













Tales from “Blackwood”





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# TALES FROM "BLACKWOOD"

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*Selected by*  
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M. O. W. OLIPHANT	



# TALES FROM "BLACKWOOD."

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## SHAKESPEARE'S FUNERAL.

BY MAJOR-GENERAL E. B. HAMLEY.

*Place.*—STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

*Time.*—THE 25TH OF APRIL 1616.

SCENE I.—*The Taproom of the Falcon Tavern in the High Street, kept by Eleanor Comyng.*

HOSTESS and SLY.

*Hostess.* Kit Sly, Kit Sly, dost thou hear? There be guests alighting in the yard; run thou and help Robin ostler hold their stirrups, and so do somewhat for the ale thou ne'er pay'st for.

*Sly.* If I do, wilt thou let this one day slip without rating and prating of thy score that I owe thee?

*Hostess.* Yea, good Kit, if thou run quickly.

E.S.—L.

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*Sly.* But wilt thou bid Francis draw me what ale I may chance call for?

*Hostess.* Nay, that will I not, or thou wouldst empty my great tun. Thou wouldst serve me as thou didst the ale-wife of Wincot,<sup>1</sup> who says, poor soul, that she ne'er had cask in cellar these twelve years but thou wert more fatal to it than a leaking tap. By these ears, I heard her say so when the deputy's men were seizing her goods. Thou shalt not cozen me as thou didst Marian.

*Sly.* Hold stirrup thyself then. I'll not budge. I'll to sleep again by the chimney till it please God send me drink.

*Enter* DRAYTON<sup>2</sup> (*the poet*) and YOUNG RALEIGH<sup>3</sup>  
(*son of Sir Walter*).

*Drayton.* Sly, said she! Didst thou not hear, Walter, you varlet's name? but 'twas scarce needful. The sodden face, the shaking nether lip, the

<sup>1</sup> "Ask Marian Hacket, the fat ale-wife of Wincot, if she know me not," says Kit Sly in the "Taming of the Shrew." Wincot is a village about three miles from Stratford.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Drayton, a Warwickshire poet of great repute in his day, was about a year older than Shakespeare, and had known him long and familiarly.

<sup>3</sup> Young Walter Raleigh was Sir Walter's eldest son, and was now twenty-two years old. He accompanied his father, soon after, to South America, as commander of one of the companies that formed the military part of the expedition, to prepare for which was the express condition on which Sir Walter was released from the Tower in January 1616.

eye watery and impudent, the paunch ale-swelled, the doublet liquor-stained, the hat crushed from being much slept in, the apparel ruinous, because the tapster intercepts the fee that should be the tailor's and the cobbler's—hath not the master, without cataloguing one of these things, implied all, in half-a-score of pregnant words, for all the future? What a skill is that can make a poor sot immortal!

*Sly.* Sot, saidst thou!—but I care not. Will ye stand me, gentles, in a pot of ale?

*Raleigh.* Wilt thou answer, then, a few questions I would put to thee?

*Sly.* Ay—but the ale first; and be brief; I love not much question. Say on, and let the world slide.

*Raleigh.* A pot of ale, drawer, for this worthy man. And now tell me, Sly, is't not thy custom to use that phrase 'let the world slide'?<sup>1</sup>

*Sly.* It may well be; 'tis a maxim I love; 'tis a cure for much. I am cold—let the world slide, for anon I shall be warmer. I am dry—let the world slide, for time will bring ale. I sit, pottle-pot in hand, i' the chimney-nook—let the world slide while I taste it.

*Drayton.* 'Tis a pretty philosophy, and might serve for greater uses. But, for a further question

<sup>1</sup> A phrase much affected by Sly the Tinker in the prelude to the "Taming of the Shrew."

—Wert thou acquainted with old John Naps of Greece?<sup>1</sup>

*Sly.* John Naps, quotha! what old John! by Jeronimy, I knew him many a year, mended his pots and helped him empty them. 'A had been a sailor, or to say pirate would be to shoot nearer the clout; when sober his fashion was to say nought, but when drunk his talk was of the things 'a had seen in Greece—whereby they called him Naps of Greece.

*Drayton.* And didst thou know, too, Peter Turf and Henry Pimpernell?

*Sly.* Yea, as this pot-handle knows these fingers. For Turf, he was deputy-sexton of Wincot, and indeed digged Naps's grave, and was found lying drunk therein, with his spade beside him, at the hour of burial. For Pimpernell, 'twas a half-witted companion, but his grandam kept money in 's purse, and 'a served to pay scores, and 'a could join in a catch on occasion, thof 'a had but a small, cracked voice, and mostly sung his part to psalm-tunes. And now, masters, a question to ye—an ye answer not, faith, I care not—but how should such as ye know Naps and the others?

*Drayton.* They have been recorded, and thou too,

<sup>1</sup> One of Sly's acquaintances at Wincot.

"Stephen Sly, and Old John Naps of Greece,  
And Peter Turf and Henry Pimpernell."

—"Taming of the Shrew."

A manuscript memorandum, in which Stephen Sly is mentioned, written at Stratford in 1614, is still extant.



in what will outlast your epitaphs. Doubtless thou hast heard of Master William Shakespeare of New Place.<sup>1</sup>

*Sly.* Heard of him, said he! Ay, and seen him and talked with him both here and at Wincot when he came thither to his kinsfolk.<sup>2</sup> By this malt-juice, a merry gentleman, and a free—'a should have been a lord, for, look you, to bestow liquor on the thirsty is a lordly fashion, and I have owed him many a skinful. Marry, that tap's dry now.

*Drayton.* What, knave, hath he found at last that it is more virtuous to forget thee than to countenance thee?

*Sly.* Nay, I will say nought in his dispraise; 'a was good to me, and hath oft spoke with me, and I'll ne'er deny it now's dead and gone. Mayhap ye have come to the burial?

*Drayton.* Dead!

*Raleigh.* Master Shakespeare dead!

*Hostess.* Oh, masters, he hath spoke the truth, tho' he be no true man; by these tears, he hath. Master Shakespeare parted o' Tuesday, and he will be buried this dientical day; the coffin will be brought forth of New Place upon the stroke of two. I have talked with the bearers, and all.

<sup>1</sup> New Place was a large house, with garden attached, in the town of Stratford—built by Sir Hugh Clopton in Henry VII.'s time, and purchased by Shakespeare in 1597.

<sup>2</sup> The Ardens, Shakespeare's relations by the mother's side, lived in the parish of Wincot.

*Raleigh.* Thus perish the hopes which drew me to Stratford. I thought to look on the foremost poet of the world—to hear his voice—perchance to be honoured with some discourse of him—and now I shall look but on his coffin. Oh, Master Drayton!

*Drayton.* We looked not, indeed, for this. 'Tis as if the sun were drawn from the firmament, and had left us to perpetual twilight. The radiant intellect is gone, and hath left but its pale reflection in his works—tho' these shall be immortal. Methinks, in future, the sky will be less blue, the air less warm, the flowers less gay; for I honoured this man more than any, and whate'er I essayed to do 'twas with a secret thought of his judgment over me, as if he had been the conscience of mine intellect.

*Hostess.* Ye look pale—a cup of sack, sweet sirs; for, ye know, a cheerful cup the heart bears up.

*Drayton.* Nay, woman, nay.

*Hostess.* 'Tis of the best, I warrant you; 'tis from the stores of Master Quiney—him that hath married Master Shakespeare's daughter Judith, and he deals in none but the best.

*Drayton.* 'Tis not sack that will help us. But canst thou tell us, good hostess, aught concerning his end?

*Hostess.* Yea, well-a-day, that can I, for 'twas Gossip Joan Tisick who goeth out nursing, the same, your worships, that brought young Elizabeth

Hall, his grandchild, into the world, that was sent for to him when 'twas seen which way 'a was likely to go; whereby, she told me thereof yesternight over a cup of ale and sugar with a toasted crab in 't—for, said she, there's none in Stratford, Mistress Comyng, that Master Shakespeare thought more on than you. The doctor, Master Hall, says to her, "Have a care, Joan, of my father-in-law Shakespeare, says he; for 'tis a parlous case, says he; we be all mortal, says he—and the breath goeth when it listeth—therefore keep thou the better watch, for 'tis a man we could ill spare." "Fear not, Master Hall," quoth Joan, "I'll tend him an 'twere his mother." So, o' Tuesday night he said he felt easier, and he bid Mistress Hall and the Doctor that they should leave him and take good rest. And 'a says to Joan, "Art drowsy, good Joan?" Whereupon she made answer, "A little; for I have been up," saith she, "all last night at a labour with Mistress Coney her thirteenth child." "Ay," quoth he, "in thy calling thou seest both ends of life; well, thou shalt sleep to-night, and all night if thou wilt." "Nay, sir," saith Joan, "not so; but your worship being of so good cheer to-night, mayhap if I take a short nap 'twill do no harm." "If thou take a long one, good Joan," said Master Shakespeare, "it matters not, for, I warrant you, I shall take a longer." "It doth me good to hear your worship speak so," says Joan, "for sleep well is

keep well, and a night's rest physics' best"—and so tucks up the bedclothes, and draws the hangings, and leaves him as 'a was closing his eyes. Well, sweet sirs, all the night he lay quiet, and with the dawn Joan peeps me in through the curtains, and there he lay, quiet and smiling—and as the sun rose she peeps me in again and he was still quiet and smiling—and she touched his forehead ;—and he had been lying for hours (so the Doctor said when Joan called him) as dead as his grandam.

*Drayton.* 'Twas, then, with good heart that this great soul passed to what himself hath called the undiscovered country : of whose inhabitants he must sure take his place among the most illustrious. Thou art sad, Walter—this grief touches thee, and, sooth, it becomes thee well. It bespeaks thy youth generous ; 'tis an assurance that thou hast thy father's spirit, who, great himself, owns near kinship with greatness, and will sorrow for Shakespeare as for a brother.

*Raleigh.* 'Twas my father's wish, when he knew I was to be thy guest in Warwickshire, that I should pay my duty to Master Shakespeare, for, said he, there is no worthier thing in life than to take note of the greatest of thy companions in earth's pilgrimage ; in them thou seest the quintessence of man's spirit, cleared of the muddy vapours which make common humanity so base and foolish : and this man is of the greatest, a companion indeed

for princes, nay, himself a king, whose kingdom is of the imagination, and therefore boundless. Tell him, Walter, said my father, that in my long captivity<sup>1</sup> I have oft remembered our pleasant encounters at the Mermaid;<sup>2</sup> tell him, too, that I have solaced mine enforced solitude in the Tower with studying all of his works that have been given to us; and entreat him, in my name, not to leave those plays of his to the chances of the world, as fathers leave their misbegotten children, but to make them truly the heirs of his invention, and to spend on them that paternal care which shall prove them worthy of their source.

*Hostess.* Please you come in here to the Dolphin chamber, where Master Shakespeare loved to sit.

*Raleigh.* Well—now we are in it, I find it convenient and well lighted; and yet methinks 'tis but a small one.

*Drayton.* Ay, but see'st thou that, through the door, one that sits here can mark the whole company of ale-drinkers in the tap-room without, and therefore Shakespeare loved it; here would he sit and note the humours of such guests as yonder Sly. For in such, he would say, you see humanity with its vizard off; and he held that nurture, though it

<sup>1</sup> The twelve years' imprisonment in the Tower to which James I. had consigned him.

<sup>2</sup> The Mermaid was a tavern in London where Sir Walter had established, before his imprisonment, a club, of which Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, and others were members.

oft cherishes a good apprehension, yet as oft doth overlay and smother it. He hath said to me, pointing to the company without, "If you find wit here 'tis the bird's own feather, and no borrowed plume; if you see courtesy 'tis inborn, and will bear the rub; if you note a quaint humour 'tis in the man by the grace of God or the force of circumstance: your weaver or your tinker, whatsoever other gift he hath, hath not the skill to counterfeit, for that comes by art, and leisure, and commerce with men of condition, and desire of their good opinion; wherefore methinks I oft see deeper through your leathern jerkin than your satin doublet."

*Hostess.* Yea, here would 'a come many a time and oft, with Master Ben, that was full of quips as an egg of meat. "Mistress Quickly!" Ben would say (for so 'a called me, I know not wherefore), "set us in the Dolphin chamber;<sup>1</sup> and let us have a sea-coal fire," 'a would say—"and I will drink none if thou give me not a parcel-gilt goblet," whereby Master Shakespeare would cast at him out of 's eye a merry glint. "Hast thou thy plate yet?" Master Ben would ask me, "and the tapestry of thy dining chambers? Come, let us have Doll Tearsheet meet us at supper." "O Lord, sir," would I say, "I know no Dolls nor Tearsheets neither;" but

<sup>1</sup> For the allusions here made by Master Ben, see the "Second Part of King Henry, IV.," act ii. sc. 1.



'twas a merry man, I warrant you, tho' I did never know what his meaning was.

*Drayton.* These memories of thine breed but sad mirth in me now.

*Hostess.* Well-a-day, if there be not Sir Thomas and Master Thynne, rid from Charlecote,<sup>1</sup> and alighting. By your leave, kind sirs, I will go receive them. *[She goes out.]*

*Drayton.* Dear Walter, this stroke is so sudden that it bewilders me; methinks I am dreaming; I discourse, remember, reason, and so forth, and yet my brain all the while wrapt as in a cerement. Coming here with my thoughts full of him, sitting in this room where he and I have sat so oft, what could seem less strange than that he should enter and greet me; and yet a little word hath made me know that to be impossible for all time.

*Raleigh.* Ay, sir, amidst my own pain I remember how you have been familiar with that divinest man, and must feel a far deeper sorrow than myself, that know him but in the picture my imagination hath formed; and I perceive by the blank made in mine own present, what a void must be left in yours. Would you have us quit Stratford forthwith?

*Drayton.* Nay, by no means; let us rather give our sorrow somewhat to feed on; let us fill it with the sad memories that abound here. For, to me,

<sup>1</sup> Charlecote, still the family seat of the Lucys, is some four miles from Stratford.

everything in Stratford speaks of Shakespeare; 'twas here he lived, while that unmatched apprehension was most waxlike to receive impressions, when wonder and observation were quickest in him; and 'twas here he began to fill a storehouse from whence to draw at will. For his manner was always to build on a ground of fact, or, rather, to sow fact like a seed, and let it strike in that rich soil till oftentimes none but himself could tell (even if himself could) what the ripened fruit had sprung from. Sometimes he would limn a man in brief as he saw him, and, again, he would so play with his first notion, dressing it and transforming it, yet ever working even as nature works, that the citizen of Stratford or Warwick would grow into a Roman or ancient Briton, a lover or a king, a conspirator or a jester, compounded part of fact, part of fancy, yet would the morsel of fact leaven the whole with truth.

*Raleigh.* Was this Sir Thomas Lucy he whom the world calls Justice Shallow?

*Drayton.* Nay, he hath been dead these many years—this is his son; but the companion that's with him thou mayest have chanced to hear of.

*Enter SIR THOMAS LUCY and MASTER THYNNE,  
in mourning habits.*

*Hostess.* Wilt please you walk this way, Sir Thomas? This chamber is warmer, and the day



is fresh. There be here, sirs, none but these two gentlemen.

*Sir Thomas.* Master Drayton, as I remember me. You are of our county of Warwickshire, I think, sir?

*Drayton.* I am so, Sir Thomas, at your service. Give me leave to bring you acquainted with my friend and comrade in travel, Master Walter Raleigh.

*Sir Thomas.* I salute you, sir. Of the Raleighs of Devonshire, mayhap?

*Raleigh.* The same, Sir Thomas.

*Sir Thomas.* An honourable family, sir, and one that hath borne itself among the best these many reigns past. You quarter the arms of Throckmorton, as I think, sir—you bear gules, five fusils, in bend argent, and your cognisance a stag; or is't a martlet?

*Raleigh.* I knew not we, being but simple gentlemen, and out of favour, were of that mark that our quarterings should be thus well known.

*Sir Thomas.* I am something of a herald, I would have you know, sir. Methinks 'twere well that men of quality were familiar each with the pretensions of all the rest, making as 'twere one family in condition: thus should we at once know who are of the better, who of the baser sort. And so, sir, of the leisure I spare from mine office as justice of the peace, and from mine own concerns, I give somewhat to heraldry.

*Drayton.* I perceive by the sad hue of your gar-

ments that you design to be present at Master Shakespeare's funeral.

*Sir Thomas.* Ay, sir. His son-in-law, Doctor Hall, is our physician at Charlecote, and I have had dealings with himself, and held him in esteem.

*Raleigh.* 'Tis as it should be—the whole world should honour such worth as his.

*Sir Thomas.* Nay, good sir, I go not so far with you : though he were indeed so honourable that his neighbours, even of condition, may well accord him a last show of respect.

*Drayton.* I am glad that the old grudge between Master Shakespeare and Sir Thomas your father holds not in this generation.

*Sir Thomas.* Why, for that, Master Drayton, in respect of the deer stealing, 'twas not such a matter as is ne'er to be forgiven nor forgotten ; he was but a youth then, and he suffered for't ; and, for the scurril ballad concerning which the rumour went 'twas writ by Shakespeare, why, 'twas none of his.

*Drayton.* I'll be sworn 'twas not. Know we not the hand of the master better than to take such 'prentice-stuff for his ? As well affirm that a daw's feather may drop from an eagle.

*Sir Thomas.* Nay, sir, I have better assurance ; he himself, of his own motion, told my father (and hath repeated it to myself) that he ne'er wrote it.

*Drayton.* He hath told me the same—and for the plays——

*Sir Thomas.* For the plays wherein 'twas said he drew my father, 'twas idle gossip. How should a Gloucestershire justice, one Shallow (for such I am told is what passes for the portrait), represent Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote in Warwickshire?

*Thynne.* 'Twas said, too, that he had set me down along with mine uncle. By the mass! I should not care though it had been so; for I saw the play<sup>1</sup> once in London, and Master Slender was a gentleman, and an esquire, and of good means, though the people did laugh, I know not why, at some of his discourse. But he and the rest lived in Harry Fourth's time, 'twas said; and how could I live in Harry Fourth's time that go not back beyond Elizabeth? though the Thynnes were well thought on afore that, look you.

*Sir Thomas.* Well, sir, I have ne'er seen the play, and love not players. I ever noted that when they came to Stratford there was new business for the justices. The idle sort grew idler—they drew others on to join them that would else have been better conducted—there was less work, more drink, and more disorder. I could never away with the players, sir; and I was heartily with those who were for inhibiting their theatre in Stratford.

*Thynne.* And I too, Cousin Lucy, I care not for the play, though, good sooth, I liked it well enough. But give me for sport a stage with two good back-

<sup>1</sup> "Merry Wives of Windsor."

sword or quarter-staff men ; or a greased pole with a Gloucester cheese atop ; or a bull-running : but of all sport, by the mass ! I love the bear-garden—man and boy, I ever loved it ; 'tis the rarest sport, in good sooth, now.

*Drayton.* Methought, Sir Thomas, when you talked of honouring my dear friend, 'twas for his works.

*Sir Thomas.* Nay, sir, I make no account of his works, and, indeed, know nought of them. He had won a good station, and maintained it, and therefore he should have his due.

*Drayton.* For his descent, that, as all men know, was not above humble citizen's degree.

*Sir Thomas.* His mother was an Arden ; and the College granted to his father a coat of arms, a spear or, upon a bend sable, in a field of gold—the crest, a falcon with his wings displayed, standing on a wreath of his colours, supporting a spear ; and he might impale with Arden. And the gentleman himself hath for years been of good havings, with lands and houses, and of good repute in all his dealings ; therefore, say I, that we who be neighbours and gentlemen, should have him in respect.

*Thynne.* Yea, forsooth ! gentlemen should give to other gentlemen (thof they be new-made and quarter not) what countenance they may, for their better advantage, and to maintain them in consideration, look you, and to prosper them ; and therefore 'tis we come to make two at the burial.

*Raleigh.* O ye gods ! this of him that conceived Lear and Othello ! Sirs, with your leave we will now bid you farewell.

*Sir Thomas.* Nay, I pray you that we part not so. I beseech you, Master Raleigh, and you, Master Drayton, that you lie this night at Charlecote. I would have you home to supper, and thank you, too, for your good company.

*Thynne.* And I, sirs, have a poor house of mine own within these dozen miles, and thof I be not a knight like my cousin Lucy here, yet I can lodge a guest as well as some ; now that my mother be dead, I live as befits a gentleman, good sooth, and I would bid you welcome truly, now, and show you a mastiff that hath lost an eye by a bear.

*Drayton.* Sir, I thank you. For your good kindness, Sir Thomas, we are beholden to you ; but, pray you, let us stand excused. Master Raleigh hath business that——

*Raleigh.* Nay, Master Drayton, that business we had is sadly ended, and our whole journey marred. With your good leave, therefore, I would rejoice that we should take Sir Thomas at his word.

*Sir Thomas.* By my troth, sirs, I am glad on't, and you shall be heartily welcome. We'll e'en meet here at four o' the clock, and ye shall find wherewithal to bear you and your mails to Charlecote.

*Raleigh.* Till then, farewell. (*To Drayton as they go out.*) Seest thou not, Master Michael, that to sit in Master Shallow's house, perchance in his very arbour<sup>1</sup>—to eat a pippin, maybe, of his own grafting—to look on his effigy, clad as he went to the Court with Falstaff—were a chance that would lead me to journey barefoot in the snow to Charlecote? For being here in the birthplace (alas! now the death-place) of him I so revered, what better tribute can I pay (now that nought but his memory is left for our worship) than, even as thou saidst but now, to trace the begettings of those bright fancies which he hath embalmed for ever?

*Drayton.* You look on these things, Walter, as I would have you look; a true disciple art thou of him whom we shall always love and always mourn, and gladly will I go with thee to Charlecote. And now, ere we stand by that greedy grave that is presently to swallow so huge a part of what is precious in England, we will see to that other business of thine, the raising of money for thee. 'Tis but a step, as I remember, to Master Sherlock's house. Now I pray thee mark that old man well—and if we deal not with him, as is likely, 'tis no matter, for I can take thee elsewhere; but I would thou shouldst see old Master Sherlock.

<sup>1</sup> See "Second Part of King Henry IV.," act v. sc. 3.



SCENE II.—*Master Sherlock's counting-house. SHERLOCK sitting at his desk in an inner room.*

*Enter DRAYTON and RALEIGH.*

*Drayton (aside to Raleigh).* Dost thou not spy in him a likeness to an old spider, black, still, and watchful, and in that money-changing den to a cob-web? There be many flies have suffered loss of wings here.

*Raleigh.* How old and bent he looks! and, but that he be a money-lender, I should have deemed him poor.

*Drayton.* Nay, 'tis not a spider of the sleek sort—blood-sucking hath not fattened him as it doth some.

*Raleigh.* His attire doth not bespeak much wealth. That old gown were dear at two shillings, fur trimmings and all; nay, 'twere a fair price even were the velvet cap and copper spectacles thrown into the bargain.

*Drayton.* Soft you, he comes.

*Sherlock.* Sirs, your servant. What would you?

*Drayton.* Marry this, Master Sherlock—me you remember—Michael Drayton—we have had some small dealings together of yore.

*Sherlock.* Ay, sir, I forget none who deal with me.

*Drayton (aside).* Nor they thee, I'll be sworn.  
(*To Sherlock.*) But thus it is—my friend here,

Master Raleigh, hath had a manor in Surrey assigned<sup>1</sup> him by his father, Sir Walter, and having pressing need of moneys, inasmuch as he hath been appointed captain in a force which will shortly embark for Guiana, whereof Sir Walter is chief commander, he would raise a sum thereon to furnish him forth.

*Sherlock.* Be there none in London that would lend him the moneys?

*Drayton.* Certes; but he goeth now into Devonshire, and his need is pressing.

*Sherlock.* His need is pressing—well, sir?

*Drayton.* To which end he would be beholden to you for a present loan.

*Sherlock.* For a present loan—well, sir?

*Drayton (aside to Raleigh).* Mark you his manner of speech? 'twas ever thus with him. (*To Sherlock.*) And for security he hath brought the writings pertaining to the estate; till thou canst prove which to be sufficient, myself will be his surety.

*Raleigh.* These be they.

*Sherlock.* These parchments, these parchments—ay, ay—Manor of West Horsley<sup>2</sup>—all these messuages and tenements—ay, ay. Well, sir, time is needed to examine these; what moneys dost thou require?

<sup>1</sup> An estate in Devonshire, thus assigned to him several years before, had been confiscated by James I.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Walter's second son afterwards lived here, and his arms long remained (perhaps still remain) on the walls.



*Raleigh.* In brief, four hundred pounds.

*Sherlock.* Four hundred pounds—well?

*Raleigh.* If upon inquiry and advice the security satisfy thee, at what rate of usance wilt thou lend me?

*Sherlock.* Rate of usance?—why, sir, money is hard to come by at this time; we have suffered great fires in 'our town,<sup>1</sup> and money hath been needed for the rebuilding; the rate hath risen of late—and there is talk of war with Spain, which will raise it further. I must myself borrow ere I lend, and must needs pay roundly. I cannot supply you at a less yearly rate than fifteen in the hundred.

*Drayton.* Nay, sir, my friend's need is not so great that he should pay so dearly. He laid his account for ten, and by my counsel he will give no more—for, look you, this is no venture, but a surety.

*Sherlock.* Then, I fear me, we deal not; but I will look into these writings—'tis possible I may be able to lend at fourteen and a half.

*Drayton.* Put up your papers, Walter, we will make other shift. This was but part of our business in Stratford, Master Sherlock; our intent was to visit your most illustrious townsman, and now, woe the day! we hear he is dead.

<sup>1</sup> There had been a conflagration in Stratford in 1614, which had destroyed a great part of the town.

*Sherlock.* Ay, who may he be?

*Raleigh.* Who but Master Shakespeare, for whose burial you will straightway hear the bell toll.

*Sherlock.* I heard say he was dead.

*Raleigh.* Didst not know him?

*Sherlock.* We had dealings together years ago—ay, he hath had money of me more than once or twice; but he consorted with mine enemy, John-a-Combe,<sup>1</sup> and we would none of each other after.

