second; a princess who did not often err so injuriously (injuriously for herself as much as for others) in the measures of her government. She had soon ample reason for repenting of her false policy. Meantime, how much it must have co-operated with the other motives previously acting upon Oubacha in sustaining his determination to revolt; and how powerfully it must have assisted the efforts of all the Tartar chieftains in preparing the minds of their people to feel the necessity of this difficult enterprise, by arming their pride and their suspicions against the Russian Government, through the keenness of their sympathy with the wrongs of their insulted prince, may be readily imagined. It is a fact, and it has been confessed by candid Russians themselves, when treating of this great dismemberment, that the conduct of the Russian Cabinet throughout the period of suspense, and during the crisis of hesitation in the Kalmuck Council, was exactly such as was most desirable for the purposes of the conspirators; it was such, in fact, as to set the seal to all their machinations, by supplying distinct evidences and official vouchers for what could otherwise have been at the most matters of doubtful suspicion and indirect presumption.

Nevertheless, in the face of all these arguments, and even allowing their weight so far as not at all to deny the injustice or the impolicy of the Imperial Ministers, it is contended by many persons who have reviewed the affair with a command of all the documents bearing on the case, more especially the letters or minutes of Council subsequently discovered, in the handwriting of Zebek-Dorchi, and the important evidence of the Russian captive Weseloff, who was carried off by the Kalmucks in their flight, that beyond all doubt Oubacha was powerless for any purpose of impeding, or even of delaying the revolt. He himself, indeed, was under religious obligations of the most terrific solemnity never to flinch from the enterprise, or even to slacken in his zeal; for Zebek-Dorchi, distrusting the firmness of his resolution under any unusual pressure of alarm or difficulty, had, in the very earliest stage of the conspiracy, availed himself of the Khan's well known superstition, to engage him, by means of previous concert with the priests and their head the Lama, in some dark and mysterious rites of consecration, terminating in oaths

under such terrific sanctions as no Kalmuck would have courage to violate. As far, therefore, as regarded the personal share of the Khan in what was to come, Zebek was entirely at his ease: he knew him to be so deeply pledged by religious terrors to the prosecution of the conspiracy, that no honors within the Czarina's gift could have possibly shaken his adhesion: and then, as to threats from the same quarter, he knew him to be sealed against those fears by others of a gloomier character, and better adapted to his peculiar temperament. For Oubacha was a brave man, as respected all bodily enemies or the dangers of human warfare, but was as sensitive and timid as the most superstitious of old women in facing the frowns of a priest, or under the vague anticipations of ghostly retributions. But had it been otherwise, and had there been any reason to apprehend an unsteady demeanor on the part of this Prince at the approach of the critical moment, such were the changes already effected in the state of their domestic politics amongst the Tartars by the undermining arts of Zebek-Dorchi, and his ally the Lama, that very little importance would have attached to that doubt. All power was now effectually lodged in the hands of Zebek-Dorchi. He was the true and absolute wielder of the Kalmuck sceptre: all measures of importance were submitted to his discretion; and nothing was finally resolved but under his dictation. This result he had brought about in a year or two by means sufficiently simple; first of all, by availing himself of the prejudice in his favor, so largely diffused amongst the lowest of the Kalmucks, that his own title to the throne, in quality of great-grandson in a direct line from Ajouka, the most illustrious of all the Kalmuck Khans, stood upon a better basis than that of Oubacha, who derived from a collateral branch: secondly, with respect to that sole advantage which Oubacha possessed above himself in the ratification of his title, by improving this difference between their situations to the disadvantage of his competitor, as one who had not scrupled to accept that triumph from an alien power at the price of his independence, which he himself (as he would have it understood) disdained to court: thirdly, by his own talents and address, coupled with the ferocious energy of his moral character: fourthly—and perhaps in an equal degree—by the criminal facility and good-nature of Oubacha: finally, (which is remarkable enough, as illustrating the character of the man,) by that very new modelling of the Sarga or Privy Council, which he had used as a principal topic of abuse and malicious insinuation against the Russian Government, whilst in reality he first had suggested the alteration to the Empress, and he chiefly appropriated the political advantages which it was fitted to yield. For, as he was himself appointed the chief of the Sargatchi, and as the pensions of the inferior Sargatchi passed through his hands, whilst in effect they owed their appointments to his nomination, it may be easily supposed that whatever power existed in the state capable of controlling the Khan, being held by the Sarga under its new organization, and this body being completely under his influence, the final result was to throw all the functions of the state, whether nominally in the Prince or in the council, substantially into the hands of this one man: whilst, at the same time, from the strict league which he maintained with the Lama, all the thunders of the spiritual power were always ready to come in aid of the magistrate, or to supply his incapacity in cases which he could not reach.

But the time was now rapidly approaching for the mighty experiment. The day was drawing near on which the signal was to be given for raising the standard of revolt, and by a combined movement on both sides of the Wolga for spreading the smoke of one vast conflagration, that should wrap in a common blaze their own huts and the stately cities of their enemies, over the breadth and length of those great provinces in which their flocks were dispersed. The year of the tiger was now within one little month of its commencement; the fifth morning of that year was fixed for the fatal day, when the fortunes and happiness of a whole nation were to be put upon the hazard of a dicer's throw; and as yet that nation was

in profound ignorance of the whole plan. The Khan, such was the kindness of his nature, could not bring himself to make the revelation so urgently required. It was clear, however, that this could not be delayed; and Zebek-Dorchi took the task willingly upon himself. But where or how should this notification be made, so as to exclude Russian hearers? After some deliberation, the following plan was adopted:— Couriers, it was contrived, should arrive in furious haste, one upon the heels of another, reporting a sudden inroad of the Kirghises and Bashkirs upon the Kalmuck lands, at a point distant about one hundred and twenty miles. Thither all the Kalmuck families, according to immemorial custom, were required to send a separate representative; and there, accordingly, within three days, all appeared. The distance, the solitary ground appointed for the rendezvous, the rapidity of the march, all tended to make it almost certain that no Russian could be present. Zebek-Dorchi then came forward. He did not waste many words upon rhetoric. He unfurled an immense sheet of parchment, visible from the outermost distance at which any of this vast crowd could stand; the total number amounted to eighty thousand; all saw, and many heard. They were told of the oppressions of Russia; of her pride and haughty disdain, evidenced towards them by a thousand acts; of her contempt for their religion; of her determination to reduce them to absolute slavery; of the preliminary measures she had already taken by erecting forts upon many of the great rivers of their neighborhood; of the ulterior intentions she thus announced to circumscribe their pastoral lands, until they would all be obliged to renounce their flocks, and to collect in towns like Sarepta, there to pursue mechanical and servile trades of shoemaker, tailor, and weaver, such as the freeborn Tartar had always disdained. 'Then again,' said the subtle prince, 'she increases her military levies upon our population every year; we pour out our blood as young men in her defence, or more often in support of her insolent aggressions; and as old men, we reap nothing from our sufferings, nor benefit by our survivorship where so many are sacrificed.' At this point of his harangue, Zebek produced several papers, (forged, as it is generally believed, by himself and the Lama,) containing projects of the Russian court for a general transfer of the eldest sons, taken en masse from the greatest Kalmuck families, to the Imperial court. 'Now let this be once accomplished,' he argued, 'and there is an end of all useful resistance from that day forwards. Petitions we might make, or even remonstrances; as men of words, we might play a bold part; but for deeds, for that sort of language by which our ancestors were used to speak; holding us by such a chain, Russia would make a jest of our wishes,—knowing full well that we should not dare to make any effectual movement.'

Having thus sufficiently roused the angry passions of his vast audience, and having alarmed their fears by this pretended scheme against their first-born, (an artifice which was indispensable to his purpose, because it met beforehand every form of amendment to his proposal coming from the more moderate nobles, who would not otherwise have failed to insist upon trying the effect of bold addresses to the Empress, before resorting to any desperate extremity,) Zebek-Dorchi opened his scheme of revolt, and, if so, of instant revolt; since any preparations reported at St. Petersburg would be a signal for the armies of Russia to cross into such positions from all parts of Asia, as would effectually intercept their march. It is remarkable, however, that, with all his audacity and his reliance upon the momentary excitement of the Kalmucks, the subtle prince did not venture, at this stage of his seduction, to make so startling a proposal as that of a flight to China. All that he held out for the present was a rapid march to the Temba or some other great river, which they were to cross, and to take up a strong position on the further bank, from which, as from a post of conscious security, they could hold a bolder language to the Czarina, and one which would have a better chance of winning a favorable audience.

These things, in the irritated condition of the simple Tartars, passed by acclamation; and all returned homewards, to push forward with the most furious speed the preparations for their awful undertaking. Rapid and energetic these of necessity were; and in that degree they became noticeable and manifest to the Russians who happened to be intermingled with the different hordes, either on commercial errands, or as agents officially from the Russian Government, some in a financial, others in a diplomatic character.

