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ARTABANZANUS:

The Demon of the Great Lake.

AN ALLEGORICAL ROMANCE OF TASMANIA.

Arranged from the Diary of the late Oliver Ubertus

BY

WILLIAM M. FERRAR.

Glendower.—I can call spirits from the vasty deep.

Hotspur.—Why so can I, or so can any man.

But will they come when you do call for them?

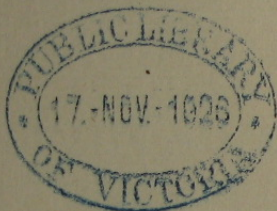
Shakespeare.

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To

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

ARTHUR JAMES BALFOUR, M.P.,

THIS WORK

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY HIS OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE EDITOR.

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PROLOGUE.

WHEN I was a boy of fourteen, there came one day to my father's house an old man of a very remarkable appearance. He was tall and rather thin and shadowy, but his face wore a benevolent expression. He was dressed in a good suit of dark-brown cloth ; and when I first saw him, as I opened the door at which he had knocked more than once, I started back astonished at his venerable figure. He asked me, with a mild, soft voice, what my name was, and where my father and mother might be. I showed him into our principal sitting-room, and sent my mother to him.

Their interview was a long one, but what passed at it I never knew. When my mother came from the room, she closed the door carefully, leaving the old man shut up alone. She had been crying, but her face did not express sorrow or pain ; nevertheless, as I belong to a rather romantic family, I began to imagine all sorts of things. There was a mystery connected with that old man which I determined to unravel. It was my duty, if he was a wicked old man, to detect and expose his wickedness. I loved my mother better than my life, and began to hate that venerable personage, who I thought might be the Prince of Darkness himself in disguise, because he had made her cry. I could not, however, quite make up my mind whether I had better burst open the door, and instantly throw him out of

the window, or magnanimously point with my finger to the door, and shout in a voice of thunder, 'Leave the room and the house this moment, sir!'

When my father came home, my mother took him aside, and told him in whispers what she evidently did not wish me to know. He appeared to be very much astonished. It was drawing towards evening, and tea would soon be ready. Instead of going in to see our mysterious visitor at once, my father went to his room and changed his dress. He was a retired merchant, and amused himself by cultivating a large orchard, and five acres of meadowland which lay around our pretty cottage, in one of the most beautiful recesses of the coast of Devonshire. When he thought himself quite ready for presentation, he was conducted, by my now smiling mother, into the presence of the old man, and then the door was again carefully closed.

In a short time my dear mother came out, not weeping this time, and proceeded to get the tea ready. Her face, always beautiful to me, was radiant with mysterious happiness, which I thought, if it depended on the possible residence of that aged party with us, might be short-lived. I asked her who he was, and coaxed her to tell me; but she only replied: 'Oh, you little know, and you could not dream; but you will know in good time. He will tell you himself probably. He is a very wonderful old gentleman, more than ninety years of age. He told me not to tell you who he was.'

When our evening meal was ready, he emerged from the sitting-room, leaning on my father's arm. My sister Bertha had just come in from her rambles, and, having been introduced to him, sat down to the table gazing at the unexpected visitor with the utmost astonishment. He was a total stranger to us both. His face was dark and weather-beaten; his hair and beard were white as snow; his eyes were small,

gray, and piercing. While he drank his tea he scarcely noticed my sister or myself, but conversed a little with our parents. I shall not recall their conversation, as it was only desultory and immaterial; but when we drew our chairs closer to the fire, and my father had placed some old journals on the table to be looked over, the old gentleman commenced his explanation in this way:

'Young lady and gentleman, you do not know who I am. You think, perhaps, that I am a visitor from another world, and I certainly bear that about me which might justify you in so thinking. But I am not so, and although I believe I have been in other worlds on short visits, I do not belong to them, having been born into this one, and not far from this very place, exactly ninety-five years ago. Did you ever hear of the great Bumblefucus, who fought with, and destroyed, the enormous serpent which used to kill and eat five hundred men and women every day for five thousand years?'

My sister and I looked at each other in wonder and dismay, while our father and mother nearly laughed outright. At length I replied: 'No, sir; but I have books that tell lies about St. George and the Dragon, and about Baron Munchausen, and I have "Gulliver's Travels."'

'Good books, nice books, for innocent boys and girls,' said the old gentleman. 'Well, I am not the great Bumblefucus, but I am the little Oliver Ubertus, who once fought a battle with the great enemy of mankind—I am your father's grandfather, your great-grandfather. You know me now; come and kiss me, Bertha.'

Bertha ran and gave our venerable relative several hearty kisses, and embraced him with unfeigned affection. I also felt his trembling lips pressed to my forehead and cheek. The tears fell from his eyes. Our parents also had recourse to their handkerchiefs. Solemn silence reigned in our house

for a considerable time. At length he suffered us to resume our seats, although it was not possible for us to withdraw our eyes from his face. Suddenly thrusting his hand into a capacious pocket, he drew from its recesses a parcel of moderate size, which he proceeded slowly to untie. We were filled with curiosity, not unmingled with an undefined expectation of seeing something wonderful; but when we saw him draw forth first a beautiful gold watch and chain, and hold it up, saying, 'This is for a good girl, named Bertha,' and then another, with the words, 'And this is for a good boy, named Willie,' our delight and gratitude knew no bounds.

Our great-grandfather told us, in the course of remarks made almost at random, that he had been a great traveller, but he would not trouble us with his travels at present. He had come, he said, unexpectedly, and without announcing his approach—because his whole life had been a series of extraordinary surprises—to lay his bones beside those of his ancestors. His grandson, our father, had kindly given him permission to spend his last years, or days, as the case might be, by his fireside; and our good mother did not object. In all probability he would not trouble us long; but be the time long or short, he would throw himself on the generosity of his young descendants, and ask for their guidance and protection.

He lived with us for about two years in comparatively good health, showing only now and then the bodily weakness incidental to his great age. His mental faculties did not seem to fail him in the least, and his mind was at perfect peace. Occasionally he was overheard talking aloud when he thought himself to be alone, as if holding an animated conversation with an invisible individual, whom he called Dr. Junius or Julius. Either my sister or myself always accompanied him in his frequent strolls along the lovely

shore, or into the interior of the county, by some of its charming lanes. On one of these occasions, when, on a calm April evening, we rambled through a delightful valley, on the banks of a gushing stream, out upon the seashore, and had turned to go back home, he sank down upon a grassy bank, sighed deeply, and spoke thus:

'I shall soon be leaving you, Willie; my silver thread of life is nearly run out. God has been good to me, and merciful, although I have been self-exalted and forgetful of my duty to Him. I have often listened to the voice of the tempter, and given way to sinful passion, and I am glad to be on the verge of release from all possibility of falling into those sins again. You will ask what there can be to tempt a man who is nearly a hundred years old. Nothing, certainly, if we are to judge by what is tangible and visible; but there may be a great deal within the soul; and within mine there has been a constant warfare with a mysterious and powerful being, who was pertinacious in his attacks, and unwearied in his efforts to undermine my allegiance to the great Author of my existence. At first he would insist that there was no God at all; we did not see or hear Him, and therefore He did not exist. Next, this evil being would try to persuade me that the Divinity of Jesus Christ, as the actual Son of God, in whom so many millions of people believe, is a mere delusion—an invention without a shadow of truth or probability in it. But I am weak; I cannot talk much now. . . .

'Every word,' he continued after a long pause, upon which I did not dare to intrude, 'must be to the purpose and well weighed. There are words which, if they could be weighed as we can weigh the bread we eat, would be worth their weight in refined gold. I have found those golden words in my Bible. Yes, blessed be God! I shall go soon, but not to the abyss of darkness where eternal wickedness

reigns. Oh, Willie, Willie, what a life mine has been ! You will find among my effects, when I shall be removed from this world of trouble, a history of the trials and temptations to which I have been exposed. My great enemy is living still, and as active and determined as ever. Whether he is the king of evil himself, or merely a satrap of his empire, I cannot tell. The work I leave behind me fully describes him, and the conflicts I had with him. It is not a religious work. Many will despise it, doubtless, on account of the strain of merriment which runs through it ; others will condemn it, because they will find it difficult to understand its hidden meanings, or to believe in the worth of its moral teaching. I leave it with you, Willie, to publish it, if you can find a publisher. Now let us go home ; my mind is at rest ; but all my life I have been in terror lest I should fall into the hell of unbelief, and so lose all hope of that glorious heaven on which I had set my heart.'

Some two or three months after this conversation we buried our aged progenitor, not without tears. He left his small estate in Tasmania to my parents, and through them it is destined to become mine. And to my sister he left all his personal property, which proved to be not inconsiderable.

The following is the work of which he had told me, and it is now published with very few alterations. Before its readers venture to condemn it for its 'absurdities,' will they receive the assurance that it was written by the author with a serious purpose, if also in the hope of amusing his fellow-men, whose happiness my great-grandfather always took pleasure in promoting ?

THE EDITOR.

CHAPTER I.

LAKE SORELL AND THE GIANT'S CASTLE.

THE lakes of Tasmania are, with one or two exceptions, situated on the higher levels of the mountains. The mountains occupy a large space—some thousands of square miles—in the centre of the island. They rise abruptly from a surrounding belt of level plains, which are bounded by other mountains nearer to the sea. On these plains, which are relieved by occasional hills and valleys, the settlers of the colony have created many handsome, and even elegant, mansions ; and they have brought into cultivation, and stocked with sheep and cattle, valuable lands which one hundred years ago were the domains of black and naked savages, who lived on kangaroos, opossums, and snakes. From a moderate distance the mountains present a magnificent appearance, being broken at irregular intervals by precipices and bold headlands, which the inhabitants call bluffs. No lover of the picturesque and wild beauties of the world can look upon these gigantic walls without feeling an anxious desire to scale them, and see for himself what is on the other side. That was the wish I formed the first time that I saw them, but it was only after the lapse of several years that I was able to gratify the wish. Having become acquainted with a family of sheep-owners

who occupy a station on the northern shore of Lake Sorell, I was fortunate enough to receive an invitation to spend some time with them. I had a month or two of leisure in the oppressive summer time, so, being in the enjoyment of good health, I shouldered my knapsack one fine morning in April, and clambered up the eastern face of the Western Tier, by a steep and rocky zigzag road which men and horses can travel, but no wheeled vehicle. The side of the mountain was covered with a dense forest, having an undergrowth of scrub and coarse grass, studded with huge rocks. The track was blocked up in several places by trees that were lying prostrate, and I found it difficult to make my way among their tangled roots or branches. The steepness of the ascent made the walk a somewhat laborious one. Surmounting all difficulties, however, I found myself, at the sultry hour of noon, sitting on my knapsack, on the very summit of the mountain, some three thousand feet above the sea, with an extensive shining lake spread out at my feet. Seated there, I was soon lost in dreamland, building sparkling 'castles in the air'—a habit to which I am, fortunately or unfortunately, rather strongly disposed.

I stay the progress of my narrative here, in order to say a few words about myself, which my generous readers will kindly excuse. I belong to that class of men who are styled 'visionary' by their wiser and more practical acquaintances, who never, in their imagination, see anything that may be on the top of a mountain, or at the other side of a haystack. Some use the adjective in contempt, others in derision, others, again, in profound pity. They say that a 'visionary' man cannot look after his proper business, but is certain to drop into the pitfall of irretrievable ruin. But I attended to my business for a great many years with fair measure of success, though now, as I am in the 'sear and yellow leaf,' I have handed it over to younger men. A 'visionary' man

may be unfit for *some* occupations, but he can, if he pleases, make himself useful and agreeable to others, and he can improve his little farm, if he has one, as Cincinnatus did, and as I, in all humility, do, by cutting down trees where they are too thick, and planting them where they are too thin. And now, as the reader knows all about me that he will care to know, I will further explain that, as I sat on the shore of Lake Sorell on that high mountain, in the far distant island of Tasmania, building sparkling 'castles in the air,' I fell into the following train of thought :

'I am rather tired of this same castle-building. Of what use is it? If I walk in a frenzy into this lake, will it save me from being drowned? If I fall over these rocks and break my leg, will it mend it again, and give me renewed strength to prosecute my journey? Will it put money in my purse when it is empty, or bread on my table, or clothes on my back? If it is a gift from on high, a branch, possibly, of the great candelabrum of human genius, of what use is it? Surely the ability to dig potatoes, to break in horses, to cook a dinner, or to sweep a crossing, would be much more beneficial to its possessor, and useful to the world at large. It is like Falstaff's honour : it pricks us on, and often pricks us off again ; not even a word or a mere breath of air, only a thought built up in any fantastic shape we please, and then blown into fragments. And yet it is not like Falstaff's honour ; it is not always of lower rank than a breath of air. It is an amusement to the great heart and mind of man, when he who builds such a castle has not a balance at his bankers' to amuse him, or a regiment of soldiers, or a ship to command, or anything to do to keep himself alive. It is an unquestionable fact that our airy castles, which your hard-headed, practical people sneer at so much, very often turn into real towers of grandeur and magnificence. Did Nelson, or Wellington, or Stanley, never build castles in the

air about winning glorious victories and achieving immortal renown?