*Drayton.* I knew not John-a-Combe was the enemy of any man.

*Sherlock.* He was mine enemy in the sense that he hindered my dealings. This Shakespeare, too, outbid me for the tithes<sup>2</sup> when they were sold. I had been a richer man had he died a dozen years ago. I spend not, therefore, much sorrow on him.

*Raleigh.* Why, this comes nigh to blasphemy—let us be gone.

*Drayton.* Well, God be with you, Master Sherlock,—(*aside*) though I fear that may hardly be. Come, Walter. But, Master Sherlock, a moment, I pray you; I saw your daughter, Mistress Visor, of late.

*Sherlock.* My daughter, Mistress Visor, ay!

*Drayton.* A woman, sir, that is held in much

<sup>1</sup> John-a-Combe was a rich banker in Stratford, and a friend of Shakespeare, to whom he left a small legacy.

<sup>2</sup> Shakespeare invested a considerable sum in a lease of these tithes.

respect, though not for her worldly means. In truth, she hath but a sorry life of it.

*Sherlock.* She made her own bed when she fled from this house twenty years ago with young Visor. Let her lie on it, and if she find it hard, let her see that she complain not. The curse of disobedience hath been on her.

*Drayton.* Well, sir, she hath paid for that long ago, if misery may pay it. She looks like one that the world hath done its worst on, and is ready to quit it.

*Sherlock.* Sir, sir, I had thought you came here on a business matter. I have somewhat pressing to see to.

*Drayton.* One word, Master Sherlock. Her eldest son, your grandson, is a lad of promise, and for education she hath done what she may for him; but I heard of late that he was driven to hold horses in the market-place, and such chance shifts, for a bare living.

*Sherlock.* Let his father look to it; he took my daughter—let him look to his son—let him look to his son. (*To Raleigh.*) Will it please you leave the writings?

*Drayton.* Her daughter, near womanhood, is fair to look on, but——

*Sherlock.* Hast thou been set on to this? Your pardon if I quit you.

[*Retires into the inner room.*]

*Raleigh.* Come, let us away. So, I breathe again, now we are quit of that den. I have heard of such flints, but ne'er saw one till now.

*Drayton.* So thou carest not for his money at fifteen in the hundred?

*Raleigh.* Were't five I would not deal with him. 'Tis a stone, sure, that hath been cut in human shape and possessed by some vile spirit from the nether world. I almost marvel, Master Michael, that thou broughtst me to him.

*Drayton.* Why, was it not of our compact that I should show thee some of the models whence our master drew?

*Raleigh.* Models? how, Sherlock? Yet that name. Soft you, now, soft you! And money-lender, too. And then his daughter—why, Master Michael, 'tis clear as the sun—it runs on all-fours with the devil in the play; and yet, but that thou gav'st me the clue, I might have borrowed money from him twenty years without guessing. Well, this passes!

SCENE III.—*The Churchyard of Stratford.*

*A crowd waiting about the gate.*

*First Woman.* Didst not hear say there would be a dole? I see no signs of it.

*Second Woman.* 'Twas too good to be true; comfort is chary of coming to poor folk.

*First Man.* I have been here since one o' the clock, and with a toothache, for which thou seest my face is tied up, and the wind is keen. I had stayed within four walls but for the word that went about of a dole.

*First Woman.* Thou look'st none the comelier, Peter Quince, for the clout about thy yellow chaps, like a blue dish full of butter-milk.

*Second Man.* Thou shouldst have covered the rest of thy face with it, Peter, then wouldst thou have been fairer to look on than e'er thou wert yet.

*Second Woman.* I'll warrant thou eatest thy share when thou getst it, crust and all, in despite of thy toothache.

*Peter Quince.* Look if here be not lame Davy, coming for the sharing; how his crutch thumps in 's haste!—do but mark how he outspeeds blind Harry that feeleth his way by the wall.

*Second Man.* Ay, and look, Madge, my buxom lass, at what will please thee better, for here come gentlemen of worship.

*Madge.* The younger is as gallant a youth as e'er I set eyes on.

[*The bell tolls for the funeral.*]

*Enter DRAYTON and RALEIGH.**Raleigh.*

"No longer mourn for me when I am dead  
Than ye shall hear the surly sullen bell  
Give warning to the world that I am fled."<sup>1</sup>

How strange sound these words of his, with that bell for commentary! How his own phrases rise to the lips!

*Drayton.* Ay, Walter, you shall find but few occasions in life, solemn or merry, regarding which something apt, something that goeth deeper than common to the heart of the matter, hath not been said by him that is now silent.

*Raleigh.* One that reads him as a student, and lovingly, as my father from my first youth hath taught me to do, and hath moreover a good memory, shall find in him (my father is wont to say) a rich vocabulary. But mark you the crowd here! 'tis the spontaneous respect of the people for so famous a townsman. Now look I to see (what we have not yet seen) the sorrow of Stratford for the loss of her great son. As the sun lights the hovel no less than the palace, so should his fame reach to, and warm, the poorest here.

*Drayton.* Be not too assured that his fame is of a kind to be felt by such as these, though were he a commander who had brought home a Spanish

<sup>1</sup> The opening lines of Shakespeare's 71st Sonnet.



galleon, or a courtier who had set the fashions at Whitehall, or a foolish lord with fifty retainers at his back, no cap so greasy but it would cover an idolater. But let us mark what passes 'twixt the townsfolk and this old beadle who cometh hither with his older satellite.

*Enter a Beadle and Assistant-Beadle with Servants bearing baskets.*

*Assist.-Beadle.* Neighbours, make way, I pray you; stand aside from the gates.

*Crowd.* The dole, the dole! Good Master Beadle, a word with you—me, sirs, me—look hither, 'tis I, &c.

*First Beadle.* What a consternation is here! Make not such a clamour. We are charged, I and my partner, with the contribution of this dole, and we will contribute it without respect of persons, save that we will give most to those we think most worthy. Stand you back, Quince and Flute.

*Quince.* Yet do not overlook me, good Master Beadle.

*Flute.* Remember me, an't please you, Master Derrick.

*Assist. - Beadle.* Heard you not what Master Derrick said? Would you set yourselves to teach him in this business?

*Beadle.* Ay, would they, such is their vanity and their greediness. It might be thought they had

ne'er seen a funeral before. When did any of you know me overlook one that should be remembered? Have I been beadle here forty years for nought?

*Assist.-Beadle.* Ye dare not say he hath for your lives.

*Crowd.* The bread! the bread!

*Beadle.* 'Ods my life, they would tear it out of the baskets, like wolves. Neighbours, though it be customary to give loaves only, yet Master Shakespeare, out of his love for you, and because ye should mourn him fittingly, hath desired that beef should be bestowed along with the bread.

*Several.* Worthy gentleman!

*First Woman.* Oh, good soul, this shall profit him, sure, where he's gone.

*Second Woman.* Nay, I ever said there were none in Stratford more rememberful of the poor than Master Shakespeare.

*Assist.-Beadle.* Ay, and more than that, there be four firkins of ale to be broached after the burial, behind the church.

*Beadle.* Neighbour Turgis, wilt thou still go about to forestall me? I was coming to the ale presently, when time fitted. Do thou stand by the baskets and give out the dole as I shall tell thee. Hast thou the bag of groats ready, too?

*Assist.-Beadle.* Yea, Master Derrick.

[*They distribute the provisions and money.*]

*Flute.* Shall I not have a loaf and a groat for my



wife? She hath had twins this morning, therefore could not come.

*Old Woman.* Thy wife, forsooth!—my son hath worked at New Place, and helped to mend the fence i' th' garden last winter, and now is he rheumaticky and bed-rid. A dole for him, I pray you, sweet Master Derrick.

*Beadle.* Be not too forward, woman; thou art not too well thought on, I warrant thee.

*Old Woman.* Is acquaintance and service to count for nought?—'tis a shame, then.

*Beadle.* Quiet thy tongue, mistress; it may be I shall be called on to deal with thee in other fashion than doles. Thou art deputed by many for a witch, let me tell thee; thou art suspect of keeping a toad, and, moreover, 'tis thought thou hast a familiar, one Hopdance.<sup>1</sup> (*To another.*) But wherefore hangst thou back, Cicely Hacket,<sup>2</sup> thou that wast once a maid-servant at New Place? Press nearer, and hold out thine apron.

*Cicely.* Oh, sir, I came not here for the dole, but indeed to see the last of him who hath been ever kind to me and mine.

*Beadle.* The more reason thou shouldst have thy part. Let her do so, Goodman Turgis, for thou knowst that she that humbleth herself should be

<sup>1</sup> "Hopdance cries in Tom's belly for two white herrings. Croak not, black angel!" *Edgar (feigning madness)* in "King Lear."

<sup>2</sup> Cicely Hacket, described by Sly as "the woman's maid of the house," in the "Taming of the Shrew."

exhorted; and 'twere not ill, methinks, if thou gav'st her, moreover, a share for her sick mother. (*Calling through the gate to boys in the churchyard.*) Young fry, wilt thou leave leaping over the grave-stones? else shall my staff and thy backs be better acquainted. I see thee, young Pickbone, drumming with thine heels on Mistress Keech's epithet; come off the stone, or 'twill be worse for thee, thou naughty varlet—and thy tall slip of a sister, too, I saw her but now up with her coats and over the railing of yonder tomb like any stag.

*Drayton (to Raleigh).* The oldest of these servants that came with the beadles is Shakespeare's own man Adam. I will speak to him. This is a sharp sundering for thee, Adam. Leave thy basket. Step aside, and speak with me of thy good master.

*Adam.* O Master Drayton, I looked that he should bury me: would I were with him! Were I young, I could ne'er hope to see such another master; and being old, I have no desire but to follow him.

*Drayton.* Was his sickness sudden?

*Adam.* Nay, sir,—I have foreboded, this many a day, how 'twas with him. He hath pined and dwindled, and then again he hath mended for a while and would walk abroad; and ever with a kind word and a jest, as was his wont. But I found, from day to day, his step slower, his hand heavier on my shoulder, his breath shorter.

*Drayton.* Did himself look for his end?

*Adam.* Ay, sir; but made as though he had a long to-come before him. Four days since ('twas o' Sunday) he said to me, "Adam, I have a fancy about my burial; but say nought of it as yet to my daughter. I have here set down the names of those I desire to bear me to the grave;" which he there-upon read to me, and they are even now in the house, making ready.

*Drayton.* Some of note and condition, mayhap?

*Adam.* Not so, not so, not so, Master Drayton; there art thou wide indeed of the mark. Never trod man among men who looked on gentle and simple with a more equal brotherly eye than Master Shakespeare. A fine coat or a ragged jerkin made no more difference in a man, in his eyes, than whether his hair were black or brown. Nay, strange to tell of a man of his gifts, he seemed oft to find as much matter in a fool as in a wise man; he would take pleasure in discoursing with many a one of this town that simple I would have fubbed off as a lackwit. So he saith to me, "First have I set down, to carry the head of my coffin, Hugh Bardolph and Corporal Nym,"<sup>1</sup> poor men, both, Master Drayton. Bardolph, one of many of the name here, was a tapster; Nym, a pensioner of the Earl of Leicester, in whose army he served in the Low Countries, though I did never hear with much credit

<sup>1</sup> See "King Henry V."

*Raleigh.* Bardolph and Nym! O brave Shakespeare!

*Adam.* "Next," he saith, "I have set down John Rugby and James Gurney," ancient serving-men, your worships, and now almsmen.

*Drayton.* Whom in his plays he hath allotted, Rugby to Dr Caius<sup>1</sup>——

*Raleigh.* Gurney to the Lady Falconbridge.<sup>2</sup>

*Adam.* "After them Thomas Wart," an old fletcher of this town, sir——

*Raleigh.* One of Falstaff's ragged recruits he——

*Adam.* "And Kit Sly. And, to end the company, Snug the joiner,<sup>3</sup> and Nick Bottom"—and, the list being thus ended, my dear master laughed so long and so merrily that I cried, "Sure one that can laugh so hath small need to name his bearers."

*Raleigh.* Truly did he make Romeo say——

"How oft, when men were at the point of death,  
Have they been merry!"

*Adam.* "And be sure, Adam," he said, "that thou have old Derrick, and his ancient comrade Turgis, to give out the dole—and see it be of good kind and plentiful." And he charged me again I should not tell his daughter, Mistress Hall, of these dispositions—for wherefore, said he, should I add a few days, or hours, to her grief?

<sup>1</sup> "Merry Wives of Windsor."

<sup>2</sup> "King John."

<sup>3</sup> "Midsummer Night's Dream."

*Drayton.* Derrick is now in the sixth age, he is the *slipper'd pantaloon*; and Turgis toucheth on the seventh, that of *second childishness and mere oblivion*,—yet are they still the shadows of that pair whom men shall long smile at.

*Beadle.* Hath every one his portion?

*Assist.-Beadle.* Yea, Master Derrick.

*Beadle.* Then give what's over how you will, and make an end shortly, for we are needed at New Place.

*Drayton.* Do ye walk in the procession, Master Beadle?

*Beadle.* Of a surety, worshipful sir. The funeral might as well make shift without the coffin as without me and my partner; we walk before choir and parson, at the head of the train; we be its eyebrows. And, neighbour Turgis, if thou shouldst walk half a foot or so to the rearward of me, 'twould be forgiven thee, for so would the people on both sides the way have me in view; and thou, neighbour, art old—and moreover small—and feeble, moreover—and thy port doth scarce beseem the van of a ceremonial, the gifts for which are, in truth, not given to all.

*Assist.-Beadle.* I will govern myself as thou desirest, good neighbour.

*Adam.* I have here herbs, for those who will bear them at the funeral. Will ye have cypress or rosemary, sirs?

*Drayton.* Thanks, good Adam; we will bear each

a branch of cypress, and will long wear it in our hearts, too.

[*The Beadles and Servants depart for New Place. DRAYTON and RALEIGH pass into the Churchyard.*]

*Drayton.*

"Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs;  
Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes  
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth."<sup>1</sup>

[*They enter the Church.*]

#### SCENE IV.—*The inside of the Church.*

*Raleigh.* I have seen many a great cathedral, both in England and abroad, holding the bones of kings and saints and heroes; but never one that enshrines dust so sacred as will this we stand in.

*Drayton.* 'Tis a fair church, and our poet might find many a less fitting resting-place than amid these pillars and arches, with the plash of Avon for requiem. Yonder, before the altar, yawns the dark portal through which he will pass out of our sphere. (*They approach the grave.*) What a wealth of ripened thought will be summed up here! what a world of promise is the future robbed of! This grave divides us not from one man, but from unnumbered men and women that might have taught and delighted us; it engulfs not one life but a multitude of unacted lives with their passions and

<sup>1</sup> "King Richard II.," act iii. sc. 2.



vicissitudes; here will pass away not a solitary figure but a pageant. It may be that, so long as Time hath dominion here, he will never spare such another spirit to eternity.

*Raleigh.* Here doth the poet fulfil the prophecy he made through the mouth of Prospero, that other enchanter:—

“I'll break my staff,  
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,  
And deeper than did ever plummet sound,  
I'll drown my book!”

[*Chanting heard in the distance.*

*Drayton.* Those choristers tell us that he is on his last journey; let us go meet the funeral train.

[*They pass out into the porch. The Funeral approaches the gate of the Churchyard. The Beadles walk first, the Choristers, in white robes, and the Minister follow, preceding the Coffin; then the mourners, two and two, each bearing a branch of yew, cypress, or rosemary in one hand, a taper in the other. As the Choristers enter the Churchyard they begin to sing the following:—*]

#### FUNERAL HYMN.

##### I.

Part of our hearts thou bear'st with thee  
To silence and to dust,  
Fair hopes that now must withered be,  
Unfading love and trust;



So thou wilt lie not all alone  
Beneath thy monumental stone.

## II.

No echoes of this fretful world,  
No glimmer of the day,  
Can reach thee, in thy shroud enfurled,  
Thou canst not hear us pray,  
Nor seest our tears, nor heed'st our moan,  
Beneath thy monumental stone.

## III.

The good thou didst thy brother here,  
The evil put aside,  
The victory gained o'er sloth and fear,  
O'er avarice, hate, and pride,  
These make the wealth thou still canst own  
Above thy monumental stone.

## IV.

With these for warrant thou shalt go  
Where sorrows enter not ;  
Still new thy paths, when here below  
Thy sculptured name's forgot,  
The roof decayed, the grasses grown  
Above thy monumental stone.

*Raleigh.* Methinks, Master Drayton, these verses  
might better befit some good husband and father of

the common sort, than Shakespeare, whose glorious intellect, shining through his works, is his indefeasible title to remembrance. To sing of him thus, is to speak of a falcon and say nought of her wings; to commend Behemoth for other qualities than his strength; to sum up Cæsar and forget his universal empire.

*Drayton.* It is apparent, Walter, that these good citizens believe they have in hand one who differs from them only in that his steps have lain in paths apart from theirs, even as an ostrich differs from a swan in strangeness rather than in excellence. Therefore it may seem to them that this hymn, which hath, doubtless, heralded many an honest alderman to his grave, may also serve very well for Shakespeare.

*Raleigh.* Tell me of the mourners: who is she that stoops her long hood so low between her taper and her branch of rosemary?

*Drayton.* His daughter, Mistress Hall; beside whom walks her husband. Next, with flushed, tear-bedewed face (yet with a corner of an eye to beholders, methinks) his other and younger daughter, the buxom Judith, married, 'tis two months since, to that comfortable vintner, Master Quiney, who trieth vainly to cover his natural contentment with a decorous mask of woe.

*Raleigh.* And who handleth his taper and his branch as 'twere a bottle and a glass. Sir Thomas

and Master Thynne I already know, but who are the next?

*Drayton.* He with the shrewd pale face and bushy eyebrows is Julius Shaw, with whom walks jovial William Reynolds—both friends and neighbours of Shakespeare; and after them come two other of his friends,—Antony Nash, whose face of gloom is the endowment of nature, and lendeth poignancy to his many jests—and Thomas Combe, son of John-a-Combe. The pair that follow are Hamnet and Judith Sadler, the god-parents of Shakespeare's twin-children. And marked you the austere aspect of the minister? he is one of the Puritan sort,<sup>1</sup> much thought of by the Halls, out of favour to whom he comes, doubtless, to do this office. The rest be town dignities, as aldermen and burgesses, and other townsfolk.

[*The Procession passes into the Church, DRAYTON and RALEIGH joining it, and the service begins. After prayers at the grave, the Minister preaches a short Sermon, which ends in this wise:—*]

"So, friends, having essayed to draw from the presence of death in our midst some matter for edification, I will speak a word of this particular brother who hath departed, dwelling, as is at these

<sup>1</sup> Probably the same Preacher who is mentioned in old records of the Stratford Corporation as having been a guest at New Place a year or two before.

seasons the custom, chiefly on what may do him grace, and serve to sweeten his memory in the nostrils of those whom he hath left still in the bonds of the flesh. And, first, of the fountain of his charities—it hath been known in Stratford for a perennial spring, abundant in refreshment to the poor, and in counsel and all good offices to those who needed countenance of another kind; and if (as must be said were a man to speak truly) he ever regarded necessity more than deserving, and inquired not over closely into the way of life of those he relieved—nay, would oftentimes succour and comfort the godless no less than the godly, and bestow his bounty where it was like to be ill-spent—yet is that to be accounted better than the withholding altogether of alms, as some use. Next, of his excellent charity of another sort, I mean the brotherly relation he held with all conditions of men; it hath been noted among you that he, who was used elsewhere to consort with the great, and hath been favoured even of princes, would yet converse with the lowly on a general level of goodwill, as if the only apparel he took thought of were the skin we are all born with; for which, indeed, he had great ensample. And, again, he hath ever gone among his fellows with a cheerful spirit, so that his presence hath been as wine among friends, and as oil among makebates. And though I dare not say that he inclined of preference to the con-

versation of the godly, nor could be counted of the fellowship of saints, nor even a favourer of them, yet have I ever found him apt at serious converse, courteous in bearing, weighty in reply, and of unshakeable serenity when I have adventured to press the truth on him somewhat instantly; inso-much, that I, whose vocation 'tis to battle for the truth, have myself, ere now, been sore put to it to hold mine own, and found me in straits to oppose him, so nimble was his wit; though I doubt not that (the clear right being with me) I should, with time for recollection, have had vouchsafed to me the wherewithal to give him sufficient answer. And it hath, at these times, seemed to me that he was a goodly vessel full of merchandise, yet driven by the wind apart from the port where alone her cargo could be bartered for that which is bread; and I have travailed over him with a sore travail; for I have hardly doubted that, with such gifts, he might, had it been so ordered, have justly aspired to be chief magistrate of your town, or even to serve you in Parliament; or again, with diligent study and prayer, to become a preacher of weight, and have struck in the pulpit a good stroke for God's honour and the devil's discomfiture. But, alas! it is known to all of you, and I dare not dissemble it, that his calling hath been one that delighteth the carnal-minded, and profiteth the idle, and maketh the godly sad of heart; while,

as for his talent, it hath been put out to use where the only return is the praise which fleeteth as the bubble on the stream, and the repute which perisheth as the leaves of autumn; for the making of rhymes and verses which flatter the ear, and the art of representing the vain shows of things, howe'er skilfully practised (and I profess not to have that acquaintance with the writings called plays, nor poems other than godly hymns, to judge his handiwork), cannot be held profitable for him that writes nor him that hears them. And therefore, whatsoe'er of wit and sense they may contain must be accounted as water poured out on the sand, which, better bestowed, might have solaced the thirsty, and nourished the herbs and the fruits, whereof many would have eaten and been strengthened. But though I may not altogether hold my peace on these matters, yet am I loth to dwell on them at this time; rather would I point to the hope that our departed brother had, in the soberer life he of late led among you, put aside such toys as unworthy, and given us warrant to forget in him their author, and, moreover, to believe that, had he been spared unto us, he would have removed himself further, year by year, from such vanities and lightnesses of his youth, until, haply, by the example of a godly household, and the ministrations of faithful expounders of God's Word, he should have attained even to the perfect day."



[*The sermon ended, the Coffin is borne to the grave, the Minister and Mourners stand around, the service is concluded, and all depart from the Church.*]

SCENE V.—*The Street near New Place.*

*Raleigh* (hastening to rejoin *Drayton*). Your pardon, sir, for seeming to forsake you ; I did but stay to throw my branch of cypress into the grave, and have kept only this handful, which I will preserve as a memorial, and make of it an heirloom. But, Master *Drayton*, I had some ado to refrain from answering that preacher even in the church ; for I have somewhat of my father's bluntness, and cannot abide that folly or conceit, in the guise whether of honesty, or religion, or philosophy, should go unchallenged ; and here was a man who, having the vision of a mole, mistook Parnassus for a mole-hill, and went about to measure it with his ell-wand, and even thought to do men service by persuading them that the golden lights and purple shadows of the mountain, its fountains and dells, the forests that clothe it, the clouds that crown it, and the Muses that make it their haunt, are all vain illusions together.

*Drayton*. You shall find, Master *Walter*, as you grow older, that all greatness which is not gross and palpable doth require some keenness of vision to discern it ; therefore doth fame ofttimes grow slowly, and from small beginnings, as when a man



notes, of a sudden, in the else familiar aspect of the heavens, an eclipse or a comet, and others gather to him, till the crowd swells, and the rumour goes abroad of a portent. And thus will it be with the fame of Shakespeare, who had so much in common with common men that they accounted him one of themselves, as Mercury passed among herdsmen for a herdsman, and Apollo among shepherds for a shepherd.

*Raleigh.* Lo you, where the mourners of his household approach the house. Let us wait here while they enter, and I pray you beguile the minute by telling me of them. Of what fashion is Mistress Hall?

*Drayton.* Susannah is, from a child, of an earnest nature and a serious wit. Learning little from books, she hath learned much from converse and observation, and so in her hath her father found a companion; somewhat retiring at first, but upon occasion speaking warmly with spirit; devout withal, capable of strict argument for conscience' sake, yet of a becoming humility; so that I have oft thought her father drew the Isabella of "Measure for Measure" from her, she being about twenty years old when 'twas writ; even her who says

"Let me be ignorant, and in nothing good  
But graciously to know I am no better."

*Raleigh.* Is her helpmate worthy of her?

*Drayton.* A worthy man is Doctor Hall—who consorts with Susannah in piety as in love: one who, next his God and his wife, loveth his most honourable calling, and hath grown to a physician of repute here in Warwickshire, much sought after by great ones of the shire.

*Raleigh.* Taketh the fair Judith in aught after her father?

*Drayton.* Hardly, sir; though her twin-brother, Hamnet, who died young, was a child of rare promise. The girl is sprightly, but of small depth or substance, favouring the mother. She might have sat for Anne Page, being about sixteen when her father drew Anne; and she is well-matched with Master Quiney, whose wit o'ertops not hers, who is gay and jovial as becometh a vintner, taking pleasure in what pleases her. Marry, he hath the merit of being the son of her father's old friend Richard Quiney.

*Raleigh.* Sir, a nobleman might have fittingly found in her a mate, she being Shakespeare's child. But what of the wife who helped him to these daughters?

*Drayton.* 'Twas Shakespeare's mishap, sir (and I say it for your warning), to wed at an age when the fancy and heat of youth o'ercrow the judgment. He had seen few women, and none of the finest. Anne Hathaway, Shakespeare's elder by eight years, was buxom as Judith is now; his fancy

dressed her in qualities not hers ; the secrecy of their meetings lent a flavour of adventure ; and so he became bound to one who matched with him as finch with falcon, in youth a country lass, in age a mere housewife, something fretful, but, in the sum, contented ; and Shakespeare, who was of a temper to fit himself to what is, dwelt with her here in much kindness. But see— Doctor Hall doth await us on the steps of the entrance.

*Doctor Hall.* Master Drayton, I pray you that you pass not by the house of your departed friend without entering ; I beseech you, sir, you and your friend ;—'twill be a kindness to come in. You shall not be excused, sirs.

SCENE VI.—*A Room in Shakespeare's House.*

DOCTOR HALL, DRAYTON, and RALEIGH.