Amongst these last (indeed at the head of them) was a Russian of some distinction, by name Kichinskoi, a man memorable for his vanity, and memorable also as one of the many victims to the Tartar revolution. This Kichinskoi had been sent by the Empress as her envoy to overlook the conduct of the Kalmucks; he was styled the Grand Pristaw, or Great Commissioner, and was universally known amongst the Tartar tribes by this title. His mixed character of ambassador and of political surveillant, combined with the dependent state of the Kalmucks, gave him a real weight in the Tartar councils, and might have given him a far greater, had not his outrageous self-conceit, and his arrogant confidence in his own authority, as due chiefly to his personal qualities for command, led him into such harsh displays of power, and menaces so odious to the Tartar pride, as very soon made him an object of their profoundest malice. He had publicly insulted the Khan; and upon making a communication to him to the effect that some reports began to circulate, and even to reach the Empress, of a design in agitation to fly from the Imperial dominions, he had ventured to say,—'But this you dare not attempt; I laugh at such rumors; yes, Khan, I laugh at them to the Empress; for you are a chained bear, and that you know.' The Khan turned away on his heel with marked disdain; and the Pristaw, foaming at the mouth, continued to utter, amongst those of the Khan's attendants who staid behind, to catch his real sentiments in a moment of unguarded passion, all that the blindest frenzy of rage could suggest to the most presumptuous of fools. It was now ascertained that suspicions had arisen; but at the same time it was ascertained that the Pristaw spoke no more than the truth in representing himself to have discredited these suspicions. The fact was, that the mere infatuation of vanity made him believe that nothing could go on undetected by his all-piercing sagacity, and that no rebellion could prosper when rebuked by his commanding presence. The Tartars, therefore, pursued their preparations, confiding in the obstinate blindness of the Grand Pristaw as in their perfect safeguard; and such it proved—to his own ruin, as well as that of myriads beside.

Christmas arrived; and, a little before that time, courier upon courier came dropping in, one upon the very heels of another, to St. Petersburg, assuring the Czarina that beyond all doubt the Kalmucks were in the very crisis of departure. These despatches came from the Governor of Astrachan, and copies were instantly forwarded to Kichinskoi. Now, it happened that between this governor—a Russian named Beketoff—and the Pristaw had been an ancient feud. The very name of Beketoff inflamed his resentment; and no sooner did he see that hated name attached to the despatch, than he felt himself confirmed in his former views with tenfold bigotry, and wrote instantly, in terms of the most pointed ridicule, against the new alarmist, pledging his own head upon the visionariness of his alarms. Beketoff, however, was not to be put down by a few hard words, or by ridicule: he persisted in his statements: the Russian Ministry were confounded by the obstinacy of the disputants; and some were beginning even to treat the Governor of Astrachan as a bore, and as the dupe of his own nervous terrors, when the memorable day arrived, the



fatal 5th of January, which for ever terminated the dispute, and put a seal upon the earthly hopes and fortunes of unnumbered myriads. The Governor of Astrachan was the first to hear the news. Stung by the mixed furies of jealousy, of triumphant vengeance, and of anxious ambition, he sprang into his sledge, and, at the rate of three hundred miles a day, pursued his route to St. Petersburg, rushed into the Imperial presence,—announced the total realization of his worst predictions,—and upon the confirmation of this intelligence by subsequent despatches from many different posts on the Wolga, he received an imperial commission to seize the person of his deluded enemy, and to keep him in strict captivity. These orders were eagerly fulfilled, and the unfortunate Kichinskoi soon afterwards expired of grief and mortification in the gloomy solitude of a dungeon; a victim to his own immeasurable vanity, and the blinding self-delusions of a presumption that refused all warning.

The Governor of Astrachan had been but too faithful a prophet. Perhaps even he was surprised at the suddenness with which the verification followed his reports. Precisely on the 5th of January, the day so solemnly appointed under religious sanctions by the Lama, the Kalmucks on the east bank of the Wolga were seen at the earliest dawn of day assembling by troops and squadrons, and in the tumultuous movement of some great morning of battle. Tens of thousands continued moving off the ground at every half-hour's interval. Women and children, to the amount of two hundred thousand and upwards, were placed upon wagons, or upon camels, and drew off by masses of twenty thousand at once—placed under suitable escorts, and continually swelled in numbers by other outlying bodies of the horde who kept falling in at various distances upon the first and second day's march. From sixty to eighty thousand of those who were the best mounted stayed behind the rest of the tribes, with purposes of devastation and plunder more violent than prudence justified, or the amiable character of the Khan could be supposed to approve. But in this, as in other instances, he was completely overruled by the malignant counsels of Zebek-Dorchi. The first tempest of the desolating fury of the Tartars discharged itself upon their own habitations. But this, as cutting off all infirm looking backward from the hardships of their march, had been thought so necessary a measure by all the chieftains, that even Oubacha himself was the first to authorize the act by his own example. He seized a torch previously prepared with materials the most durable as well as combustible, and steadily applied it to the timbers of his own palace. Nothing was saved from the general wreck except the portable part of the domestic utensils, and that part of the woodwork which could be applied to the manufacture of the long Tartar lances. This chapter in their memorable day's work being finished, and the whole of their villages throughout a district of ten thousand square miles in one simultaneous blaze, the Tartars waited for further orders.

These, it was intended, should have taken a character of valedictory vengeance, and thus have left behind to the Czarina a dreadful commentary upon the main motives of their flight. It was the purpose of Zebek-Dorchi that all the Russian towns, churches, and buildings of every description, should be given up to pillage and destruction, and such treatment applied to the defenceless inhabitants as might naturally be expected from a fierce people already infuriated by the spectacle of their own outrages, and by the bloody retaliations which they must necessarily have provoked. This part of the tragedy, however, was happily intercepted by a providential disappointment at the very crisis of departure. It has been mentioned already that the motive for selecting the depth of winter as the season of flight (which otherwise was obviously

the very worst possible) had been the impossibility of effecting a junction sufficiently rapid with the tribes on the west of the Wolga, in the absence of bridges, unless by a natural bridge of ice. For this one advantage the Kalmuck leaders had consented to aggravate by a thousandfold the calamities inevitable to a rapid flight over boundless tracts of country with women, children, and herds of cattle—for this one single advantage; and yet, after all, it was lost. The reason never has been explained satisfactorily, but the fact was such. Some have said that the signals were not properly concerted for marking the moment of absolute departure; that is, for signifying whether the settled intention of the Eastern Kalmucks might not have been suddenly interrupted by adverse intelligence. Others have supposed that the ice might not be equally strong on both sides of the river, and might even be generally insecure for the treading of heavy and heavily-laden animals such as camels. But the prevailing notion is, that some accidental movements on the 3d and 4th of January of Russian troops in the neighborhood of the Western Kalmucks, though really having no reference to them or their plans, had been construed into certain signs that all was discovered; and that the prudence of the Western chieftains, who, from situation, had never been exposed to those intrigues by which Zebek-Dorchi had practised upon the pride of the Eastern tribes, now stepped in to save their people from ruin. Be the cause what it might, it is certain that the Western Kalmucks were in some way prevented from forming the intended junction with their brethren of the opposite bank; and the result was, that at least one hundred thousand of these Tartars were left behind in Russia. This accident it was which saved their Russian neighbors universally from the desolation which else awaited them. One general massacre and conflagration would assuredly have surprised them, to the utter extermination of their property, their houses, and themselves, had it not been for this disappointment. But the Eastern chieftains did not dare to put to hazard the safety of their brethren under the first impulse of the Czarina's vengeance for so dreadful a tragedy; for as they were well aware of too many circumstances by which she might discover the concurrence of the Western people in the general scheme of revolt, they justly feared that she would thence infer their concurrence also in the bloody events which marked its outset.

Little did the Western Kalmucks guess what reasons they also had for gratitude on account of an interposition so unexpected, and which at the moment they so generally deplored. Could they but have witnessed the thousandth part of the sufferings which overtook their Eastern brethren in the first month of their sad flight, they would have blessed Heaven for their own narrow escape; and yet these sufferings of the first month were but a prelude or foretaste comparatively slight of those which afterwards succeeded.