'So I, Oliver Ubertus, of Tasmania, wool-grower (my friends smile at me, and tell me that I am a boy still, though over sixty years of age), while laughing to scorn the idea of glorious victories and immortal renown, have often built castles, which gradually dwindled into a snug little estate in the country; and a pleasant house, with trees and a garden around it; and a diminutive park, with a horse or two and a few simple-minded cows in it; and a cosy library indoors, and an outside run for a few hundred sheep, all my own. And now, when I have all these in reality, it must be acknowledged that my airy castle has become a substantial one of timber and stone, albeit one of very humble dimensions.'

My soliloquy ended, I rose up and continued my journey, stepping boldly into the wild Bush. Some idea of writing and publishing a book about these wonderful Tasmanian lakes, that would astonish the world and shake it up to the very centre of its cold, selfish heart, entered into my mind, and became a dreamy fascination which I could not shake off. It recurred again and again as I pursued my way. But it must be no ordinary book. If it should be nothing but a dry description of land and water, or even a kind of half-and-half history of another Paris and Helen, or of some forlorn Angelina or Virginia pining on an island, or a story of the romantic love of a local Tom Smith and his Betsy Jane Stubbs, the mighty world would scarcely condescend to touch it at all.

I am travelling now through a very thick, dark forest, along a snake-like track which winds round the northern shore, and I find myself booked for a weary, solitary tramp of at least twenty miles. I thought I should never get out of that forest, and began to imagine myself a veritable Babe in the Wood. There was no fear of my being lost, for the

lake could not fly away, and my friend's house was within half a mile of it. At last, in about four hours' time, I emerged into the open country, and entered upon a vast marsh, which was bounded at a great distance by a range of high wooded hills. There were mountains to be seen all round in this land of enchantment—mountains piled on mountains. For a time immersed to the waist in an ocean, so to speak, of rushes, which greatly added to the fatigue of walking, I plodded on; but it was fortunate for me that I was not compelled to wade up to my knees in water, or flounder pitifully over my boot-tops in hideous black mud. The time was passing quickly, the sun was sinking, and the end of my journey seemed as far off as ever. Extricating myself at last from the thick rushes, I strode into the wood again, which was now much more open, and then toiled wearily on until, as night was coming on, I arrived at a paddock, in which a new weather-boarded cottage could be descried at a little distance. This proved to be the very dwelling of which I was in search. I received a warm welcome, as is usually the case under such circumstances, and soon sat down to enjoy a refreshing cup of tea. The honours of the table were done by a young lady, a sister of my host, who, with her little niece, resides here during the summer, and takes great pleasure in the pure mountain air and in the delightful scenery around the lake.

I was told a great deal that evening about the curiosities of the locality. There is a so-called phantom island in Lake Sorell, and I was a week in my friend's house before I succeeded in getting a glimpse of it. There is also a beautiful wooded island in it which is by no means a phantom. The lake is about ten miles in diameter, and is surrounded, except in a few marshy places, with rocky and densely-wooded shores. It might be appropriately called the Tasmanian Lake of the Woods. On its southern

shore the celebrated Thomas Francis Meagher, he of the drawn sword and of 'Irish Invincible' fame, resided for a time.

One morning I went down to the lake before sunrise, and found the opposite shores enveloped in a thick atmosphere of blue smoke, which had risen from many surrounding Bush fires. Above the edge of this smoke a splendid orange glow preceded the rising sun. A soft hazy cloud stretched itself over such of the adjacent hills as were at all visible. The lake had the appearance of an extensive sea—a vast sheet of the brightest silver, studded with millions of glancing particles of gold. Then, and not till then, I found the object of my search—the phantom island. Alas for the genius of romance! It was not a creation of indescribable grandeur like a mediæval castellated rock or a fairy-like garden in a pearly ocean, such as we read of in Byron and Moore. On the contrary, it presented the very practical appearance of the black hull of a huge ship, rising only a few feet above the surface of the water, and yet seeming to be suspended over it like the flying island of 'Gulliver's Travels.' It is evidently nothing more nor less than a low mass of rock nearly in the centre of the lake, not always visible; and when I first saw it I fancied myself standing on the brink of the Nile, surveying the hulk of one of the great French ships which had been battered to pieces in Nelson's famous battle.

The Cradle Mountain, and the hills around, were totally invisible, owing to the dense columns of smoke which rose from the sides of the Western Tier, where fierce fires were raging. On such occasions a weird and deceptive glare is cast upon the water; and that morning the rosy glow of the sunrise through the nearly opaque gloom rendered the scene a truly magnificent one. A Bush fire also had broken out on the estate occupied by my friend Mr. Solomon

Pepper, and I volunteered my services to help to save his fences from being burnt. But it unfortunately happened that, in spite of all our efforts, fully two miles of fencing were destroyed. One of these fires was the grandest I ever saw; the flames roared like thunder, and leaped up in the forest to the height of forty or fifty feet.

After the pearly lake and the phantom island, what will you say, gentle reader, to a Giant's Castle? It is an eccentric idea of mine to give it that name. Before I attempted to explore the edifice itself, I discovered the graves of the giant and his wife, or what might be regarded as such, close to the public road and the margin of the lake. They—I mean the graves, not the bodies—lie side by side, but, as there are no monuments of any kind, I cannot be certain that the giant and his wife actually lie buried there.

The Giant's Castle is, in fact, a stupendous pile of rocks, towering one above another, and reaching to a height of about five hundred feet above the tops of the forest trees by which it is surrounded. It is a mile from the shore, and consists of a hard gray granite, or something of that kind, which seems to be impervious to the assaults of all the raging elements. At present it bears the unclassical name of Todd's Hill; but it ought to be called Castle Rock or Mount Terror. I was of course seized with an irresistible desire to ascend its perpendicular heights, and, to my great delight, my young hostess and her little niece promptly volunteered to be my guides.

We selected a fine afternoon for our excursion, and started at three o'clock. The air was calm and warm, but, unfortunately, not so free from smoke as we could have wished. The ascent was not particularly difficult, if I except the rough rocks which we had to scramble over, until we reached the foot of the enormous crags which form the ruined walls and turrets of the magnificent structure.

We followed for some time a well-defined track round the base of the rocky tower, seeking for the least impregnable part by which we might scale the escarpment, which was now hanging in confused masses over our heads. At last we discovered a narrow natural staircase among the rocks, which led us up to a grassy platform covered with innumerable trees. At the further side of this we found another pile of rocks, and these also we ascended, traversing at last a narrow ledge, which led us up to the highest pinnacle. Now came the tug of war. I had been advised to keep my head cool—it is by nature exceedingly hot—and to brace up my nerves—which, to say the least, were never very strong—and to effect both objects I screwed my hat firmly down over my eyebrows.

My fair guides tripped along like antelopes; but I, being well up in years, and inclined to be heavy, passed the causeway very cautiously indeed. Two unexpected sights burst suddenly upon my view. On our left lay the remains of a vast chamber, deep in the heart of the mountain, the roof of which must have been blown off in the centuries gone by in some terrible convulsion of the earth, and the ruins scattered about in every direction. On our right lay a frightful precipice, and, like imperial eagles, we were pluming our feathers on the very edge. The distance to the tops of the trees below seemed amazing. A sheer wall of rock was beneath our feet, the highest I had ever been on in my life.

At first my head began to feel a little giddy, and at such times a kind of paroxysm comes over me, which in my assumed allegorical character I find it impossible to control. My imagination does not require a very strong charge of dynamite in order to set it going. Where are now my dreams of being able one day to see my native land again, and of embracing the friends, the brothers and sisters of my youth?

Where are now the vile and crooked rascalities of the human hive—its pride, its venom, its avarice, and its arrogance? I even lose thought of my companions. I am alone, but surrounded with beings of another world. In this silent, impressive solitude I ask what I really am—a being destined to live for ever, armed with a dreadful power, or a poor, miserable creature of despicable clay, doomed to sleep the eternal sleep, or live on for centuries in the shadow of death? Why do I live and have power to move and think? And what awful power is that which prevents me from losing the command of my own strength, and falling headlong from the top of this precipice? What am I now? A mere insect of life, a mere atom of matter, which a sudden gust of wind might blow, shrieking or senseless, into that profound abyss.

Ha, ha! what is the value, I should like to know, of the boasted highly-prized philosophy of mankind, and who are those men who dare to place their own limits on the power of the great Creator? If there is any scene to be surveyed in the world likely to convince such men of their own insignificance, it is one like this. It is like a looking-glass with two opposing surfaces. It can show the beholder how small he really is, and still how great and magnificent he can become. If his body is a mere atom compared to the mountain, he is gifted with an intellect which can grasp and understand it. But let him not be presumptuous; his metaphysical philosophy is—at least, the greater part of it is—nothing but conjecture.

What do I see? What do I hear? The faint pale-blue glimmering of approaching lightning, the muffled mutterings of distant thunder, the gushing sounds of torrents of rain renewing the life of the thirsty, sun-baked earth, the hoarse growling of the wild hurricane still chained up far away over the sea, the convulsive pantings of the earthquake destined to

rend these iron masses from their foundations, but still securely bottled up.

What scenes, what creatures, are these? Circles of brilliantly-dressed ladies and gentlemen, myriads of white-robed beings, and a host of captive mountain tigers dancing round me in the graces of youth and beauty to the splendid music of the band of the Coldstream Guards—and listen! Whose voice is that?

‘Look, oh, look, Mr. Ubertus,’ warbled from the summit the elder Lady of the Lake, ‘at this enchanting scene! Is it not lovely? Come up here!’

‘Up there, my dear young lady! I am not a rope-dancer or a chimpanzee. I can see it from where I am.’

And lovely it certainly was. Lake Sorell, with all its charming sinuosities of island and shore, of mountain, marsh, and forest, lay spread out beneath us like a coloured map of grand proportions. Lake Crescent lay farther off, looking like a round polished mirror deeply set within a fringe of dark-green ribbons. The isthmus between the lakes came out in strong relief. A Bush fire was raging at Interlaken. The mountains and hills around us reflected the amber light of the setting sun, his golden rays softened and mellowed into the richest of ruby tints by the smoke of the distant fires.

Lured on by an insatiable desire to see whatever might be worth seeing, I rambled forth alone on another afternoon in search of this wonderful castle, and then beheld it from below. At imminent danger to neck and limbs I climbed through and over a wilderness of rocks, and stood at last at the foot of the gigantic pile, gazing upwards at its towers and battlements. It did not present a perpendicular face, as I had at first assumed, but that of a sharp, jagged cone which appeared to have been besieged and battered by heavy guns for years. And yet what was it compared to

the mountains of other lands? Still, it interested my lonely and brooding mind at the time, and in a pleasing and healthy way changed the gloomy current of my thoughts.

That night strange and weird ideas crowded into my mind, and strange and weird dreams, with but little originality in them, haunted my pillow. In the great ruined chamber of the Giant's Castle I saw sights which made my blood boil with excitement, angels and demons fighting for the mastery, as in Swift's ‘Battle of the Books.’

CHAPTER II.

THE VAST CITY OF ETERNITY.

WHILE at Lake Sorell it was my custom to retire to rest at nine o'clock, because I knew that my sitting up later would inconvenience my host and hostess; the former being anxious to get up early to attend to his daily duties, and the latter being accustomed to study for an hour after all the household had retired. Before wishing them good-night, however, I made it a rule to take a few turns outside the house, in order to see what kind of weather we were likely to have during the night and on the following day, and also to meditate awhile on the philosophy of nature, and on the strange vicissitudes of human experience. It was the second evening after my visit to the Giant's Castle that I became as weary of the protracted drought as Mr. Pepper was, who had told me that if it continued much longer it would blight everything green and fresh, and transform the very air into a seething furnace of suffocating smoke. I looked out upon the surrounding belt of tall forest trees, and up at the cloudless sky, with strong feelings of disappointment and fear, for I deeply sympathised with the anxieties which belong to the poor farmer's lot, whether he be a keeper of sheep or a tiller of the soil.

Just before entering the house again that evening, I saw

a sudden flash of pale blue light, low down upon the northern horizon, which made my heart leap with joy. I had already seen one in broad daylight, while on the pinnacle of the castle, in my mind's eye. Now it was a reality. There was actual lightning approaching, and there was thunder in the air, but as yet it had not made itself heard. I watched for at least an hour the successive faint flashes, which gradually increased their wild play through the wilderness, and then I went to my couch in the happy belief that the long-expected and thrice-blessed rain was coming.