*Doctor Hall.* Here, sirs, is my father-in-law's parlour, where he hath mostly abided in this last illness. Be pleased to sit while I fetch my wife, who will part with a few moments of her sorrow in seeing so old a friend. [*He goes out.*]

*Raleigh.* By Saint George, sir, the poet was bravely lodged ! How rich the staining of this window, where, through the lower panes, we look on the garden ! and above, there stands emblazoned the falcon with his golden spear, steel-pointed, that Sir Thomas told us of. This wainscot, too, is

quaintly carved, and the chimney-front of a rich design. But, soft you now—whose graven portrait is this that hangs in the midst of it? By my troth, 'tis my father's!

*Drayton.* Ay, Master Raleigh; think not but that the poet, with his wide embrace for his fellow-men, took such merit as Sir Walter's near his soul. The daring that went forth on the unknown deep, the search for El Dorado, the finding of strange lands and stranger peoples, all these fired his fancy. 'Tis to our great mariners we owe the sweet magic of Prospero's isle, the innocence of Miranda, the savageness of Caliban, the witcheries of Ariel.

*Raleigh.* And above my father's hangs Bacon's; these Shakespeare looked on as he sat by the fire, and thus was homage done both to adventure and to thought. And on this side, engraven like the others, from a painting I have seen, hangs the Earl of Southampton's.

*Drayton.* Whereby is homage done to friendship; greatly and constantly did the Earl love Shakespeare. And here, when he sat by this window that looks on the garden, he saw on the wall opposite, the presentments of his more level associates—Ben Jonson, Marlow, Beaumont and Fletcher (twinned in one carven oak frame), Spenser, Sidney, and, lo you, mine unworthy self.

*Raleigh.* But what strange company for such

progeny of the Muse are these others on the opposing wall! Calvin and Knox, Ridley and Jewel, and here, portrayed in chalk by a cunning hand, the divine who preached to us even now. What do these godly men here? Did Shakespeare love them?

*Drayton.* Shakespeare, Master Walter, looked on Puritan and Prelatist as the wearers of certain garbs hiding men underneath; 'twas concerning the men he chiefly cared to inquire. 'Tis the Doctor and Mistress Hall who have solaced themselves by hanging these here; the Doctor hath long been a chief of that party in Stratford which, though it forsakes not quite the Church, yet holds by that corner of it which is nearest Geneva; and his wife, from her natural bent, leans to the austerer (perchance I should say, the more earnest) side of religion. But Shakespeare, in such matters, would, as Polonius advises, give his ear to all, his voice to few, and tolerated the effigies of these grave divines without any special love for themselves.

*Enter DOCTOR HALL, his WIFE, their young daughter ELIZABETH, aged eight, and SHAKESPEARE'S WIDOW.*

*Mistress Hall.* Master Drayton, your pardon yet awhile if I cannot greet you—the seeing of you stirs up thoughts that rob me of all words.

*[She turns aside.]*

*Mistress Shakespeare.* O Master Drayton!—Son



Hall, lead me to my great chair. Oh, what a loss is mine !

*Drayton.* Your loss is the world's loss, too, good madam.

*Mistress Shakespeare.* Oh, sir, who will uphold me now, a poor, weak woman? Mr Shakespeare in his merry mood would say, "Come, thou'lt make a brave widow, Anne—who shall be thy next?" But Lord, sir, I'll ne'er marry again.

*Raleigh.* Kings, madam, might be proud of such a predecessor.

*Mistress Shakespeare.* Kings, sir! What should kings have to do with me! You are pleased to jest, young sir; though kings and queens, too, have looked with favour on Mr Shakespeare. But the funeral, Susannah—was all becoming? Did the sermon make good mention of my husband? And the dole—was all the dole given away? But oh, my poor brain! Master Drayton and his friend must eat somewhat. There is a stuffed chine. Oh, how he that's gone loved a stuffed chine! Here be the keys, Elizabeth; see the chine set forth in the dining chamber.

*Drayton.* Nay, nay, good madam, think not of us.

*Mistress Shakespeare.* But ye must eat somewhat, sirs, indeed, now. Daughter, dost know that my new black hood is sewn awry, and I can go not forth till it be straight? And for drink, sirs, will ye a posset, or sack with sugar? The wine is from my son Quiney's cellars, and of his choicest.

*Drayton.* Nay, Mistress Shakespeare, we will rather talk than eat or drink.

*Mistress Shakespeare.* O Master Michael! seeing thee minds me of my youth, and of Shottery where my husband courted me—the bridge of the stream where he would await me; but I can talk no more—I can but weep. Lead me forth, son Hall. Go not till you have eaten, Master Drayton; do but taste the chine. O sweet husband!

[*The Doctor leads her forth.*]

*Mistress Hall.* Master Drayton, your pardon once again. I feel some shame at being thus o'er-mastered—'tis not meet to let our spirits be held in dominion by a private sorrow—but when I think on him, my heart turns to water. But, Master Drayton, I have marvelled you came not to my father in his sickness.

*Drayton.* I knew not of it—think you I could have stayed from him? I was far beyond rumour of his condition, and had come now, O heavens! hoping to behold him and listen to him, as of yore.

*Mistress Hall.* Much and oft hath he talked of you; for it was growing to be his chief pleasure to sit with old friends, or, they absent, to talk of them. His sickness, though it subdued not his spirit, sobered it; his mirth fell to the level of cheerfulness; he was oftener silent and rapt; and oh, sir, though I dare not aver it, I will yet hope that his thoughts were above.



*Drayton.* Trust me, Mistress Hall, 'twould be a narrower heaven than we should all hope for, where room and gracious welcome were not proclaimed for him. Think you his place can be elsewhere than with the greatest and best that have gone before?

*Mistress Hall.* Oh, sir, 'tis that troubles me. Hath he not trusted overmuch to that bright intellect? Hath he not been as one that looketh forth from his watch-tower, and beholdeth a fertile land, and a great dominion, and heedeth not that the foundations of the building are of sand? Hath he not—but I will not speak of the thorn that, since he is gone, pricketh me sorer than before. He charged me, Master Michael, that you should see what writings he hath left behind. Would, oh would they had dealt with such things as only are of great price!

*Drayton.* Wrote he much in these latter days?

*Mistress Hall.* Yea, often, and would call his pen the sluice without which his thoughts would o'erflow his brain, and perchance drown his wits. But now, sir, I will take you to his own chamber, where I will show you the coffer wherein he kept his writings.

[*DRAYTON follows her out—RALEIGH takes up a book.*

*Doctor Hall (returning).* Your pardon, sir, for leaving you without company.

*Raleigh.* Nay, I had the best of company—even

fancies about the great one that so lately dwelt here. Was this book his?

*Doctor Hall.* Yea, and one of the last he read in.

*Raleigh.* Right glad am I to hear it—and right proud will my father be to know that the book he wrote in his captivity was of the last studied by the man he hath ever esteemed the most illustrious of this age.

*Doctor Hall.* Thy father! the History of the World! you are then the son of Sir Walter Raleigh?

*Raleigh.* Ay, sir, I am but too forward to own that kinship.

*Doctor Hall.* Sir Walter's health must needs have suffered much wrong from his long imprisonment. I have heard that he hath been mightily shaken of an ague.

*Raleigh.* Ay, sir, one contracted years ago in the service of our king's famous predecessor.

*Doctor Hall.* Well is it said, put not your trust in princes. I may tell you, sir, that I do strongly desire to see that time when none shall be so great as to o'ertop the law, and do think it better that the claws of kings should be pared, than that in their breath should lie the liberties of men. But I pray you, sir, hath Sir Walter made trial of the decoction of dittany, or of fumitorie, to correct the malice of this ague? I have made essay of the root satyrion, in like cases, and found his effects to be good.

*Raleigh.* I doubt not, sir, that all approved remedies have been used by his physicians.—Did Master Shakespeare suffer much pain?

*Doctor Hall.* His malady was wasting rather than painful, save that toward the last he was oft seized with a panting and passion of the heart which left him very nigh to death, for the which I found the syrup of gilliflower, and flour of marigold, in wine, of much avail; the juice of roses also doth greatly comfort the heart. But of your father. I have ever heard Sir Walter reputed for a gentleman of qualities the most diverse, as skill in war by sea and land, courtiership, and statesmanship, the poet's and the chronicler's art, and in all a master—some of which concern not greatly an obscure physician; but I have also heard that he hath a pretty knowledge of pharmacy.

*Raleigh.* He hath some skill in simples. But I pray you, tell me somewhat of Master Shakespeare, the hope of seeing whom fetched me hither, and, next to that lost contentment, will be the hearing of him from those he loved. Was not a play called the 'Tempest' (which I have not yet seen imprinted) one of the latest of his works for the theatre?

*Doctor Hall.* I believe it was. It hath been told me that the famous cordial which bears Sir Walter's name<sup>1</sup> was administered both to the Queen and

<sup>1</sup> A specific, or panacea, well known in that age as *Sir Walter's Cordial*, the ingredients of which are given in the text.

Prince Henry. I have the recipe writ down, but I doubt me whether I have the ingredients in just quantities. Can you advise me of this?

*Raleigh.* I think my memory may serve me so far. But, sir, 'tis Master Drayton's opinion, as he said but now, that such expeditions by sea as my father hath adventured may have caused conception, in the poet's fancy, of the story of that play.

*Doctor Hall.* It may be so: 'tis of a shipwreck and an enchanted isle, as I remember me to have heard; good sooth, Master Raleigh, there be so many evils in this world crying for redress, that I bestow not much thought on enchantments, and love-tales, and bygone histories. (*Takes out a memorandum-book.*) First there be, in the cordial, of zedoary and saffron each half a pound.

*Raleigh.* True, sir. But talked Master Shakespeare greatly of his plays while he was busied in inditing them.

*Doctor Hall.* Perchance, to others who were poets; but, indeed, my business in life hath so little relation with what he writ that I did not greatly seek his confidence at such times. Now, regarding this recipe—as to the powder of crab's claws, I have set it down at fourteen ounces.

*Raleigh.* It should be sixteen, sir.

*Doctor Hall.* Why, there now, see, good youth, what a service you have done me; for just proportion is of the essence of a prescript, and I have

hitherto compounded this rare remedy but imperfectly. Of cinnamon and nutmegs, two ounces,—cloves, one,—cardamoms, half an ounce,—sugar, two ounces.

*Raleigh.* All these be right.

*Doctor Hall.* I thank you heartily for your correction in the matter of the crab's claws. I will note it. (*Goes to write at a table.*)

*Raleigh (to Elizabeth).* Come hither, pretty one, and tell me thy name.

*Elizabeth (whispering).* My grandfather called me his Queen Bess; and said he would liefer be ruled by me than the older one. (*Aloud.*) Didst thou not say, sir, thou wouldst like to hear of him from those he loved?

*Raleigh.* Ay, little maid.

*Elizabeth.* Then thou must talk of him to me, for he hath oft said 'twas me he loved best, and (*weeping*), I shall ne'er be tired talking of him.

*Raleigh.* Didst often bear him company, Bess?

*Elizabeth.* Ay, for my father goeth much from home, and when my mother was in her store-closet, or visiting the sick, my grandfather and I kept together, we and our two friends.

*Raleigh.* Who be they?

*Elizabeth.* Mopsa is one—this, look you, is Mopsa (*fetching a cat from the hearth*). When I would do her pleasure, I scratch her behind the ear, but my



grandfather would always tickle her under the chin. Her father and mother were fairies.

*Raleigh.* How cam'st thou to know that, Bessie?

*Elizabeth.* She was left by them one night in the snow, where my grandfather found her, and brought her hither wrapped in his cloak; and he told me all the tale of how she left fairyland—when there is time I'll tell it thee. And our other friend is Bobadil.

*Raleigh.* Is Bobadil a man?

*Elizabeth.* Nay, surely you know he is a dog; kind and civil to us, but with other dogs he quarrelleth and growleth, and then flieth from them in fear, loving not to fight. And I have a little horse which grandfather did buy for me, and a riding-coat like the Queen's maids, and, so long as he could, we did ride together.

*Raleigh.* Well, Elizabeth, I am going presently to the wars, and when I come again thou and I shall be married, shall we not?

*Elizabeth.* Ay, if my mother will let me, for thou art handsome and kind.

*Raleigh.* Seest thou this chain round my hat, with the pearl clasp? well, I have kept it for my lady-love, when I should have one—so 'tis yours—look, I clasp it on your neck for a token, and when we are wedded you shall tell me the story of Mopsa.

*Elizabeth.* Sure, 'tis the prettiest chain. I give

thee for't these four kisses. I will go show it my grandmother.<sup>1</sup> [*She goes out.*]

*Raleigh.* Methinks, Master Hall, that Elizabeth might serve at a pinch for her grandfather's very faithful chronicler.

*Doctor Hall.* Ay, sir, better than most; she bore him company ever when he was inditing, and oft at other seasons. For me, I did greatly love and esteem my good father-in-law, and we lived together in pleasant communion; but for the works which, as I have heard, those that make a play-place of this world find such content in, he ever knew that ceaseless warring with the diseases of the bodies, and (what is more) of the souls, of my neighbours, and care for those public matters in which I discern a way to a better condition of the world's affairs, have left me small leisure for fancies to which I am, good sooth, noways affected; therefore he spake not to me of them. But there is one sweet piece of work, of which (not to speak profanely) he was author, that I daily study with reverence and love—and hither it comes.

*Re-enter MISTRESS HALL and DRAYTON.*

*Drayton.* I am like the man in the fable who was privileged to look in the cave where a wizard had

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth married, at eighteen, Mr Thomas Nash, and secondly, Sir John Barnard, leaving no children by either.



collected the treasures of the earth, and was so dazed that he could neither pouch any, nor even take account of what he saw. Only I know there be there, beside plays already acted though never imprinted, and others of which only false copies have gone abroad, a multitude of uncoined ingots and uncut jewels of thought, which that matchless mind hath thrown off as if in mere exercise and at breathing-time. What measureless delight will these bestow on the world!<sup>1</sup>

*Mistress Hall.* But I know not, sir, if the world shall ever see them. My father gave me no command in that matter, and it may be that I shall serve his memory better with pious men by keeping them private.

*Drayton.* Trust me, Mistress Hall, the holder of these shall owe a heavy debt to thy father's fame.

*Mistress Hall.* Nay, sir, what is fame that it must needs be satisfied at all hazards? the bandying of a name from one idle mouth to another!—praise as hollow and unavailing as the night wind sighing o'er an epitaph!—what profit or comfort is in such for the departed?

*Raleigh.* By heaven, madam, not so!—rather is

<sup>1</sup> Halliwell says, "According to Roberts, two large chests full of Shakespeare's loose papers and manuscripts" (belonging to a baker who had married one of his descendants) "were destroyed in the great fire at Warwick." Falstaff's speech, "I have given them away to bakers' wives, and they have made boulders of them," seems almost prophetic of this.

fame the linking of far-off generations by the common bond of one great name : for the dead, it is a second life among men, in which earthiness is purged away, and what is imperishable tarries—and, for the living, their just inheritance ; so, to defeat Fame is to commit a double, nay, a tenfold wrong. Her trumpet sounds no empty strain ; 'tis the appeal against our baser promptings, the summons to action, the meed of achievement, the celebration on earth of the spirit's triumph over the grave : thus it maketh the music to which mankind do march, and which, silent, would leave them slaves.

*Mistress Hall.* Your words, young sir, are manly, but I know not if they be godly. Of what avail that men should march, if not heavenward ? How poor be centuries of this fame of yours to one hour of that other life we look for ! Think not, Master Drayton, that I am dull to the spell of my father's verse ; as a maiden it enthralled my fancy and charmed mine ear ; even now could I taste the delights of it ; but I have come to know that in such enchantments lies deadly peril, and I must pass on with my fingers in mine ears. Feeling thus, I know not if, in conscience, I may give a voice to what he hath left, by utterance in books.

*Drayton.* I will not do battle with these scruples in the hour of your grief, but will trust to the future for overcoming them. Even if no new matter go forth, it were grievous to withhold the true versions

of his plays.<sup>1</sup> Methinks I espy, in the depths of time, his image veiled, and mark the generations of men toiling to unravel his meanings, and piecing out his maimed verses, and clipt fancies, with guess-work; collecting the while, in pain and doubt, what unthreaded memories tradition may preserve of him. And I do fear me, that if some disciple be not found elsewhere, more devoted than any his birthplace affords, to tell posterity what manner of man he was, there may, in a brief space, and ere his fame hath reached its zenith, remain of this chief of English poets nothing but a wondrous name.

[DRAYTON and RALEIGH take their leave, and quit New Place.

SCENE VII.—*The Dolphin Chamber in the Falcon Tavern.* DRAYTON and RALEIGH. *Through the open door, those who were Bearers at the Funeral are seen drinking in the Taproom.*

*Enter HOSTESS with a bottle of sack, glasses, small loaves in a basket, and a plate of anchovies.*

*Drayton.* This small refection will bring us handsomely to supper with Sir Thomas. So, hostess, now fill to Master Raleigh—and to each a crust. What do these roysterers without?

*Hostess.* Sir, Master Shakespeare, who was ever

<sup>1</sup> The corrected plays were first published seven years after, in the well-known Folio of 1623.

full of kind thoughts and maleficence, left it in 's testament that the bearers should be entertained at the "Falcon" with cakes and ale after the burial; and in truth, sirs, they have borne themselves like men this hour past; they drink rarely.

*Drayton.* What a coil the varlets keep! Let us listen to them.

*Sly.* Well, a health, boys, to Master Shakespeare, wheresome'er he be.

—(*Sings*)     *And we'll trowl the brown bowl  
                 To the health of his——*

*Bardolph.* Nay, no singing, except any man knoweth a virtuous psalm-tune.

*Nym.* The fitting humour is—melancholy, and pass the ale.

*Sly.* Are we to be mute, then, in our drink, like fish?

*Bottom.* Let us discourse, but no revelry. Let us suit our matter to the occasion, and enjoy the good liquor sadly. Yet, methinks, I could sing something to the purpose.

—(*Sings*)     *Out flieth breath,  
                 In cometh Death  
                 With his candle, bell, and book—a,  
                 With his prayer so loud  
                 And his woollen shroud,  
                 And his cell in the churchyard-nook—a.*

*Sly.* A less comfortable song I ne'er listened to. I am of the party of silence rather than this.

*Bottom.* I can be silent too, an it comes to that, as well as o'er a man of you.

*Bardolph.* More ale, hostess. What, must I take to my old trade again, and turn tapster?

*Wart.* Canst thou mind, Rugby, when the play was held in John-a-Combe's great barn at the end of Chapel-lane, many years ago?

*Rugby.* Ay.

*Wart.* There was somewhat played then, writ, 'twas said, by Master Shakespeare, that would have served our turn now; something of ghosts and a burial.

*Rugby.* Was't not the play of *King Hamlet*?

*Bottom.* Ay, that or else the goodly tragedy of *Makebate*.

*Bardolph.* To see Master Shakespeare sitting there on the bench nighest the stage, with his daughter, Mistress Quiney that now is, beside him, and to think the play he looked-on at was writ by himself—by heaven! 'twas as a man should say—wonderful.

*Wart.* I ne'er saw *Makebate*, but I saw another. I was lingering by the play-house door, with Margery my wife one night, thinking to peep at the stage through a chink in the boards, when Master Shakespeare comes me down the lane. "Art for the play, Wart?" quo' he. "Nay, sir," quo' I; "no pay no play, and my pockets are e'en



like Skinflint's pot." "Never stay for that," quoth he; "thou shalt pass, and Margery too, as freely as coined silver—and I hope, Margery, thou'lt lay the play to heart, for they tell me thou lead'st Wart a terrible life of it." Now, the play, sirs, was of a masterful woman whose goodman got the better of her. Marry, 'twas named—let me see—by the mass, 'twas——

*Rugby.* Was't not named the *Turning of the Screw*, or some such?

*Several.* Ay, 'twas so indeed.

*Bottom.* Nay, if you are for remembering names, my masters, I am he that can serve your turn. 'Twas named the *Quelling of the Scold*—'twas, as Wart truly said, the history of a crowing hen that had her comb cut, as all such should.

*Sly.* When wilt cut Goodwife Bottom's, Nick? Folk say she playeth Chanticleer to thy Partlet.

*Bottom.* Folk say much, neighbour, that it seemeth not a man of sense to hearken to. But touching these plays—I am all for the love passages; it giveth one, as 'twere, a yearning; it maketh one feel young again—the billing, now—and the sighing. I have played the lover, neighbours, both on the stage and off it, when my sweet-heart hath borne her most tenderly.

*Wart.* I also was loved in my youth.

*Sly.* Thou loved! was there ne'er a scarecrow in the parish, then, to set heart on?

*Hostess (entering with fresh ale).* Nay, fub not the goodman so, Christopher—thou art ever girding. I warrant me, neighbour Wart hath had his cooings and his wooings like the rest, and could tickle a maiden's ear as well as another. What! have we not all been young!

*Nym.* Well, for me, I care not for the love-humours—there is a mawkishness and a queasiness in overmuch ogling and lipping. I am for your deadlier humours; give me a murder, now,—or the witches.

*Wart.* I love the witches, too.

*Bardolph.* Since ye talk of witches, saw ye Goody Broom at the burial to-day, hanging on the skirts of the crowd, and lurking behind a gravestone, wiping, the while, her old red eyes with the corner of her ragged cloak? I am well persuaded that Master Shakespeare had no truer mourner than that same ancient leman of Lueifer.

*Hostess.* And well she may, poor soul! Between water and fire there was like to have been soon an end of her, but for Master Shakespeare.

*Wart.* Well, I was one of those that ducked her i' the pond; and I ran a needle, too, into a mole she had, and she wineed not—a sure sign of a witch; but when Master Shakespeare stept forth and bespoke us, I felt I know not how at his words, and made home an 'twere a dog that hath been caught in the larder.

*Snug.* And when they haled her before the jus-



tices, Sir Thomas was for burning her, had not Master Shakespeare o'erpersuaded him.

*Sly.* Well, he saved her then, but she may chance have her whiskers singed yet. I am not one that favours witches, any more than our good King, and I shall keep eye on her.

*Hostess (entering the Dolphin chamber).* Sirs, here be Sir Thomas's men, and the horses, awaiting you in the yard.

*Drayton.* Thanks, hostess — our score. Now, Walter, set on.

*Raleigh (passing into the taproom).* Good friends——

*Bottom.* Hear him ! hear him !

*Raleigh.* Good friends, all simple as ye sit here, ye have this day done an office that the foremost nobles of England might envy you, and that might make their children's children proud to say—our forefather was one of those who bore Shakespeare to the grave.

*Bottom.* Sir, we did it passing well, and becomingly, but we boast not of it.

*Bardolph.* 'Sblood, sir, to be a bearer is no such great matter—and for nobles, why, we have been paid with one each, and are content.

*Raleigh.* Ay, ye have had greatness so near ye, that ye saw it not—ye are as daws that build in a cathedral and take it for an old wall. But I blame ye not—your betters have seen no clearer. And, now, to show my goodwill for ye, as those whom

Shakespeare hath sometime honoured with a word or look, I will entreat Master Drayton to lodge for me a sum with his friend Master Quiney, which shall suffice to let ye all meet and carouse here once a-month, for a year to come—and each year that I live<sup>1</sup> will I do likewise—and ye shall call it Shakespeare's Holiday.

*Bardolph.* By heaven ! a most noble gentleman, and of a choice conception.

*Nym.* This humour likes me passing well.

*Sly.* I would there were more of your kidney in Stratford.

*Bottom.* I will invent a new speech every year in your lordship's honour, and every year it shall be more excellent than the last. My masters, let us, all that can stand, attend these gentles to the door.

*All.* Farewell, gallant sirs

*Raleigh and Drayton.* Good friends, farewell.

<sup>1</sup> At the close of the following year he was slain, sword in hand, gallantly fighting the Spaniards, on the banks of the Orinoco.

## A NIGHT WITH THE VOLUNTEERS OF STRATHKINAHAN.

BY LIEUT.-COL. LAURENCE W. M. LOCKHART.

I HAVE the highest respect for the Volunteer movement, and the highest admiration for Volunteers. I think the country owes them an immense debt of gratitude. Perhaps a professional soldier can estimate better than a civilian what the magnitude of the debt really is. He knows how irksome a business it is to reduce one's self to the condition of an automaton, to abandon one's personal identity, to become Number One, Two, or Three in a squad, and to concentrate for hours one's whole intellectual faculties upon the task of instantly adjusting the anguished frame to certain angles, in obedience to the unmelodious shriek of the drill-sergeant.

I can recall no instances of nervous tension so protracted and intense as those under which I suf-

ferred as a recruit officer of her Majesty's Line ; and remembering that ordeal of terror and suffering, I regard the volunteer—the self-immolator—with feelings of profound admiration, sympathy, and astonishment. I look upon his existence as a death-blow to the cynical idea that patriotism has ceased to be ; and if you tell me that the age of chivalry is gone, I point triumphantly to the perspiring legions who offer themselves as willing victims in the dog-days—from morn to noonday bright, from noon to dewy eve, dreeing their self-imposed weird in the grand field-days of Wimbledon Common or the Brighton Downs. The professional soldier, of course, has tangible advantages to gain by submitting himself, soul and body, to the thralldom of military discipline. But the Volunteers ? for what purpose eat they thus the bread of toil ? *Cui bono* this deliberate expense of tissue ?

The only solution I can find is, that these men are patriots.

Of course we are all accustomed to admit this in a general honorary sort of way—indeed it has become one of those standing, after-dinner axioms, like the bravery of the army, or the merits of the Royal Family, which no true Briton would dream of attempting to controvert.

But I regard their patriotism as genuine and remarkable, and therefore worthy of something more than a mere assenting and commonplace admiration ;

and I record my own admiration here specially, and I make these few remarks on this occasion, lest in the following pages I should be suspected of a wish to throw ridicule on an institution so honourable to its members, and so beneficial to the country, which is justly proud of it. It is not to be supposed that such an institution can flourish with equal vigour in every district where it has taken root; and as in certain localities the superior energy and intelligence of the inhabitants will be displayed in this, as in everything else which they take in hand to do, so in others where there is no energy and no intelligence, the Volunteer movement will be stamped with the same backwardness and inefficiency which characterise all the other undertakings of the place.