For now began to unroll the most awful series of calamities, and the most extensive, which is anywhere recorded to have visited the sons and daughters of men. It is possible that the sudden inroads of destroying nations, such as the Huns, or the Avars, or the Mongol Tartars, may have inflicted misery as extensive; but there the misery and the desolation would be sudden—like the flight of volleying lightning. Those who were spared at first would generally be spared to the end; those who perished would perish instantly. It is possible that the French retreat from Moscow may have made some nearer approach to this calamity in duration, though still a feeble and miniature approach; for the French sufferings did not commence in good earnest until about one month from the time of leaving Moscow; and though it is true that afterwards the vials of wrath were emptied upon the devoted army for six or seven weeks in

succession, yet what is that to this Kalmuck tragedy, which lasted for more than as many months? But the main feature of horror, by which the Tartar march was distinguished from the French, lies in the accompaniment of women and children. There were both, it is true, with the French army, but so few as to bear no visible proportion to the total numbers concerned. The French, in short, were merely an army—a host of professional destroyers, whose regular trade was bloodshed, and whose regular element was danger and suffering. But the Tartars were a nation carrying along with them more than two hundred and fifty thousand women and children, utterly unequal, for the most part, to any contest with the calamities before them. The Children of Israel were in the same circumstances as to the accompaniment of their families; but they were released from the pursuit of their enemies in a very early stage of their flight; and their subsequent residence in the Desert was not a march, but a continued halt, and under a continued interposition of Heaven for their comfortable support. Earthquakes, again, however comprehensive in their ravages, are shocks of a moment's duration. A much nearer approach made to the wide range and the long duration of the Kalmuck tragedy may have been in a pestilence such as that which visited Athens in the Peloponnesian war, or London in the reign of Charles II. There also the martyrs were counted by myriads, and the period of the desolation was counted by months. But, after all, the total amount of destruction was on a smaller scale; and there was this feature of alleviation to the conscious pressure of the calamity—that the misery was withdrawn from public notice into private chambers and hospitals. The siege of Jerusalem by Vespasian and his son, taken in its entire circumstances, comes nearest of all—for breadth and depth of suffering, for duration, for the exasperation of the suffering from without by internal feuds, and, finally, for that last most appalling expression of the furnace-heat of the anguish in its power to extinguish the natural affections even of maternal love. But, after all, each case had circumstances of romantic misery peculiar to itself—circumstances without precedent, and (wherever human nature is ennobled by Christianity) it may be confidently hoped—never to be repeated.

The first point to be reached, before any hope of repose could be encouraged, was the river Jaik. This was not above three hundred miles from the main point of departure on the Wolga; and if the march thither was to be a forced one, and a severe one, it was alleged on the other hand that the suffering would be the more brief and transient; one summary exertion, not to be repeated, and all was achieved. Forced the march was, and severe beyond example: there the forewarning proved correct; but the promised rest proved a mere phantom of the wilderness—a visionary rainbow, which fled before their hope-sick eyes, across these interminable solitudes, for seven months of hardship and calamity, without a pause. These sufferings, by their very nature, and the circumstances under which they arose, were (like the scenery of the Steppes) somewhat monotonous in their coloring and external features: what variety, however, there was, will be most naturally exhibited by tracing historically the successive stages of the general misery, exactly as it unfolded itself under the double agency of weakness still increasing from within, and hostile pressure from without. Viewed in this manner, under the real order of development, it is remarkable that these sufferings of the Tartars, though under the moulding hands of accident, arrange themselves almost with a scenical propriety. They seem combined, as with the skill of an artist; the intensity of the misery advancing regularly with the advances of the march, and the stages of the calamity corresponding to the stages of the route; so that, upon raising the curtain which veils the great catastrophe, we behold one vast climax of anguish, towering upwards by regular gradations, as if constructed artificially for picturesque effect:—a result which might not have been surprising, had it been reasonable to anticipate the same rate of speed, and even an accelerated rate, as prevailing through the later stages of the expedition. But it

seemed, on the contrary, most reasonable to calculate upon a continual decrement in the rate of motion according to the increasing distance from the head-quarters of the pursuing enemy. This calculation, however, was defeated by the extraordinary circumstance, that the Russian armies did not begin to close in very fiercely upon the Kalmucks until after they had accomplished a distance of full two thousand miles; one thousand miles further on the assaults became even more tumultuous and murderous; and already the great shadows of the Chinese Wall were dimly descried, when the frenzy and acharnement of the pursuers, and the bloody desperation of the miserable fugitives had reached its uttermost extremity. Let us briefly rehearse the main stages of the misery, and trace the ascending steps of the tragedy, according to the great divisions of the route marked out by the central rivers of Asia.

The first stage, we have already said, was from the Wolga to the Jaik; the distance about three hundred miles; the time allowed seven days. For the first week, therefore, the rate of marching averaged about forty-three English miles a day. The weather was cold, but bracing; and, at a more moderate pace, this part of the journey might have been accomplished without much distress by a people as hardy as the Kalmucks: as it was, the cattle suffered greatly from overdriving: milk began to fail even for the children: the sheep perished by wholesale: and the children themselves were saved only by the innumerable camels.

The Cossacks, who dwelt upon the banks of the Jaik, were the first among the subjects of Russia to come into collision with the Kalmucks. Great was their surprise at the suddenness of the irruption, and great also their consternation: for, according to their settled custom, by far the greater part of their number was absent during the winter months at the fisheries upon the Caspian. Some who were liable to surprise at the most exposed points, fled in crowds to the fortress of Koulagina, which was immediately invested, and summoned by Oubacha. He had, however, in his train only a few light pieces of artillery; and the Russian commandant at Koulagina, being aware of the hurried circumstances in which the Khan was placed, and that he stood upon the very edge, as it were, of a renewed flight, felt encouraged by these considerations to a more obstinate resistance than might else have been advisable, with an enemy so little disposed to observe the usages of civilized warfare. The period of his anxiety was not long: on the fifth day of the siege, he descried from the walls a succession of Tartar couriers, mounted upon fleet Bactrian camels, crossing the vast plains around the fortress at a furious pace, and riding into the Kalmuck encampment at various points. Great agitation appeared immediately to follow; orders were soon after despatched in all directions: and it became speedily known that upon a distant flank of the Kalmuck movement a bloody and exterminating battle had been fought the day before, in which one entire tribe of the Khan's dependents, numbering not less than nine thousand fighting men, had perished to the last man. This was the ouloss, or clan, called Feka-Zechorr, between whom and the Cossacks there was a feud of ancient standing. In selecting, therefore, the points of attack, on occasion of the present hasty inroad, the Cossack chiefs were naturally eager so to direct their efforts as to combine with the service of the Empress some gratification to their own party hatreds; more especially as the present was likely to be their final opportunity for revenge if the Kalmuck evasion should prosper. Having, therefore, concentrated as large a body of Cossack cavalry as circumstances allowed, they attacked the hostile ouloss with a precipitation which denied to it all means for communicating with Oubacha; for the necessity of commanding an ample range of pasturage, to meet the necessities of their vast flocks and herds, had separated this ouloss from

the Khan's head-quarters by an interval of eighty miles: and thus it was, and not from oversight, that it came to be thrown entirely upon its own resources. These had proved insufficient; retreat, from the exhausted state of their horses and camels, no less than from the prodigious encumbrances of their live stock, was absolutely out of the question: quarter was disdained on the one side, and would not have been granted on the other; and thus it had happened that the setting sun of that one day (the 13th from the first opening of the revolt) threw his parting rays upon the final agonies of an ancient ouloss, stretched upon a bloody field, who on that day's dawning had held and styled themselves an independent nation.

Universal consternation was diffused through the wide borders of the Khan's encampment by this disastrous intelligence; not so much on account of the numbers slain, or the total extinction of a powerful ally, as because the position of the Cossack force was likely to put to hazard the future advances of the Kalmucks, or at least to retard, and hold them in check, until the heavier columns of the Russian army should arrive upon their flanks. The siege of Koulagina was instantly raised; and that signal, so fatal to the happiness of the women and their children, once again resounded through the tents—the signal for flight, and this time for a flight more rapid than ever. About one hundred and fifty miles ahead of their present position, there arose a tract of hilly country, forming a sort of margin to the vast, sea-like expanse of champaign savannas, steppes, and occasionally of sandy deserts, which stretched away on each side of this margin both eastwards and westwards. Pretty nearly in the centre of this hilly range, lay a narrow defile, through which passed the nearest and the most practicable route to the river Torgai (the further bank of which river offered the next great station of security for a general halt.) It was the more essential to gain this pass before the Cossacks, inasmuch as not only would the delay in forcing the pass give time to the Russian pursuing columns for combining their attacks and for bringing up their artillery, but also because (even if all enemies in pursuit were thrown out of the question) it was held by those best acquainted with the difficult and obscure geography of these pathless steppes—that the loss of this one narrow strait amongst the hills would have the effect of throwing them (as their only alternative in a case where so wide a sweep of pasturage was required) upon a circuit of at least five hundred miles extra; besides that, after all, this circuitous route would carry them to the Torgai at a point ill fitted for the passage of their heavy baggage. The defile in the hills, therefore, it was resolved to gain; and yet, unless they moved upon it with the velocity of light cavalry, there was little chance but it would be found pre-occupied by the Cossacks. They, it is true, had suffered greatly in the recent sanguinary action with their enemies; but the excitement of victory, and the intense sympathy with their unexampled triumph, had again swelled their ranks—and would probably act with the force of a vortex to draw in their simple countrymen from the Caspian. The question, therefore, of pre-occupation was reduced to a race. The Cossacks were marching upon an oblique line not above fifty miles longer than that which led to the same point from the Kalmuck head-quarters before Koulagina: and therefore without the most furious haste on the part of the Kalmucks, there was not a chance for them, burdened and 'trashed' as they were, to anticipate so agile a light cavalry as the Cossacks in seizing this important pass.