At midnight exactly I was awakened by a tremendous crash of thunder rolling along the very ridge-pole of the roof. Springing from my bed, and throwing on an overcoat, I went out into the open air. The sky, to my great surprise, was still without a cloud, and not a breath of wind stirred the leaves of the trees; but the lightning flashed incessantly in blinding columns of flame, lighting up the gloomiest recesses of the immense forest, and sweeping with strange, ghostly, phosphorescent glow over the calm waters of the adjacent lake. The thunder still pealed out, crash after crash; but where did it all come from? Why all this terrible clamour, and weird illumination of the vasty deep, if we were to get no rain? Unable to solve the mystery, I turned in to my bed again.

Two hours after I was again awakened. A loud trumpeting and drumming deluge was falling on the roof. Never was music more sweet, or eloquence of stunning senator more delicious; but alas! it ceased almost as soon as it began, and subsided into light and intermittent showers, which continued until daybreak. Then the convulsion ceased altogether, and we were left once more to our silent slumbers.

After breakfast I strolled down to the lake, as I was in

the habit of doing. It was a most lovely morning in April, hot as in the middle of summer, and the still parched earth was thirsting for more rain. I thought it exceedingly strange that no sooner did I seat myself on the shore than I lost, or seemed to lose, all perception of where I actually was, falling straightway into a mesmeric trance, a delightful reverie, and thence into a day-dream, in which the scenes and the persons who figured in them became to me substantial realities. A soft atmosphere, clear, bright, and sparkling, to which I had not lately been accustomed, surrounded me. The lake expanded before me until it assumed the dimensions of a vast sea, calm and brilliant like a sea of rosy glass. A wide and smooth road, of dazzling whiteness, seemed to encircle it as far as my eyes could reach, whereon thousands of elegantly dressed men and women, on beautiful and spirited horses, and in all descriptions of grand carriages, careered with incredible speed. The glassy sea was covered with innumerable ships and boats, shooting about here and there, propelled by some wonderful invisible power, for I saw neither oar nor sail, nor funnel for smoke or steam. While gazing on these extraordinary things, a large and sumptuous vessel suddenly stopped within a few yards of the place where I was seated, and a man—or a superior being—descended to the water, was by my side in an instant, and commanded me to accompany him on board.

The magnificent vessel now flew through the water at the rate, I fully believe, of one hundred miles an hour. I shall not attempt to describe the superb grandeur of its equipment. My conductor, when I ventured to look upon him, appeared to be a strong and vigorous young man, with a countenance rather thoughtful and winning than strikingly beautiful. His person was tall and commanding, and the people on the ship—for so I suppose I must call them—

treated him with the greatest respect, obeying his every nod, and even the glances of his eyes. He wore on his head a helmet, which seemed to be one large pearl, and carried in his hand a silver staff about four feet in length. A rich white tunic, reaching to the knees, closely enveloped his person; bright blue sashes of some strange but exquisite material crossed each other on his breast, and at the point of contact glittered a large diamond star. Below his left shoulder I saw the image of some bird on the wing, worked in purple silk. His legs were clothed in what appeared to me to be dark green velvet, and his feet were protected by boots of a substance resembling ivory. He did not speak to me during the voyage, and I was so overwhelmed with wonder and awe that I did not dare to speak to him.

We drew near what I supposed to be the opposite shore of the lake, the numerous ships and boats that were in our way drawing aside quickly in order to let us pass. I saw that we were approaching a mountain of prodigious height, and proportionate extent in every direction. It was covered from its base to its summit with buildings, which sparkled and shone as if built of stars. There were castles, palaces, towers, and temples, surrounded by gardens of luxuriant beauty, and shaded by trees of extraordinary verdure, loaded with flowers and fruit; but its summit was so far away in the dread regions of space, that I could scarcely see either its shape or its habitations. The ship entered a grand harbour, which was crowded with other ships, and was moored to a broad wharf by a hundred willing hands. Before going on shore, my guide signed to me to follow him down into the interior of the vessel, and while putting on my shoulders a curious light-blue mantle, and on my head a cap with a white plume, he said with indescribable dignity, entirely free from haughtiness or severity of tone: 'I am permitted to show you a small portion of this home

of ours; follow me whither I go; do as you see me do; ask no questions, I will explain hereafter. You will distinguish me in the crowd by this red flower in my helmet. You are, for the present, my attendant or aide-de-camp, but remember that I also have a master.'

I bowed low, in deep humility and astonished silence. Who was this mysterious being that, while confessing himself to be a servant, was saluted and obeyed by everyone he met? He walked out of the ship with a lordly air. A proudly-caparisoned horse was led up for him by a person who wore a blue mantle and white plume like those I was wearing. When he was mounted, his servant, in obedience to a sign from him, went back to a company of horsemen, and led up another noble creature for me. My new master led the way, and I followed at the distance of a few paces, the other horsemen bringing up the rear. Our way was not directly up the mountain, but along the base of it, and we soon turned into a street of such magnificence that my senses nearly fled from me altogether. It was truly a street of palaces, separated from each other by the grandest gardens it is possible to conceive, and joined together by arches over the gardens several hundred feet in height. It was filled with crowds of people, on foot, on horseback, and in carriages. Multitudes of men and women, for such at least I supposed them to be, thronged the glittering pavements, or loitered in earnest conversation in the busy street. My guide was saluted on all sides by bows and smiles of respectful recognition. I also was obliged to return many salutes. Being compelled to keep my eye on my master, I could not see or attend to much that was going on; but of this I am quite sure, there was not one person to be seen whose garment spoke of poverty or disgrace, or one countenance that wore an aspect of pain, disease, sadness, degradation, or vice.

We rode on and on until our leader turned into a great square, surrounded by buildings more vast and beautiful, if possible, than any I had yet seen. I was dazzled and overpowered by the sight. Here rose up suddenly an enormous octagon tower, of shining white marble, piercing the sky; there an obelisk of black marble and gold, on a pedestal of ruby-coloured glass. Like the street outside, the square was crowded with people, principally men on horseback, clothed like my master in white garments and pearl helmets, who seemed to be mustering for some great parade or festivity. Numbers also wandered about, prancing here and there, who wore uniforms of different colours. Military music of the grandest description was not wanting. In a little time he to whom I was attached dismounted at the entrance-gate of one of the finest of the palaces, and entered the apartments within. Gorgeous furniture, splendid decorations, pictures which could be gazed on for ever, vases, statues, revolving scenes, moving, changing landscapes, and ornaments of wonderful beauty, presented themselves to my view. In one gigantic chamber tables were laid out, which were spread with delicious fruits, representing all kinds of animal and vegetable foods, bread and wine. We partook of these refreshments, and rose up inspired and invigorated with new mental and bodily life. Then we entered another crowded room which contained all kinds of models in gold and silver—castles, ships, and extraordinary machines. There were actual rivers flowing over model waterfalls, and an immense reservoir of water, enclosed by a circular wall of glass as high as my shoulders, in which there were hundreds of beautiful fishes, and on its surface numbers of model ships were moving in all directions.

Then we went into another great chamber. This, to my intense delight—oh, how shall I describe it?—was a magnificent library. All my life I have been passionately

fond of books. I envied authors, and thought them surely the happiest of men, and vowed within myself that if I ever could I would be one of them. And yet our books may be compared to the stars of heaven for multitude, and for the brilliancy of their lustre. The pages piled on pages which have been heaped together by one single active brain, and one industrious hand, are such as almost to surpass belief, and would indeed be perfectly incredible did we not hear of it on unquestionable authority, and frequently even see for ourselves the mighty monuments which have been reared by great intellects, and bequeathed to posterity.

But the books which I saw before me now far exceeded in grandeur all that I had ever seen before. Shelves were loaded, tables groaned, flying columns, like regiments manœuvring in sham battle, were scattered through the room. Histories of all worlds, 'Geology of the Sun,' 'The Earth in its Antediluvian State,' 'Progress of Society in the Planet Saturn,' 'History of the Creation of the Star Sirius and his Companion Worlds,' Autobiographies of Angels, were within my reach. The room was a very large and lofty one, lighted from the roof, and surrounded with several tiers of galleries. Like the others, it was crowded with people, all appearing to be young, or, at most, middle aged; some were deeply engaged with books, others were busy writing letters. I noticed that when one of them had finished a letter, he looked up to the roof, and immediately a bird, of a kind I had never before seen, descended, took the letter, and flew off with it, as I supposed, to some central office. As I stood pondering on this, and other wonders, a soft rushing sound, without warning, swelling slowly into a loud vibration of the air as from a great trumpet, resounded through the palace. My master, and all within the room, rose from their seats, and stood for some moments in reverential silence. It was felt that an august and Divine

Presence was diffusing itself around, and a Voice breathed the solemn words, '*Love one another, as I have loved you.*' A thrilling glow of inexpressible delight, tempered indeed by deeply humbled and remorseful thoughts, came to me, and then an intensely joyful burning of the heart as the unspeakable gift of love passed over us.

My conductor now led me into a smaller room, of which there were several opening into the great library. It was furnished in a very elegant manner, with every suitable convenience for a person of exalted rank. The walls were adorned with pictures of mysterious life. A beautiful globe, representing our little world, hung from the ceiling. A large clock of marvellous construction stood on one side. A golden vine spread its branches, bearing rich fruit, over one of the walls. Two large windows looked out upon the square, which was becoming more crowded with officers in all kinds of brilliant dresses. He in whose presence I now stood took his seat at a silver table, and pointed to a chair, of which I timidly took possession. He placed his helmet on the table. His rich brown hair curled over a high and noble forehead. His eyes were dark blue, and exceedingly bright and clear; his nose, ears, and lips were delicately formed, and strikingly beautiful. After a short pause he looked at me as if he would devour me with his eyes, and then he spoke thus to me:

'This is one of the outlying portions of the great city of Eternity, of which, doubtless, you have heard—not I hope with unbelieving scorn and contempt, as is the prevailing fashion in your ignorant world—and you see what our city is like; but you cannot see, and you cannot know, the ten thousandth part of its beauties, pleasures, and privileges. I have been, fortunately for myself, graciously permitted to take up my abode in it, and this palace is my residence when I am not commanded to be elsewhere. I have duties

to perform, being a captain in the grand army of our Prince, who commands us, and reigns over us for ever. By the Presence which you were allowed to feel while in the library, know that within three days a Review will take place in the Park of the River of Life, at the other side of the mountain, where will be assembled many millions of redeemed human beings, but you cannot be there. Know that in this city are everlasting joy, peace, purity, and love. Nothing coarse or brutal, nothing vile, offensive, or revolting, can enter here. We have no plagues, wild beasts, or noxious insects to trouble us. No evil passion, envy, hatred, jealousy, or avarice ever enters our hearts. No violence, secret assassination, or open murder; no wars, diseases, or death can separate us or make us miserable. The trees of our forests and gardens supply us with abundance of delicious food; we need never fear famine, or destitution. We enjoy perfect happiness in the service of our Divine Prince, who is not the prince of your world. Seek therefore to be united with us: the meanest of our servants is better and higher than an emperor of the earth. Do not fail or hesitate. Give your whole heart to the mighty Being who gave you life, and who offers to redeem you from the grave.'

He looked upon me with an unutterable expression of affection and anxiety. A wild thought darted through my brain. I recognised him and fell at his feet, clasping his knees and crying: 'My father, my dear, dear father, have I found you again?'

'Yes, son of my love,' he replied, raising me up and kissing my forehead, 'I am, I was your earthly father. You must now go hence, but we shall meet again; a few more years and all will be over. Beware of the world! seek no honour or fame or wealth amongst men, and thank God night and day who has preserved you from the temptations by which many who do seek such things are destroyed.'

'My father,' I said, 'if I must go, may I not see my mother and my brothers and sisters who are dead? Where are they?'

'Yes,' he answered, 'they are all here; you may see them for a moment, but do not address them.'

He now led me through a number of apartments in which I saw fresh objects of wonder. Here were various intricate passages into a large garden, a garden indeed of indescribable luxuriances and beauty. On one portion of it a large pavilion of silver tissue stood out in bold relief. I purposely abstain from the details of description, relating only the salient points of all the grand things that I saw. As we approached this pavilion we heard the sound of music from within. As we entered I was obliged to lift my hand to shield my eyes from the soft and enchanting glow of fairy-like light with which they were dazzled. I was lost in astonishment, and my guide was evidently under the powerful influence of some strong emotion. Neither of us spoke a word. At a large instrument like an octagon piano sixteen young ladies sat, all playing together a brilliant piece of music. Others sat round them playing on instruments resembling guitars and flageolets. I never before heard such delightful music. There were lovely children also in this pavilion.