And if a district happens to be steeped in whisky, as Strathkinahan was (I say *was*, for let us hope the Strath has long ago abjured the deleterious "creature"), why, naturally, its Volunteers, in the infancy of the movement, would be apt to regard the movement as they regarded everything else—from a purely alcoholic point of view.

So much by way of apology or disclaimer. And now to my story.

One autumn day, a good many years ago, I was taking mine ease in mine inn in Edinburgh, when it was announced to me that a visitor, by the name of Captain Cumming, was waiting below. I occupied the interval between the announcement and

his appearance in the room in mentally calling the roll of my acquaintances, but I failed to discover any one answering to this description; nor could I tax myself with knowing any member of the *elan*. From the Red Comyn who was made "siccar" end of in the olden time, to the Black Cumming who threatens us with the immediate end of Time itself, all the *elan* Cumming "were to me like shadows." The difficulty was (not immediately) solved by the entrance of Tom Finlayson, not a few years ago my friend and a *ci-devant* subaltern in the —th Hussars.

"Holloa, Peter!" I exclaimed, using his regimental misnomer — which, written in full, was "Blue Peter" — "I'm delighted to see you; and how are you? and what are you? and where are you? and what will you drink? Take a weed, and bring yourself to an anchor; and, by the quality of merey, let my hand alone, and spare at least my trigger finger;" for Peter was strong in his friendly feelings, and expressed them strongly upon such occasions by collecting one's fingers into a sort of fascine, and then squeezing them with the full power of his vice-like grasp. "But where is your friend?" I went on.

"What friend?" replied Peter.

"Why, Captain Cumming, of course; I suppose he came with you."

"Captain Cumming!" said Peter; "why, hang it! — I'm — you don't mean to say you don't — eh?"



Peter had never been a lucid expositor of his ideas, but there was a haziness about this which led my gaze to his nose, the tints on which had given rise to his sobriquet, and had undoubtedly derived their own origin from habits not unconnected with a rather hurried close of his military career.

Peter, still sensitive about his tints, read my eye like a book, and laid his fingers nervously on the many-coloured feature. "Hang it!" he cried, "don't stare so, and listen to the end of a fellow's sentence. I was going to say that you don't positively assert that you don't know who Captain Cumming is?"

"Yes, I do assert that I know nothing about him."

"Well, he is in this room."

"Oh! is he?" said I, banteringly, now convinced of Peter's melancholy state, but determined to humour him for the sake of the furniture. "Of course—not so bad—ha! ha!—pray introduce me."

"Now then, look here," burst out Peter, "I'm Captain Cumming!"

"Oh! I understand now. All right, Peter; the rose by any other name, &c., and of course I'm safe; but you're not half disguised. Let me recommend a beard, a dark wig, and a lick of flesh-coloured paint on the—you know; and what have you broken for? and where are you off to? in short, let me hear all about it;" and I drew two



chairs to the fire, and prepared to receive in comfort a recital of my friend's pecuniary embarrassments, and his scheme of flight from the Philistine.

"Tut, tut! there's no deception, no mystery; can't you understand? I've changed my name for good and all—got a property by my wife, and taken her name."

I congratulated him heartily on his good fortune, and added, "I suppose the 'Captain' is a little honorary prefix of your own invention, built on the ruins of that cornetcy which——"

"No, it isn't."

"What! did you acquire that by your wife too?"

"No; I'll tell you. You see, though in right of my wife I'm a landed proprietor, the property in question does not yield a very large revenue, and, moreover, what there is of it is a good deal burdened; and so when we went down to take up our abode there, we found it rather difficult to make the ends meet, and therefore, to supplement our income, and give me some occupation at the same time, I accepted the appointment of Adjutant of the 2d Administrative Battalion of Keltshire Volunteers. My property lies in that county, so it suits very well; and that's how I stand before you, transformed from ex-Cornet Tom Finlayson into Captain Cumming."

"And how do you like the work?" I inquired.

"Oh, very well; the colonel does very little, so

I have the corps pretty much in my own hands, and can work out my own system."

This was said with some dignity, and I had much difficulty in repressing a grim smile as I thought of Tom's military antecedents and the system likely to spring from them.

"Nothing like system," he went on. "I carry out old Chalk's —th Hussar system as much as possible. I hated Chalk and he hated me; but I recognise his military talent, and I have made use of him I can tell you; and, though I say it that shouldn't, you'll find few corps that can walk round the 2d Ad. Batt. of the Keltshire Volunteers. I took 'em over, sir, like a lump of clay, and my what-d'ye-call-it hand has moulded them into a— a—moulded them, sir! The worst of the business is that the fellows won't stick to it. You drill them up to the highest pitch of perfection and then they leave you. You never saw such a fickle, captious set of devils as I have to deal with. They're always taking offence—sometimes with their officers, sometimes with me, and very often with my system—and then they resign; so that though the corps is a crack corps, it is a very small one. Three companies have already been broken up, and if another goes, the 2d Ad. Batt. of the Keltshire Volunteers will collapse—the adjutancy will collapse—and Captain Cumming will also collapse financially. Now another company is in a very shaky state, which

makes me horribly anxious and uneasy. It (the shaky company, the Strathkinahan company) has lately been transferred from the Kippershire county corps to ours. Strathkinahan is in our county, but in a part of it which dovetails itself far into Kippershire, so that the men are in feeling rather Kippershire than Keltshire men, more especially that they are all on the property of Lord Worrycow, the great Strathkinahan proprietor. Well, these fellows don't like the transfer, and won't co-operate at all. They lost their captain some time before they joined us, and being ordered to select his successor from our county, they keep shilly-shallying and doing nothing, much provoked thereto (I understand) by their lieutenant and ensign—the one a fellow who distils whisky on a large scale, and the other a sheep farmer who largely consumes it—both, I believe, so thoroughly inefficient, that either the corps will not select them for promotion or they themselves decline to be promoted. I'll be hanged if I know what they want! but the result of it will certainly be, that if they don't get a good captain to keep them together they will fade away like the other three companies, and then good-bye to my appointment.

“Well, I've done what I could by writing threats and remonstrances—all to no purpose; so now I am going down to beat up their quarters in person. I have a man in my eye who would make a first-rate

captain for them; and if I can only get them to elect him, the company will be saved, and so will be my adjutancy; so I am determined that they *shall* elect him, by fair means or foul. Couldn't you make a run down with me, and then come on for a few days to my place and try your hand at grouse-driving? It's a glorious district—splendid scenery, and all that—and I'm sure the natives will amuse you; and then your diplomatic talents might be of immense assistance in helping an old friend out of a difficulty."

I had some ten days at my disposal at the time, so I readily agreed to Tom's request, and the next day saw us *en route* for Strathkinahan.

It will not do, for obvious reasons, to describe too accurately the geographical position of Strathkinahan. Suffice it to say that it lies far away out of the beaten tracks of men, and that he who would behold it must undergo a varied yet tedious journey, with perils by land and perils by water, and the equally important Highland element of whisky. Our journey was performed by almost every possible form of conveyance—railway, steamboat, stage-coach, row-boat, dog-cart, and post-chaise; we employed them all, and I had thus an opportunity of studying, not without interest, the habits of the Celt in a state of locomotion, and of observing how, under his quaint handling, the most modern inventions put on an irresistible air of travesty. On a

Highland railway I saw a solution of the long-vexed question, "How should the guard communicate with the engine-driver?" It was very simple, and consisted in the former functionary pelting the latter with large stones until he was fortunate enough to hit him in some telling place, and work upon his mind through the sufferings of his body. I saw the deficiencies of pressure on the valves of a steamboat-engine supplied by the nether-men of the steerage passengers, who kindly volunteered to perform in turns this interesting duty. And it was not without a tremor that I observed our driver quietly take off his left boot and improvise therefrom a supplement to the drag by wedging it in between the wheel and the worn-out buffer, prior to plunging, at sixteen miles an hour, down a long and dreadfully steep mountain road into the darksome abysses of the "Devil's Glen."

Everything, however—even a Highland journey—must have an end, and at last, amid pelting rain and howling wind, our jaded horses were pulled up in the dark opposite the "Bodach-beg Inn and Hotel."

"Here we are," said Tom; "we are to sleep here, and have our meeting with the corps in the barn behind the house. I wonder if the officers have come; I asked them to dine with us. How infernally dark and quiet it all is! Kick the door, driver, and rouse them up."

A long onslaught by the driver's hoofs on the door produced no effect.

"Break a window," shouted Tom; and the driver, finding no other missile handy, again had recourse to his left boot, which he hurled through a lower pane. This destruction of property at once had the desired effect.

Lights shone in the windows, dogs barked, and at last the door was half opened and a head showed itself warily in the aperture. It was the head of an angry man, and from it proceeded winged words of wrath.

"Gang on! gang on! this meenut; I've tell't ye a'ready there's nae mair whusky in the inns, and if there was, there's nane for a drucken auld carle like you. A Collector! a bonny Collector! I'll collect ye! and it'll be fower and saxpence for the peen o' glass, and if you dinna pay it this meenut ye shall march hame on your hose, for deil a sicht o' yer damned auld brogue shall ye get this nicht without the siller."

"The man's a maniac," cried Tom, springing past me and pouncing on the orator like a tiger, whom throttling, he thrust back into the house. "What in the name of all the whiskies do you mean, you jabbering idiot? Whisky! I don't want any of the abomination. We want the dinner and the rooms and the beds we ordered. Don't you know me—Captain Cumming? I was here



fishing last summer ; and didn't you get my letter, you numskull ? ”

“ Captain Cumming ! is it you, sir ? Wha wad have expeckit yer honour at siccan a time o' year ? I made sure it was the Collector ; he's on the ramble this eight days past, drinking three days here till I pit him oot, and five up i' the bothy, and noo he's hunting for drink heigh and laigh—ragin' like a bear ; for he would toom the Spey in spate if it ran wi' Talusker or Glenleevat.”

“ But my letter, man, my letter ? Did you not get it ? ”

“ I got nae letter, sir. Ye see, the postman gaed aff a week sin' to see his freens up Appin way, and there's been nae chance tae get a letter without sending ance errand the fifteen mile. But come in, gentlemen ; beds ye shall ha'e and rooms, but for the denner I dinna ken what to say ; but I'll speak to the wife.” With which he ushered us into a room, fireless and cold, yet stuffy withal, and pregnant with the odours of departed peat and whisky long ago consumed. Leaving his candle, he retired hastily to consult the guidwife upon the serious crisis.

“ Well, this is a nice state of things,” said Tom ; “ but I wrote to the Volunteers a fortnight ago, so they must have had time to get their warning before the confounded postman went off for his holiday—fancy a single-handed postman daring to have a holiday !—so we're sure to have them

here; and even if we have a bad dinner and un-  
aired rooms, it's only for one night, for we'll get  
the business over this evening and be off home to-  
morrow morning."

The landlord shortly after returned and told us,  
with many apologies, that ham and eggs, a fowl,  
and perhaps "a bit braxy" would be our dinner,  
assuring us at the same time that his statement  
as to the whisky, outside, was only a humane  
fiction devised for the Collector's own good, and  
that there was an abundance of the best Glenlivet  
down below. He added ruefully that "the bodach"  
(meaning the Collector) had been lurking about the  
premises, and had taken advantage of the temporary  
confusion consequent on our arrival to effect  
a lodgment in the kitchen, where he was again  
"makin' himself most ootrageous," and resisting  
all attempts at eviction—physically with his fists,  
and morally with the argument that he was there  
on military duty.

"Ye see," explained the landlord, "he's in thae  
Strathkinahan Volunteers, and bein' 'on the beer,' as  
ye may say, he's gotten it into his head that he has  
a tryst here this nicht wi' his commandin' offisher  
—the Earl, I'm thinkin'—which shows that the  
Collector is far through; for when he's in his  
ordinary he cares for nane, and wad break tryst  
wi' the archangel Gabbriel himsel' if he had the  
chance."

A light seemed to break on Tom (who, by the by, had never visited the corps since its incorporation with his battalion). "Who is this Collector?" he inquired.

"Weel, sir, he's no exacklee a Collector himsel', but he aye gets it as a kin' o' title; his fayther aye got it, but I'm thinking it wad be his grandfayther was the Collector."

"And what is his name?"

"Shooliter."

"Shooleather?"

"Shooliter."

"That's a queer name; I never heard it before."

"It's no exacklee his name jist, but a byname from the bit farm. 'Hamish Shooliter, the Collector,' that's him in full," said the landlord, as if summing up and closing the discussion.

"But he must have a name—a surname I mean," said Tom.

"Weel, I suppose he wull; it'll be Cawmill maist likely."

Tom hurriedly consulted his note-book. "By Jove! just as I expected," he exclaimed; "'Ensign James Campbell, Shooliter Farm, Glencroaky;' why, this beastly Collector is the ensign, and his tryst is to dine with us here to-night!"

"Aweel," said the landlord, "nensign's the word; for he's been aye croonin' to himsel' as if he was discoorsin' with some ither body. He's been aye

sayin' in a fierce voice, 'Nensign! Nensign Hamish! Nensign Shooliter, you're drunk, sir! You're not fit for t' nensign! Shoulder arms and faal oot, Nensign Cawmil!' and then he answers himsel' in a quate fleeching way, 'Jist anither glass o' tuddy afore I fall, my lord; the tuddy's goot; it's easy to tak'. I'm a Collector and a nensign, and anither glass can hairm naither the tane nor the tither.' And aye the fierce voice again, 'Shooliter! attention! to the right half face! to the devil with you, Shooliter! quick march!' And syne he greets."

Tom now shortly explained to the landlord the new position which he occupied to the Volunteers of Strathkinahan—told him of the meeting arranged for that evening, and that the officers were expected to join us at dinner. "The lieutenant," he continued, "is a Mr M'Tavish of Glensnork; do you know him?"

"I ken him weel," replied the landlord; "he was here wi' Shooliter for his first three days, preparing, he aye said, for his 'prospection;' but he wearied o' the Collector, and misca'd the whusky for having nae bite wi' it; sae he gaed aff wi' the doctor to the new inns at Mairdroukit, for a chainge o' scene and speerits; but he'll be here, the corby, when he smells drink for naething."

"And the doctor, he was invited too—do you know anything of him?"

"Fine that—a dacent nice man; he'll be wi'

Glensnorruk, nae doot, and they'll be comin' thegither. If the doctor was to come it'll be a' richt, for he'll baith come himsel' and bring the tither."

I was this day a travelled and a hungry man; it was now past seven o'clock, and I by no means saw the advantage of hanging my dinner-hour on such a vague contingency as the arrival of these worthies, so with some decision I asked Tom, "in how many minutes we should order dinner to be served?"

"Well," said Tom, "I asked these fellows for seven o'clock sharp, but we must give them a little law. The roads are bad, and an engagement in Strathkinahan is different from an engagement in Belgravia; besides, the cooking will take time: we'll give them three-quarters of an hour and then sit down. Dinner at a quarter to eight, landlord—places for five; you must have another fowl and more ham and eggs; and look here, if your friend the Collector has not collected his senses by dinner-time, don't let him come up—d'ye hear?"

"I'll see to him, sir, nae fear; and now I'll show you your rooms, gentlemen."

When I was finishing my toilette Tom appeared. His air was mysterious, and he shut the door carefully.

"You see," he said, "what a queer lot of people I have got to do with here; the chances are we shall have no meeting at all, or if we do, that the

meeting will be, like the 'United Brick Lane Temperance Association,' drunk; but if they *do* come, confound them! drunk or sober, I'll carry my point, and make them elect my man, Sir William M'Vittie—I swear I will. I have had another talk with the landlord, and he now admits that he knows more of the politics of the matter than he pretended at first. They're all dead against the transfer—which, however, is a *fait accompli*—and I suppose they have got it into their woolly brains, that by refusing to elect a Keltshire man as captain, they will prevent the practical working out of the matter. The landlord thinks they'll come, however, for the sake of the liquor—which it appears their late captain used to stand freely—but, being come, will give fair words, and try to evade any decision. But we'll take the fowler in his own gin; and I've been thinking of a dodge, if you'll help me—will you?"

"Of course I will," I replied; "I'll assassinate the Collector, if necessary, or anything."

"Well, then, I'll introduce you to the meeting as a tremendous swell of some sort—something between a Field-Marshal and a Prime Minister, but, above all things, as a special friend and confidant of the Queen's—stay, why shouldn't you be the Inspector-General of the Volunteers? The very thing; so you shall be. When the right moment comes you'll address them; and if, with this hint, you don't carry my point for me, all I can say is,



you've degenerated since the old Newbridge days, when you canvassed two Roman Catholic parishes successfully in the Orange interest as The O'Clancy More. What did it then? why, blarney and poteen. With the Irish Celt these are specifics. Try his Caledonian brother with the same. Of course you'll feel your way and be cautious, and take your time from me. I'm a little nervous about the doctor; we must feel his pulse at dinner, and either make him a conspirator or not, according to his symptoms. Now, let us go down; I'm as hungry as a hunter. Stay, we must christen you first—what are you to be? Not more than a general and a knight, I think, to begin with. We can easily promote you as public enthusiasm warms up. So come along, General Sir Hercules O'Halloran, K.C.B.—that ought to fetch them. You're a trifle young for a colonel even, but you're big and burly, and the doctor's the only one who's the least likely to suspect, and I can tell him, if necessary, that the Queen insisted on your promotion for services at Court. Come on."

We had not been long in the sitting-room when a sound of approaching wheels was heard, and a confused murmur of many voices, and on looking out of the window, we beheld, by the dusky light of a torch, a gig which had drawn up at the door. It contained two human figures, and was surrounded by a crowd of indistinct forms, who had apparently arrived with it.

"The doctor and the lieutenant, of course," said Tom, "thank goodness; and these weird shapes must be the corps: well, they shall have a captain to-night; and now for dinner." He rang the bell, which the landlord answered. "Is that the lieutenant who arrived just now?" inquired Tom.

"It's Glensnorruck himsel', sir, and the doctor wi' him safe enough; and there's a drove o' billies come along wi' them. Maist likely they'll ha'e been waitin' up at the bothy till he cam' by; between oorsel's, I'm thinkin' there's mair gangs on at that bothy than the gauger kens o', but it's no for the like o' me——"

"Oh, hang the bothy! ask the lieutenant and the doctor to come up."

In a few moments we heard a peculiar sound on the wooden stairs — a hurtling, griding, bumping sound—suggesting the idea that some heavy body was being propelled upwards by an agency not altogether successful in resisting the tendency of the said body to gravitate to the bottom of the stairs. Occasional crashes took place, when both appeared to be involved in a common downfall. These crashes were succeeded by guttural sounds of the human voice, which I conjectured to be profane swearing in Gaelic. The ascent was, however, achieved, and there was a repetition of the sounds along the passage leading to our room, alternated with quick whispers of entreaty, expostulation, and

wrath. A heavy bump against our door announced that the expedition, whatever it might be, had arrived. There was a pause. Tom and I looked at each other.

"What the deuce can it be?" he said.

"Somebody very drunk," I replied, "taking care of somebody rather worse; the Collector, for choice."

At this moment the door was slowly opened, and an arm, terminating in a very evil and claw-like hand, was extended into the room, and commenced a sawing vertical action in the air, that might mean deprecation, but was probably the result of heavy leverage going on at some other part of its proprietor's unseen body.

"Come in," cried Tom, "come in;" but the saw only worked more vigorously, and the fingers were clinched as if in intense muscular exertion.

"Stay out, then," shouted Tom, in a rage, whereupon the saw worked for a few strokes with terrific vehemence, and a shoulder and eventually a head made their appearance. The head was a bald head, decorated on either side with a high and tapering horn of black hair; the face was swarthy and dingy, pierced with a pair of Chinese-looking eyes, and corrugated with a wild assortment of smiles, or rather grins, which broke out independently all over the face, cancelling and neutralising the expression of each other in a most puzzling manner.

The arm continued to saw, and the horned head was butted backwards and forwards as if in salutation.

"Mephistopheles!" I exclaimed, involuntarily.

"Her name's M'Taveesh, sir—M'Taveesh of Glenschnorruk, sir; Rifled Lifteenant, sir," said the head.

"Oh! Mr M'Tavish," said Tom, "how do you do? I'm glad to see you; won't you come in, though?"

"How doo yew doo? and how are yew? and how doo yew doo?" went the head, as if mechanically repeating some formula.

"Very well, thanks; but come in," said Tom.

"Can't," replied the head.

"What?" said Tom.

"Not able," said the head.

"Why not?" said Tom.

The head tossed one of its horns back indicatively to the door and murmured, "The Collecthur."

"Where?" cried Tom.

"On her ither airm and leg," replied the head.

"Why, damme! he's a regular old man of the sea, this infernal Collector!" shouted Tom.

"Run him in, Mr M'Tavish, and let's see him; give a tug; pull away—all your strength—there!" and the head, followed by its body, shot comet-like into the room and subsided on the floor, leaving behind it, inside the door, and on the perpendicular, an Apparition.

"The Collector!" said M'Tavish, picking himself up, and extending another claw, by way of introduction, in the direction of the new arrival. It was satisfactory to see this historical character at last.

He was a tallish elderly man, with a very red face, a fixed and flaming eye, and white hair, on the top of which was perched, somewhat defiantly, a round drum-shaped boy's cap with a tassel at the side—a head-dress evidently filched from the nursery below.

He wore tartan trousers and a black dress-coat, with what are called "weepers" on the cuffs. On the whole, his appearance was not disappointing. We tried to keep our gravity, and Tom to be courteous.

"How do you do, Mr a—a—Collector?" he said.

The Collector spoke not a word, but elevated his arm with the gesture of a minister bespeaking attention for grace before meat, and remained in this attitude, like the lion rampant in the Scottish shield. I think he had some hazy notion of performing a military salute, but was deterred by considerations of equilibrium.

"Won't you sit down?" said Tom, trying to look as if the attitude of the lion rampant was perfectly normal and expected. There was no answer. The fixed eye had shifted its angle, and glued itself to a bottle of sherry which stood on the table; and

the mind, such as it was, that shone through that eye, was in that bottle and nowhere else.

"Hadh't he better sit down, Tom?" I interposed, treating the Collector as a lay figure.

"Certainly," said Tom.

"Well, then, here goes;" and I poured out a glass of sherry, and advanced towards the Collector. "Take a glass of sherry, ensign?" I said. He shot out the paw to its full extent, and slid one foot forward in my direction. I took a step back, still holding out the shining bait. Out went the paw again, and another shuffling pace was effected; and so on and so on till we got opposite the sofa, when I turned upon him and decanted him into it, giving him the wine by way of reward.

This he devoured, and then letting the glass fall and break on the floor, again, as if nothing had happened, fastened his burning orbs on the bottle. It was evidently fruitless to attempt any conversation with the wretch, so we left him to his contemplation, and Tom turned his attention to Mr M'Tavish.

This gentleman was, no doubt, according to the Strathkinahan standard, very sober. By comparison he certainly was, but I am inclined to think he was indebted for this happy state of things less to personal abstinence than to the quelling influence of two sober Sassenachs, and a certain feeling of being on a superior moral elevation to the Collector.



He stood up with his thumbs stuck into the arm-holes of his waistcoat, his head carried low, as if preparing to butt, and every particular square inch of his visage working with a spasmodic action.

His English was broken and almost unintelligible, and every sentence was preceded, accompanied, and followed by a series of sputterings and hootings which, with the working of his face, I could refer to no mental emotion whatsoever.

Mephistopheles, the Black Dwarf, the Gorilla, Waterton's Nondescript, the laughing hyena, the horned screech-owl, and the vampire, were a few of the ideas instantly suggested by the contemplation of this Highlandman.

"Well, Mr M'Tavish," said Tom, "so you got my letter all right; I suppose you warned the corps, and I hope we shall have a good meeting, and get through our business?"

"Shess, captain — that's adjutant, shess, sir. Letter? shess. Corps come? shess. Business? tit, tit, tit! no business." Then after a pause, and with an insinuating assortment of puckers playing all over his face, "Bheil Gaelig a'gad?"

"What?" said Tom.

"Spoke Gaelic? tit hish!"

"No," said Tom.

"No spokes? ach tit! no spoke Gaelic?"

"But we *have* business, Mr M'Tavish, and very important business too."

"Shess, sir, shess, to be certainly, captain, major, adjutant, but no spokes? none? not a few?"

"Devil a word," said Tom, testily.

"To be surely, tevil a word, ach tit!"

"This is healthy," said Tom, forgetting his manners, and looking round at me with a shrug. The lieutenant also looked at me, and, catching his eye, I thought I read in it symptoms that he might speak better, and stick more to the point if he chose. The instant our eyes met he fired off his "bheil Gaelig a'gad?" at me.

"No," said Tom; "this is a general, and a great friend of the Queen's, and he couldn't think of speaking it."

"Ach! she's a Queen's freend? and no spokes? Queen spoke a few?"

"Not a single one," said Tom; "she'd be ashamed to do it."

"Tit, tit, tit! to be surely, Sassenach Queen—no spoke."

"But about business, Mr M'Tavish——" A diversion in his favour was, however, created by the entrance of the dinner, and a sudden movement on the part of the Collector. He had sat perfectly motionless, and staring at the bottle; but his line of vision being intersected by the waiter, he uttered a low moan, rose from the sofa, and, with a stride and a plunge, made for the door, and lurched out of the room.

In the depths of his drunken Celtic inner-consciousness, the fellow was probably offended.

"Ensign Cawmil—jist a little peety, she's no greatly hersel' the nicht," said the lieutenant. "She's a pretty fellow, ferry pretty, a good offisher, a good ensign—in Gaelic; but the nicht she's no jist hersel'; no, sir, no jist hersel'. But we'll no be angry or quarrel her, no, no; tit, tit! hish!" The last was semi-interrogative, semi-deprecatory.

"Well," said Tom, "I can't say I think it creditable. Being drunk and speechless may make a very excellent officer in Gaelic, but in any other language he would be considered a disgrace to his commission; and when I was only to be here for one night, he might, I think, have contrived to be sober."