Dreadful were the feelings of the poor women on hearing this exposition of the case. For they easily understood that too capital an interest (the *summa rerum*) was now at stake to allow of any regard to minor interests, or what would be considered such in their present circumstances. The dreadful week

already passed,—their inauguration in misery,—was yet fresh in their remembrance. The scars of suffering were impressed not only upon their memories, but upon their very persons and the persons of their children. And they knew that where no speed had much chance of meeting the cravings of the chieftains, no test would be accepted, short of absolute exhaustion, that as much had been accomplished as could be accomplished. Weseloff, the Russian captive, has recorded the silent wretchedness with which the women and elder boys assisted in drawing the tent-ropes. On the 5th of January all had been animation, and the joyousness of indefinite expectation: now, on the contrary, a brief but bitter experience had taught them to take an amended calculation of what it was that lay before them.

One whole day and far into the succeeding night had the renewed flight continued: the sufferings had been greater than before: for the cold had been more intense: and many perished out of the living creatures through every class, except only the camels—whose powers of endurance seemed equally adapted to cold and heat. The second morning, however, brought an alleviation to the distress. Snow had begun to fall: and though not deep at present, it was easily foreseen that it soon would be so; and that, as a halt would in that case become unavoidable, no plan could be better than that of staying where they were: especially as the same cause would check the advance of the Cossacks. Here then was the last interval of comfort which gleamed upon the unhappy nation during their whole migration. For ten days the snow continued to fall with little intermission. At the end of that time keen bright frosty weather succeeded: the drifting had ceased: in three days the smooth expanse became firm enough to support the treading of the camels, and the flight was recommenced. But during the halt much domestic comfort had been enjoyed: and for the last time universal plenty. The cows and oxen had perished in such vast numbers on the previous marches, that an order was now issued to turn what remained to account by slaughtering the whole, and salting whatever part should be found to exceed the immediate consumption. This measure led to a scene of general banqueting and even of festivity amongst all who were not incapacitated for joyous emotions by distress of mind, by grief for the unhappy experience of the few last days, and by anxiety for the too gloomy future. Seventy thousand persons of all ages had already perished; exclusively of the many thousand allies who had been cut down by the Cossack sabre. And the losses in reversion were likely to be many more. For rumors began now to arrive from all quarters, by the mounted couriers whom the Khan had despatched to the rear and to each flank as well as in advance, that large masses of the Imperial troops were converging from all parts of Central Asia to the fords of the river Torgai as the most convenient point for intercepting the flying tribes: and it was already well known that a powerful division was close in their rear, and was retarded only by the numerous artillery which had been judged necessary to support their operations. New motives were thus daily arising for quickening the motions of the wretched Kalmucks, and for exhausting those who were previously but too much exhausted.

It was not until the 2d day of February that the Khan's advanced guard came in sight of Ouchim, the defile among the hills of Moulgaldchares, in which they anticipated so bloody an opposition from the Cossacks. A pretty large body of these light cavalry had, in fact, pre-occupied the pass by some hours; but the Khan having too great advantages, namely, a strong body of infantry, who had been conveyed by sections of five on about two hundred camels, and some pieces of light artillery which he had not yet been forced to abandon, soon began to make a serious impression upon this unsupported detachment; and they would

probably at any rate have retired; but at the very moment when they were making some dispositions in that view, Zebek-Dorchi appeared upon their rear with a body of trained riflemen, who had distinguished themselves in the war with Turkey. These men had contrived to crawl unobserved over the cliffs which skirted the ravine, availing themselves of the dry beds of the summer torrents, and other inequalities of the ground, to conceal their movement. Disorder and trepidation ensued instantly in the Cossack files; the Khan, who had been waiting with the elite of his heavy cavalry, charged furiously upon them; total overthrow followed to the Cossacks, and a slaughter such as in some measure avenged the recent bloody extermination of their allies, the ancient ouloss of Feka-Zechorr. The slight horses of the Cossacks were unable to support the weight of heavy Polish dragoons and a body of trained cameleers (that is, cuirassiers mounted on camels); hardy they were, but not strong, nor a match for their antagonists in weight; and their extraordinary efforts through the last few days to gain their present position, had greatly diminished their powers for effecting an escape. Very few, in fact, did escape; and the bloody day of Ouchim became as memorable amongst the Cossacks as that which, about twenty days before, had signaled the complete annihilation of the Faka-Zechorr.

The road was now open to the river Igritch, and as yet even far beyond it to the Torgau; but how long this state of things would continue, was every day more doubtful. Certain intelligence was now received that a large Russian army, well appointed in every arm, was advancing upon the Torgau, under the command of General Traubenberg. This officer was to be joined on his route by ten thousand Bashkirs, and pretty nearly the same amount of Kirghises—both hereditary enemies of the Kalmucks—both exasperated to a point of madness by the bloody trophies which Oubacha and Momotbacha had, in late years, won from such of their compatriots as served under the Sultan. The Czarina's yoke these wild nations bore with submissive patience, but not the hands by which it had been imposed; and, accordingly, catching with eagerness at the present occasion offered to their vengeance, they sent an assurance to the Czarina of their perfect obedience to her commands, and at the same time a message significantly declaring in what spirit they meant to execute them, viz., 'That they would not trouble her Majesty with prisoners.'

Here then arose, as before with the Cossacks, a race for the Kalmucks with the regular armies of Russia, and concurrently with nations as fierce and semi-humanized as themselves, besides that they were stung into threefold activity by the furies of mortified pride and military abasement, under the eyes of the Turkish Sultan. The forces, and more especially the artillery, of Russia, were far too overwhelming to permit the thought of a regular opposition in pitched battles, even with a less dilapidated state of their resources than they could reasonably expect at the period of their arrival on the Torgau. In their speed lay their only hope—in strength of foot, as before, and not in strength of arm. Onward, therefore, the Kalmucks pressed, marking the lines of their wide-extending march over the sad solitudes of the steppes by a never-ending chain of corpses. The old and the young, the sick man on his couch, the mother with her baby—all were left behind. Sights such as these, with the many rueful aggravations incident to the helpless condition of infancy—of disease and of female weakness abandoned to the wolves amidst a howling wilderness, continued to track their course through a space of full two thousand miles; for so much at the least, it was likely to prove, including the circuits to which they were often compelled by rivers or hostile tribes, from the point of starting on the Wolga until they could reach their destined halting-ground on the east bank of the Torgau. For the first seven weeks of this march their sufferings had been embittered by the excessive severity of the cold; and every night—so long as wood was to be had for

fires, either from the lading of the camels, or from the desperate sacrifice of their baggage-wagons, or (as occasionally happened) from the forests which skirted the banks of the many rivers which crossed their path—no spectacle was more frequent than that of a circle, composed of men, women, and children, gathered by hundreds round a central fire, all dead and stiff at the return of morning light. Myriads were left behind from pure exhaustion of whom none had a chance, under the combined evils which beset them, of surviving through the next twenty-four hours. Frost, however, and snow at length ceased to persecute; the vast extent of the march at length brought them into more genial latitudes, and the unusual duration of the march was gradually bringing them into the more genial seasons of the year: Two thousand miles had at least been traversed; February, March, April were gone; the balmy month of May had opened; vernal sights and sounds came from every side to comfort the heart-weary travellers; and at last, in the latter end of May, they crossed the Torgau, and took up a position where they hoped to find liberty to repose themselves for many weeks in comfort as well as in security, and to draw such supplies from the fertile neighborhood as might restore their shattered forces to a condition for executing, with less of wreck and ruin, the large remainder of the journey.