Not far from this group there was another, which consisted of twelve ladies of very elegant appearance. They looked like Roman matrons seated on thrones of ivory and gold, and were engaged upon some peculiar description of embroidery, having a large coloured cloth like a banner spread on their knees, and stretching out on the floor before them. On our approach they looked up from their work, and one of them, an extremely beautiful woman, smiled graciously and rose from her seat, but at a sign from my father she sat down again, while her face assumed an

expression of strange gravity. My heart leaped up into my mouth! This was my mother!—my mother! Her presence seemed to burn my soul like fire. Her beauty enchanted me; her ineffable grace bewitched me; her calm, grave, half reproachful glance, as if she recognised but did not dare to acknowledge me, was like a dagger in my heart! Oh, my mother! hast thou not forgiven me for the errors and follies of my youth? How I long to clasp thee once more to my breast!

My father held up his staff, and the music ceased. The lovely musicians arose from their seats, and arranged themselves behind the chairs of the ladies engaged in embroidery, and he addressed them thus:

‘Ladies! this friend and servant of mine is a visitor from the earth. His name I am not permitted to divulge. He is one of the poetical sons of the world, but as a poet he has no name.’ Then, turning to me, he continued: ‘Sir, these ladies will be happy to hear one of your poetical compositions.’

Taken by surprise, and overwhelmed with timidity and confusion, I was silent for some time. At length I thought of a Jubilee Ode, which I had written in honour of our gracious Queen, and, summoning all my courage to my aid, recited it thus:

‘In visions of the dark but mighty Past,
 From dreams of many happy days gone by,
 In sadness, yet in joy, we wake at last
 To blend our voices in sweet harmony:
 Joining our hands and singing, fondly singing
 Of thee, O gentle Queen and Sovereign,
 Revered, beloved, the hills around us ringing
 With rapturous shouts, still in thy glorious reign.
 Now since that day when first we heard thy name
 Proclaimed as Britain’s monarch, there have flown
 Full half a hundred years; and in thy fame
 We feel ourselves exalted and full grown
 From youth to age, from folly to be wise;
 From darkness, as it were, to light; from shades of night

To-day’s effulgent brightness; in thine eyes
 Beholding peaceful pictures of delight;
 Rejoicing still as we rejoiced so long;
 Victoria!

Deign but to hear and to approve our song.

‘Full half a hundred years! since yesterday!
 They seem but halves of hours: yet in the time
 What changes have been wrought! Still far away
 The things that gave us pain appear, and in their prime
 Our joys are rich and fresh, revealing home and youth,
 And lov’d ones wreathed in beauty’s smiles and charms
 Of unforgett’n sweetness, kindness, truth:
 Our parents’ love, circled in sisters’ arms,
 Blessed by our brothers’ voices, prayed for by friends,
 Far over half the world on waters glancing
 In strange fantastic light, which neither ends
 By night nor day, this startled soul entrancing,
 Borne like a floating shell. This is the history
 Of thousands of thy subjects, happy Queen,
 Brought back again through memory’s hidden mystery
 O noble Queen!

Be still to us what thou so long hast been!

‘And yet, alas! how many have gone down
 Into the tomb who might have seen this day,
 And shared in all our joy before thy crown;
 Slain by dark crime; by rude blasts swept away;
 By reckless sailors dashed on rugged rocks;
 By war’s fierce venom torn from love and home;
 Or rent in twain by pitiless earthquake shocks;
 Or lost on trackless wastes, condemned to roam:
 These are the shadows. If there hath been war,
 If hatred, if sedition, rule a part
 In all thy wide domains, or if the car
 Of mad, revengeful slaughter wildly dart
 Between us and our joys, thou’rt not to blame:
 Thy heart is peace; thy soul is good and pure;
 To men’s base passions we impute the shame.
 Thy pitying tears flow for them, we are sure;
 Thy gentle bosom heaves in deep distress:
 Thy wish, if such might be, would quickly bring
 An end to hate and lawless wickedness,
 O gentle Queen,
 With which the nations ring!

‘We change the theme. How shall we show our pleasure,
 Or how congratulate thee, true-hearted Queen?
 We could not, were we rich, increase thy treasure,
 For all true happiness thou in full hast seen.
 Shall we repeat, what tongues ne’er tire of telling,
 And sing thine empire’s glories?—how on land

Thy strength is feared : on ocean proudly swelling,
 Thy navies guard thy world-wide glittering strand :
 How on thy realms the sun doth ne'er go down ;
 How millions call thee Empress : thy banner waves
 From pole to pole ; how rich gems deck thy crown—
 How brave thy warriors' hearts, as one who braves
 The battle's thunders and the tempest's rage ?
 These are the flowers it is thy lot to tread ;
 These are the actors on life's stormy stage ;
 These are the sons who for thee nobly bled ;
 And we who bleed not—still the wish is ours—
 The fond, deep wish, fairer than crowns of earls—
 To strew thy path with all our loveliest flowers,
 O mighty Queen !
 And deck thy diadem with richer pearls.

' With what great sovereign of the vanished years
 Shall we compare thee, happy, happy Queen—
 Blest with all blessings, rich in that which cheers
 The soul and heart, a matron, dear, serene ?—
 Not with *her*, surely, daughter of a king—
 A monster-tyrant, mocking at man's pain,
 Who scoffed at mercy as an unholy thing,
 Bidding his subjects' blood flow down like rain !
 Mary ! what recks it, when thou wast on the throne,
 Two hundred martyrs died by axe and stake ?
 Thou heard'st no piercing scream, no hapless groan ;
 The Christian's light did not thy hard heart break ;
 Thy slaves, the furious Bonner and his crew,
 Drunk in their blood-stained revelry—where are *they* ?
 And Philip, whom the weeping nations knew ?
 All swept to infamy away !

' Neither with *her*, Elizabeth, the brave,
 The lion-hearted Queen, of virgin charms,
 Who shattered on the island-girdling wave
 The might of Spain with England's hosts in arms ;
 Who, while all kings in solemn awe beholding,
 Wondering and trembling at tremendous power,
 Played the pretending lover, her white hands folding,
 Prepared to strike, smiling in Cupid's bower,
 Lost in enchantment, making fools of men,
 Laughing at tears : her battlemented tower
 A tower of woes indeed ; her house a den
 Of mocking beings ; its grim walls arrayed
 With ghastly heads ! Dread Queen, who ruled by fear !
 These she with Biron of France surveyed,
 She hissing, " *See how we punish traitors here !*"
 Laughing at wisdom, her own wild way pursuing,
 Her smile a Circe's cup, her frown a terror
 Of Gorgon-wreathèd serpents : her hands imbruing

In kindred blood—a sister Queen's ! Sad error !
 Fatal to future peace. What has fate to show
 This maiden Queen, who once was sweet and fair ;
 Who from young hands took flowers ; whose tears could flow
 In tender sympathy, worn to the grave with care—
 A miserable wreck, lately a fresh,
 Angelic girl ? Let Essex tell with maddening groan.
 Her heart—one half, indeed, was heart of flesh,
 The other half—of stone !

' Neither with *her*, illustrious Anne, the star
 Of whose proud diadem was VICTORY :
 Illustrious through him whose strength in war
 Was terrible, and most wonderful to see.
 Blenheim and Ramilies still trump his fame—
 In wild confusion England's foes he hurled ;
 While Genius crowned with glory many a name,
 Which in its turn gave glory to the world.
 But she, unhappy Queen, bereft of all
 That made her life a joy, except her crown,
 With broken heart saw her dear children fall—
 The grave insatiable ! like buds unblown,
 Like star-lit gems, no sooner found than lost,
 Like gleams of golden sunshine through a storm ;
 Ruled by her favourites, by their fierce passions tossed,
 Weeping in agony over many a form,
 O'er many a lovely form. Alas ! her joy,
 Whate'er it was, turned into bitterness,
 As when we feel relentless woe destroy
 Our fondest hopes, believing they might bless.
 Dying midst courtiers' quarrels—seeking in vain
 For earthly peace—wrenched from the shore
 Of all her greatness ; her line—last dreaded pain—
 Uncrowned for evermore !

' But thou, incomparable Queen ! we speak
 But what we feel ; it hath pleased God to give
 Health unto thee, and strength and heart to seek
 Thy joy in His full glory ; and mayst thou live
 Long years to come ; many of us shall die
 Still honouring thee as Empress of our homes.
 Our thoughts have wings and eyes, and can descry
 Thy future bliss, even as one who roams
 The realms of space, and sees vast worlds afar,
 And muses on the littleness of earth,
 Comparing it with each gigantic star :
 Our earth, where pride and vanity have birth !
 O gentle Queen, may thy remaining years
 Be full of peace and joy, thou friend of peace !
 Thou friend of virtue ! and ne'er may sorrow's tears
 Bedew thy cheek, nor love nor wisdom cease ;

And may thy children's children, both on land and sea,
 Be saved from all the ills which flow around,
 Yielding themselves to heavenly care like thee—
 The world no worse, but better than 'twas found.
 And if through distance we behold the traces
 Of thy abiding griefs, it is not well
 To sorrow uncontrolled o'er vacant places,
 Knowing that with heaven's King thou too shalt dwell.
 We who are weak may not meet all the rays
 Of thy great empire's splendour ; but we are swift,
 With grateful hearts, to give our God the praise,
 O peerless Queen !
 For thee, His priceless gift.'

The ladies graciously expressed their thanks and acknowledgments by smiles and courtesies. My father held up his staff again ! The musicians resumed their seats, and played a charming symphony, with astonishing variations, of 'GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.'

Bowing a low and deep farewell, I now accompanied my father back through the intricate passages, and gigantic apartments, to the room of the golden vine.

'You have seen,' said he, 'what it is permitted to but few mortals to see. We lead here a charmed and enchanted life. We can scarcely form a wish that is not instantly gratified, or feel a want that is not instantly supplied. Pleasure lingers long, pain follows not. The evil frown of offended pride or disappointed avarice disturbs us not. The lying tongue of slander utters no sound here. More I cannot show you ; further secrets I cannot tell you. Fall not, my son, into that vain and foolish error so prevalent among men, that because these things are hidden from their eyes and other senses, therefore they do not exist. Avoid the paths of those who presume to teach others what they do not know themselves. Their teaching will lead you to the blackness of eternal death. Arouse yourself from your self-satisfied security ; from your bland settlement upon your lees, and confident hope of reward for having done nothing. If I have done no good, you say, I

have done no harm : I never killed, or cheated, or committed adultery, therefore I shall be all right. I tell you nay : more, far more than this shall be required of you : awake from your pleasing dream, and awaken others. Is the great Being who created all worlds one likely to be mocked or played with ? Wash while you may, in that Fountain which is offered for the effacement of all uncleanness. Remember the poor, and help them according to your means ; rescue young children from wickedness, and our God will bless you.'

So saying he struck the table with his silver staff, and another officer entered the room. 'Take,' said my father to him, 'this servant of mine back to the ship in which he came hither.' He bowed to me with a distant grace and dignity which cut me to the heart, though it carried with it a consolatory effect, and retired to another apartment. My tears fell fast as I followed my new conductor, who bade me take my place in a chariot which we found at the entrance gate.

We were now driven through several wide streets, under a series of magnificent arches, not by the way which we had at first traversed, but up the mountain side for some distance ; and then turning back through a terrific gorge, which was spanned by a glorious bridge, constructed of large blocks of glass of all imaginable colours. Our carriage stopped in the centre of the bridge. The views on either side were grand beyond description. The officer by my side, who seemed to be a very good-humoured kind of man, carried on a running commentary on every wonder which presented itself to our view. We now drove down rapidly to the ship, and I was hurried on board. She once more flew through the water, coasting along the shore of the lake, and a truly astonishing shore it was, studded with gigantic castles and mansions in the bosoms of de-

lightful groves and meadows. We passed by several rivers, some of them exhibiting distant waterfalls, amongst enchanting hills. The trees were of mighty proportions, and were laden with gorgeous flowers and tempting fruit up to their topmost branches. All too soon I was set on shore at the place whence the vessel had borne me, and my vision gradually faded away into the murky smoke which floated over Lake Sorell.

CHAPTER III.

THE DEMON INTRODUCES HIMSELF.