"To be surely," replied the lieutenant; "and she'd be trying for four days to do it."

"To do what?"

"To lay the whisky, to be sure."

"To lay it in, I suppose you mean—and he seems to have succeeded to a marvel."

"Ach! no, tit, tit! to lay it, with bitters *and more*."

"Well, hang me if I ever heard such a recipe! more whisky, do you mean?"

"Most certaintlee, bitters and more," in the indignant tone of one who hears an infallible specific for the first time called in question.

The landlord here announced Dr M'Kinlay, and a little, meek, elderly, and, apparently, somewhat sober, man walked into the room.

"How do you do, doctor?" said Tom. "As I had invited the other officers to dine, I took the liberty of asking you to join us as the honorary assistant-surgeon, and I'm delighted to see you."

"Much obliged, sir, and very proud I am to come; it's an honour, sir, to me to make your acquaintance."

"Let me present you," continued Tom, "to Sir Hercules O'Halloran, who has come down to have a look at the Scotch Volunteers." Then, in a whispered aside, "A very eminent man, particular friend of the Queen's; might do you all a deal of service; he reports everything, sir, everything—medical service and all."

"God bless me!" said the unsuspecting doctor; "it's a great honour, Sir Hercules, to see you, and to dine with you makes me very proud indeed. I never expected such a distinction, I'm sure. May I make so bold, Sir Hercules, as to ask how you left her Majesty the Queen?"

Trying to combine the air of camps and courts, I replied, with bland condescension, that my royal mistress was, at the date of my last telegram from Windsor that forenoon, in the enjoyment of excellent health and spirits; had lunched in private; was to drive to Eton College for inspecting pur-

poses in the afternoon, "and by this time," looking at my watch, "is entertaining, with her usual condescension, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Pope's Legate at dinner."

"God bless me!" cried the doctor; "this is wonderful! And you heard all this to-day, Sir Hercules? here, far away in the Highlands? Excuse the freedom, but there's something awful in meeting the like of you, Sir Hercules."

"Oh! I'm a very humble person, doctor; don't imagine" (with great humility) "I'm anybody to be afraid of. Her Majesty is good enough to keep me posted up in her movements. Three telegrams a-day, that's all. There's so much I have to be consulted about, you see; you understand me? eh?"

"Unquestionably, Sir Hercules, of course. It must be a great comfort to her Majesty, although I say it to your face, sir, to have such a fine, affable, pleasant nobleman to consult with; and she'll miss you much, no doubt."

"Tut, tut, doctor, you flatter me, and make a great man of a mere nobody—a poor soldier, sir, nothing more, who is glad to make your acquaintance, doctor."

I concluded with an access of condescension, extending my hand, which the doctor took in a tumult of delight and awe.

Tom warned me by a look not to go too far; but

as he had given me my *rôle*, I was determined to play it for myself. Besides, indeed, the doctor was evidently prepared to swallow anything.

"Now let us sit down to dinner," said Tom. "Sir Hercules, will you kindly face me? Gentlemen, pray be seated. I'm afraid the dinner won't be very choice."

Nor, in truth, was it. He who hath bent his hungry head over dinner in a Highland inn, even in the tourists' season, may remember how much that meal is indebted to the keen mountain air and the appetite with which it is approached; and he may therefore form some idea of a similar banquet out of the season. Fowl there was, but such as reminded one of the feathered spectre which, on arriving at a *dâk* bungalow in India, the traveller inevitably sees led shrieking to the slaughter, to serve as the *pièce de resistance* fifteen minutes after. Eggs were there, but such as "Brother Sam" describes as having been "very nice little eggs six weeks ago;" and as for the ham, it painfully suggested the universal adaptability of the driver's boot

Our guests, however, seemed to enjoy it thoroughly. The doctor, though perched, timid and bird-like, on the edge of his chair, contrived to play an excellent knife and fork; and the lieutenant, his head almost flush with the table, ate like a ghou, albeit sorely impeded therein by an attempt to



reconcile the normal position of his hands in the arm-holes of his waistcoat, with their duties of wielding knife, fork, and spoon.

I had taken a quiet opportunity of hinting to Tom my suspicion that the lieutenant was hiding his light under a bushel, with a view to evading business; and that if the conversation were to be kept off it for a time, the scoundrel would be found comparatively fluent, especially under the immediate influence of meat and drink. In pursuit of these tactics, therefore, we contrived to make the conversation (if such it could be called) general.

We drew Glensnork on the subject of his farm—the merits of black-faced and white-faced, wool, heather, wintering, turnips, and other congenial topics. He became comparatively lucid, and by degrees, as glass after glass of vitriolic sherry descended, there was no lack of a certain fluency. His English was execrable, but he had plenty of it. The doctor, though penetrated with awe, and sitting, as it were, on the threshold of royalty, nevertheless contrived to chat away pretty freely, and was of considerable service in acting as a sort of jackal to the lieutenant, laying him on to topics on which he had some ideas, and eventually, when the creature passed into the narrative and facetious stage, drawing him out in what he evidently considered his brilliant things. In this way we were favoured with a little episode in his military career

which was clearly held to reflect much credit on the lieutenant's courage and wit.

"When the Queen had a reviews," he said (his use of singulars and plurals was remarkably vague and impartial) "in Edinburgh—— Ferry certainlee you would be there, general?"

"Oh yes!" I replied; "and I think I remember your face there."

"Most notoriouslee you would be seeing me there. Well, sir, when the Queen had her reviews there, I went to it, with his lordship's regiment—eight hundred ferry beautiful fine fellows—and when we were making the march into the Cannysgate, a French Spies keepit walkin' beside us, and lookin' pretty surprised and frightened like. At last the Spies comes to me and says, 'Can these men fight?' says he. And I turned to him, mighty fierce, and says I to the Spies, 'Go away, you tamned ugly teef of a Spies!' says I; 'go and tell your King and your countree not to give them the chance,' and she jist turned aboot and went away with a ferry white face. I put the fear of deeth on to that Spies." This gem he favoured us with three or four times, accompanying it with a great deal of weird laughter.

The doctor then turned the conversation to salmon-fishing; and on my asking how they were off for fish in the river there, he replied, that what with stake-nets at the mouth, and "burning the

water" up above, there was but poor sport to be had.

"Burning the water!" I said; "I thought that had been illegal for long."

"So it has, Sir Hercules; but it's done a good deal for all. Ask Glensnork, Sir Hercules," said the doctor, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Deed, doctor, and it's a pretty small quantitee Glensnorruck kens about the wather; he never touches it;" a statement which in many senses was no doubt incontrovertible.

"Ah! but your shepherds, your shepherds? I'm afraid they're pretty guilty."

"Hoosh, doctor! not kilty at all; the shepherds be on the hills with the sheeps, and not able to be kilty with the fishes and sawmonts in the wather."

"Well, Glensnorruck, there was Fraser you know——"

"Ach! to be certaintlee, Lauchy Fraser. But who made her kilty? Me, surr—Glensnorruck hersel'—spoke to the Shirra's man and made her kilty."

"Ah! how was that?" said the doctor.

"Well, Lauchy be always makin' his tamned ugly traffics into my house, and always coortin' and coortin' my servant lass for drams and brose, and kissin' and trash. I be findin' him pretty seldom oot o' the house, and quarrelled him. 'Mister Lauchy,' says I, 'be greatlee kind, and

get trams and brose and servant lasses for yoursel', and don't be bringing yourself into my kitchings twice again, you nasty trooper!' says I, 'or maybe there'll be a little more said.' Ferry well, two days afterhin, I be going into my own kitchings to crack wi' Shennet, my own servant lass—shess, sir, my own servant Shennet—and there is my pretty shentleman Lauchy again, wi' a dram in his mooth and a big fishes beside him, coortin' and quarrellin' at Shennet to kettle the fishes for him. 'You plackgard!' says I, 'you vagabones! you are into here again!' 'Plackgard your nanesell, Glenschnorruk,' says he, giving me his peastly tongue. 'Where have you been, you *sloightear*?' says I. 'To the hills and to the sheeps,' says he. 'Did you find that big sawmonts on to the hills among the sheeps?' says I. 'I met her there,' says he. 'Ach! you tamned *breugadair*!' says I; 'I will teach you to come coortin' at Shennet, you teef! you poacher! and to set fire to the wather against the law. Come to Donald, come to the Shirra's man, and get your fishes kettled.' So I handed him and his fishes to the lock-up, and *kettled him*; and it was 'Good-bye, Mr Lauchy; ye've saved Glenschnorruk six months' wage,' which he was awed."

"And where is he now?" I inquired.

"The tevil may ask the questions—in the chails, to be sure."

"And you never paid him?"

"Not a hapnee, the teef! he would have paid the Shirra for the poachin', and been oot o' the chails coortin' again."

Glensnork was, of course, so much delighted with this splendid illustration of crime, law, and justice, that he repeated it frequently; and the appreciation displayed by his audience bringing him into high good-humour, Tom seized the opportunity of turning the conversation into a business channel.

"Well, M'Tavish," he said, dinner being now some time over, "I'm very glad to have made your acquaintance in this pleasant sort of way. Here's to your very good health; and now I think it's time to discuss the *real business* of the evening."

"Goot life, captain! business already? You must be ferry heavy on the speerits, if you would be for beginning already," said the lieutenant. "No, surr; my thanks to you, but not a drop of tuddy till the wine settled herself. It was a mighty fine surprise for Mr Lauchy when she ob-sairved herself in the lock-up. 'It will be your fun, Glenschnorruk,' says she, 'that——'"

"I beg your pardon," interrupted Tom; "you misunderstood my meaning; what I wished to express was, that we should lose no time in looking at the concern which has brought us here to-night."

"Hoosh, captain! you would not be thinkin' of

that. If the post-boy cannot look at his own horses and his own concern, he must be a ferry poor cratur inteed, and the doctor's powney Callum, she looks at herself. 'It will be your fun, Glenschnorruck,' says Mr Lauchy, 'that you are putting on to my head.' 'My teer goot friend,' says I——"

"You misunderstand me again, Mr M'Tavish," said Tom, firmly. "You must be aware that it is now six months since you lost your captain, and——"

"Six months, captain? will it be six months sin' the cratur died?"

"Six months," said Tom.

"Well, maybe, maybe; oich! oich! six months. Well, well, she was a nice bit cratury. 'Yes, Mr Lauchy,' says I, 'you are ferry right, and you will have——'"

"The devil seize Mr Lauchy!" thundered Tom, in a fury. "I'll tell you what it is, Mr M'Tavish, I have come here to discuss business, and not to waste time, and if you had the proper spirit——"

"Well, well, captain," said the irrepressible, in the tone of one yielding to excessive importunity, "if you must set to the speerits, goot life! let us yoke to them, but be ferry strict with Mr Stew-art to give them out of his own brown pig.<sup>1</sup> As the meenister says, 'Stew-art's pig is like the cask o'

<sup>1</sup> An earthenware vessel called a "grey-beard" in the Lowland dialect, and containing a gallon.



the weedy wummin, with a last drop always into it.' You will ken the meenister, captain?"

Tom's wrath melted away at the peal of laughter with which I greeted the lieutenant's last flank movement; he joined in it, but denied all knowledge of the divine, and outmanœuvred M'Tavish by plunging *in medias res*.

"Now, Mr M'Tavish," he said, "have the goodness to listen without interrupting me. I have come here to-night to see that the corps *does* elect a captain, and I mean to see that it does, and I wish to know if you will support Sir William M'Vittie. The Lord-Lieutenant is anxious that he should be nominated, and, what is more, so is the Queen. You must elect a Keltshire man; he is a Keltshire man, and the best, and indeed the only, man you can get in the district. Now I have said my say; let me hear yours, but let it be to the point. We have had quite enough of Mr Lauchy and his salmon, and I won't listen to another word except on business."

"Ferry well, surr, ferry well; but you will likely be ringin' for Stew-art's pig first?"

"Certainly," said Tom, ringing the bell; "and now go on."

"Ferry well, I was just saying to me ownself and to the Collecthur lately, that it would be incautions to be in a tremendous hurry aboot the business. 'Collecthur,' says I, 'we cannot

chump over crayt big hetches and titches withoot a look into them.' 'What you say is a true case,' says the Collecthur. 'You are a cliver man, Glenschnorruk,' says he; 'and we must not chump over a captain ferry hastilee.'"

"Well," said Tom, "that's all very true; but I'll be hanged if six months isn't long enough to look at the biggest hedge or ditch that was ever jumped over, and in fact there *is* to be no more delay in the matter. I tell you I won't stand this humbug any longer, and you mistake your man if you think you can play the fool with me. Will you support Sir William or will you not? and if not, will you propose some one else, in opposition to the Queen's wishes, and the Lord-Lieutenant's and mine?" Tom added, demurely.

"I am sure," said the doctor, on whom the fiery sherry was working its effect perceptibly—"I am sure such a statement would be sufficient for the corps; the Queen's wish and the Lord-Lieutenant's and yours, captain, and I may add yours, Sir Hercules (for of course your feeling will be her Majesty's), would weigh with them against any other suggestion; and I will say this, that if Glensnork were to set himself up in an opposition to these wishes of yours, he would pan himself, pan himself, Sir Hercules, I do assure you."

"I don't doubt it," I said, assuming that the process of "panning" was equivalent to ostracism

in Strathkinahan; "and serve him right too," I added, rather fiercely.

"But he may be sure of this," continued the doctor, "that Strathkinahan will refuse to be panned with him."

"Hoosh, doctor!" said the lieutenant, whose normal attitude towards the doctor was that of an honoured patron evidently; "you are a ferry eliver man, but you are incautions to speak when you are not asked to spoke. Ailsie M'Leod is in crayt trouble with her tooth-gums; you had petter" (with a dignified wave) "go and make them heal—tit, tit!"

"The opinion of a sober professional man," cried the doctor, in high wrath, "is at least as valuable as that of a being who forgets himself daily with the bottle."

"Deed, doctor, he'll be a ferry smart man that forgets the pottle when you are into the room. Go away—go and sing a song to Ailsie's tooth-gums."

"Come, come, gentlemen," cried Tom, as the doctor was bursting out in huge wrath at this *tu quoque*, "we are forgetting ourselves; to business, business, business. What do you say, Mr M'Tavish—will you support Sir William?"

"Well, well, Sir William is a fine man, a ferry fine nice nobleman; but, for God's sake, captain, is Stew-art niver bringing his pig?"

"Oh yes! this will bring him" (ringing the bell); "and now go on, for heaven's sake!"

A diversion was, however, again created in the lieutenant's favour by the entrance of the landlord, who informed us that the corps had been for a considerable time awaiting us in the barn, and were beginning to get a "little troublesome;" and as it appeared to Tom and myself that perhaps more might be done by a direct appeal to the whole body than by fencing with their impracticable officer, we decided to descend at once.

A strange scene presented itself to our eyes as we entered the barn. It was dimly lighted by a few tallow candles stuck into bottles, and by a stable-lantern suspended from a crossbeam in the centre. A heavy cloud of tobacco-smoke brooded over all, through which were hazily revealed the figures of the Volunteers. We had a dim panorama of shaggy crests of hair, of red faces, of tobacco-pipes, and of all manner of improvised drinking-vessels; while the hum of many voices, the puffing of many pipes, and the glugging of lips that drank greedily, were the sounds that met our ears. When our entrance was observed, suddenly uprose from the mist the form of a tall man with an outstretched arm, and from his lips proceeded a sound much resembling an ill-executed sneeze—"Att-itshun!" The form and the voice were those of the Collector, who seemed to have partially succeeded in "laying

the spirit," and who now, in the exercise of his military function, was calling the room to "attention."

The men all rose, looking like the peaks of hills appearing above the morning mist.

"Saloot!" cried the Collector, still favouring the attitude of the lion rampant; whereupon the corps all began to make what looked like mesmeric passes with their right arms in the air. "Dooble saloot!" shouted the Collector again; and then each man employed his left arm also, which gave the pleasing general effect of about fifty men swimming for their lives in an ocean of tobacco-smoke. This movement had for me such a delightful novelty that I could not help remarking on it to the lieutenant, who explained with great pride that it was an invention of his own devised to meet a difficulty he had felt in receiving merely the same salute as the Collector. "So I doobled it for my nanesel"; and if the craturs had more airms, they would use plenty more of them for the captain and yoursel'."

Tom now told the lieutenant that he would like to see the company fallen in in their ranks for a minute or two, just to get an idea of the general appearance of the men.

"Would you put the craturs into rangks withoot their sojer's clothes on, captain? and without their guns? Tit, tit! begging your grace, that would be a ferry fulish-like trick, to be sure."

"I don't want to see their clothing or their rifles;

I want to see the men themselves. Have the goodness to fall them in," said Tom, firmly, "and get them into single rank."

"Ferry goot, ferry well," said the lieutenant, with a shrug. "Shooliter, be craytly kind and put the cratur's into a single rank." The Collector had, however, apparently succumbed to his old enemy again, for he only waved his arm feebly, and muttered, with a sort of imbecile snigger, "She kens naething aboot it."

"Very well," said Tom, "I'll do it myself; give me a sergeant."

"Is there a sergeant among ye?" cried M'Tavish.

"No," shouted the collective voice of Strathkinahan from the mist.

"Very well, a corporal will do," said Tom.

"Is Corporal M'Ildhu thereabouts?" inquired M'Tavish, peering into the haze.

"He's at the bothy," shouted a score of voices.

"Why did he not take heed to come doon?" said the lieutenant.

"He had words wi' the Collector," explained the chorus again.

"Well, well, that's a peety—a sore peety—and the captain here and all."

I understood the chorus to admit, by a sort of rumbling growl, that it *was* a pity.

"Well, never mind," said Tom; "give me a 'coverer' of some sort, and we'll get on."



"Deed, and it's a thing the corps never had, captain. There was a taak of sairvin' them oot at our own costs; and they would be ferry goot in the wat nights if they were happenin' to be M'Intosh's clothes, and cheap."

"Isn't this nice?" said Tom, grimly, looking round at me. "Give me your right-hand man, then; I suppose the company has a right and a left?"

"Shess, sir! most notoriouslee, most certaintlee. Hand me oot the richt-hand man," he cried into the mist.

"She is not into here," replied the chorus.

"Who is she then, at all?" cried the lieutenant.

"Lauchy Fraser," shouted the chorus, with a roar of laughter.

"Ach! deed, and it is trooth," cried the lieutenant, heartily joining in the mirth; "she is on a veesit to the shirra;" whereupon there was another roar, which put Tom quite out of temper, and he pounced personally into the mist, and seizing the first man he found there, stood him up against the wall.

"This is the right-hand man," he said; "and now come on, all the rest of you, and fall in." And what with the doctor's assistance and mine, he at length contrived to get them into a row against the wall, all continuing to smoke their pipes and to retain their drinking-vessels in their hands. Tom winked

at these delinquencies, however, for the purpose, as he explained to me after, of keeping them in good-humour and carrying his point. "Now, Mr M'Tavish, take command of them ; and if your ensign can stand, which seems doubtful, he may as well take his place—it may keep him out of mischief, at least."

"I am to command them, captain?"

"If you please, Mr M'Tavish."

The lieutenant waddled out in front of the line, his hands in the arm-holes of his waistcoat, his head low, and shooting backwards and forwards, like a large gander waddling heavily to a pond, while from his lips came a sort of preliminary hissing, also suggestive of that bird. The hissing gradually "boiled up," so to speak, till it bubbled into a cry of "Oarter arrums !" whereupon the men gave an apologetic plunge in their ranks, apparently to imply that if they had the means, the lieutenant's wish would be cheerfully complied with.

"Tut, tut ! Mr M'Tavish," said Tom, struggling between laughter and indignation, "I don't mean that ; take command in the regular way."

"Shoolter arrums !" shouted the bewildered lieutenant, and again the corps executed a sort of *pas d'extase*.

"Fall in on the right, Mr M'Tavish," said Tom, with a desperate effort to keep his countenance ; "and, for the love of heaven, take your hands out of your waistcoat. and hold up your head, and try

to look like a reasonable being for three minutes !” he added, as the lieutenant moved sulkily to his position.

The arrangements being at last completed, including the position of the Collector, who, by way of compromise, was accommodated with a stool on the left flank, Tom and I walked slowly down the rank and inspected the men. They were a fine set of fellows, certainly—tall, sinewy, broad-shouldered, and athletic-looking. Many, indeed, bore very unequivocal traces of the manner in which they had occupied their time at “the bothy ;” but there was no disgraceful case like that of the Collector, the intermittent nature of whose inebriety made it difficult to deal with on any uniform system. The men, as a rule, stood steadily enough in the ranks, though in one or two exceptional cases an attempt was made to shake hands with the inspecting officer as he passed.

“Gentlemen,” said Tom, when the inspection was completed, “I have to congratulate you on your fine, I may say your soldier-like, appearance. I have often heard of the fine *physique* you have in this district——” (“It could not have been the feesick of Dr M’Kinlay,” interpolated M’Tavish, still rankling at his medical friend), “and I am not disappointed. A fine *physique*, and the mental intelligence which you evidently possess, are immense advantages ; but they must be properly applied,

and there are two things that can alone compass this end—drill and discipline. As it is with the regular, so it is with the volunteer soldier. I am sorry to find, with regard to the first, that you have been unfortunate in losing your drill-sergeant; but I am now making arrangements to supply his place. With regard to the second, the grand essential is, that the corps should be fully and efficiently officered; above all things, that there should be at its head a competent captain—a man of intelligence, energy, and, I may add, social position. A long period has elapsed since the death of your late captain, and no step has been taken to elect and nominate his successor to the Lord-Lieutenant. I have made frequent representations to your officers on this score, but without any result. I have therefore personally visited you for the double purpose of inspecting the corps, and of impressing upon you all the necessity of at once proceeding to elect a captain. When I say that *I* am inspecting the corps, I do not speak correctly, for I am in reality on this occasion only the attendant of the distinguished General Sir Hercules O'Halloran, who, in his capacity of Inspector-General of Reserves, does you the honour of being present here to-night, and may not improbably feel himself called upon to address a few words of advice to you on the subject I have been insisting upon. When I mention that Sir Hercules, in addition to his great military distinc-

tion, is so highly honoured as to be the confidential adviser of our beloved Sovereign, you will, I am sure, concur with me in the propriety of at once giving three cheers for that eminent officer. Hip! hip! hip! hurrah!" The cheers were given with right goodwill, till roof and rafters rang; and then Tom gravely continued his oration: "The Lord-Lieutenant will not appoint a gentleman to that position without your nomination, and I must tell you that he is not a little surprised and disappointed at the delay which has taken place. It would not be right for me to conceal from you, and I have Sir Hercules's sanction to mention, that pain and surprise have also been excited in far more august quarters, by what he has felt himself compelled to stigmatise as 'this unseemly tardiness;' but to-night I am confident this stigma will be removed, and I now propose that we proceed at once to elect a gentleman to the vacant position. I will not trouble you to stand in the ranks while this goes on; but I earnestly request you to sit down in an orderly manner, and discuss the matter in a business-like way. To the right face! Break off!" The men tumbled out of their ranks, and resealed themselves on the benches; the Collector obeyed the order by turning a back somersault off his stool; and the lieutenant waddled back into civil life much relieved, to lay aside the crown of office. "Now," said Tom, "let us discuss the matter quietly. I



say Sir William M'Vittie is our best man, and that we ought to elect him at once. Light your pipe, M'Tavish, and give us your opinion."

"Sir William is no doot a ferry fine, nice, partee-  
cular, pretty fellow, captain," said the lieutenant, emphasising each epithet with a draw at his pipe, in which an inordinate amount of suctional power was employed; "but if a captain is to be aal the goot things that you have spoke into your bit speech, Sir William will not be our man."

"How d'ye mean?" inquired Tom.

"Angus M'Rioch, will you be craytly kind, and tell the captain whether Sir William is for the dipping or for the smearing of the sheeps?" said the lieutenant, in a voice of the deepest solemnity.

"Dipping!" bellowed the whole room as one man.

"Ferry well, captain, you will not, after that, again be speaking for Sir William," said M'Tavish, with the air of one who has got rid of the first of a series of difficulties, and proceeds to handle the next, confident of success.

"But I don't see what that has got to do with the question," urged Tom. "As he has neither got to dip nor smear the Volunteers, I don't think it matters what he does with his sheep."

"There niver was a yowe, there niver was a tupp, there niver was a wedder dipped yet at aal on to the holdings of my father's son; there niver will be a



yowe, there niver will be a tupp, there niver will be a wedder dipped on to his holdings," said a lantern-jawed old fellow in a sort of chant; and the somewhat irrelevant statement was received with much applause, and evidently held to strengthen the case against Sir William.

"What would the old red man, Colin-with-the-crooked-nose, have said to all the dippings and the trash, Angus?" inquired another anti-Sir Williamite; but the Nestor only smoked with ineffable grimness. He had uttered, and that, he evidently thought, should settle the matter without further parley.

"There was once a pollis-offisher, by the name of M'Ardle, in the Strath," suggested another of the party, "but he is not into it now. Will somebody be ferry kind, and say who pit him oot?"

"Sir William!" cried a dozen voices.

"I suppose a pollis-offisher is to have no mouth into this Strath," observed a gentleman largely provided in respect of that feature, and with complexional indications that neither in eating nor in speaking was it principally employed.

"M'Ardle was not a drucken man," hiccoughed the Collector. "He tasted—at a time—like me; it was his dewty—Sir William pit him oot for—for his dewty. His name was Peter." And much honour was done to these decidedly hazy propositions.

"If Sir William is to be captain in the Strath, the Volunteers may ferry quickly put their mouths into the store wi' the guns, and not bring them oot again," suggested another satirist.

"After the shearin', when the ball was in the barn at Craig-Vittie, there was plenty of tea, but I did not obsairve anything for a man-body to drink," said another.

"If Sir William is to be captain, he will have to list the auld wives into the company. Betty M'Candlish will make a ferry parteecular fine lieutenant to him, and Ailsie M'Leod will be ensign instead of the Collector."

"Sir William is a temperanst man at his heart."