Yes; it was true that two thousand miles of wandering had been completed, but in a period of nearly five months, and with the terrific sacrifice of at least two hundred and fifty thousand souls, to say nothing of herds and flocks past all reckoning. These had all perished: ox, cow, horse, mule, ass, sheep, or goat, not one survived—only the camels. These arid and adust creatures, looking like the mummies of some antediluvian animals, without the affections or sensibilities of flesh and blood—these only still erected their speaking eyes to the eastern heavens, and had to all appearance come out from this long tempest of trial unscathed and unharmed. The Khan, knowing how much he was individually answerable for the misery which had been sustained, must have wept tears even more bitter than those of Xerxes when he threw his eyes over the myriads whom he had assembled: for the tears of Xerxes were unmingled with compunction. Whatever amends were in his power he resolved to make by sacrifices to the general good of all personal regards; and accordingly, even at this point of their advance, he once more deliberately brought under review the whole question of the revolt. The question was formally debated before the Council, whether, even at this point, they should untread their steps, and, throwing themselves upon the Czarina's mercy, return to their old allegiance? In that case, Oubacha professed himself willing to become the scapegoat for the general transgression. This, he argued, was no fantastic scheme, but even easy of accomplishment; for the unlimited and sacred power of the Khan, so well known to the Empress, made it absolutely iniquitous to attribute any separate responsibility to the people—upon the Khan rested the guilt, upon the Khan would descend the Imperial vengeance. This proposal was applauded for its generosity, but was energetically opposed by Zebek-Dorchi. Were they to lose the whole journey of two thousand miles? Was their misery to perish without fruit; true it was that they had yet reached only the half-way house; but, in that respect, the motives were evenly balanced for retreat or for advance. Either way they would have pretty nearly the same distance to traverse, but with this difference—that, forwards, their rout lay through lands comparatively fertile—backwards, through a blasted wilderness, rich only in memorials of their sorrow, and hideous to Kalmuck eyes by the trophies of their calamity. Besides, though the Empress might accept an excuse for the past, would she the less forbear to suspect for the future? The Czarina's pardon they might obtain, but could they ever hope to recover her confidence? Doubtless there would now be a standing presumption against them, an immortal ground of jealousy; and a jealous government would be but another name for a harsh one. Finally, whatever motives there ever



had been for the revolt surely remained unimpaired by anything that had occurred. In reality the revolt was, after all, no revolt, but (strictly speaking) a return to their old allegiance, since, not above one hundred and fifty years ago (*viz.*, in the year 1616,) their ancestors had revolted from the Emperor of China. They had now tried both governments; and for them China was the land of promise, and Russia the house of bondage.

Spite, however, of all that Zebek could say or do, the yearning of the people was strongly in behalf of the Khan's proposal; the pardon of their prince, they persuaded themselves, would be readily conceded by the Empress; and there is little doubt that they would at this time have thrown themselves gladly upon the Imperial mercy; when suddenly all was defeated by the arrival of two envoys from Traubenberg. This general had reached the fortress of Orsk, after a very painful march, on the 12th of April; thence he set forwards towards Oriembourg, which he reached upon the 1st of June, having been joined on his route at various times through the month of May by the Kirghises and a corps of ten thousand Bashkirs. From Oriembourg he sent forward his official offer to the Khan, which were harsh and peremptory, holding out no specific stipulations as to pardon or impunity, and exacting unconditional submission as the preliminary price of any cessation from military operations. The personal character of Traubenberg, which was anything but energetic, and the condition of his army, disorganized in a great measure by the length and severity of the march, made it probable that, with a little time for negotiation, a more conciliatory tone would have been assumed. But, unhappily for all parties, sinister events occurred in the meantime, such as effectually put an end to every hope of the kind.

The two envoys sent forward by Traubenberg had reported to this officer that a distance of only ten days' march lay between his own head-quarters and those of the Khan. Upon this fact transpiring, the Kirghises, by their prince Nourali, and the Bashkirs, entreated the Russian general to advance without delay. Once having placed his cannon in position, so as to command the Kalmuck camp, the fate of the rebel Khan and his people would be in his own hands; and they would themselves form his advanced guard. Traubenberg, however, why has not been certainly explained, refused to march, grounding his refusal upon the condition of his army, and their absolute need of refreshment. Long and fierce was the altercation; but at length, seeing no chance of prevailing, and dreading above all other events the escape of their detested enemy, the ferocious Bashkirs went off in a body by forced marches. In six days they reached the Torgau, crossed by swimming their horses, and fell upon the Kalmucks, who were dispersed for many a league in search of food or provender for their camels. The first day's action was one vast succession of independent skirmishes, diffused over a field of thirty to forty miles in extent; one party often breaking up into three or four, and again (according to the accidents of ground) three or four blending into one; flight and pursuit, rescue and total overthrow, going on simultaneously, under all varieties of form, in all quarters of the plain. The Bashkirs had found themselves obliged, by the scattered state of the Kalmucks, to split up into innumerable sections; and thus, for some hours, it had been impossible for the most practised eye to collect the general tendency of the day's fortune. Both the Khan and Zebek-Dorchi were at one moment made prisoners, and more than once in imminent danger of being cut down; but at length Zebek succeeded in rallying a strong column of infantry, which, with the support of the camel-corps on each flank, compelled the Bashkirs to retreat. Clouds, however, of these wild cavalry continued to arrive

through the next two days and nights, followed or accompanied by the Kirghises. These being viewed as the advanced parties of Traubenberg's army, the Kalmuck chieftains saw no hope of safety but in flight; and in this way it happened that a retreat, which had so recently been brought to a pause, was resumed at the very moment when the unhappy fugitives were anticipating a deep repose without further molestation, the whole summer through.

It seemed as though every variety of wretchedness were predestined to the Kalmucks; and as if their sufferings were incomplete unless they were rounded and matured by all that the most dreadful agencies of summer's heat could superadd to those of frost and winter. To this sequel of their story we shall immediately revert, after first noticing a little romantic episode which occurred at this point between Oubacha and his unprincipled cousin Zebek-Dorchi.

There was at the time of the Kalmuck flight from the Wolga, a Russian gentleman of some rank at the court of the Khan, whom, for political reasons, it was thought necessary to carry along with them as a captive. For some weeks his confinement had been very strict, and in one or two instances cruel. But, as the increasing distance was continually diminishing the chances of escape, and perhaps, also, as the misery of the guards gradually withdrew their attention from all minor interests to their own personal sufferings, the vigilance of the custody grew more and more relaxed; until at length, upon a petition to the Khan, Mr. Weseloff was formally restored to liberty; and it was understood that he might use his liberty in whatever way he chose, even for returning to Russia, if that should be his wish. Accordingly, he was making active preparations for his journey to St. Petersburg, when it occurred to Zebek-Dorchi that, not improbably, in some of the battles which were then anticipated with Traubenberg, it might happen to them to lose some prisoner of rank, in which case the Russian Weseloff would be a pledge in their hands for negotiating an exchange. Upon this plea, to his own severe affliction, the Russian was detained until the further pleasure of the Khan. The Khan's name, indeed, was used through the whole affair, but, as it seemed, with so little concurrence on his part, that, when Weseloff in a private audience humbly remonstrated upon the injustice done him, and the cruelty of thus sporting with his feelings by setting him at liberty, and, as it were, tempting him into dreams of home and restored happiness only for the purpose of blighting them, the good-natured prince disclaimed all participation in the affair, and went so far in proving his sincerity as even to give him permission to effect his escape; and, as a ready means of commencing it without raising suspicion, the Khan mentioned to Mr. Weseloff that he had just then received a message from the Hetman of the Bashkirs, soliciting a private interview on the banks of the Torgau at a spot pointed out; that interview was arranged for the coming night; and Mr. Weseloff might go in the Khan's suite, which on either side was not to exceed three persons. Weseloff was a prudent man, acquainted with the world, and he read treachery in the very outline of this scheme, as stated by the Khan—treachery against the Khan's person. He mused a little, and then communicated so much of his suspicions to the Khan as might put him on his guard; but, upon further consideration, he begged leave to decline the honor of accompanying the Khan. The fact was, that three Kalmucks, who had strong motives for returning to their countrymen on the west bank of the Wolga, guessing the intentions of Weseloff, had offered to join him in his escape. These men the Khan would probably find himself obliged to countenance in their project; so that it became a point of honor with Weseloff to conceal their intentions,

and therefore to accomplish the evasion from the camp, (of which the first steps only would be hazardous,) without risking the notice of the Khan.