I BADE adieu to my kind host and hostess, promising to repeat my visit, if possible, at no distant date. Accordingly, after the lapse of a few months, I found myself again in the airy home of Solomon Pepper, and enjoyed for some three or four days his genial and instructive conversation. He strongly advised me to pay a visit to the Great Lake, which is far larger and more beautiful than Lake Sorell. I therefore set out immediately on horseback, and after a pleasant journey of about thirty miles through some very wild and rocky country, arrived at the romantic shore. The waters of this lake are clear as glass, not thick with mud like those of Lake Sorell. Its circumference is about one hundred miles. Three picturesque islands adorn its surface, but they are situated at long distances from each other. Near it are splendid bare and rocky mountains, of weird and fantastic appearance, but its shores in some places expand into extensive stony plains, and in others are clothed with forest down to the water's edge. It was a wild and charming scene, in the remembrance of which I should always find the greatest possible pleasure were it not for a great peril which befell me there.

My residence in this district lasted for nearly a month, and

I enjoyed the hospitality of a younger brother of Mr. Pepper's, to whom he had given me a very kind introduction. These gentlemen could not get suitable shepherds at that time, and were consequently obliged to live during the summer months at their out-stations. There is a freedom in this country life which makes it attractive, and its extreme loneliness is compensated for by the best of health, and plenty of invigorating exercise. A strong boy, ten years old, resided here with his uncle, who was my host, and with this lad for my guide and companion I rambled about over the rocks, and up and down the precipitous hills. We used to traverse extensive plains that were covered with thick grass, and had thousands of curiously-shaped stones, as high as my head, jutting out here and there, all over them; and it was pleasant to see the playful sheep jumping upon them and off again. From the top of one of the highest of the hills—itsself a mass of nearly inaccessible crags—I could see three large lakes, and the mountain masses, and the forests by which they were separated from each other. On one side was the 'Great Lake,' with its adamantine sentinels, the 'Split Rock' and 'China Wall'; on the other, two large sheets of water, which were known as 'Arthur's Lakes,' lay stretched beneath our feet, as in a clearly-painted picture, glittering in the sun like blue mirrors. In the distance we saw a large portion of the midland plains as far as Epping Forest and Ben Lomond, a hundred miles away. The whole country is a wilderness of rocks, forests, yellow grassy plains, and water. No houses of any kind were to be seen; not a garden or cultivated field was visible, and not a sound was to be heard save the occasional bleating of the sheep, and now and again the bellowing of cattle.

The season had changed since my last visit. The days were then almost insufferably hot; now they were exceedingly cold. The winter was drawing near, when the white

sun, if it condescends to shine at all, does so with a sublime indifference to the effect of his rays in giving life and warmth. I well remember what the lake was like in the long bright days of summer; everything was then fresh and beautiful. The bright blue water, changing sometimes to rich emerald, reflected in varied tints the floating clouds above it. The three islands looked like little fairy gardens, and amid their crags the keen eye of imagination might see tiny mediæval castles holding sway over diminutive domains. But now everything is sombre and desolate. The shore is encrusted with ice; the air is heavy with gloomy fogs and snow-laden clouds; the wind is blowing with searching, chilling keenness; the waters look dark as if threatening some coming calamity; the birds are silent; the flowers have hidden themselves, and I am shivering with cold.

I sat down on a rock, and gave way to reflections that were quite in harmony with the gloomy scene around me. I put myself for the time being in the place of the large landed proprietor. The life of a sheepowner may be more free and happy than that of a brave defender of his country, but, except for its health and freedom-giving qualities, it is not an enviable life. Just at the present time the farmer has emerged from the severest drought that has ever been experienced in this usually favoured island. It was so protracted and so intense that it killed thousands of trees, and caused great loss and deterioration of his flocks. He has been visited by calamitous Bush fires, which have destroyed thousands of acres of grass, and miles upon miles of valuable fencing which cannot be replaced save at great labour and expense; and he is constantly suffering from other losses, annoyances and anxieties.

I grew quite excited as I thought over the social and political anxieties of the class to which I belong, and I

could not refrain from giving audible expression to my soliloquy.

‘There is not, I believe, on the face of our glorious world a single human being—let him appear to be ever so happy, be he saint or sinner, beggar or gentleman, earl or emperor—who has not his under-current of grief and misery—his skeleton in the house. While some are oppressed with the cares of vast property, others are groaning under hopeless, chronic poverty. Millions bewail their past follies and blunders; millions more are the victims of degrading vice, and lost in the mazes of the basest passions. Millions drink to the dregs the cup of pleasure, and fritter away their precious—their most precious—time in idle and senseless gratifications. Who are they who are suffering the agonies of incurable disease, and why am I spared? What have the poor wretches done? Religion saith it is a sin to murmur, or to think of wriggling ourselves out of our mortal envelope. Is the world beautiful, and am I cold and hungry? I cannot love or admire the world. Am I in pain or without a penny? I abhor my existence and everything else. What to me are the joys of earth, the pleasures of life? And these odious demands for our hard-earned money—money that is so difficult to obtain, and so easy to get rid of. Pay! pay! pay! or the bloodhounds of the law will be let loose upon you. Pay! pay! pay! or the demons of the “Rabbit Act,” the “Scab Act,” and every other Act, will follow you about with red-hot fish-hooks. Our wool may sell for next to nothing, our sheep may die of rot, our lambs of fluke and tigers; our house may be burnt and our bank smashed; nevertheless, we must pay! pay! I raised my voice and struck a rock a tremendous blow with my stick, and cried out: ‘There’s the very devil himself to pay, and the devil *will* be paid!’

There was a terrific roar close to my side, and somebody said:

‘Aye, I will, and I’ll make you pay, I will!’

As I thought I was altogether alone, I started up in the wildest terror, and with a feeling of horror which I could not conquer, and cannot now describe, I turned slowly round, and lo! within six feet of me stood that terrible being, the far-famed ‘Demon of the Great Lake.’

An iceberg glided down my vertebral column. The appearance of this awful being, far more repulsive than that of a real live yahoo, nearly drove me frantic with terror and despair, tempered with something like detestation, so utterly repugnant was it, and so far below everything which I had previously imagined in connection with created beings above the rank of beasts of the field. He was about seven feet in height. His face was frightful, and of a deep chocolate colour; his nose was hooked like an eagle’s claw. He glared upon me with eyes like two leaden bullets of grape-shot just ready to go off; his mouth and teeth closely resembled the deadliest part of a rabbit-trap. On his head he wore a remarkably small cocked hat made of serpent’s skin, as I was afterwards informed. His robe was the rough waterproof hide of a bunyip. In his right hand he carried a knotted caduceus with two live snakes twined around it, and with certain cabalistic characters engraved upon it; and on his left arm he bore what appeared to be several folds of the tail part of a boa-constrictor.

‘I’ll make you pay!’ he again roared at the top of his voice, and gnashing his teeth with a loud snapping noise; ‘and I’ll double the amount and more, I will!’

‘I kept silence for a long time, and I was trembling to my very boots; but seeing that he was working himself up into a fearful rage, I managed to stammer:

‘Please, sir——’

‘Oh, you have found your tongue at last, have you?’ he said, in a somewhat mollified tone. ‘Well, get up your courage, what little you have of it, and listen to my words.’

You are in for it like a rabbit in a trap, and it is no use your doubling and twisting. I am not so bad as I appear ; I can make myself look much better sometimes. I intend to show you some great things, and use you as you deserve. I have long had my watchful eye upon you, and you will suit me very well. I want a new private secretary, and you are the coming man. Salary one million sterling pounds per annum, and as many fine castles to live in as you like, and a thousand pleasures besides from year's end to year's end. You shall have power to give pleasure to, or to torture, whom you please. I have had many private secretaries, but was obliged to send them about their business on account of their idleness ; but you are a hard worker, and will suit me very well.'

'And what has become of your secretaries, sir?' I ventured to ask.

'Gone to glory,' he replied laconically.

'But, sir,' I managed to say, 'I am growing old. I am unfitted for the office ; and if I accepted it, what would my friends, what would the world, say?'

'Your friends!' said he, in a tone of the greatest contempt; 'it is fine news to me that you have any ; and what have you to do with the world, or the world with you? Does the world care a farthing about you? No more words, I say. I am the world, and the prince of it.'

'What an extraordinary being !' I said to myself ; 'he flies into a passion with me for not speaking, and when I do speak he commands me to hold my tongue.'

He now called out in a loud voice some words which I could not understand. Then he lifted his caduceus into the air over his head, and waved it to and fro three times. Suddenly a black shadow, deep, and appalling, and portentous of some great impending misfortune, spread itself over the face of the waters.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CITY OF PANDAPOLIS.

THE alarming shadow, which each moment seemed to become broader and darker over the lake, was caused by an enormous balloon which I saw floating over our heads. It made a great blowing and hissing noise as it came near that was almost deafening. Settling down gradually until the car touched the ground close beside the place where we stood, the swollen monster came at last to rest. Then the demon addressed me again :

'Get in there !'

'No, sir,' I answered. 'I hope you will excuse me. I never was in a balloon, and it would not agree with my nerves. I prefer to remain here if it is all the same to you, sir.'

'Get in there !' he again shouted in a commanding tone.

'I will not,' I replied. My blood was rising, and even cowards may be brave sometimes.

The fiend in the car, the engine-driver, burst into a loud and derisive laugh. Then a peal of thunder from a neighbouring black cloud suddenly burst on my ears, and rain began to fall in torrents. The Demon scowled and, quick as thought, untwisted his tail from his arm, and seizing me with it round the waist, roughly hurled me into

the car. I was horribly bruised, and half-stunned. Then he sprang in himself, and, with a dreadful explosive scream, the huge machine shot up into the air like lightning. A most villainous-looking fiend drove the engine by turning a small wheel, which set a larger one in motion. This moved a crank, which caused a complicated pendulum to oscillate, and finally drove the whole machine by setting outside fans in motion. The fans were assisted by a current of electricity, which was generated from the atmosphere in some way that I did not get to understand. The driver amused himself by mocking, and making horrible grimaces at me, when his master was looking another way. We flew at least ten thousand feet above the lake, and over an immense tract of snow-clad mountains, forests, seas, rivers, sandy deserts, and fertile valleys, through dense choking clouds, crossing several enormous ranges of mountains in our course. Away the balloon plunged with the speed of a hurricane over a howling wilderness of arid wastes, and at last, whistling like hundreds of steam pipes, hung suspended above a vast chasm in the earth which seemed about ten miles in diameter, and as black as Erebus. Into this dreadful hole the balloon descended swiftly, and I was politely commanded to get out as soon as the car touched the black charcoal floor.

Overwhelmed with astonishment and terror, I was for a long time unable to make calm and accurate observations. I asked myself, in my despair, had I died beside the Great Lake, and was I really in the power of the fearful, sleepless dragon, the great enemy of mankind?

The height of the walls of this awful chasm it was impossible for me to estimate, but I knew it must be something tremendous from the appearance of the opening, which, from the spot where I stood, looked like a round hole, about as large as our full moon. The pit would have been

the blackness of darkness itself had not a number of huge incandescent lights been placed at intervals around the vast chamber, hung on the perpendicular walls like gigantic shields of dull red fire. By this light I saw the shadowy entrances to a number of caverns which were situated at great distances from each other. The interiors of these were lighted so that they presented the appearance of long arcades, illuminated by regular lines of gas lamps; and the cavern that was nearest to me seemed crowded with inhabitants.

I was now alarmed by a loud, rushing, rumbling sound, and the heavy trampling of horses. A large and strange-looking coach, drawn by six black horses of great size, stopped where the Demon and I stood. The Demon opened the door himself, and ordered me to take my seat. Seeing further resistance useless, and indeed impossible, I obeyed, and after giving an order to the fiend on the box, he jumped in himself, and we drove on.

As we rolled on, at a steady pace, towards the entrance of one of the great caverns, he entered into familiar conversation with me, asking a variety of questions about my occupation, rank in life, and family. These I answered very cautiously. He even condescended to tell me his name, and to explain his condition in the following speech:

‘I am Artabzanus, the Demon of the Great Lake of Tasmania, and the Emperor of the World. You will learn my history gradually, and it will excite your wonder and admiration. It is my duty and pleasure to show you some wonderful things, but you need not be alarmed. You can never be in pain like some of these people here. You are to be my new private secretary, and, not to flatter you too grossly, I think I shall be very proud of you. You are under my protection here, and you shall see greater wonders than all these, and be an emperor yourself of mighty power,

under me only: think of that! You will for ever bless the day when you came over to my side. I make my servants happy, jolly, and light-hearted; and they have their fill of pleasure—theatre-going, boxing, horse-racing, gambling, drinking. I give them unbounded prosperity, riches, unimagined joys, and all kinds of grandeur; and I watch over them with the care and affection of a fond father. Ever since the world was created, I have looked well after my children and servants. To you I promise power unlimited, and unbounded wealth—castles, gardens, parks, forests, cringing slaves, and everything you can wish for—but you must come of your own free will; I do not use compulsion, although I might if I pleased. Take the other side, and you are poor and miserable for your whole life, despised by men, abhorred by my followers, in constant fear of ruin, and dread of offending a hard and exacting Master, who very probably will throw you over at last.'