"And a temperanst man is a teirant."

"And we will have no teirants and no teiranny here."

Loud applause followed these heroic sentiments, and the lieutenant, turning to Tom, observed, "You see, captain, Sir William is a parteecular nice goot nobleman, but the Volunteers will not be for having a teirant for their captain."

"But there is no one else in the district you can elect, and as you must elect some one, why, you must elect Sir William. It's all nonsense about tyranny. Sir William is an excellent man, and no more a teetotaller than I am, though, of course, he doesn't think that every parade is to be turned into a drinking bout. When you know him better, when

he is mixed up with you as your captain, you will find all these things you've been hearing about him are nonsense, and I hear he is going to reside regularly at Craig-Vittie."

"If I might make bold to say a word," said a diplomatist, whose opinion was evidently held in high esteem, "I would say this, that if we must elect a captain, we must elect him; but if there is no one into the Strath who is shootable for the posection, then, for Got's sake, let us not at aal forget that there is other places with shootable people into them. We will elect some ferry crayt man; we will elect the Prince of Whales. He will be captain to the company; but we will not be troubling him, and he will not be troubling himself to come down to the Strath for the dreels; and so we will have a captain and no teiranny."

This novel method of solving the difficulty found universal favour; and M'Tavish at once abandoned his Fabian policy, and became clamorous for instant action as to the Prince's election.

Tom took me out of the room for consultation. "Did you ever see such an impracticable set of devils?" he said. "What's to be done?"

"Arguing won't mend matters, that's clear," I replied. "Give me some particulars about this Sir William, and I'll see what I can do." Tom did so, and I learned that Sir William had quite recently succeeded to the property; that he had lived prin-

cipally abroad in the diplomatic service, and was as yet almost unknown in the Strath; but that he was about to settle on his acres, and that his co-operation and assistance would be of the greatest importance in saving the Volunteer movement in the locality from death by alcoholic drowning. He was reported to be a very sensible man; and though neither the tyrant nor the ascetic he was alleged to be by the corps, he had, on a recent short visit to the Strath, been not a little startled and scandalised at the extraordinary chronic state of fuddlement in which its inhabitants lived, and had expressed himself pretty broadly on the subject, and, in one or two instances, made a clearance of the most inveterate offenders. *Hinc illæ lacrymæ.* "In fact," Tom concluded, "he is just the man to keep these dipso-maniacs in order; and I know he will accept, if he is elected."

"Very well," said I, "you had better let me speak to them. Just say that 'the General' will address a few observations to the corps."

When we returned to the meeting we found that they had just elected the Prince of Wales *nem. con.*, and were expecting with flaming eyes the arrival of the "glasses round" with which the lieutenant had suggested they should celebrate the event "at their own costs."

Three cheers for "our captain, the Prince," were given somewhat defiantly on our entrance; and, on

the whole, matters bore a decidedly unsatisfactory aspect.

"Gentlemen," cried Tom, "Lieutenant-General Sir Hercules O'Halloran, K.C.B., Inspector of the Reserve Forces, will address you;" and I stepped forward, desperately determined that if unscrupulous impudence could avert the collapse of the Keltshire "Ad. Batt." and the loss of my friend Tom's appointment, it should not be wanting to me on this occasion.

"Gentlemen," I said, "first of all I must express to you, as representing the Royal Family, my very sincere thanks for the honour which you have so loyally and so very properly bestowed upon us—I mean, upon the Prince of Wales. Gentlemen, you have done honour to yourselves in honouring him—(cheers)—and before I go further I beg that you will allow me, on behalf of the Queen, to defray the expense of the farther honour which you propose to offer him in drinking his health." (Loud and protracted cheering, during which I tried to look as if the Privy purse was at that moment in my portmanteau up-stairs.) "But having said thus much, it deeply grieves me to add that duty and my instructions compel me to decline, with every expression of gratitude, the honour which you have done to his Royal Highness." (Murmurs, soothed by the arrival of the liquor, during which I paused for a second or two.) "Yes, gentlemen," I resumed,



"it is my painful duty to be obliged to decline. You must all be aware, of course, that the Prince, from his position and natural affability, is perpetually importuned to accept situations similar to that which you have offered him to-night. In such great numbers are they offered to him, indeed, that to fill one tithe of them, even in a nominal and honorary way, would strain and overtax his royal energies most insupportably. Under these circumstances we were obliged to come to a fixed determination; and I assure you that in coming to it I experienced the greatest hesitation and difficulty, but having been come to, it cannot be deviated from. It was this,—that the Prince should only consent to take command of one corps at a time. What that corps should be it was of course left for me to decide; and after renewed hesitation, my choice fell upon—upon—upon the corps which—now enjoys that distinction.

"The Prince himself, with that self-abnegation which characterises him, has frequently implored me to reconsider the matter, and bring him into a wider connection with a movement which he honours and admires.

"Supported by her Majesty, I have, however, remained firm; and you must pardon me if I say that even the impression which you as a corps have made upon me to-night, and the *absorbing* interest which you clearly take in your duties, cannot make me waver.



“On Monday night, the night before I left London, I was dining in private with the Prince and the Duke of Cambridge; and his Royal Highness, understanding that I was about to proceed northward on my tour of inspection, again reverted to the subject. ‘Are you still as obstinate as ever, Hercules?’ said his Royal Highness. ‘Please your Royal Highness, I am a rock,’ I replied. ‘As the Russians found at Inkerman,’ remarked the Duke of Cambridge.” (“Three cheers for Sir Hercules!” cried the doctor, which were rather quaveringly given, however.) “‘Won’t you give me a corps in each of the three kingdoms?’ urged the Prince. ‘It can’t be done at any price, your Royal Highness,’ I replied, firmly but respectfully. ‘I like the Scotch,’ continued the Prince. ‘They are a noble race,’ I replied; ‘especially the Highlanders.’ ‘You should have seen them following me up the Alma Heights,’ said the Duke. ‘Give me a Scotch corps, General,’ said the Prince—‘there’s a good fellow.’ ‘It cuts me to the heart to say “No,” sir,’ I replied. ‘But what am I to say to all these fine fellows?’ he inquired, pulling out a bundle of papers which were requisitions from the Kirkintilloch, Kilbogie, Slamannan, Cowcaddens, and other corps. ‘You can show your interest in them by nominating the gentleman you would wish to fill the post instead of your Royal Highness,’ I replied. ‘It is a happy thought,’ said the Prince; ‘but it is impos-

sible for me to go down to Kilbogie and Cowcaddens at present, and I would not nominate a substitute without being sure of him, as, of course, where I nominate, the corps can't refuse to elect.' 'Leave it all to Sir Hercules,' said the Duke; 'his judgment in all military matters is simply the best in the country.' 'Your Royal Highness does me infinite honour,' I replied. 'Pooh, pooh! only your due, O'Halloran,' said the Duke. 'Well, O'Halloran, would you mind going to these places for me,' said the Prince, 'to say that I thank the corps with all my heart, and that I leave you to act for me and nominate a substitute?' 'It is my duty and delight to do what your Royal Highness wishes,' I replied. 'But you must be very careful in your selection, General; you must be sure that the man is fit in every way—above all, that he is a district proprietor;—and when you have made your choice you must be firm. Remember that for the moment you are the Prince of Wales; and if any other corps should elect me while you are in the north, pray go to them also, and select a substitute for me. I am ashamed to give you so much trouble.' 'Don't mention it, Prince,' I replied; 'I will carry out your instructions to the letter.'

"Well, gentlemen, I have been to Kirkintilloch, I have been to Kilbogie, to Slamannan, and to Cowcaddens, and in each of these places I have made, I think, satisfactory appointments. In one instance

the corps had set their hearts upon a gentleman I could not appoint; but I am bound to say, that the moment they became aware of the ground on which I stood, they evinced the patriotic and loyal self-denial which is characteristic of the volunteer, and at once accepted with enthusiasm the gentleman I had selected.

"Now, gentlemen, by your selection of the Prince to-night you have virtually thrown, as you must see, the appointment of your captain into my hands; for though, as a matter of form, I shall simply propose a gentleman to you, you will, as a matter of course, accept him; and, standing in this position, I feel the grave responsibility which rests upon me. On the one hand, it is most unpleasant to me to run counter to your inclinations; but on the other, the duty I owe to the Prince is paramount.

"As far as my own convictions go, however, I have no hesitation in making my selection. In many districts where I might be called upon to act as I am to-night, I should require time for inquiry and consideration; but here, in Strathkinahan, I find ready to my hand the right man, and that in the person of one of my oldest and dearest friends, a man of great distinction, high character, probity, and Presbyterian principles—a man, in fact, every inch a man and a soldier. I allude to my honourable friend Sir William M'Vittie of Craig-Vittie, Baronet."

A perfect howl of indignation rose from the party, upon whom this came like a thunderclap. It was necessary to take a high tone at once, so "Volunteers!" I cried, raising my voice sternly, "you forget in whose presence you virtually are. Situated as you are, this unseemly demonstration is very nearly approaching to a seditious cry, and I trust" (with grim emphasis) "that I shall never have to report or to punish sedition in Strathkinahan. I propose to you Sir William M'Vittie. I am sorry there is a prejudice against him, but I can't help it. How groundless it is I well know.

"His views upon certain practical matters, such as the dipping of sheep, may not be as healthy as I could wish, but a residence in Strathkinahan will correct them. As to his being a temperance man, *that* I repudiate, on behalf of my old friend, as a personal insult; and when I tell you that at Court, where he is known well, his singular power of consuming claret and other fluids has procured for him the nickname of "Gallon" M'Vittie, you will, I think, acquit him of any such baseness." ("Hurrah! hurrah!" from the doctor and Tom, slightly joined in by a few converts.)

"I beg to propose him, then, as a fit and proper person to be Captain of the Strathkinahan Volunteers, and I *expect* the proposal to be seconded and carried unanimously."

"I second it, Sir Hercules!" cried the doctor, at once.

"And it is carried *nem. con.*," I added, hastily. "Get paper, pen, and ink, and I will draw the requisition."

"I make so bold as to make a protest against it," said the diplomatist.

It was necessary to nip this sort of thing in the bud by a *coup d'état*, so I replied with fierce energy, advancing and gobbling at the fellow, "Hold your tongue, sir! you ought to be ashamed of yourself, sir! All your brother volunteers blush for you, sir! Another word, and I shall turn you out of the corps, and out of the room, and send you to the lock-up, sir!"

This quelled the fellow; and the rest of them accepted me as apparently a sort of dictator, endowed with the fullest legislative and executive powers. No farther difficulty was made; and after I had ordered another round of liquor to the health of the Queen, another to the health of Sir William, and a third in honour of Tom and myself, certain hieroglyphs were dashingly appended to the requisition; and the meeting broke up in the highest delight, after singing "Auld Lang Syne," and dancing hand in hand round the prostrate and senseless form of the Collector.

Next morning we departed at daybreak, and posted the requisition at the first village. I confess I had many misgivings as to what the morning feelings of the Volunteers might be, and whether, in my wish to serve Tom, I might not have run him into a

serious scrape. All, however, went well, and in three weeks I had the satisfaction of seeing Sir William gazetted. And now I can assure my readers that the pious fraud has turned out to admiration.

The Strathkinahans are now a flourishing corps, and Sir William and Tom are still prospering in their official connection with the once tottering "Ad. Batt."

For once, then, the efforts of a practical joker have been productive of beneficial results, for my friend Tom has much benefited therefrom, and thereby, in Strathkinahan, the Volunteer institution has been placed on a solid and satisfactory basis; so that though the austere may decline to admit the Horatian "*Dulce est desipere in loco*," perhaps the blending in this case of the "*utile*" with the "*dulce*" may lead them to find extenuating circumstances in the outrageous audacity of my conduct. Tom has no doubt whatever on the subject. Looking over my shoulder as I write, he bawls out—

"*Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci.*"  
"You carried my point for me, old boy, and I'm forever grateful."



## THE PHILOSOPHER'S BABY.

I HAD been considering for about a year whether I should marry Winifred Hanway, when I heard that she was engaged to the Philosopher. Why did she accept him? It is true that he is both imaginative and critical; but faculties exercised in the formation of psychological hypotheses and the laborious destruction of those of one's neighbour, do not usually rouse the sympathy of a bright and beautiful girl, who is more fit to live than to think about life. He is certainly handsome, but as certainly his clothes are barbarous. His trousers cannot keep their shape for a day, and his hats are never new. If he notices the rain, he opens an umbrella which might have served as an ineffectual protection at the time of the Deluge; if he finds out that it is cold, he assumes a garment which might have been the everyday coat of Methuselah. His manners are as strange as his appearance. He may often be seen walking in the Park at the fashionable hour

with a far-off look in his eyes, and his hat thrust back as if to lessen the external pressure on his active brain; more rarely you may hear him bursting into enthusiasm in Piccadilly, though Piccadilly is the last place in which a man should allow himself to be enthusiastic. In short, though he is a true friend, he is an uncomfortable acquaintance; and his volcanic utterances, after long periods of calm contemplation, cause such shocks to one's nerves as would be conveyed to the Sunday citizen by the eruption of Primrose Hill. But if it was odd that the beautiful Winifred Hanway should marry my friend, it was yet more odd that he should marry any one. There were no topics more certain to excite an explosion in the philosopher than the excessive population of the country, and the wholesome solitude of the Thinker. "How," he would fiercely ask, "can a man think effectually on fundamental subjects, who is compelled by the despicable circumstances of his life to exhaust his analytical faculty in considering how to pay his butcher and when to buy his coals? I tell you, sir, it's better to starve with cold and hunger than to debase one's noblest part to a game of skill with a grasping grocer." Again and again I had heard him declaim in this preposterous fashion; and after all, he was going to the altar like any other victim, and would doubtless take a house upon his back with the docility of a snail.

I could not solve the problem ; I would not give it up. So, full of the determination to drag Diogenes out of his tub, and the secret out of Diogenes, I stepped round the corner to offer my congratulations. My friend was in his study apparently writing, really eating a quill pen. He rose at me with a rush, wrung my hand till it ached, and blushed rather uncomfortably. Congratulations are the curse of the Briton. Whether he is offering them or receiving them, he is generally obliged to take refuge in intermittent hand-shaking, and most of his sentences tail off into grunts and groans. But on this occasion it was evident that the philosopher had something ready to say, and was nervously anxious to say it. Indeed I had hardly said more than "My dear fellow, I don't know when . . . I really am so awfully glad, I . . . it's in every way so, such a satisfactory, you know . . . I really do wish all possible, and all that sort of thing, you know"—when he burst in with a speech so fluently delivered, that I knew I was not his earliest visitor that morning. "Of course it's taken you by surprise," he said, "as I knew it would ; but the truth is, that I have been thinking of it for a long time, and I am sure I am right." Here I tried to get in an expression of wonder at his new notion of duty, but he was bent on being rid of the matter, and hurried on to his reasons. "In the first place," said he, "I am sure that, instead of

increasing my domestic worries, my marriage will transfer them in a body to my wife ; and, secondly, when I consider the vast number of fools who are every day born into the world, I am terrified by the picture of what the next generation will be, if the thinkers of this are to be without successors." Having discharged his reasons in this wise, the orator stood blinking at me as if he feared dissent, but I was too astounded by his magnificent audacity to reply. Slowly a look of peace stole back into his face, a pleasant light dawned in his eyes, and the promise of a smile played at the corner of his mouth. His remarkable fluency was gone, and indeed his voice sounded quite choky when he said, "Johnny, you don't know what an angel she is." A light broke in upon me. "Philosopher," I said, "I believe you are going to be married because you fell in love?" "Perhaps you are right," said the philosopher.

After the wedding, the philosopher and his wife went abroad for an indefinite period, and their friends heard but little of them. He wrote to nobody, and she did not write to me. Yet there were occasional rumours. Now they were breathing the keen air of the Engadine, now sinking to the chestnuts and vines of Chiavenna ; now he was lashing himself to frenzy over the treasures of Rome ; now she was gazing with sweet northern eyes across the

glowing splendour of the Bay of Naples. Then they were in Germany, and about to settle for life in a university town; but anon had fled from it in haste after a long night's dispute, in the course of which my learned friend had wellnigh come to blows with the university's most celebrated professor.

At last I heard that they were again in London, and, full of enthusiasm, darted round the corner to welcome them home. Nobody was with them but Mrs Hanway, Winifred's mother. I would enter unannounced, and surprise the philosopher. I entered unannounced, and was surprised myself. Was this the effect of matrimony or of foreign travel? Each occupant of the room was engaged in an exercise wholly unconnected, as it seemed, with those of the rest. My friend's wife, the lady whom I had almost loved, queen of all grace and comeliness, was appearing and disappearing like a flash behind the day's 'Times,' showing at the moments of disclosure a face flushed with excitement, and lustrous coils of hair tumbled into the wildest disorder, while she accompanied the whole performance with strange and inarticulate sounds. Her mother, the same Mrs Hanway who was so perfect a model of dress and carriage that many of her lady friends were wont to lament among themselves that she gave herself such airs, was seated on the floor dressed for walking but without her bonnet. Yes,

she was certainly drumming on an inverted tea-tray with the wrong end of the poker. And the philosopher? It was perplexing, after three years' separation, to meet him thus. The philosopher was cantering round the room on all-fours, wearing on his head his own waste-paper basket. Briskly he cantered round, ever and anon frisking like a lamb in spring-time, until he reached my feet, which were rooted to the spot with astonishment. He glanced up sideways, rose with a cry to the normal attitude of man, and grasped me by the hand. At the sound of his voice, his wife dropping the paper from her hands raised them quickly to her hair; and his mother-in-law, with as much dignity as the effort would allow, scrambled on to her feet. Then in an instant the cause of their eccentric conduct was made clear. Throned upon the hearthrug, and showing by a gracious smile a few of the newest teeth, sat a fine baby of some fifteen months. In one dimpled fist was tightly clenched the brush, which had so neatly arranged the mother's braids; while the other was engaged in pounding the grandmother's best bonnet into a shapeless mass.

We were all somewhat embarrassed except the baby. The ladies knew that they were untidy, and I that I was an intruder. As for the learned father, he stood now on one leg and now on the other, while he shifted the waste-paper basket from hand to hand, and continued to smile almost as persever-



ingly as his amiable offspring. Yet it was he who at last put an end to our awkward position by expressing a wild desire to have my opinion of the new curtains in his study. Rather sheepishly I said good-bye to the lady of the house, trying to express by my eyes that I would never call again unannounced. I knew that Mrs Hanway had not forgiven me, as I humbly took the two fingers which she offered; and I felt like a brute, as the most important member of the family condescended to leave a damp spot by the edge of my left whisker.

When, however, I had been swept down-stairs by my impulsive friend, and was alone with him in his den, my courage returned, and with it some indignation. I confronted him, and sternly asked why I had not been told that he was a father. "Not been told?" echoed he; "do you mean to say that you did not know about the Baby?" "Not so much as that it was," I replied, gloomily. He was overwhelmed: of course he had supposed that every one knew it from the Queen downwards. Of course fifty people ought to have told me, who of course had told me everything else. At last my curiosity got the better of my indignation, and I cut short his apologies by beginning my questions—"Does the shape of its head content you?" I asked. "The shape of whose what?" cried the philosopher, apparently too surprised for grammar. "Of the

baby's head, of course," I replied, tartly; "I merely wish to know if the child is likely to be as intellectual as you hoped." "Isn't the hair lovely?" he asked, inconsequently. This was too much, and assuming my severest manner I delivered myself in this wise—"I thought, though no doubt I was wrong, that the use of a baby to you would be partly to furnish you with raw material for a philosopher, partly to enable you by constant observation to gain further evidence bearing on such vexed questions as, whether the infant gains its idea of space by feeling about, whether it is conscious of itself, &c." "Well," he said, laughing, "I don't expect much help from my infant in those matters, unless I can get inside her and think her thoughts." "Her thoughts?" cried I, in amazement; "you don't mean to say it's a girl? Good gracious! you are not going to educate a female philosopher?" He looked rather vexed. "Of course it's a girl," he said. "The father of a female philosopher!" I gasped. "Dear me!" said he, somewhat testily; "isn't it enough to be father of a noble woman?"

Now I have often put up with a great deal from my learned friend, and am quite aware that I have been spoken of as "Bozzy" behind my back. But there is a turning-point even for the worm, and nobody will sit for ever at the feet which are constantly kicking him. I had been snubbed more than enough by this illogical parent, and assum-

ing my most sarcastic manner, I inquired, with an appearance of deference—"Is it not rather early to speak of your daughter as a noble woman?"

"Not at all," said the philosopher.

I had kept aloof from the philosopher for some weeks, nursing my wrath, like Achilles I said to myself—cross as a bear, I overheard my landlady say in the passage—when I received a hasty note begging me to come to him at once. I fancied myself summoned to a council of chiefs; so, having donned my shining armour, I left my tent with fitting dignity, and descended with a clang into the plain. Yet I could not but be aware of my landlady's eye piercing me through the crack of the parlour-door purposely left ajar, and of the hasty flapping of loose slippers which told of the startled slavey's flight into the abyss below.

An unusual silence held my friend's house that morning. The door was opened, before I had time to ring, by a melancholy footman, who, walking before me with the elaborate delicacy of an Agag, noiselessly ushered me into the study. It was my lot to be again rooted to the spot with amazement. By the book-case, in a shaded corner of the room, with his head bowed low upon his hands, knelt the philosopher. Here was a long step from the siege of Troy, from the simple wrath of a child-like hero to the most complex embarrassment of

an heir of all the ages. What should I do? The dismal menial had fled to the shades, without a word, without even a glance into the room. If I retreated, I left my friend unaided, and remained ignorant of the cause of his strange conduct. If I advanced, I was again the intruder on a scene not prepared for my inspection. In an agony of hesitation I fell to brushing my hat with my elbow; but not finding the expected relief in the occupation, I was about to desist, when my hat decided what my head could not, by falling with a crack on the floor. The effect was electrical. Without one glance at the intruder, the philosopher made a grab at the nearest book-shelf, dragged out a volume which had not been touched for half a century, and hunted for nothing in its pages with frantic eagerness. He was still at it, when I stood over him and noted without wonder that he held the book upside down; then with the poorest imitation of surprise which I have ever seen, he rose and grasped my hand. "You found me on the track of something," he said; "I was looking it out in—in——"

Here it occurred to him that he did not know the name of the venerable tome which he had so rudely disturbed; and with a heightened colour and a sudden change of manner he turned quickly to me and said, "My child is ill." I felt positively guilty. I had been angry with that baby for making my wise friend foolish, for not being a boy, for

being called "a noble woman." Was it not shameful that a great hulking brute should sneer at a weak thing that could not even answer with a taunt? Were not my clumsy sarcasms enough to crush so delicate a plant? The poor little "noble woman" was in danger, and I could do nothing to help her. There were tears in the eyes which were looking into mine for comfort; but I had nothing ready to say.

"I could not stand being alone," he muttered, after a short silence; "the doctor is with her now, and in a moment I may hear that my little daughter must—in fact may hear the worst."

While he was speaking, I seemed to have fifty consoling remarks to offer; but when he stopped, no one sentence would disengage itself from the rest. What I blurted out at last seems almost ridiculous as I look back on it.

"You must hope for the best," I said; "you know she has youth on her side."

The words were scarcely out of my mouth when I heard a measured step upon the stairs; presently the door was opened by the noiseless footman, and the most famous of London doctors entered the room. My friend leaned heavily on my arm, but looked at the man of science with seeming calm.

"I am happy to say," said the physician, cheerily, "that our little friend is going on as well as possible."



"And she is out of danger?"

"She never was in it."

"Never in danger?" cried I, almost disappointed.

"She has nothing the matter with her," he replied, "but a slight feverish cold. I have seldom seen a finer or more healthy child. Good morning."

I never was more annoyed. Here was a waste of my finest feelings. Here was I stirred to the depth, wellnigh moved to tears, by a baby's feverish cold. Of course I was very glad that it was no worse; but my friend was too absurd, and I would not spare him.

"Won't you resume your studies?" I asked, sarcastically, pointing to the disturbed book, which was lying on the ground at our feet. His humility might have disarmed me: "I am afraid I've been a fool," he said; "but if you had seen her all flushed and breathing hard; and then she is so small and fragile."

"Yes, for a noble woman," I remarked; he received the dart meekly. "Philosopher," said I, suddenly, determined to rouse him at any cost, "when I entered this room, you were engaged in prayer." His colour certainly deepened. "May I ask," I inquired with an appearance of deference, "whether you were addressing yourself to the Personal First Cause, or to the Unknowable—but perhaps you were merely bowing to the rational order of the Universe?"



He made a gesture of impatience, but answered still with studied moderation, "I was alone and in trouble."

"And the efficacy of prayer?" I asked.

"For heaven's sake," cried he, bursting into excitement, "stop your jargon! Nothing shows such ignorance of a subject as having all its cant phrases on the tip of your tongue. Can't I speak to God without expecting to be paid for it?"

This was turning the tables. If he was going to take to questions, I knew I should end by admitting myself a fool. So to avoid a Socratic dialogue I put my hand on my friend's shoulder and said: "You are a good man, philosopher; may you and the 'noble woman' live a thousand years."

"Thank you," he said, simply; "and now you must let me go and sing a pæan with the nobler woman, my patient Penelope, my sweet wife."

So he went with long strides over the asphodel meadow, and I betook myself to my tent full of pleasant thoughts.

# THE SECRET CHAMBER.

*[Dedicated to the inquirers in the Norman Tower.]*

BY M. O. W. OLIPHANT.