The district in which they were now encamped abounded, through many hundred miles, with wild horses of a docile and beautiful breed. Each of the four fugitives had caught from seven to ten of these spirited creatures in the course of the last few days; this raised no suspicion; for the rest of the Kalmucks had been making the same sort of provision against the coming toils of their remaining route to China. These horses were secured by halters, and hidden about dusk in the thickets which lined the margin of the river. To these thickets, about ten at night, the four fugitives repaired; they took a circuitous path, which drew them as little as possible within danger of challenge from any of the outposts or of the patrols which had been established on the quarters where the Bashkirs lay; and in three quarters of an hour they reached the rendezvous. The moon had now risen, the horses were unfastened, and they were in the act of mounting, when the deep silence of the woods was disturbed by a violent uproar, and the clashing of arms. Weseloff fancied that he heard the voice of the Khan shouting for assistance. He remembered the communication made by that prince in the morning; and requesting his companions to support him, he rode off in the direction of the sound. A very short distance brought him to an open glade in the wood, where he beheld four men contending with a party of at least nine or ten. Two of the four were dismounted at the very instant of Weseloff's arrival; one of these he recognized almost certainly as the Khan, who was fighting hand to hand, but at great disadvantage, with two of the adverse horsemen. Seeing that no time was to be lost, Weseloff fired, and brought down one of the two. His companions discharged their carbines at the same moment, and then all rushed simultaneously into the little open area. The thundering sound of about thirty horses, all rushing at once into a narrow space, gave the impression that a whole troop of cavalry was coming down upon the assailants; who, accordingly, wheeled about and fled with one impulse. Weseloff advanced to the dismounted cavalier, who, as he expected, proved to be the Khan. The man whom Weseloff had shot was lying dead; and both were shocked, though Weseloff at least was not surprised, on stooping down and scrutinizing his features, to recognize a well known confidential servant of Zebek-Dorchi. Nothing was said by either party. The Khan rode off, escorted by Weseloff and his companions, and for some time a dead silence prevailed. The situation of Weseloff was delicate and critical; to leave the Khan at this point was probably to cancel their recent services; for he might be again crossed on his path, and again attacked by the very party from whom he had just been delivered. Yet, on the other hand, to return to the camp was to endanger the chances of accomplishing the escape. The Khan also was apparently revolving all this in his mind, for at length he broke silence, and said—'I comprehend your situation; and, under other circumstances, I might feel it my duty to detain your companions. But it would ill become me to do so after the important service you have just rendered me. Let us turn a little to the left. There, where you see the watchfire, is an outpost. Attend me so far. I am then safe. You may turn and pursue your enterprise; for the circumstances under which you will appear, as my escort, are sufficient to shield you from all suspicion for the present. I regret having no better means at my disposal for testifying my gratitude. But tell me, before we part, was it accident only which led you to my rescue? Or had you acquired any knowledge of the plot by which I was decoyed into this snare?' Weseloff answered very candidly that mere accident had brought him to the spot at which he heard the uproar, but that having heard it, and connecting it with the Khan's communication of the morning, he had then designedly gone after the sound in a way which he certainly should not have done at so critical a moment, unless in the expectation of finding the Khan assaulted by assassins. A few minutes after they reached the

outpost at which it became safe to leave the Tartar chieftain; and immediately the four fugitives commenced a flight which is perhaps without a parallel in the annals of travelling. Each of them led six or seven horses besides the one he rode; and by shifting from one to the other (like the ancient Desultors of the Roman circus,) so as never to burden the same horse for more than half an hour at a time, they continued to advance at the rate of two hundred miles in the twenty-four hours for three days consecutively. After that time, considering themselves beyond pursuit, they proceeded less rapidly; though still with a velocity which staggered the belief of Weseloff's friends in after years. He was, however, a man of high principle, and always adhered firmly to the details of his printed report. One of the circumstances there stated is, that they continued to pursue the route by which the Kalmucks had fled, never for an instant finding any difficulty in tracing it by the skeletons and other memorials of their calamities. In particular, he mentions vast heaps of money as part of the valuable property which it had been necessary to sacrifice. These heaps were found lying still untouched in the deserts. From these, Weseloff and his companions took as much as they could conveniently carry; and this it was, with the price of their beautiful horses, which they afterwards sold at one of the Russian military settlements for about £15 a-piece, which eventually enabled them to pursue their journey in Russia. This journey, as regarded Weseloff in particular, was closed by a tragical catastrophe. He was at that time young, and the only child of a doating mother. Her affliction under the violent abduction of her son had been excessive, and probably had undermined her constitution. Still she had supported it. Weseloff, giving way to the natural impulses of his filial affection, had imprudently posted through Russia, to his mother's house without warning of his approach. He rushed precipitately into her presense; and she, who had stood the shocks of sorrow, was found unequal to the shock of joy too sudden and too acute. She died upon the spot.

We now revert to the final scenes of the Kalmuck flight. These it would be useless to pursue circumstantially through the whole two thousand miles of suffering which remained; for the character of that suffering was even more monotonous than on the former half of the flight, but also more severe. Its main elements were excessive heat, with the accompaniments of famine and thirst, but aggravated at every step by the murderous attacks of their cruel enemies, the Bashkirs and the Kirghises.

These people, 'more fell than anguish, hunger, or the sea,' stuck to the unhappy Kalmucks like a swarm of enraged hornets. And very often whilst they were attacking them in the rear, their advanced parties and flanks were attacked with almost equal fury by the people of the country which they were traversing; and with good reason, since the law of self-preservation had now obliged the fugitive Tartars to plunder provisions, and to forage wherever they passed. In this respect their condition was a constant oscillation of wretchedness; for, sometimes, pressed by grinding famine, they took a circuit of perhaps a hundred miles, in order to strike into a land rich in the comforts of life; but in such a land they were sure to find a crowded population, of which every arm was raised in unrelenting hostility, with all the advantages of local knowledge, and with constant preoccupation of all the defensible positions, mountain passes, or bridges. Sometimes, again, wearied out with this mode of suffering, they took a circuit of perhaps a hundred miles, in order to strike into a land with few or no inhabitants. But in such a land they were sure to meet absolute starvation. Then, again, whether with or without this plague of starvation, whether with

or without this plague of hostility in front, whatever might be the 'fierce varieties' of their misery in this respect, no rest ever came to their unhappy rear; post equitem sedet atra cura; it was a torment like the undying worm of conscience. And, upon the whole, it presented a spectacle altogether unprecedented in the history of mankind. Private and personal malignity is not unfrequently immortal; but rare indeed is it to find the same pertinacity of malice in a nation. And what embittered the interest was, that the malice was reciprocal. Thus far the parties met upon equal terms; but that equality only sharpened the sense of their dire inequality as to other circumstances. The Bashkirs were ready to fight 'from morn to dewy eve.' The Kalmucks, on the contrary, were always obliged to run; was it from their enemies, as creatures whom they feared? No; but towards their friends—towards that final haven of China—as what was hourly implored by their wives, and the tears of their children. But though they fled unwillingly, too often they fled in vain—being unwillingly recalled. There lay the torment. Every day the Bashkirs fell upon them; every day the same unprofitable battle was renewed; as a matter of course, the Kalmucks recalled part of their advanced guard to fight them; every day the battle raged for hours, and uniformly with the same result. For, no sooner did the Bashkirs find themselves too heavily pressed, and that the Kalmuck march had been retarded by some hours, than they retired into the boundless deserts where all pursuit was hopeless. But if the Kalmucks resolved to press forward, regardless of their enemies, in that case their attacks became so fierce and overwhelming, that the general safety seemed likely to be brought into question; nor could any effectual remedy be applied to the case, even for each separate day, except by a most embarrassing halt, and by countermarches, that, to men in their circumstances, were almost worse than death. It will not be surprising, that the irritation of such a systematic persecution, superadded to a previous and hereditary hatred, and accompanied by the stinging consciousness of utter impotence as regarded all effectual vengeance, should gradually have inflamed the Kalmuck animosity into the wildest expression of downright madness and frenzy. Indeed, long before the frontiers of China were approached, the hostility of both sides had assumed the appearance much more of a warfare amongst wild beasts than amongst creatures acknowledging the restraints of reason or the claims of a common nature. The spectacle became too atrocious; it was that of a host of lunatics pursued by a host of fiends.