Here the Demon laughed with a low, diabolical chuckle, and gave me a familiar poke in the ribs.

The lumbering vehicle entered one of the largest of the caverns, under a gigantic arch of marvellous construction, and I shuddered as I looked around me. If the Demon thought to bind me to his service by bringing me to a place like this, he was mistaken. We have often observed that those who give themselves up to wanton excesses are not deterred from pursuing that course by the sudden fall of others, or by the fear of the hopeless ruin, or the terrible disease and disgrace, which are sure to overtake them. What infatuated gambler is frightened from his fascinating game by the sight of the miserable wretch who, mad with disappointment, and cursing his existence, has laid down his life at the shrine of Mammon? What drunkard is reclaimed in the society of other drunkards, who are rushing headlong to destruction? What liar, or slanderer, or heart-

less miser, recovers from the errors of his ways by witnessing the pity and contempt bestowed by honourable men on his brethren of the same trade?

The carriage pursued its way through several long streets, and at last entered a most brilliantly lighted court-yard, and stopped at the gate of a large palace. The Demon alighted, motioning to me to follow him. He was received by several dark-looking officials, who bowed, and scraped, and grinned, and pressed their hands to their hearts. Into the interior of the palace, through a number of large halls and dimly-lighted passages, the Demon strutted with stately steps, as if conscious of great dignity. We emerged into a chamber, whose high arched roof was supported by a number of pillars made of a metal resembling lead. Two leaden thrones occupied one end of the chamber, and these were surrounded by a number of vacant seats. There was a long table in the centre of the apartment, and a highly ornamented leaden chair stood at one end of it. I did not require a magician to tell me that this was the Demon's council chamber. He told me that his duties now compelled him to leave me for a while to the guidance of one of his attendants, who would show me into my office. He called aloud: 'Astoragus!'

A young man with a villainous, hang-dog scowl on his face came forth from behind one of the thrones, where he had been lurking. His head was entirely destitute of hair, and he had black flashing eyes, which he tried to hide under a hideous pair of frowning eyebrows. His countenance showed nothing but malevolence, but this he endeavoured to conceal under a smirking smile. I was not, however, so easily deceived. His dress consisted of a long black cloak which reached to his feet, and covered every part of his lanky person. He approached quickly, and bowed low before his august sovereign.

'Astoragus, take this gentleman—your name, sir, I have been given to understand, is Ubertus?'

I bowed an affirmative, inwardly cursing both of them.

'Take Mr. Ubertus to my private secretary's office, and see that he has refreshment and amusement. By the way, you two must be better acquainted with each other. General Astoragus, sir, is the commander of my brave brigade of Larrikins. Mr. Ubertus, General, is a new arrival from the upper world, about to be appointed my private secretary. You will work well together, I am sure.'

The General grinned like an ape, with an excruciating attempt at a smile, and held forth a dusky paw, which I did not touch, or pretend to notice.

'I shall call for you in the course of the evening, Ubertus, and take you out for a look round,' said the Demon with a bland, rabbit-trap smile, as he stalked away.

Astoragus (I shall drop the 'General' while speaking of this execrable villain) motioned to me to follow him. He did not use words, but his malignant glance spoke volumes. It told me that he was my bitter enemy for ever, and, oh horror of horrors! I was in his power.

He led me through two or three adjacent rooms, up a long flight of stairs, and then into an apartment more brilliantly lighted than the rest. As he entered he turned suddenly upon me, with his hideous, gorilla face within a couple of inches of mine, and croaked out: 'This is your office, be happy and comfortable!' Then he closed the door, leaving me to myself.

It was a large room, of vault-like appearance, sombre enough, notwithstanding the light, and in the centre, on the floor, a strange, mysterious-looking fire burned brightly, apparently without smoke, or the need of being fed with fresh fuel. A round table and an easy chair were placed near the fire. A high lamp, and sundry articles necessary

for a secretary's office, were on the table. There were also a few more chairs, two or three couches of bronze, and several presses ranged round the walls. On the floor, in the vicinity of the fire, I was astonished to see crouching a number of large black dogs. They rose up, and glared at me savagely as I approached, but just as I expected to be torn to pieces, they lay down again quietly.

I walked up and down before that extraordinary fire, eyeing those dogs suspiciously. My reflections were indescribably painful. At last, tired of walking, I sat down in the easy chair, and remained contemplating both fire and dogs for, I suppose, an hour. For the time being I could think of nothing else. From a deep reverie I was aroused by the deafening sound of a bell—one stroke only, but its echoes resounded through the whole palace like the knell of doom. What was going to happen now? I became conscious that over my head there was an increasing light, far brighter than that of the lamp on the table. I looked up and saw descending another table, from which the light darted all round in rays of glory. That on which the writing materials were sunk into the ground at my feet, and the one from above became fixed in its place. On it were arranged a number of dishes of polished lead (evidently the precious metal of this wonderful city), containing tempting viands, and transparent vessels of wine of splendid colour. I gazed on these things with the greatest astonishment, but inwardly resolved to die sooner than touch any thing upon that table.

In a few moments I heard the sound of a distant opening door, and saw a procession approaching that sent all the blood in my heart up to my brain in a tumultuous flood. A number of beautiful women advanced towards me, bearing on their shoulders a throne, over which was an orange canopy. Upon that throne there reclined a young

girl, whose dark eyes bent themselves enquiringly upon me as I sat spell-bound. It is not necessary to describe her minutely. She was a lovely, dark, unearthly looking creature, who might indeed command the admiration of an unprincipled libertine, but could not win the love, or attract the respect, of an honourable man. Her beauty was of that dazzling and eminently dangerous kind which so frequently leads even good men to their eternal ruin. I trembled as her bearers lowered her from their shoulders carefully, and placed her beside the table within a short distance of my chair, and arranged themselves to wait upon us.

It might have been difficult, even for a practical judge in such matters, to say which were the more attractive, the mistress or her maids. They were all dressed in gaudy and fantastic robes, which hung on their graceful shoulders in bewitching folds. They smiled most sweetly as they mutely pressed me, one after another, to partake of the fragrant delicacies before us, but they pressed me in vain; food or wine I would not touch. The Princess, for such I presumed she was, was not affected by my reluctance, but ate her dinner with a very good appetite. At a sign from her one of her maids filled up a goblet with blood-red wine, and then placed another beside me. The girl, taking the cup, turned to me, and said in languishing tones:

‘Sir Stranger, do me the honour to pledge me in a cup of wine!’

I stood up and bowed, and intimated that I was obliged to decline the honour. She then pettishly waved her hand to her attendants, and they all submissively retired.

A movement among the dogs now attracted my attention. One after another they furtively arose, and for some reason, known only to themselves, stole round to the other side of the fire; but I noticed that they regarded us with lightning-glancing eyes.

This strange girl, so wonderfully and yet repulsively lovely, looked upon me for some time with evident interest and curiosity. I shall refrain from giving very minute descriptions, and shall merely say that she seemed to cherish and take care of herself, and appeared to be about eighteen years of age. With airs of despotism she tossed her head now and again from side to side, picked her teeth with her little finger-nail, and made eyes at me.

At length she condescended to speak again. The sound of her voice had nothing unpleasant in it, with the exception of a tendency to affectation; it was soothing, soft, and musical. This is the speech to which she gave utterance, and to which I listened with surprise, believing all the time that I was only dreaming.

‘I have been given to understand that our worthy and revered emperor hath procured you, Sir Stranger, to be his new private secretary. I am truly pleased, and I rejoice most immensely to be the first to congratulate you on your acceptance of such an honourable and lucrative post, which, if you do not foolishly resign it through some petty pique, will surely lead you to much greater and higher honour. If I have found favour already in your eyes—which indeed I do not doubt, seeing that—forgive me if I speak too boldly, or seem to be forgetful of that maidenly modesty on which I pride myself—I will do my very utmost to make you as happy as you deserve to be. While you reside in this palace please to regard me as the very best of your friends. My beloved and anxious parent—ahem!—I mean the powerful sovereign of this great empire—has informed me of your arrival. I saw you myself through a grated window, as you were driven past in his carriage. Stranger, be not alarmed! I am the princess of these realms; I am accustomed to speak my mind freely, and to be obeyed. I need not conceal from you, dear youth, that I love you—

that I loved you almost before I saw you. I am plain and straightforward, prompt and decided ; it is my nature ; I hate dissimulation, and what you might call beating about the bush ; fair and honourable dealing for me all the world over ; and now I have told you all, and you are mine for ever, and I am yours.'

'Madam,' I replied, as soon as I had recovered from my astonishment and confusion, 'you are a stranger to me as I am to you. Is this possible? Have I heard you aright? To speak thus to a strange man in the world I come from would cover you with the greatest disgrace, unless, indeed, you were a reigning queen, and even then under circumstances far different from our present respective positions.'

'Disgraced!' she screamed ; 'did you say disgraced? And for what? For speaking my mind plainly and truthfully ; for being honest and good, and—and—you speak of your world! Yours is a world of lies, hypocrisy and deceit, and roguery, and bitterness, and malice, and wrath, and revenge, and everything vile—there!'

She rose from her seat as she spoke, and stamped her foot on the hard floor, while indignation and defiance flashed from her eyes.

'Think,' said I in a tone of humility and commiseration, 'of your reputation, of your maidenly modesty and self-respect. It is the business of the man to propose marriage first to the woman whom he wishes to have for his wife. Besides, madam, I beg to inform you with all due respect that I have a wife now living, and she is very much alive, too, I beg to assure you.'

The Princess laughed. 'And do you think,' she answered, 'that a mere childish trifle like your marriage above ground will foil me in my determination to make you my husband? I am older than I look ; I am absolute here ; no one dare disobey me. I am subject only to my honoured father. I

can turn your gray hair into splendid curly locks of whatever colour you like. I can make you happy far beyond your golden dreams of eternal bliss, and I will, I will! You are mine! you cannot—you dare not refuse me.' And before I could prevent her, she advanced to me suddenly, and threw her arms round my neck.

I sprang from my chair in the greatest horror and indignation, and pushed her away, but not ungently, saying : 'Woman or lady, whoever you are, remember that your sudden assumption or pretence of love is not the way to inspire with love the man whom you are pleased to honour with your regard. May I humbly beg that you will now, having had your dinner, retire from this office? You say you are the daughter of the emperor of this place. He has offered me the proud position of his private secretary, but to be his actual son-in-law is a relation of which I may or may not deem myself to be totally unworthy. Whatever may be my private thoughts I beg to decline that distinguished honour ; I belong to another. Your father—if he is your father—told me I was under his protection, and unless you retire and leave me alone, I shall certainly appeal to him for it.'

'Do you reject my suit?' she cried, with her face scarlet, and her eyes on fire.

'I do,' I replied firmly. 'Your conduct is unfair and ungenerous, as well as unwomanly and unmaidenly. You would make me an unprincipled adulterer. I may be as weak as water to resist temptation, but how can you expect me to become your husband in this sudden manner, when I do not even know what shall become of me hereafter? I, for good or evil, look a long way into futurity. Lives of pleasure soon come to an end ; satiety is swallowed up by agony. Because you choose to indulge a blind and unholy passion, am I to be bereft of prudence and robbed of

peace? If my connection with the earth where I was born is really severed for ever, I have come to a place which I fondly hoped and prayed my greatest enemy might never see. How can I tell that I am not, by complying with your insane desire, riveting a chain which will bind me here, or consign me to a worse place to all eternity?’

‘You reject my suit!’ she answered passionately. ‘Well, I will give you time. Continue to reject it for twelve short hours—for twelve strokes of the bell you heard, and your day of grace shall be past. *I will be terribly revenged!* Your moral and religious arguments have less than a feather’s weight with me. You may trust in the King of heaven to save you. Fool! fool! He does not know you, or of your existence, or trouble Himself about you. If He exists at all He has too much to do. He cares not whether you live or die, or scald or burn, or get devoured by black men, or stung to death by serpents. Reject my suit! I am a woman, and no woman ever forgives a slight of this kind. Have you seen my regiment of guards? Come forward, Captain Syren. Lieutenant Picklock, bring your company.’

The dogs came forward sulkily, and ranged themselves in line before this fury of a princess.

‘Attention!’ she commanded. They all stood upon their hind legs.

‘Salute this honoured visitor!’

They bowed very low, pressed their right paws to their teeth, and then placed them on their hearts.

‘On your heads!’ In a moment they turned in the air like wheels, their heads on the floor.

‘Heads up; play at leap-frog!’ And they commenced forthwith to jump over each other, forming a remarkable circle around the fire, which continued to burn as brightly as ever.