## CHAPTER I.

CASTLE GOWRIE is one of the most famous and interesting in all Scotland. It is a beautiful old house, to start with,—perfect in old feudal grandeur, with its clustered turrets and walls that could withstand an army,—its labyrinths, its hidden stairs, its long mysterious passages—passages that seem in many cases to lead to nothing, but of which no one can be too sure what they lead to. The front, with its fine gateway and flanking towers, is approached now by velvet lawns, and a peaceful, beautiful old avenue, with double rows of trees, like a cathedral; and the woods out of which these grey towers rise, look as soft and rich in foliage, if not so lofty in growth, as the groves of the South. But this softness of aspect is all new to the place,—that is, new within the century or two which count

for but little in the history of a dwelling-place, some part of which, at least, has been standing since the days when the Saxon Athelings brought such share of the arts as belong to them, to solidify and regulate the original Celtio art which reared incised stones upon rude burial-places, and twined mystic knots on its crosses, before historic days. Even of this primitive decoration there are relics at Gowrie, where the twistings and twinings of Runic cords appear still on some bits of ancient wall, solid as rocks, and almost as everlasting. From these to the graceful French turrets, which recall many a grey chateau, what a long interval of years ! But these are filled with stirring chronicles enough, besides the dim, not always decipherable records, which different developments of architecture have left on the old house. The Earls of Gowrie had been in the heat of every commotion that took place on or about the Highland line for more generations than any but a Celtic pen could record. Rebellions, revenges, insurrections, conspiracies, nothing in which blood was shed and lands lost, took place in Scotland, in which they had not had a share ; and the annals of the house are very full, and not without many a stain. They had been a bold and vigorous race—with much evil in them, and some good ; never insignificant, whatever else they might be. It could not be said, however, that they are remarkable nowadays. Since the first

Stuart rising, known in Scotland as "the Fifteen," they have not done much that has been worth recording; but yet their family history has always been of an unusual kind. The Randolphs could not be called eccentric in themselves: on the contrary, when you knew them, they were at bottom a respectable race, full of all the country-gentleman virtues; and yet their public career, such as it was, had been marked by the strangest leaps and jerks of vicissitude. You would have said an impulsive, fanciful family — now making a grasp at some visionary advantage, now rushing into some wild speculation, now making a sudden sally into public life—but soon falling back into mediocrity, not able apparently, even when the impulse was purely selfish and mercenary, to keep it up. But this would not have been at all a true conception of the family character; their actual virtues were not of the imaginative order, and their freaks were a mystery to their friends. Nevertheless these freaks were what the general world was most aware of in the Randolph race. The late Earl had been a representative peer of Scotland (they had no English title), and had made quite a wonderful start, and for a year or two had seemed about to attain a very eminent place in Scotch affairs; but his ambition was found to have made use of some very equivocal modes of gaining influence, and he dropped accordingly at once and for ever from the political firm-

ment. This was quite a common circumstance in the family. An apparently brilliant beginning, a discovery of evil means adopted for ambitious ends, a sudden subsidence, and the curious conclusion at the end of everything that this schemer, this unscrupulous speculator or politician, was a dull, good man after all — unambitious, contented, full of domestic kindness and benevolence. This family peculiarity made the history of the Randolphs a very strange one, broken by the oddest interruptions, and with no consistency in it. There was another circumstance, however, which attracted still more the wonder and observation of the public. For one who can appreciate such a recondite matter as family character, there are hundreds who are interested in a family secret, and this the house of Randolph possessed in perfection. It was a mystery which piqued the imagination and excited the interest of the entire country. The story went, that somewhere hid amid the massive walls and tortuous passages there was a secret chamber in Gowrie Castle. Everybody knew of its existence; but save the Earl, his heir, and one other person, not of the family, but filling a confidential post in their service, no mortal knew where this mysterious hiding-place was. There had been countless guesses made at it, and expedients of all kinds invented to find it out. Every visitor who ever entered the old gateway, nay, even passing travellers who saw

the turrets from the road, searched keenly for some trace of this mysterious chamber. But all guesses and researches were equally in vain.

I was about to say that no ghost-story I ever heard of has been so steadily and long believed. But this would be a mistake, for nobody knew even with any certainty that there was a ghost connected with it. A secret chamber was nothing wonderful in so old a house. No doubt they exist in many such old houses, and are always curious and interesting—strange relics, more moving than any history, of the time when a man was not safe in his own house, and when it might be necessary to secure a refuge beyond the reach of spies or traitors at a moment's notice. Such a refuge was a necessity of life to a great medieval noble. The peculiarity about this secret chamber, however, was, that some secret connected with the very existence of the family was always understood to be involved in it. It was not only the secret hiding-place for an emergency, a kind of historical possession presupposing the importance of his race, of which a man might be honestly proud; but there was something hidden in it of which assuredly the race could not be proud. It is wonderful how easily a family learns to pique itself upon any distinctive possession. A ghost is a sign of importance not to be despised; a haunted room is worth as much as the richest farm to the complacency of the family that



owns it. And no doubt the younger branches of the Gowrie family—the light-minded portion of the race—felt this, and were proud of their unfathomable secret, and felt a thrill of agreeable awe and piquant suggestion go through them, when they remembered the mysterious something which they did not know in their familiar home. That thrill ran through the entire circle of visitors, and children, and servants, when the Earl peremptorily forbade a projected improvement, or stopped a reckless exploration. They looked at each other with a pleasurable shiver. “Did you hear?” they said. “He will not let Lady Gowrie have that closet she wants so much in that bit of wall. He sent the workmen about their business before they could touch it, though the wall is twenty feet thick if it is an inch; ah!” said the visitors, looking at each other; and this lively suggestion sent tinglings of excitement to their very finger-points; but even to his wife, mourning the commodious closet she had intended, the Earl made no explanations. For anything she knew, it might be there, next to her room, this mysterious lurking-place; and it may be supposed that this suggestion conveyed to Lady Gowrie’s veins a thrill more keen and strange, perhaps too vivid to be pleasant. But she was not in the favoured or unfortunate number of those to whom the truth could be revealed.

I need not say what the different theories on the

subject were. Some thought there had been a treacherous massacre there, and that the secret chamber was blocked by the skeletons of murdered guests,—a treachery no doubt covering the family with shame in its day, but so condoned by long softening of years as to have all the shame taken out of it. The Randolphs could not have felt their character affected by any such interesting historical record. They were not so morbidly sensitive. Some said, on the other hand, that Earl Robert, the wicked Earl, was shut up there in everlasting penance, playing cards with the devil for his soul. But it would have been too great a feather in the family cap to have thus got the devil, or even one of his angels, bottled up, as it were, and safely in hand, to make it possible that any lasting stigma could be connected with such a fact as this. What a thing it would be to know where to lay one's hand upon the Prince of Darkness, and prove him once for all, cloven foot and everything else, to the confusion of gainsayers!

So this was not to be received as a satisfactory solution, nor could any other be suggested which was more to the purpose. The popular mind gave it up, and yet never gave it up; and still everybody who visits Gowrie, be it as a guest, be it as a tourist, be it only as a gazer from a passing carriage, or from the flying railway train which just glimpses its turrets in the distance, daily and

yearly spends a certain amount of curiosity, wonderment, and conjecture about the Secret Chamber—the most piquant and undiscoverable wonder which has endured unguessed and undeciphered to modern times.

This was how the matter stood when young John Randolph, Lord Lindores, came of age. He was a young man of great character and energy, not like the usual Randolph strain—for, as we have said, the type of character common in this romantically-situated family, notwithstanding the erratic incidents common to them, was that of dulness and honesty, especially in their early days. But young Lindores was not so. He was honest and honourable, but not dull. He had gone through almost a remarkable course at school and at the university—not perhaps in quite the ordinary way of scholarship, but enough to attract men's eyes to him. He had made more than one great speech at the Union. He was full of ambition, and force, and life, intending all sorts of great things, and meaning to make his position a stepping-stone to all that was excellent in public life. Not for him the country-gentleman existence which was congenial to his father. The idea of succeeding to the family honours and becoming a mere Scotch peer, either represented or representative, filled him with horror; and filial piety in his case was made warm by all the energy of personal hope, when he prayed that

his father might live, if not for ever, yet longer than any Lord Gowrie had lived for the last century or two. He was as sure of his election for the county the next time there was a chance, as anybody can be certain of anything; and in the meantime he meant to travel, to go to America, to go no one could tell where, seeking for instruction and experience, as is the manner of high-spirited young men with parliamentary tendencies in the present day. In former times he would have gone "to the wars in the Hie Germanie," or on a crusade to the Holy Land; but the days of the crusaders and of the soldiers of fortune being over, Lindores followed the fashion of his time. He had made all his arrangements for his tour, which his father did not oppose. On the contrary, Lord Gowrie encouraged all those plans, though with an air of melancholy indulgence which his son could not understand. "It will do you good," he said, with a sigh. "Yes, yes, my boy; the best thing for you." This, no doubt, was true enough; but there was an implied feeling that the young man would require something to do him good—that he would want the soothing of change and the gratification of his wishes, as one might speak of a convalescent or the victim of some calamity. This tone puzzled Lindores, who, though he thought it a fine thing to travel and acquire information, was as scornful of the idea of being done good to, as is natural

to any fine young fellow fresh from Oxford and the triumphs of the Union. But he reflected that the old school had its own way of treating things, and was satisfied. All was settled accordingly for this journey, before he came home to go through the ceremonial performances of the coming of age, the dinner of the tenantry, the speeches, the congratulations, his father's banquet, his mother's ball. It was in summer, and the country was as gay as all the entertainments that were to be given in his honour. His friend who was going to accompany him on his tour, as he had accompanied him through a considerable portion of his life—Almeric Ffarrington, a young man of the same aspirations—came up to Scotland with him for these festivities. And as they rushed through the night on the Great Northern Railway, in the intervals of two naps, they had a scrap of conversation as to these birthday glories. "It will be a bore, but it will not last long," said Lindores. They were both of the opinion that everything that did not produce information or promote culture was a bore.

"But is there not a revelation to be made to you, among all the other things you have to go through?" said Ffarrington. "Have not you to be introduced to the secret chamber, and all that sort of thing? I should like to be of the party there, Lindores."

"Ah," said the heir, "I had forgotten that part



of it," which, however, was not the case. "Indeed I don't know if I am to be told. Even family dogmas are shaken nowadays."

"Oh, I should insist on that," said Ffarrington, lightly. "It is not many who have the chance of paying such a visit—better than Home and all the mediums. I should insist upon that."

"I have no reason to suppose that it has any connection with Home or the mediums," said Lindores, slightly nettled. He was himself an *esprit fort*; but a mystery in one's own family is not like vulgar mysteries. He liked it to be respected.

"Oh, no offence," said his companion. "I have always thought that a railway train would be a great chance for the spirits. If one were to show suddenly in that vacant seat beside you, what a triumphant proof of their existence that would be! but they don't take advantage of their opportunities."

Lindores could not tell what it was that made him think at that moment of a portrait he had seen in a back room at the castle of old Earl Robert, the wicked Earl. It was a bad portrait—a daub—a copy made by an amateur of the genuine portrait, which, out of horror of Earl Robert and his wicked ways, had been removed by some intermediate lord from its place in the gallery. Lindores had never seen the original—nothing but this daub of a copy. Yet somehow this face occurred to him by some



strange link of association—seemed to come into his eyes as his friend spoke. A slight shiver ran over him. It was strange. He made no reply to Ffarrington, but set himself to think how it could be that the latent presence in his mind of some anticipation of this approaching disclosure, touched into life by his friend's suggestion, should have called out of his memory a momentary realisation of the acknowledged magician of the family. This sentence is full of long words; but unfortunately long words are required in such a case. And the process was very simple when you traced it out. It was the clearest case of unconscious cerebration. He shut his eyes by way of securing privacy while he thought it out; and being tired, and not at all alarmed by his unconscious cerebration, before he opened them again fell fast asleep.

And his birthday, which was the day following his arrival at Glenlyon, was a very busy day. He had not time to think of anything but the immediate occupations of the moment. Public and private greetings, congratulations, offerings, poured upon him. The Gowries were popular in this generation, which was far from being usual in the family. Lady Gowrie was kind and generous, with that kindness which comes from the heart, and which is the only kindness likely to impress the keensighted popular judgment; and Lord Gowrie had but little of the equivocal reputation of his pre-

decessors. They could be splendid now and then on great occasions, though in general they were homely enough; all which the public likes. It was a bore, Lindores said; but yet the young man did not dislike the honours, and the adulation, and all the hearty speeches and good wishes. It is sweet to a young man to feel himself the centre of so many hopes. It seemed very reasonable to him—very natural—that he should be so, and that the farmers should feel a pride of anticipation in thinking of his future speeches in Parliament. He promised to them with the sincerest good faith that he would not disappoint their expectations—that he would feel their interest in him an additional spur. What so natural as that interest and these expectations? He was almost solemnised by his own position—so young, looked up to by so many people—so many hopes depending on him; and yet it was quite natural. His father, however, was still more solemnised than Lindores—and this was strange, to say the least. His face grew graver and graver as the day went on, till it almost seemed as if he were dissatisfied with his son's popularity, or had some painful thought weighing on his mind. He was restless and eager for the termination of the dinner, and to get rid of his guests; and as soon as they were gone, showed an equal anxiety that his son should retire too. "Go to bed at once, as a favour to me," Lord Gowrie said. "You will

have a great deal of fatigue—to-morrow." "You need not be afraid for me, sir," said Lindores, half affronted; but he obeyed, being tired. He had not once thought of the secret to be disclosed to him, through all that long day. But when he woke suddenly with a start in the middle of the night, to find the candles all lighted in his room, and his father standing by his bedside, Lindores instantly thought of it, and in a moment felt that the leading event—the chief incident of all that had happened—was going to take place now.

## CHAPTER II.

Lord Gowrie was very grave, and very pale. He was standing with his hand on his son's shoulder to wake him; his dress was unchanged from the moment they had parted. And the sight of this formal costume was very bewildering to the young man as he started up in his bed. But next moment he seemed to know exactly how it was, and, more than that, to have known it all his life. Explanation seemed unnecessary. At any other moment, in any other place, a man would be startled to be suddenly woke up in the middle of the night. But Lindores had no such feeling; he did not even ask a question, but sprang up, and fixed his eyes, taking in all the strange circumstances, on his father's face.

"Get up, my boy," said Lord Gowrie, "and dress as quickly as you can; it is full time. I have lighted your candles, and your things are all ready. You have had a good long sleep."

Even now he did not ask, What is it? as under any other circumstances he would have done. He got up without a word, with an impulse of nervous speed and rapidity of movement such as only excitement can give, and dressed himself, his father helping him silently, It was a curious scene: the room gleaming with lights, the silence, the hurried toilet, the stillness of deep night all around. The house, though so full, and with the echoes of festivity but just over, was quiet as if there was not a creature within it—more quiet, indeed, for the stillness of vacancy is not half so impressive as the stillness of hushed and slumbering life.

Lord Gowrie went to the table when this first step was over, and poured out a glass of wine from a bottle which stood there,—a rich, golden-coloured, perfumy wine, which sent its scent through the room. "You will want all your strength," he said; "take this before you go. It is the famous Imperial Tokay; there is only a little left; and you will want all your strength."

Lindores took the wine; he had never drunk any like it before, and the peculiar fragrance remained in his mind, as perfumes so often do, with a whole world of association in them. His father's eyes

dwelt upon him with a melancholy sympathy. "You are going to encounter the greatest trial of your life," he said; and taking the young man's hand into his, felt his pulse. "It is quick, but it is quite firm, and you have had a good long sleep." Then he did what it needs a great deal of pressure to induce an Englishman to do,—he kissed his son on the cheek. "God bless you!" he said faltering. "Come, now, everything is ready, Lindores."

He took up in his hand a small lamp, which he had apparently brought with him, and led the way. By this time Lindores began to feel himself again, and to wake to the consciousness of all his own superiorities and enlightenments. The simple sense that he was one of the members of a family with a mystery, and that the moment of his personal encounter with this special power of darkness had come, had been the first thrilling, overwhelming thought. But now as he followed his father, Lindores began to remember that he himself was not altogether like other men; that there was that in him which would make it natural that he should throw some light, hitherto unthought of, upon this carefully-preserved darkness. What secret even there might be in it—secret of hereditary tendency, of psychic force, of mental conformation, or of some curious combination of circumstances at once more and less potent than these—it was for him to find out. He gathered all his forces about him, re-



minded himself of modern enlightenment, and bade his nerves be steel to all vulgar horrors. He, too, felt his own pulse as he followed his father. To spend the night perhaps amongst the skeletons of that old-world massacre, and to repent the sins of his ancestors—to be brought within the range of some optical illusion believed in hitherto by all the generations, and which, no doubt, was of a startling kind, or his father would not look so serious,—any of these he felt himself quite strong to encounter. His heart and spirit rose. A young man has but seldom the opportunity of distinguishing himself so early in his career; and his was such a chance as occurs to very few. No doubt it was something that would be extremely trying to the nerves and imagination. He called up all his powers to vanquish both. And along with this call upon himself to exertion, there was the less serious impulse of curiosity: he would see at last what the Secret Chamber was, where it was, how it fitted into the labyrinths of the old house. This he tried to put in its due place as a most interesting object. He said to himself that he would willingly have gone a long journey at any time to be present at such an exploration; and there is no doubt that, in other circumstances, a secret chamber, with probably some unthought-of historical interest in it, would have been a very fascinating



discovery. He tried very hard to excite himself about this ; but it was curious how fictitious he felt the interest, and how conscious he was that it was an effort to feel any curiosity at all on the subject. The fact was, that the Secret Chamber was entirely secondary—thrown back, as all accessories are, by a more pressing interest. The overpowering thought of what was in it drove aside all healthy, natural curiosity about itself.

It must not be supposed, however, that the father and son had a long way to go to have time for all these thoughts. Thoughts travel at lightning speed, and there was abundant leisure for this between the time they had left the door of Lindores' room, and gone down the corridor, no further off than to Lord Gowrie's own chamber, naturally one of the chief rooms of the house. Nearly opposite this, a few steps further on, was a little neglected room devoted to lumber, with which Lindores had been familiar all his life. Why this nest of old rubbish, dust, and cobwebs should be so near the bedroom of the head of the house had been a matter of surprise to many people—to the guests who saw it while exploring, and to each new servant in succession who planned an attack upon its ancient stores, scandalised by finding it to have been neglected by their predecessors. All their attempts to clear it out had, however, been resisted, nobody could tell how, or indeed thought

it worth while to inquire. As for Lindores, he had been used to the place from his childhood, and therefore accepted it as the most natural thing in the world. He had been in and out a hundred times in his play. And it was here, he remembered suddenly, that he had seen the bad picture of Earl Robert which had so curiously come into his eyes on his journey here, by a mental movement which he had identified at once as unconscious cerebration. The first feeling in his mind, as his father went to the open door of this lumber-room, was a mixture of amusement and surprise. What was he going to pick up there? some old pentacle, some amulet or scrap of antiquated magic to act as armour against the evil one? But Lord Gowrie, going on and setting down the lamp on the table, turned round upon his son with a face of agitation and pain which barred all further amusement: he grasped him by the hand, crushing it between his own. "Now my boy, my dear son," he said, in tones that were scarcely audible. His countenance was full of the dreary pain of a looker-on—one who has no share in the excitement of personal danger, but has the more terrible part of watching those who are in deadliest peril. He was a powerful man, and his large form shook with emotion; great beads of moisture stood upon his forehead. An old sword with a cross handle lay upon a dusty chair among other dusty and battered relics. "Take

this with you," he said, in the same inaudible, breathless way—whether as a weapon, whether as a religious symbol, Lindores could not guess. The young man took it mechanically. His father pushed open a door which it seemed to him he had never seen before, and led him into another vaulted chamber. Here even the limited powers of speech Lord Gowrie had retained seemed to forsake him, and his voice became a mere hoarse murmur in his throat. For want of speech he pointed to another door in the further corner of this small vacant room, gave him to understand by a gesture that he was to knock there, and then went back into the lumber-room. The door into this was left open, and a faint glimmer of the lamp shed light into this little intermediate place—this debatable land between the seen and the unseen. In spite of himself, Lindores' heart began to beat. He made a breathless pause, feeling his head go round. He held the old sword in his hand, not knowing what it was. Then, summoning all his courage, he went forward and knocked at the closed door. His knock was not loud, but it seemed to echo all over the silent house. Would everybody hear and wake, and rush to see what had happened? This caprice of imagination seized upon him, ousting all the firmer thoughts, the steadfast calm of mind with which he ought to have encountered the mystery. Would they all rush in, in wild *déshabillé*, in terror and

dismay, before the door opened? How long it was of opening! He touched the panel with his hand again.—This time there was no delay. In a moment, as if thrown suddenly open by some one within, the door moved. It opened just wide enough to let him enter, stopping half-way as if some one invisible held it, wide enough for welcome, but no more. Lindores stepped across the threshold with a beating heart. What was he about to see? the skeletons of the murdered victims? a ghostly charnel-house full of bloody traces of crime? He seemed to be hurried and pushed in as he made that step. What was this world of mystery into which he was plunged—what was it he saw?

He saw—nothing—except what was agreeable enough to behold,—an antiquated room hung with tapestry, very old tapestry of rude design, its colours faded into softness and harmony; between its folds here and there a panel of carved wood, rude too in design, with traces of half-worn gilding; a table covered with strange instruments, parchments, chemical tubes, and curious machinery, all with a quaintness of form and dimness of material that spoke of age. A heavy old velvet cover, thick with embroidery faded almost out of all colour, was on the table; on the wall above it, something that looked like a very old Venetian mirror, the glass so dim and crusted that it scarcely reflected at all; on the floor an old soft Persian carpet, worn into a

vague blending of all colours. This was all that he thought he saw. His heart, which had been thumping so loud as almost to choke him, stopped that tremendous upward and downward motion like a steam piston ; and he grew calm. Perfectly still, dim, unoccupied : yet not so dim either ; there was no apparent source of light, no windows, curtains of tapestry drawn everywhere—no lamp visible, no fire—and yet a kind of strange light which made everything quite clear. He looked round, trying to smile at his terrors, trying to say to himself that it was the most curious place he had ever seen—that he must show Ffarrington some of that tapestry—that he must really bring away a panel of that carving,—when he suddenly saw that the door was shut by which he had entered—nay, more than shut, undiscernible, covered like all the rest of the walls by that strange tapestry. At this his heart began to beat again in spite of him. He looked round once more, and woke up to more vivid being with a sudden start. Had his eyes been incapable of vision on his first entrance ? Unoccupied ? Who was that in the great chair ?

It seemed to Lindores that he had seen neither the chair nor the man when he came in. There they were, however, solid and unmistakable ; the chair carved like the panels, the man seated in front of the table. He looked at Lindores with a calm and open gaze, inspecting him. The young



man's heart seemed in his throat fluttering like a bird, but he was brave, and his mind made one final effort to break this spell. He tried to speak, labouring with a voice that would not sound, and with lips too parched to form a word. "I see how it is," was what he wanted to say. It was Earl Robert's face that was looking at him; and startled as he was, he dragged forth his philosophy to support him. What could it be but optical delusion, unconscious cerebration, occult seizure by the impressed and struggling mind of this one countenance? But he could not hear himself speak any word as he stood convulsed, struggling with dry lips and choking voice.

The Appearance smiled, as if knowing his thoughts—not unkindly, not malignly—with a certain amusement mingled with scorn. Then he spoke, and the sound seemed to breathe through the room not like any voice that Lindores had ever heard, a kind of utterance of the place, like the rustle of the air or the ripple of the sea. "You will learn better to-night: this is no phantom of your brain; it is I."

"In God's name," cried the young man in his soul; he did not know whether the words ever got into the air or not, if there was any air;—"in God's name, who are you?"

The figure rose as if coming to him to reply; and Lindores, overcome by the apparent approach,



struggled into utterance. A cry came from him—he heard it this time—and even in his extremity felt a pang the more to hear the terror in his own voice. But he did not flinch, he stood desperate, all his strength concentrated in the act; he neither turned nor recoiled. Vaguely gleaming through his mind came the thought that to be thus brought in contact with the unseen was the experiment to be most desired on earth, the final settlement of a hundred questions; but his faculties were not sufficiently under command to entertain it. He only stood firm, that was all.

And the figure did not approach him; after a moment it subsided back again into the chair—subsided, for no sound, not the faintest, accompanied its movements. It was the form of a man of middle age, the hair white, but the beard only crisped with grey, the features those of the picture—a familiar face, more or less like all the Randolphs, but with an air of domination and power altogether unlike that of the race. He was dressed in a long robe of dark colour, embroidered with strange lines and angles. There was nothing repellent or terrible in his air—nothing except the noiselessness, the calm, the absolute stillness, which was as much in the place as in him, to keep up the involuntary trembling of the beholder. His expression was full of dignity and thoughtfulness, and not malignant or unkind. He might have

been the kindly patriarch of the house, watching over its fortunes in a seclusion he had chosen. The pulses that had been beating in Lindores were stilled. What was his panic for? a gleam even of self-ridicule took possession of him, to be standing there like an absurd hero of antiquated romance with the rusty, dusty sword—good for nothing, surely not adapted for use against this noble old magician—in his hand—

"You are right," said the voice, once more answering his thoughts; "what could you do with that sword against me, young Lindores? Put it by. Why should my children meet me like an enemy? You are my flesh and blood. Give me your hand."

A shiver ran through the young man's frame. The hand that was held out to him was large and shapely and white, with a straight line across the palm—a family token upon which the Randolphs prided themselves—a friendly hand; and the face smiled upon him, fixing him with those calm, profound, blue eyes. "Come," said the voice. The word seemed to fill the place, melting upon him from every corner, whispering round him with softest persuasion. He was lulled and calmed in spite of himself. Spirit or no spirit, why should not he accept this proffered courtesy? What harm could come of it? The chief thing that retained him was the dragging of the old sword, heavy and

useless, which he held mechanically, but which some internal feeling—he could not tell what—prevented him from putting down. Superstition, was it?

“Yes, that is superstition,” said his ancestor, serenely; “put it down and come.”

“You know my thoughts,” said Lindores; “I did not speak.”

“Your mind spoke, and spoke justly. Put down that emblem of brute force and superstition together. Here it is the intelligence that is supreme. Come.”

Lindores stood doubtful. He was calm; the power of thought was restored to him. If this benevolent venerable patriarch was all he seemed, why his father’s terror? why the secrecy in which his being was involved? His own mind, though calm, did not seem to act in the usual way. Thoughts seemed to be driven across it as by a wind. One of these occurred to him suddenly now—

There came and looked him in the face,  
An angel beautiful and bright,  
And that he knew it was a fiend.”