On a fine morning in early autumn of the year 1771, Kien Long, the Emperor of China, was pursuing his amusements in a wild frontier district lying on the outside of the Great Wall. For many hundred square leagues the country was desolate of inhabitants, but rich in woods of ancient growth, and overrun with game of every description. In a central spot of this solitary region, the Emperor had built a gorgeous hunting-lodge, to which he resorted annually for recreation and relief from the cares of government. Led onwards in pursuit of game, he had rambled to a distance of two hundred miles or more from this lodge, followed at a little distance by a sufficient military escort, and every night pitching his tent in a different situation, until at length he had arrived on the very margin of the vast central deserts of Asia. Here he was standing, by accident, at an opening of his pavilion, enjoying the morning sunshine, when suddenly to the westward there arose a vast cloudy vapor, which by degrees expanded, mounted, and seemed to be slowly diffusing itself over the whole face of the heavens. By-and-by this vast sheet of mist began to thicken towards the horizon, and to roll forward in billowy volumes. The Emperor's suite assembled from all quarters. The silver trumpets were sounded in the rear, and from all the glades and forest avenues began to trot forward towards the pavilion the yagers, half cavalry, half huntsmen, who composed the Imperial escort. Conjecture was on the stretch to divine the cause of this phenomenon, and the interest continually increased, in proportion as simple curiosity gradually deepened into the anxiety of uncertain danger. At

first it had been imagined that some vast troops of deer, or other wild animals of the chase, had been disturbed in their forest haunts by the Emperor's movements, or possibly by wild beasts prowling for prey, and might be fetching a compass by way of re-entering the forest grounds at some remoter points secure from molestation. But this conjecture was dissipated by the slow increase of the cloud, and the steadiness of its motion. In the course of two hours the vast phenomenon had advanced to a point which was judged to be within five miles of the spectators, though all calculations of distance were difficult, and often fallacious, when applied to the endless expanses of the Tartar deserts. Through the next hour, during which the gentle morning breeze had a little freshened, the dusty vapor had developed itself far and wide into the appearance of huge aerial draperies, hanging in mighty volumes from the sky to the earth; and at particular points, where the eddies of the breeze acted upon the pendulous skirts of these aerial curtains rents were perceived, sometimes taking the form of regular arches, portals, and windows, through which began dimly to gleam the heads of camels 'indorsed' with human beings—and at intervals the moving of men and horses, in tumultuous array—and then, through other openings or vistas, at far distant points, the flashing of polished arms. But sometimes, as the wind slackened or died away, all those openings, of whatever form, in the cloudy pall, would slowly close, and for a time the whole pageant was shut up from view; although the growing din, the clamors, the shrieks and groans, ascending from infuriated myriads, reported, in a language not to be misunderstood, what was going on behind the cloudy screen.

It was in fact the Kalmuck host, now in the last extremities of their exhaustion, and very fast approaching to that final stage of privation and intense misery, beyond which few or none could have lived, but also, happily for themselves, fast approaching (in a literal sense) that final stage of their long pilgrimage, at which they would meet hospitality on a scale of royal magnificence, and full protection from their enemies. These enemies, however, as yet still were hanging on their rear as fiercely as ever, though this day was destined to be the last of their hideous persecution. The Khan had, in fact, sent forward couriers with all the requisite statements and petitions, addressed to the Emperor of China. These had been duly received, and preparations made in consequence to welcome the Kalmucks with the most paternal benevolence. But as these couriers had been despatched from the Torgau at the moment of arrival thither, and before the advance of Traubenberg had made it necessary for the Khan to order a hasty renewal of the flight, the Emperor had not looked for their arrival on their frontier until full three months after the present time. The Khan had indeed expressly notified his intention to pass the summer heats on the banks of the Torgau, and to recommence his retreat about the beginning of September. The subsequent change of plan being unknown to Kien Long, left him for some time in doubt as to the true interpretation to be put upon this mighty apparition in the desert; but at length the savage clamors of hostile fury, and the clangor of weapons, unveiled to the Emperor the true nature of those unexpected calamities which had so prematurely precipitated the Kalmuck measure.

Apprehending the real state of affairs, the Emperor instantly perceived that the first act of his fatherly care for these erring children (as he esteemed them) now returning to their ancient obedience, must be—to deliver them from their pursuers. And this was less difficult than might have been supposed. Not many miles in the rear was a body of well appointed cavalry, with a strong detachment of artillery, who always attended the Emperor's motions. These were hastily summoned. Meantime it occurred to the train of

courtiers that some danger might arise to the Emperor's person from the proximity of a lawless enemy; and accordingly he was induced to retire a little to the rear. It soon appeared, however, to those who watched the vapory shroud in the desert, that its motion was not such as would argue the direction of the march to be exactly upon the pavilion, but rather in a diagonal line, making an angle of full forty-five degrees with that line in which the Imperial cortège had been standing, and therefore with a distance continually increasing. Those who knew the country judged that the Kalmucks were making for a large fresh-water lake about seven or eight miles distant; they were right; and to that point the Imperial cavalry was ordered up; and it was precisely in that spot, and about three hours after and at noon-day on the 8th of September, that the great Exodus of the Kalmuck Tartars was brought to a final close, and with a scene of such memorable and hellish fury, as formed an appropriate winding-up to an expedition in all its parts and details so awfully disastrous. The Emperor was not personally present, or at least he saw whatever he did see from too great a distance to discriminate its individual features; but he records in his written memorial the report made to him of this scene by some of his own officers.

The lake of Tengis, near the frightful desert of Kobi, lay in a hollow amongst hills of a moderate height, ranging generally from two to three thousand feet high. About eleven o'clock in the forenoon, the Chinese cavalry reached the summit of a road which led through a cradle-like dip in the mountains right down upon the margin of the lake. From this pass, elevated about two thousand feet above the level of the water, they continued to descend, by a very winding and difficult road, for an hour and a half; and during the whole of this descent they were compelled to be inactive spectators of the fiendish spectacle below. The Kalmucks, reduced by this time from about six hundred thousand souls to two hundred thousand, and after enduring for two months and a half the miseries we have previously described—outrageous heat, famine, and the destroying scimitar of the Kirghises and the Bashkirs, had for the last ten days been traversing a hideous desert, where no vestiges were seen of vegetation, and no drop of water could be found. Camels and men were already so overladen, that it was a mere impossibility that they should carry a tolerable sufficiency for the passage of this frightful wilderness. On the eighth day the wretched daily allowance, which had been continually diminishing, failed entirely; and thus for two days of insupportable fatigue, the horrors of thirst had been carried to the fiercest extremity. Upon this last morning, at the sight of the hills and the forest scenery, which announced to those who acted as guides the neighborhood of the lake of Tengis, all the people rushed along with maddening eagerness to the anticipated solace. The day grew hotter and hotter, the people more and more exhausted, and gradually, in the general rush forwards to the lake, all discipline and command were lost—all attempts to preserve a rear-guard were neglected—the wild Bashkirs rode in amongst the encumbered people, and slaughtered them by wholesale, and almost without resistance. Screams and tumultuous shouts proclaimed the progress of the massacre; but none heeded—none halted; all alike, pauper or noble, continued to rush on with maniacal haste to the waters—all with faces blackened by the heat preying upon the liver, and with tongue drooping from the mouth. The cruel Bashkir was affected by the same misery, and manifested the same symptoms of his misery as the wretched Kalmuck; the murderer was oftentimes in the same frantic misery as his murdered victim—many indeed (an ordinary effect of thirst) in both nations had become lunatic—and in this state, whilst mere multitude and condensation of bodies alone opposed any check to the destroying scimitar and the trampling hoof, the lake was reached; and to that the whole vast body of enemies rushed, and together continued to rush, forgetful of all things at that moment but of one almighty instinct. This absorption of the thoughts in one maddening appetite lasted for a single minute; but in the

next arose the final scene of parting vengeance. Far and wide the waters of the solitary lake were instantly dyed red with blood and gore; here rode a party of savage Bashkirs, hewing off heads as fast as the swathes fall before the mower's scythe; there stood unarmed Kalmucks in a death-grapple with their detested foes, both up to the middle in water, and oftentimes both sinking together below the surface, from weakness, or from struggles, and perishing in each other's arms. Did the Bashkirs at any point collect into a cluster for the sake of giving impetus to the assault? Thither were the camels driven in fiercely by those who rode them, generally women or boys; and even these quiet creatures were forced into a share in this carnival of murder, by trampling down as many as they could strike prostrate with the lash of their fore-legs. Every moment the water grew more polluted: and yet every moment fresh myriads came up to the lake and rushed in, not able to resist their frantic thirst, and swallowing large draughts of water, visibly contaminated with the blood of their slaughtered compatriots. Wheresoever the lake was shallow enough to allow of men raising their heads above the water, there for scores of acres were to be seen all forms of ghastly fear, of agonizing struggle, of spasm, of convulsion, of mortal conflict, death, and the fear of death—revenge, and the lunacy of revenge—hatred, and the frenzy of hatred—until the neutral spectators, of whom there were not a few, now descending the eastern side of the lake, at length averted their eyes in horror. This horror, which seemed incapable of further addition, was, however, increased by an unexpected incident. The Bashkirs, beginning to perceive here and there the approach of the Chinese cavalry, felt it prudent—wheresoever they were sufficiently at leisure from the passions of the murderous scene—to gather into bodies. This was noticed by the governor of a small Chinese fort, built upon an eminence above the lake; and immediately he threw in a broadside, which spread havoc amongst the Bashkir tribe. As often as the Bashkirs collected into 'globes' and 'turms' as their only means of meeting the long line of descending Chinese cavalry—so often did the Chinese governor of the fort pour in his exterminating broadside; until at length the lake at the lower end, became one vast seething cauldron of human bloodshed and carnage. The Chinese cavalry had reached the foot of the hills: the Bashkirs, attentive to their movements, had formed; skirmishes had been fought: and, with a quick sense that the contest was henceforwards rapidly becoming hopeless, the Bashkirs and Kirghises began to retire. The pursuit was not as vigorous as the Kalmuck hatred would have desired. But, at the same time, the very gloomiest hatred could not but find, in their own dreadful experience of the Asiatic deserts, and in the certainty that these wretched Bashkirs had to repeat that same experience a second time, for thousands of miles, as the price exacted by a retributory Providence for their vindictive cruelty—not the very gloomiest of the Kalmucks, or the least reflecting, but found in all this a retaliatory chastisement more complete and absolute than any which their swords and lances could have obtained, or human vengeance could have devised.