‘As you were; lie prostrate; beg for mercy!’ She put

them through a strange variety of positions, and as she dismissed them said to me in a hissing whisper: ‘Reject my suit, insult my love, and when the twelfth bell sounds, you shall be added to their number.’

‘And what shall I be, madam, if I consent to be your husband?’

‘You shall be a prince,’ she replied vehemently. ‘Perpetual happiness, peace, joy, love, delight for ever, pleasure without end, shall be your lot. Decide now. We shall not need the light of the sun or the twinkling of the stars, for we shall be sun and star to each other. And when we are united we can see them as often as we like, and wander where we like upon the earth, and watch, ourselves unseen, the sons and daughters of men while they dance in their halls of dazzling light, and play in their delicious meadows and flowery gardens, or lull themselves into entrancing raptures with their sweetest melodies, which we can hear; and we can scatter blessings as we go, and lighten heavy burdens, and lessen pain, and cure disease, and feed the hungry. We can sit on golden clouds, or, if it is our humour, we can sail the seas on mountainous icebergs, and feel no cold. We can be young and beautiful for ever. Decide now, darling, darling!’ And to my renewed consternation she again advanced, and tried to press her lips to mine, but I collected all my strength, both of mind and body, and pushed her away once more.

‘Princess, whoever you are, it is in vain,’ I said firmly. ‘Please to withdraw, or if you will not, permit me to retire to another apartment. I love you not. Be your vengeance what it may, I tell you now, for the last time, I cannot love you. Were I as free as air to choose whom I would, I could not choose you, because my principles are too high to allow me to give my hand in wedded union to any woman to whom I could not give my heart also. I desire not

wantonly to offend or insult you, or wound your exquisitely tender susceptibilities. If I could love you personally your gloomy, unhappy environment would render our marriage impossible. Did you tell me that the Almighty Being who made me does not know of my existence, or care for, or love me? How do you know that? Can you prove it to be true? If I obey His commandments and do not worship my own evil passions, you have no power to make me believe that He does not love me. If I do not obey Him, I have the witness within myself that I am no son of His, and that therefore He does not love me.'

'Poor fool! I pity you,' she answered in scorn; 'but you will be wiser when it is too late. Thousands of your greatest philosophers and clever literary men agree with me.'

I did not answer. She gazed upon me with an expression which I shall never forget. Indignation and hatred flashed from her eyes; contempt, intensified by rage, was about to be poured forth in an overwhelming torrent on my devoted head from her cruel, uncompromising lips, when suddenly the thundering stroke of the great bell resounded through the palace. We both started in terror like a guilty pair, and as with a rush of a mighty gust of wind the Demon himself stood before us.

'How is this?' he roared. 'You here already, Bellagranda? is this the way my orders are obeyed? Are you, too, a Delilah, a Jezebel? You will ruin me and my best affairs with your blind idiotic folly. Away to your chamber, instantly, or Doctor Julius——'

The Princess uttered a loud shriek, and fled wildly from the room.

'Come, Ubertus,' said the Demon in a very gentle tone, 'you and I will take a quiet walk, and enjoy some of the grand sights of my beautiful city. Attach no importance to anything that foolish girl has been saying to you. I com-

manded her not to trouble you on any account. She disobeyed my command and shall be punished; but notwithstanding all she is a good girl, a most affectionate and obedient daughter—never disobedient except the inducement to be so is irresistible.' As he spoke he turned to me with an impudent leer on his countenance, which annoyed me very much, if indeed anything could annoy me in that horrible place.

It was with a great feeling of pleasure at my escape from the enchantment of one who I began to think was a most dangerous sorceress, equal perhaps to the dread Sycorax herself, that I now followed my 'friendly' guide through the halls and passages that led into the open street.

CHAPTER V.

THE DEMON'S DAUGHTERS.

I FOUND myself in a long straight corridor, walking as it were in a dream by the side of the Demon. He had reduced, for some reason, his abnormal height, and was now no taller than myself. The corridor, or covered street, was high and broad, and it was lit up by hundreds of glaring lamps, whose light dazzled my eyes. It had lanes opening into it, and numbers of ghostly-looking dwellings, with doors like our houses on earth, but without their cheerful and inviting appearance. Some of these were large, aristocratic buildings, residences evidently of great people; others close beside them were poor, insignificant-looking places. The doors of the larger houses were surrounded with lamps of various colours, and fashioned in all manner of fantastic shapes. Crowds of people were sauntering listlessly about, for the most part in a solemn and painful silence—like convicts, I thought, taking exercise in a prison yard. Occasionally a loud burst of bitter, derisive laughter, or a hideous yell of pain, or the shout of combatants in a sudden outbreak of popular passion, disturbed the pervading silence of the place.

Amongst the individuals who paraded this great street, I perceived one like a negro grenadier, who issued orders,

and looked about him with the conscious authority of a powerful policeman. This individual saluted my guide in a stealthy, underhand sort of way. All the others were yellow and coffee-coloured people; thin and unhappy-looking beings, who wore only a single garment which reached from their necks to their heels. There was nothing, not even hair, on their bare skulls. We walked on and on past hundreds of doors, elbowing our way through the crowds, which seemed to grow denser every moment; our nostrils, mine at least, being saluted every now and again by an unearthly and abominable smell, and our ears by an increasing discord of wild screams and discordant singing. Advancing to a wide cross-street we stood before a great palace, upon which I gazed with wonder. It was a grand picture of oriental beauty. It was surrounded by guards, on foot and on horseback, men with fierce, swarthy complexions, who were armed in a fearful manner. Blazing lights were in all the apartments, and through the windows I saw numbers of people, men and women, running to and fro.

Suddenly a loud crash of drums and trumpets made me start violently, and I saw approaching a chariot so gaudily painted that it seemed to be on fire. It was drawn by men and horses mingled together. It evidently contained some great personage, for it was preceded and followed by many mounted guards. We drew aside to let it pass. Within it sat a tall, dark-featured woman, on whose countenance might be discovered the traces of extreme and severe beauty, but they were accompanied with those of the fiercest human passions, and of exaggerated pride and evil temper. She had on her head a leaden crown, and around her shoulders was thrown a gorgeous robe like the variegated skin of a tiger snake. Facing her, with his back to the horses, sat an officer, who seemed to be of very high rank. He wore the grand

uniform of a Roman military tribune. The chariot stopped at the palace gate. The officer stepped down and presented his hand to the lady to help her in alighting, but she disdainfully refused it, tossed her magnificent head, and, leaping to the ground, entered the palace, followed by her abashed, but still obsequious knight.

‘I must not speak to her now,’ said the Demon with a sardonic grin. ‘She is in one of her send-me-flying-over-the-moon tantrums, but we can go in. I’ll make you invisible.’

Accordingly I felt an immediate change coming over me: for the first time in my life I was nothing but a spirit of air.

‘Who is she, sir?’ I was bold enough to ask.

‘I ought not to mention her name,’ answered he; ‘but nothing may be concealed from you—Cleopatra, whom you may have heard of. And that is Mark Antony who follows so submissively at her heels. We shall have a fine laugh now; I have many a fine laugh at these people.’

The idea of laughing in such a place, and at such a scene, was so revolting that my heart almost stood still in my breast.

The carriage-folk went into a large hall, where there stood a high throne of lead, and I noticed that the hall was also furnished in a peculiar manner, with several massive chairs, couches, tables, and articles to which I can give no name, all, or nearly all, made of the same dingy metal. I cannot say positively that it was lead, having neglected to bring back a specimen of it for the benefit of science, but it was certainly very like lead, and that I shall call it. Glittering with a pale, ghastly light, there hung from the ceiling three heavy chandeliers crowded with candles of all the colours of the rainbow. The renowned queen lightly ascended the steps of the throne, and seated herself with great solemnity. She held up her right hand, a trumpet sounded, and instantly the room was filled with a motley group of elegant

ladies, Roman and Egyptian officers, and ministers and gentlemen from Greece, Parthia, Carthage, and Asia Minor. When they were assembled, the Queen commanded in a sharp, shrill voice, ‘Bring wine!’

A large leaden goblet full of the blood-coloured fluid was brought and presented to her by her Mayor of the Palace. She unclasped from her throat a pearl necklace of immense value, threw it into the goblet, stirred the foaming fluid furiously with the end of her sceptre, then lifted it to her lips, and swallowed every drop. Then Antony approached in a cringing posture, and said:

‘What, my Queen! what, my Empress! not one drop left for me? I gave you that necklace; I won it in a game of balls and rackets from the Queen of Cappadocia, who is more spirited and far handsomer than you are.’

The courtiers laughed. The Queen looked at the impudent Antony with spiteful ferocity, and, darting from her seat, struck him on the face, and screamed:

‘Out, slave—out, hypocrite—away from my sight, cruel, false, barbarous monster!’

Then she threw herself on the floor in her rage, and several of her ladies, rushing to her, pushed Antony away, calling him with echoing voices a cruel, false, barbarous monster. They lifted up their afflicted mistress, and administered the needful consolation.

‘She charges him with cruelty,’ whispered the Demon to me, while the laugh of the courtiers at the discomfiture of the hero began to ring again through the room. ‘Why, she poisoned a brother of her own, and dragged a sister to death from the sanctuary of Diana; he bestowed kingdoms upon her as well as pearls, and made her his goddess, and see how she treats him now. But she is a fine woman—a good, sweet creature, and a daughter after my own heart, although she is wantonness and avarice beaten together

like cockatrices' eggs for a pepper-and-mustard pudding! You will have to patch up their quarrels when you are my private secretary! And the fiend had his laugh, and I did not envy him the pleasure.

I could not help pitying poor Antony. He is one of the grand and inimitable 'Lives' of Plutarch, in which I have from boyhood taken the greatest delight, although the dark side of his character is black enough. His close connection with, and devotion to, the wonderful Julius Cæsar, his military talents and brilliant victories—nay, even his lightness and gaiety as contrasted with the heavy, bloodthirsty ferocity of Marius and Sylla—won my youthful admiration, if they did not command my respect; and his miserable self-inflicted death, under the influence of a heartless woman, often nearly brought tears to my eyes. What agony it must be to be under the heel of a vindictive, untruthful woman, who will unmercifully drag her victim before the scornful world!

A few steps brought us to the gate of another palace; except for the glaring lamps in the street it was in total darkness.

'This is the residence,' said the Demon, 'of another of my favourite daughters, and you will have to take especial care of her. I will tell you her name privately. She must be ill now, as all her lights are out, but we will go in and see her; perhaps we may be able to do her good. My dear young friend,' here he turned round with a rabbit-trap snap of his teeth close to my very nose, 'never mind what people say about me; I don't care two straws for anything they say; the truth is, *I delight in doing good* whenever I can get a chance; nothing fills me with greater joy than to give pleasure to those who love me.'

Here I was overtaken by a violent fit of coughing and sneezing, which nearly cost me my life. When I recovered,

we entered the palace, and met with none but some gloomy, scowling people, who allowed us to pass by without inquiring who we were, or what was our business. Tall guards in dismal uniforms, who looked like statues made of dirty snow, stood here and there in the vestibules and corridors. We ascended a broad staircase, and passed into a back chamber, in which was visible a dull, reddish light, proceeding from a solitary lamp. The furniture, like that of Cleopatra's palace, was principally of lead. On a couch, beside a small table, reclined a lady whose face, swollen and bloated, wore all the evidences of intense anguish. She was as pale as death, like one already dead, but I knew that she could not die. She moaned and trembled, opened her large eyes, which sparkled with mad, wild lustre, and closed them again in despairing agony. Her person was covered with a black robe like a funeral pall, and she had a protuberance on her breast which told either of some cherished offspring or of fearful disease. The Demon went close to her and spoke.

'You are ill again, my beloved daughter! indeed, you are not often well; I have come to comfort you; be comforted! can I do anything?'

'Remove these,' she replied, in tones in which hope seemed to be struggling with despair.

'Ah! I cannot,' answered the Demon; 'my power is great, but I am not omnipotent. I can merely alleviate your pain, and administer present consolation, if not hope of your ultimate restoration to health. You have been a good and an obedient daughter, always ready to anticipate my wishes; I wish I could make you happy. Let us see the children. If they trouble you much I will send you something to keep them quiet. Has Doctor Julius seen you lately?'

'Yesterday.'

'Did he give you hope of relief?'

'No; he said the disease was incurable.' The lady passed her hand over her face and sighed deeply; as for tears, she seemed to have lost the power of weeping.

The Demon drew off the robe which covered the lady's breast. 'Come and look,' he said to me.

I shrank back; no terrible sight should, I had made up my mind, cross my eyeballs in that place, if I could possibly prevent it. Therefore, I not only shrank back, but I squeezed my eyelids together firmly. Fortunately, he did not insist on my obeying him.