The words were not ended, when Earl Robert replied suddenly with impatience in his voice, “Fiends are of the fancy of men; like angels and other follies. I am your father. You know me; and you are mine, Lindores. I have power beyond

what you can understand ; but I want flesh and blood to reign and to enjoy. Come, Lindores !"

He put out his other hand. The action, the look, were those of kindness, almost of longing, and the face was familiar, the voice was that of the race. Supernatural ! was it supernatural that this man should live here shut up for ages ? and why ? and how ? Was there any explanation of it ? The young man's brain began to reel. He could not tell which was real—the life he had left half an hour ago, or this. He tried to look round him, but could not ; his eyes were caught by those other kindred eyes, which seemed to dilate and deepen as he looked at them, and drew him with a strange compulsion. He felt himself yielding, swaying towards the strange being who thus invited him. What might happen if he yielded ? And he could not turn away, he could not tear himself from the fascination of those eyes. With a sudden strange impulse which was half despair and half a bewildering half-conscious desire to try one potency against another, he thrust forward the cross of the old sword between him and those appealing hands. "In the name of God !" he said.

Lindores never could tell whether it was that he himself grew faint, and that the dimness of swooning came into his eyes after this violence and strain of emotion, or if it was his spell that worked. But there was an instantaneous change. Everything swam around him for the moment, a giddiness and

blindness seized him, and he saw nothing but the vague outlines of the room, empty as when he entered it. But gradually his consciousness came back, and he found himself standing on the same spot as before, clutching the old sword, and gradually, as through a dream, recognised the same figure emerging out of the mist which—was it solely in his own eyes?—had enveloped everything. But it was no longer in the same attitude. The hands which had been stretched out to him were busy now with some of the strange instruments on the table, moving about, now in the action of writing, now as if managing the keys of a telegraph. Lindores felt that his brain was all atwist and set wrong; but he was still a human being of his century. He thought of the telegraph with a keen thrill of curiosity in the midst of his reviving sensations. What communication was this which was going on before his eyes? The magician worked on. He had his face turned towards his victim, but his hands moved with unceasing activity. And Lindores, as he grew accustomed to the position, began to weary—to feel like a neglected suitor waiting for an audience. To be wound up to such a strain of feeling, then left to wait, was intolerable; impatience seized upon him. What circumstances can exist, however horrible, in which a human being will not feel impatience? He made a great many efforts to speak before he could

succeed. It seemed to him that his body felt more fear than he did—that his muscles were contracted, his throat parched, his tongue refusing its office, although his mind was unaffected and undismayed. At last he found an utterance in spite of all resistance of his flesh and blood.

"Who are you?" he said hoarsely. "You that live here and oppress this house?"

The vision raised its eyes full upon him, with again that strange shadow of a smile, mocking yet not unkind. "Do you remember me," he said, "on your journey here?"

"That was—a delusion." The young man gasped for breath.

"More like that you are a delusion. You have lasted but one-and-twenty years, and I—for centuries."

"How? For centuries—and why? Answer me—are you man or demon?" cried Lindores, tearing the words, as he felt, out of his own throat. "Are you living or dead?"

The magician looked at him with the same intense gaze as before. "Be on my side and you shall know everything, Lindores. I want one of my own race. Others I could have in plenty; but I want *you*. A Randolph, a Randolph! and *you*. Dead! do I seem dead? You shall have everything—more than dreams can give—if you will be on my side."



Can he give what he has not? was the thought that ran through the mind of Lindores. But he could not speak it. Something that choked and stifled him was in his throat.

"Can I give what I have not? I have everything—power, the one thing worth having; and you shall have more than power, for you are young—my son! Lindores!"

To argue was natural, and gave the young man strength. "Is this life," he said, "here? What is all your power worth—here? To sit for ages, and make a race unhappy?"

A momentary convulsion came across the still face. "You scorn me," he cried, with an appearance of emotion, "because you do not understand how I move the world. Power! 'Tis more than fancy can grasp. And you shall have it!" said the wizard, with what looked like a show of enthusiasm. He seemed to come nearer, to grow larger. He put forth his hand again, this time so close that it seemed impossible to escape. And a crowd of wishes seemed to rush upon the mind of Lindores. What harm to try if this might be true? To try what it meant—perhaps nothing, delusions, vain show, and then there could be no harm; or perhaps there was knowledge to be had, which was power. Try, try, try! the air buzzed about him. The room seemed full of voices urging him. His bodily frame rose into a tremendous whirl of excitement, his veins

seemed to swell to bursting, his lips seemed to force a yes, in spite of him, quivering as they came apart. The hiss of the s seemed in his ears. He changed it into the name which was a spell too, and cried "Help me, God!" not knowing why.

Then there came another pause—he felt as if he had been dropped from something that held him, and had fallen, and was faint. The excitement had been more than he could bear. Once more everything swam around him, and he did not know where he was. Had he escaped altogether? was the first waking wonder of consciousness in his mind. But when he could think and see again, he was still in the same spot, surrounded by the old curtains and the carved panels—but alone. He felt, too, that he was able to move, but the strangest dual consciousness was in him throughout all the rest of his trial. His body felt to him as a frightened horse feels to a traveller at night—a thing separate from him, more frightened than he was—starting aside at every step, seeing more than its master. His limbs shook with fear and weakness, almost refusing to obey the action of his will, trembling under him with jerks aside when he compelled himself to move. The hair stood upright on his head—every finger trembled as with palsy—his lips, his eyelids, quivered with nervous agitation. But his mind was strong, stimulated to a desperate

calm. He dragged himself round the room, he crossed the very spot where the magician had been—all was vacant, silent, clear. Had he vanquished the enemy? This thought came into his mind with an involuntary triumph. The old strain of feeling came back. Such effects might be produced, perhaps, only by imagination, by excitement, by delusion——

Lindores looked up, a sudden attraction drawing his eyes to one spot, he could not tell why: and the blood suddenly froze in his veins that had been so boiling and fermenting. Some one was looking at him from the old mirror on the wall. A face not human and life-like, like that of the inhabitant of this place, but ghostly and terrible, like one of the dead; and while he looked, a crowd of other faces came behind, all looking at him, some mournfully, some with a menace in their terrible eyes. The mirror did not change, but within its small dim space seemed to contain an innumerable company, crowded above and below, all with one gaze at him. His lips dropped apart with a gasp of horror. More and more and more! He was standing close by the table when this crowd came. Then all at once there was laid upon him a cold hand. He turned; close to his side, brushing him with his robe, holding him fast by the arm, sat Earl Robert in his great chair. A shriek came from the young man's lips. He seemed to hear it echoing away into

unfathomable distance. The cold touch penetrated to his very soul.

"Do you try spells upon me, Lindores? That is a tool of the past. You shall have something better to work with. And are you so sure of whom you call upon? If there is such a one, why should He help you who never called on Him before?"

Lindores could not tell if these words were spoken; it was a communication rapid as the thoughts in the mind. And he felt as if something answered that was not all himself. He seemed to stand passive and hear the argument. "Does God reckon with a man in trouble whether he has ever called to Him before? I call now" (now he felt it was himself that spoke): "go, evil spirit!—go, dead and cursed!—go, in the name of God!"

He felt himself flung violently against the wall. A faint laugh, stifled in the throat, and followed by a groan, rolled round the room; the old curtains seemed to open here and there, and flutter, as if with comings and goings. Lindores leaned with his back against the wall, and all his senses restored to him. He felt blood trickle down his neck; and in this contact once more with the physical, his body, in its madness of fright, grew manageable. For the first time he felt wholly master of himself. Though the magician was standing in his place, a great, majestic, appalling figure, he did not shrink. "Liar!" he cried, in a voice that rang and echoed

as in natural air—"clinging to miserable life like a worm—like a reptile ; promising all things, having nothing, but this den, unvisited by the light of day. Is this your power—your superiority to men who die? is it for this that you oppress a race, and make a house unhappy? I vow, in God's name, your reign is over ! You and your secret shall last no more."

There was no reply. But Lindores felt his terrible ancestor's eyes getting once more that mesmeric mastery over him which had already almost overcome his powers. He must withdraw his own, or perish. He had a human horror of turning his back upon that watchful adversary : to face him seemed the only safety ; but to face him was to be conquered. Slowly, with a pang indescribable, he tore himself from that gaze : it seemed to drag his eyes out of their sockets, his heart out of his bosom. Resolutely, with the daring of desperation, he turned round to the spot where he entered—the spot where no door was,—hearing already in anticipation the step after him—feeling the grip that would crush and smother his exhausted life—but too desperate to care.

## CHAPTER III.

How wonderful is the blue dawning of the new day before the sun! not rosy-fingered, like that Aurora of the Greeks who comes later with all her wealth; but still, dreamy, wonderful, stealing out of the unseen, abashed by the solemnity of the new birth. When anxious watchers see that first brightness come stealing upon the waiting skies, what mingled relief and renewal of misery are in it! another long day to toil through—yet another sad night over! Lord Gowrie sat among the dust and cobwebs, his lamp flaring idly into the blue morning. He had heard his son's human voice, though nothing more; and he expected to have him brought out by invisible hands, as had happened to himself, and left lying in long deathly swoon outside that mystic door. This was how it had happened to heir after heir, as told from father to son, one after another, as the secret came down. One or two bearers of the name of Lindores had never recovered; most of them had been saddened and subdued for life. He remembered sadly the freshness of existence which had never come back to himself; the hopes that had never blossomed again; the assurance with which never more he had been able to go about the world. And now his son would be as himself—the glory gone out of



his living—his ambitions, his aspirations wrecked. He had not been endowed as his boy was—he had been a plain, honest man, and nothing more; but experience and life had given him wisdom enough to smile by times at the coquetries of mind in which Lindores indulged. Were they all over now, those freaks of young intelligence, those enthusiasms of the soul? The curse of the house had come upon him—the magnetism of that strange presence, ever living, ever watchful, present in all the family history. His heart was sore for his son; and yet along with this there was a certain consolation to him in having henceforward a partner in the secret—some one to whom he could talk of it as he had not been able to talk since his own father died. Almost all the mental struggles which Gowrie had known had been connected with this mystery; and he had been obliged to hide them in his bosom—to conceal them even when they rent him in two. Now he had a partner in his trouble. This was what he was thinking as he sat through the night. How slowly the moments passed! He was not aware of the daylight coming in. After a while even thought got suspended in listening. Was not the time nearly over? He rose and began to pace about the encumbered space, which was but a step or two in extent. There was an old cupboard in the wall, in which there were restoratives—pungent essences and cordials, and fresh water which he had

himself brought—everything was ready ; presently the ghastly body of his boy, half dead, would be thrust forth into his care.

But this was not how it happened. While he waited, so intent that his whole frame seemed to be capable of hearing, he heard the closing of the door, boldly shut with a sound that rose in muffled echoes through the house, and Lindores himself appeared, ghastly indeed as a dead man, but walking upright and firmly, the lines of his face drawn, and his eyes staring. Lord Gowrie uttered a cry. He was more alarmed by this unexpected return than by the helpless prostration of the swoon which he had expected. He recoiled from his son as if he too had been a spirit. "Lindores !" he cried ; was it Lindores, or some one else in his place ? The boy seemed as if he did not see him. He went straight forward to where the water stood on the dusty table, and took a great draught, then turned to the door. "Lindores !" said his father, in miserable anxiety ; "don't you know me ?" Even then the young man only half looked at him, and put out a hand almost as cold as the hand that had clutched himself in the Secret Chamber ; a faint smile came upon his face. "Don't stay here," he whispered ; "come ! come !"

Lord Gowrie drew his son's arm within his own, and felt the thrill through and through him of nerves strained beyond mortal strength. He could

scarcely keep up with him as he stalked along the corridor to his room, stumbling as if he could not see, yet swift as an arrow. When they reached his room Lindores turned and closed and locked the door, then laughed as he staggered to the bed. "That will not keep him out, will it?" he said.

"Lindores," said his father, "I expected to find you unconscious. I am almost more frightened to find you like this. I need not ask if you have seen him——"

"Oh, I have seen him. The old liar! Father, promise to expose him, to turn him out—promise to clear out that accursed old nest! It is our own fault. Why have we left such a place shut out from the eye of day? Isn't there something in the Bible about those who do evil hating the light?"

"Lindores! you don't often quote the Bible."

"No, I suppose not; but there is more truth in—many things than we thought."

"Lie down," said the anxious father. "Take some of this wine—try to sleep."

"Take it away; give me no more of that devil's drink. Talk to me—that's better. Did you go through it all the same, poor papa?—and hold me fast. You are warm—you are honest!" he cried. He put forth his hands over his father's, warming them with the contact. He put his cheek like a child against his father's arm. He gave a faint

laugh, with the tears in his eyes. "Warm and honest," he repeated. "Kind flesh and blood! and did you go through it all the same?"

"My boy!" cried the father, feeling his heart glow and swell over the son who had been parted from him for years by that development of young manhood and ripening intellect which so often severs and loosens the ties of home. Lord Gowrie had felt that Lindores half despised his simple mind and duller imagination; but this childlike clinging overcame him, and tears stood in his eyes. "I fainted, I suppose. I never knew how it ended. They made what they liked of me. But you, my brave boy, you came out of your own will."

Lindores shivered. "I fled!" he said. "No honour in that. I had not courage to face him longer. I will tell you by-and-by. But I want to know about you."

What an ease it was to the father to speak! For years and years this had been shut up in his breast. It had made him lonely in the midst of his friends.

"Thank God," he said, "that I can speak to you, Lindores. Often and often I have been tempted to tell your mother. But why should I make her miserable? She knows there is something; she knows when I see him, but she knows no more."

"When you see him?" Lindores raised himself, with a return of his first ghastly look, in his bed.

Then he raised his clenched fist wildly, and shook it in the air. "Vile devil, coward, deceiver!"

"Oh hush, hush, hush, Lindores! God help us! what troubles you may bring!"

"And God help me, whatever troubles I bring," said the young man. "I defy him, father. An accursed being like that must be less, not more powerful, than we are—with God to back us. Only stand by me: stand by me——"

"Hush, Lindores! You don't feel it yet; never to get out of hearing of him all your life! He will make you pay for it—if not now, after; when you remember he is there, whatever happens, knowing everything! But I hope it will not be so bad with you as with me, my poor boy. God help you indeed if it is, for you have more imagination and more mind. I am able to forget him sometimes when I am occupied—when I am in the hunting-field, going across country. But you are not a hunting man, my poor boy," said Lord Gowrie, with a curious mixture of a regret, which was less serious than the other. Then he lowered his voice. "Lindores, this is what has happened to me since the moment I gave him my hand."

"I did not give him my hand."

"You did not give him your hand? God bless you, my boy! You stood out?" he cried, with tears again rushing to his eyes; "and they say—they say—but I don't know if there is any truth in

it." Lord Gowrie got up from his son's side, and walked up and down with excited steps. "If there should be truth in it! Many people think the whole thing is a fancy. If there should be truth in it, Lindores!"

"In what, father?"

"They say, if he is once resisted his power is broken—once refused. *You* could stand against him—you! Forgive me, my boy, as I hope God will forgive me, to have thought so little of His best gifts," cried Lord Gowrie, coming back with wet eyes; and stooping, he kissed his son's hand. "I thought you would be all the more shaken, because there was more mind in you than body," he said, humbly. "I thought if I could but have saved you from the trial; and *you* are the conqueror!"

"Am I the conqueror? I think all my bones are broken, father—out of their sockets," said the young man, in a low voice. "I think I shall go to sleep."

"Yes, rest, my boy. It is the best thing for you," said the father, though with a pang of momentary disappointment. Lindores fell back upon the pillow. He was so pale that there were moments when the anxious watcher thought him not sleeping but dead. He put his hand out feebly, and grasped his father's hand. "Warm—honest," he said, with a feeble smile about his lips, and fell asleep.



The daylight was full in the room, breaking through shutters and curtains, and mocking at the lamp that still flared on the table. It seemed an emblem of the disorders, mental and material, of this strange night; and, as such, it affected the plain imagination of Lord Gowrie, who would have fain got up to extinguish it, and whose mind returned again and again, in spite of him, to this symptom of disturbance. By-and-by, when Lindores' grasp relaxed, and he got his hand free, he got up from his son's bedside, and put out the lamp, putting it carefully out of the way. With equal care he put away the wine from the table, and gave the room its ordinary aspect, softly opening a window to let in the fresh air of the morning. The park lay fresh in the early sunshine, still, except for the twittering of the birds, refreshed with dews, and shining in that soft radiance of the morning which is over before mortal cares are stirring. Never, perhaps, had Gowrie looked out upon the beautiful world around his house without a thought of the weird existence which was going on so near to him, which had gone on for centuries, shut up out of sight of the sunshine. The Secret Chamber had been present with him ever since he had first visited it. He had never been able to get free of the spell. He had felt himself watched, surrounded, spied upon, day after day, since he was of the age of Lindores, and that was thirty years ago.

He turned it all over in his mind, as he stood there and his son slept. It had been on his lips to tell all his story to his boy, who had now come to inherit the enlightenment of his race. And it was a disappointment to him to have the flood in his heart forced back again, and silence imposed upon him once more. Would Lindores care to hear it when he woke? would he not rather, as Lord Gowrie remembered to have done himself, thrust the thought as far as he could away from him, and endeavour to forget for the moment—until the time came when he would not be permitted to forget? He had been like that himself, he recollected now. He had not wished to hear his own father's tale. "I remember," he said to himself; "I remember"—turning over everything in his mind. If Lindores might only be willing to hear the story when he woke! But then he himself had not been willing when he was Lindores, and he could understand his son, and would not blame him; but it would be a disappointment. He was thinking this when he heard Lindores' voice calling him. He went back hastily to his boy's bedside. It was strange to see him in his evening dress with his worn face, in the fresh light of the morning, which poured in at every crevice. "Does my mother know?" said Lindores; "what will she think?"

"She knows something; she knows you have some trial to go through. Most likely she will be

praying for us both; that's the way of women," said Lord Gowrie, with the tremulous tenderness which comes into a man's voice sometimes when he speaks of a good wife. "I'll go and ease her mind, and tell her all is well over——"

"Not yet. Tell me first," said the young man, putting his hand upon his father's arm.

What an ease it was! "I was not so good to my father," he thought to himself, with sudden penitence for the long-past, long-forgotten fault, which, indeed, he had never realised as a fault before. And then he told his son what had been the story of his life—how he had scarcely ever sat alone without feeling, from some corner of the room, from behind some curtain, those eyes upon him; and how, in the difficulties of his life, that secret inhabitant of the house had been always present, sitting by him and advising him. "Whenever there has been anything to do: when there has been a question between two ways, all in a moment I have seen him by me: I feel when he is coming. It does not matter where I am—here or anywhere—as soon as ever there is a question of family business; and always he persuades me to the wrong way, Lindores. Sometimes I yield to him, how can I help it? He makes everything so clear; he makes wrong seem right. If I have done unjust things in my day——"

"You have not, father."

"I have: there were these Highland people I turned out. I did not mean to do it, Lindores; but he showed me that it would be better for the family. And my poor sister that married Tweedside and was wretched all her life. It was his doing, that marriage; he said she would be rich—and so she was, poor thing, poor thing! and died of it. And old Macalister's lease—— Lindores, Lindores! when there is any business it makes my heart sick. I know he will come, and advise wrong, and tell me—something I will repent after."

"The thing to do is to decide beforehand, that, good or bad, you will not take his advice."

Lord Gowrie shivered. "I am not strong like you, or clever; I cannot resist. Sometimes I repent in time and don't do it; and then! But for your mother and you children, there is many a day I would not have given a farthing for my life."

"Father," said Lindores, springing from his bed, "two of us together can do many things. Give me your word to clear out this cursed den of darkness this very day."

"Lindores, hush, hush, for the sake of heaven!"

"I will not, for the sake of heaven! Throw it open—let everybody who likes see it—make an end of the secret—pull down everything, curtains, walls. What do you say?—sprinkle holy water? Are you laughing at me?"

"I did not speak," said Earl Gowrie, growing

very pale, and grasping his son's arm with both his hands. "Hush, boy; do you think he does not hear?"

And then there was a low laugh close to them—so close that both shrank; a laugh no louder than a breath.

"Did you laugh—father?"

"No, Lindores." Lord Gowrie had his eyes fixed. He was as pale as the dead. He held his son tight for a moment; then his gaze and his grasp relaxed, and he fell back feebly in a chair.

"You see!" he said; "whatever we do it will be the same; we are under his power."

And then there ensued the blank pause with which baffled men confront a hopeless situation. But at that moment the first faint stirrings of the house—a window being opened, a bar undone, a movement of feet, and subdued voices—became audible in the stillness of the morning. Lord Gowrie roused himself at once. "We must not be found like this," he said; "we must not show how we have spent the night. It is over, thank God! and oh, my boy, forgive me! I am thankful there are two of us to bear it; it makes the burden lighter—though I ask your pardon humbly for saying so. I would have saved you if I could, Lindores."

"I don't wish to have been saved; but *I* will not bear it. I will end it," the young man said, with an oath out of which his emotion took all

profanity. His father said, "Hush, hush." With a look of terror and pain, he left him; and yet there was a thrill of tender pride in his mind. How brave the boy was! even after he had been *there*. Could it be that this would all come to nothing, as every other attempt to resist had done before?

"I suppose you know all about it now, Lindores," said his friend Ffarrington, after breakfast; "luckily for us who are going over the house. What a glorious old place it is!"

"I don't think that Lindores enjoys the glorious old place to-day," said another of the guests under his breath. "How pale he is! He doesn't look as if he had slept."

"I will take you over every nook where I have ever been," said Lindores. He looked at his father with almost command in his eyes. "Come with me, all of you. We shall have no more secrets here."

"Are you mad?" said his father in his ear.

"Never mind," cried the young man. "Oh, trust me; I will do it with judgment. Is every body ready?" There was an excitement about him that half frightened, half roused the party. They all rose, eager, yet doubtful. His mother came to him and took his arm.

"Lindores! you will do nothing to vex your



father; don't make him unhappy. I don't know your secrets, you two; but look, he has enough to bear."

"I want you to know our secrets, mother. Why should we have secrets from you?"

"Why, indeed?" she said, with tears in her eyes. "But, Lindores, my dearest boy, don't make it worse for *him*."

"I give you my word, I will be wary," he said; and she left him to go to his father, who followed the party, with an anxious look upon his face.

"Are you coming, too?" he asked.

"I? No; I will not go: but trust him—trust the boy, John."

"He can do nothing; he will not be able to do anything," he said.

And thus the guests set out on their round—the son in advance, excited and tremulous, the father anxious and watchful behind. They began in the usual way, with the old state-rooms and picture-gallery; and in a short time the party had half forgotten that there was anything unusual in the inspection. When, however, they were half-way down the gallery, Lindores stopped short with an air of wonder. "You have had it put back then?" he said. He was standing in front of the vacant space where Earl Robert's portrait ought to have been. "What is it?" they all cried, crowding upon him, ready for any marvel. But as there

was nothing to be seen, the strangers smiled among themselves. "Yes, to be sure, there is nothing so suggestive as a vacant place," said a lady who was of the party. "Whose portrait ought to be there, Lord Lindores?"

He looked at his father, who made a slight assenting gesture, then shook his head drearily.

"Who put it there?" Lindores said, in a whisper.

"It is not there; but you and I see it," said Lord Gowrie, with a sigh.

Then the strangers perceived that something had moved the father and the son, and, notwithstanding their eager curiosity, obeyed the dictates of politeness, and dispersed into groups looking at the other pictures. Lindores set his teeth and clenched his hands. Fury was growing upon him—not the awe that filled his father's mind. "We will leave the rest of this to another time," he cried, turning to the others, almost fiercely. "Come, I will show you something more striking now." He made no further pretence of going systematically over the house. He turned and went straight up-stairs, and along the corridor. "Are we going over the bed-rooms?" some one said. Lindores led the way straight to the old lumber-room, a strange place for such a gay party. The ladies drew their dresses about them. There was not room for half of them. Those who could get in began to handle the strange things that lay about, touching

them with dainty fingers, exclaiming how dusty they were. The window was half blocked up by old armour and rusty weapons; but this did not hinder the full summer daylight from penetrating in a flood of light. Lindores went in with fiery determination on his face. He went straight to the wall, as if he would go through, then paused with a blank gaze. "Where is the door?" he said.

"You are forgetting yourself," cried Lord Gowrie, speaking over the heads of the others. "Lindores! you know very well there never was any door there; the wall is very thick; you can see by the depth of the window. There is no door there."

The young man felt it over with his hand. The wall was smooth, and covered with the dust of ages. With a groan he turned away. At this moment a suppressed laugh, low, yet distinct, sounded close by him. "You laughed?" he said, fiercely, to Ffarrington, striking his hand upon his shoulder.

"I—laughed! Nothing was farther from my thoughts," said his friend, who was curiously examining something that lay upon an old carved chair. "Look here! what a wonderful sword, cross-hilted! Is it an Andrea? What's the matter, Lindores?"

Lindores had seized it from his hands; he dashed it against the wall with a suppressed oath. The two or three people in the room stood aghast.

"Lindores!" his father said, in a tone of warning. The young man dropped the useless weapon with a groan. "Then God help us!" he said; "but I will find another way."

"There is a very interesting room close by," said Lord Gowrie, hastily—"this way! Lindores has been put out by—some changes that have been made without his knowledge," he said, calmly. "You must not mind him. He is disappointed. He is perhaps too much accustomed to have his own way."

But Lord Gowrie knew that no one believed him. He took them to the adjoining room, and told them some easy story of an apparition that was supposed to haunt it. "Have you ever seen it?" the guests said, pretending interest. "Not I; but we don't mind ghosts in this house," he answered, with a smile. And then they resumed their round of the old noble mystic house.

I cannot tell the reader what young Lindores has done to carry out his pledged word and redeem his family. It may not be known, perhaps, for another generation, and it will not be for me to write that concluding chapter: but when, in the ripeness of time, it can be narrated, no one will say that the mystery of Gowrie Castle has been a vulgar horror, though there are some who are disposed to think so now.







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