Here ends the tale of the Kalmuck wanderings in the Desert; for any subsequent marches which awaited them, were neither long nor painful. Every possible alleviation and refreshment for their exhausted bodies had been already provided by Kien Long with the most princely munificence; and lands of great fertility were immediately assigned to them in ample extent along the river Ily, not very far from the point at which they had first emerged from the wilderness of Kobi. But the beneficent attention of the Chinese Emperor may be best stated in his own words, as translated into French by one of the Jesuit missionaries:—"La nation des Torgotes (savoir les Kalmuques) arriva à Ily, toute delabree, n'ayant ni de quoi vivre, ni de quoi se vêtir. Je l'avais prévu; et j'avais ordonné de faire en tout genre les provisions nécessaires pour pouvoir les secourir promptement; c'est ce qui a été exécuté. On a fait la division des



terres; et on a assigné à chaque famille une portion suffisante pour pouvoir servir à son entretien, soit en la cultivant, soit en y nourrissant des bestiaux. On a donné à chaque particulier des étoffes pour l'habiller, des grains pour se nourrir pendant l'espace d'une année, des ustensiles pour le ménage et d'autres choses nécessaires: et outre cela plusieurs onces d'argent, pour se pourvoir de ce qu'on aurait pu oublier. On a désigné des lieux particuliers, fertiles en pâturages; et on leur a donné des boeufs, moutons, &c. pour qu'ils pussent dans la suite travailler par eux-mêmes à leur entretien et à leur bien-être."

These are the words of the Emperor himself, speaking in his own person of his own paternal cares; but another Chinese, treating the same subject, records the munificence of this prince in terms which proclaim still more forcibly the disinterested generosity which prompted, and the delicate considerateness which conducted this extensive bounty. He has been speaking of the Kalmucks, and he goes on thus:—"Lorsqu'ils arrivèrent sur nos frontières (au nombre de plusieurs centaines de mille), quoique la fatigue extrême, la faim, la soif, et toutes les autres incommodités inséparables d'une très-longue et très pénible route en eussent fait périr presque autant, ils étaient réduits à la dernière misère: ils manquaient de tout. Il" (viz. l'Empereur, Kien Long) "leur fit préparer des logemens conformes à leur manière de vivre; il leur fit distribuer des aliments et des habits; il leur fit donner des boeufs, des moutons, et des ustensiles, pour les mettre en état de former des troupeaux et de cultiver la terre, et tout cela à ses propres frais, qui se sont montés à des sommes immenses, sans compter l'argent qu'il a donné à chaque chef-de-famille, pour pourvoir à la subsistance de sa femme et de ses enfans."

Thus, after their memorable year of misery, the Kalmucks were replaced in territorial possessions, and in comfort equal perhaps, or even superior, to that which they had enjoyed in Russia, and with superior political advantages. But, if equal or superior, their condition was no longer the same; if not in degree, their social prosperity had altered in quality; for instead of being a purely pastoral and vagrant people, they were now in circumstances which obliged them to become essentially dependent upon agriculture; and thus far raised in social rank, that by the natural course of their habits and the necessities of life they were effectually reclaimed from roving, and from the savage customs connected with so unsettled a life. They gained also in political privileges, chiefly through the immunity from military service which their new relations enabled them to obtain. These were circumstances of advantage and gain. But one great disadvantage there was, amply to overbalance all other possible gain; the chances were lost or were removed to an incalculable distance for their conversion to Christianity, without which in these times there is no absolute advance possible on the path of true civilization.

One word remains to be said upon the personal interests concerned in this great drama. The catastrophe in this respect was remarkable and complete. Oubacha, with all his goodness and incapacity of suspecting, had, since the mysterious affair on the banks of the Torgau, felt his mind alienated from his cousin; he revolted from the man that would have murdered him; and he had displayed his caution so visibly as to provoke a reaction in the bearing of Zebek-Dorchi, and a displeasure which all his dissimulation could not hide. This had produced a feud, which, by keeping them aloof, had probably saved the life of Oubacha; for the friendship of Zebek-Dorchi was more fatal than his open enmity. After the settlement on the Ily

this feud continued to advance, until it came under the notice of the Emperor, on occasion of a visit which all the Tartar chieftains made to his Majesty at his hunting-lodge in 1772. The Emperor informed himself accurately of all the particulars connected with the transaction—of all the rights and claims put forward—and of the way in which they would severally affect the interests of the Kalmuck people. The consequence was, that he adopted the cause of Oubacha, and repressed the pretensions of Zebek-Dorchi, who, on his part, so deeply resented this discountenance to his ambitious projects, that in conjunction with other chiefs he had the presumption even to weave nets of treason against the Emperor himself. Plots were laid—were detected—were baffled—counterplots were constructed upon the same basis, and with the benefit of the opportunities thus offered.

Finally, Zebek-Dorchi was invited to the imperial lodge, together with all his accomplices; and under the skilful management of the Chinese nobles in the Emperor's establishment, the murderous artifices of these Tartar chieftains were made to recoil upon themselves; and the whole of them perished by assassination at a great imperial banquet. For the Chinese morality is exactly of that kind which approves in everything the *lex talionis*:—

—'lex nec justior ulla est (as they think)

Quam necis artifices arte perire sua.'

So perished Zebek-Dorchi, the author and originator of the great Tartar Exodus. Oubacha, meantime, and his people, were gradually recovering from the effects of their misery, and repairing their losses. Peace and prosperity, under the gentle rule of a fatherly lord paramount, re-dawned upon the tribes; their household lares, after so harsh a translation to distant climates, found again a happy reinstatement in what had in fact been their primitive abodes; they found themselves settled in quiet sylvan scenes, rich in all the luxuries of life, and endowed with the perfect loveliness of Arcadian beauty. But from the hills of this favored land and even from the level grounds as they approach its western border, they still look out upon that fearful wilderness which once beheld a nation in agony—the utter extirpation of nearly half a million from amongst its numbers, and, for the remainder, a storm of misery so fierce, that in the end (as happened also at Athens during the Peloponnesian war from a different form of misery) very many lost their memory; all records of their past life were wiped out as with a sponge—utterly erased and cancelled; and many others lost their reason; some in a gentle form of pensive melancholy, some in a more restless form of feverish delirium and nervous agitation, and others in the fixed forms of tempestuous mania, raving frenzy, or moping idiocy. Two great commemorative monuments arose in after years to mark the depth and permanence of the awe—the sacred and reverential grief with which all persons looked back upon the dread calamities attached to the year of the Tiger—all who had either personally shared in those calamities, and had themselves drunk from that cup of sorrow, or who had effectually been made witnesses to their results, and associated with their relief; two great monuments, we say; first of all, one in the religious solemnity, enjoined by the Dalai Lama, called in the Tartar language a Romanang, that is, a national commemoration, with music the most rich and solemn, of all the souls who departed to the rest

of Paradise from the afflictions of the Desert: this took place about six years after the arrival in China. Secondly, another more durable and more commensurate to the scale of the calamity and to the grandeur of this national Exodus, in the mighty columns of granite and brass, erected by the Emperor Kien Long, near the banks of the Ily: these columns stand upon the very margin of the steppes; and they bear a short but emphatic inscription to the following effect:—

By the Will of God Here, upon the Brink of these Deserts, Which from this Point begin and stretch away Pathless, treeless, waterless, For thousands of miles—and along the margins of many mighty Nations, Rested from their labors and from great afflictions Under the shadow of the Chinese Wall, And by the favor of KIEN LONG, God's Lieutenant upon Earth, The ancient Children of the Wilderness—the Torgote Tartars Flying before the wrath of the Grecian Czar, Wandering Sheep who had strayed away from the Celestial Empire in the year 1616, But are now mercifully gathered again, after infinite sorrow, Into the fold of their forgiving Shepherd. Hallowed be the spot for ever, and Hallowed be the day—September 8, 1771! Amen.

***Freeditorial*** 