As we left the room, I asked him if that lady had also been a queen.

'Yes,' he answered, with a low, malicious laugh. 'She was an empress of a very powerful nation indeed. I dare say some of her history is known to you. If it is not, it ought to be. There is nothing like teaching wisdom by examples. Nobody rejoices more than I do when I get an opportunity of impressing upon the minds of those who love me what a very wicked thing it is to persevere in sin up to the very moment of one's death. That empress was rich, wise, clever, and strong in national and unscrupulous energy; and she was famous—or infamous, I suppose, according to your code of morality—for the number of her lovers, and for her ambition, in the contemplated gratification of which she was suddenly struck down.

'Have I not a splendid city here?' resumed the Demon, as we walked through the crowded streets, in which new wonders presented themselves every moment. 'This portion of it is the Department of Sensual Pleasure. It is occupied by those beings who, when they were in your world, gave themselves up without restraint to the gratification of every evil passion. It is a good thing for me, for it gives me plenty to do, and just like you, my friend, I am

fond of work. It keeps me in good health, and there's nothing like it. I am ambitious too, and covetous also, greedy of gain and glory; and I never lose an opportunity of extending my empire, and adding to the number of my subjects. I use all sorts of means, and I'll teach you some precious tricks when you become my private secretary.'

Just then something like a cloud of black dust rushed through the street with the speed of a steam-engine. The Demon held up both his hands, and it stopped. It was a light and curious carriage of complicated construction, drawn by a noble pair of red horses, from whose sides fell flakes of snowy foam. Fire seemed to dart from their eyes and nostrils. Within the carriage sat a burly, jolly, middle-aged gentleman, dressed in clothes which must have been two or three hundred years old. He took off his hat to the Demon, and looked very keenly at me, for the spell of invisibility had been taken off.

'Whither away now in such break-neck haste, Doctor Julius?' inquired my conductor.

'To the Hall of Inexpressible Delight, please your Majesty,' replied the gentleman in a rich bass voice, 'to see the unhappy Charles, who has been struck down again. And now, since I have fortunately met with you, sir, may I take the liberty of inquiring after the health of the charming and amiable Princess Bellagrande?'

'She is as well as she always deserves to be,' answered the Demon; 'and now for my question: how are public affairs in your quarter?'

'Troublesome, sir—very troublesome; matters are looking ominous and gloomy—a congestion of blood, sir; a congestion of blood. Stripes, rows, rebellions, revolutions!' replied the Doctor as he drove on.

The Demon muttered 'Ha!' with a snap of his teeth.

'He means Charles the Second, once the King of England,' he explained to me. 'That is the great and wonderfully clever Doctor Julius, the Director-General of my Military Hospitals, and one of my Ministers of State.'

He now led me into several great houses where resided men and women who had formerly filled the highest places upon earth, but who had utterly destroyed themselves by leading lives of constant pleasure, vice, and degradation. The portraits and pictures presented to our view by Tacitus, Gibbon, Hallam, and hundreds of other historians, appeared to me to be reproduced here on a gigantic and revolting scale. Hideous pictures were painted on many of the houses. I was in the centre of a crowd of brawlers, gamblers, blasphemers, drunkards, and larrikins, who eyed me with suspicion and hatred, and who, I believe, would have torn me to pieces had it not been for the presence of the police. On one side I saw an imitation of the famous Parc aux Cerfs, where Louis the Fifteenth revelled in shameless debauchery with the Marchioness of Pompadour, Madame Barry, and his other mistresses, who were now his scourging and tormenting serpents. On the other I saw a vast building, on which the words 'Hall of Inexpressible Delight' showed resplendent in large variegated lamps; this was crowded with kings and queens, dukes, barons, courtiers, and women of high rank. My companion pointed out several of them to me by name; amongst them I grieve to say that our Charles the Second was particularly conspicuous.

He lay on a leaden couch, surrounded by women who pretended to be weeping bitterly, so bitterly that one might have thought they had onions concealed in their handkerchiefs. He appeared to be at the point of death, although I well knew he could not die. The honest-looking Doctor

Julius stood beside him, putting a potent blistering cap on his head, and forcing a horrible drug, extracted from human skulls, into his mouth. 'Poor king!' I could not help saying aloud, 'son of an unfortunate father—descendant of a most unhappy queen—is this the end of all your greatness and reckless pleasure?'

'The end is not yet,' replied the Demon. '*That* will never come.'

I then murmured to myself: 'Is there a merciful Ruler of the universe in existence?'

The names of even the most eminent of the delinquents who occupied this Hall are too numerous for repetition; and I could not remember the hundredth part of them. As for the common herd, they pressed upon me so thickly that I was nearly sick to death. They formed groups here and there, and abused and fought with each other in the open streets, their bald scalps shining in the gaslight. Many of them, poor beings, were consumed with a too-late and unavailing repentance. In uttermost shame they were trying to hide their nakedness in their squalid garments.

'This is the palace of Theodora, Empress of Constantinople,' said Artabanzanus, stopping before another gigantic and splendid edifice. 'She was a very extraordinary woman—a low, common woman in early life, who became the wife of the Emperor Justinian. Come in; she is holding her court now. I will present you to her.'

'Oh no, thank you, sir,' I replied, shuddering. 'Please excuse me. I have seen enough. Take me out of this, I implore your majesty; when will you take me back, sir, to the Great Lake?'

He laughed.

'All in good time, my thin-skinned friend. My dear Mr. Ubertus, you must have patience. I am bound to take you back within a certain number of days. Make yourself

happy—there's nothing like it! I'm always happy and jolly, no matter who comes here. I'm sorry to leave you here by yourself for awhile, although there's plenty of company, but private business calls me away for ten or twenty of your mundane minutes. Stay here till I come back; if any of these people molest you, call the police.'

'Please, sir,' I said, 'indeed, I am very tired. I should like to sit or lie down while you are away.'

'Go in there,' he answered, pointing to a gaudy-looking house, 'and you will find a chair or a bed.'

'No, thank you, sir. I would rather not. I should not feel happy or safe in any of these houses. If you will kindly order me a chair or a couch out here I shall esteem it a great favour, and I would feel myself under the protection of the police.'

'That I will, my brave Mr. Timidity,' he said, in an affable and jocular manner; 'and I'll send you the softest and most delightful couch you ever lay down on. I only wish my good Astoragus was here.'

'Here I am, my lord; what can I do, my lord?' said the ever ready and ubiquitous Astoragus, darting out of the crowd.

'Ha! are you there, General?' said the Demon; 'always on the watch, and mindful of your duty, as good as gold. Well, get an easy couch for this gentleman to lie down on, and place it here, and warn these people that he is not to be interfered with.'

Astoragus touched his hairless head with his cuttle-fish fingers, and whistled in a peculiarly suspicious manner. He himself went round an adjacent corner hurriedly, while a crowd of larrikins collected and honoured me with their concentrated attention. What could it all mean? Did they expect to see some grand sport? Presently four stout porters appeared, carrying an elegant-looking couch, and

they put it down beside me. I examined it with great care, and eyed it wistfully. I was worn out, and it was of a beautiful and luxurious appearance, inviting me not to hesitate, but take my repose at once, lest the opportunity should pass away and not present itself again. But then a horrible thought darted into my mind. Was it not a larrikin's couch? and what *is* a larrikin? He is a waif of the streets who delights in playing mischievous, cruel tricks on passers-by who are not interfering with him; and he can be a young man of higher rank, with more coin than conscience, who prowls about at night tearing down tradesmen's signs, lifting gates off their hinges, assaulting the police, and amusing himself in other ways. The larrikin can be of the sweet and gentle sex also, more is the pity. The peculiar word was coined impromptu, it is said, by a Melbourne policeman, who introduced some youths and maidens to a certain magistrate with the intimation 'Please, sir, I caught these pussons a-larrikin!' It almost puts me in mind of the old-fashioned 'sky-larking.'

But how could I tell what might be the consequence to me if I laid my weary bones upon the larrikin's couch? Perhaps a riveting of the accursed chain! Perhaps some fearful disease! Perhaps an eternal shutting in my face of the gates of Paradise! But no, no, I cannot believe in such cruelty. God is surely a more merciful Being. I will not be chicken-hearted. Overcome by fatigue, I could not resist the temptation of first sitting upon it, and then cautiously lying down on it. All my doubts and fears vanished at once. Was I not under the protection of my 'friend' the Demon and his powerful police? And now that I had broken the ice, how soft, how sweet, how extremely comfortable! I never stretched myself on such a couch—it was delicious beyond the power of description. 'Certainly,' said I half aloud, 'if happiness can be found in

a place like this it can only come while reclining on such a couch: we have no such articles of furniture in our world. If I could invent a couch like this I should make a splendid fortune.'

The thought of making a fortune set me thinking further and more deeply, and at any other time I would have laughed the idea to scorn; but now I asked myself seriously, Could I invent such a couch? The notion of converting larrikins into manufacturers of luxurious couches, on which honest elderly parties might repose their jaded limbs delightedly at the corners of public streets, was in itself so ludicrous that I laughed to myself for a long time, and yet I must have been overheard, for a faint echo of my laugh struck upon my ears; but was it more wonderful than the telegraph, or the phonograph, or the electric light?

A fortune, too! And what should I do with a fortune, who had been severely without one all my life? Build a grand house in town; drive through the streets four-in-hand on the box of an elegant drag filled with fine fashionable ladies and gentlemen; give splendid entertainments to the rich, obsequious world, his wife, and all his family, and leave the poor and miserable beings of the earth most haughtily and severely alone. Be the great Oliver Ubertus, the wealthy, the proud, the generous grandee, the inventor of the celebrated larrikin couch—the favourite of princes, the Buckingham of the nineteenth century, the observed of all observers!

Suddenly I bounded to my feet in the greatest horror and alarm. But the luxurious couch lifted up itself, and pulled me down again. Every hair of my head stood on end with terror and anguish. Had a hundred red-hot needles started up from the cushion of that couch? Had a thousand belligerent scorpions invaded my garments? I roared like a mad bull with pain, and danced about like an infuriated

lion stung to diabolical rage with torture. The crowd of larrikins at the corner bellowed with wild laughter, and clapped their hands with delight. I threw myself on the ground and rolled over and over, hoping to extricate myself from that abominable couch, but in vain: its legs were round me like the arms of an octopus. I shouted 'Police, police, help, murder, mercy, mercy!'

Most fortunately my cries were heard, and about a dozen policemen rushed round the corner, knocking down twice that number of larrikins, and commenced belabouring the couch with their batons with all their might. That fiendish article loosened its hold, started up into its natural or unnatural shape, which was that of the death's-head, stinging-wasp, *Astoragus himself*, and bounded away like a race-horse, after giving me a parting kick. At that moment my patron the Demon made his appearance, and was duly informed of what had occurred.

'The villain, the incorrigible, irreclaimable villain!' he said excitedly: 'I'll boil him in petroleum and rackarock for this, and I'll command Doctor Julius to do it.'

'Oh please, sir,' said I, rubbing myself and blubbering, 'don't hurt the poor fellow; to be a larrikin and live here is punishment enough, and I never bear malice.'

'I tell you,' roared the Demon, with his usual rabbit-trap snap, 'and don't you tell me—I'll roast him in a furnace of hissing phosphorus of five thousand degrees of heat, I will.'

But, notwithstanding his loud threats and my anguish, I could see that he was ready to burst with suppressed laughter.

So passed my first day in that infernal city, and although I was horrified at its revolting scenes, and almost stung to death by the larrikin couch, yet I felt, as I lay down in bed

in the Demon's palace, an awful fascination and desire taking possession of me, until I started at the hideous depth of my own iniquity, that I might stay in that city for ever, and that the beautiful Bellagranda might succeed when she again tried to press her lips to mine.

CHAPTER VI.

A GRAND REVIEW.

AFTER a disturbed and fitful slumber of some eight or ten hours' duration, I was thoroughly aroused by the tolling of the great bell—one stroke only. 'The bell strikes one; we take no note of time save from its loss, to give it then a tongue is wise in man.' That toll resounded through the palace like the knell of Doom. My heart sank within me: my soul seemed to become that of a despicable, grovelling coward, and I actually trembled with apprehension. But after a little sober reflection, I whispered to myself, 'Courage, Oliver; remember Cromwell, things may not be so bad as they seem; the Demon may mean what he says when he assures you so solemnly that he will protect you, and take you back again to your beloved Great Lake; and as for the dangerous witch Bellagranda, she may forget all about you soon, when she falls in love with somebody else and not turn you into a black dog after all; so courage, my boy: be strong, fear not, but hope for the best!'

A loud knock at my door recalled me to a sense of my position and extreme danger; for it convinced me that I was still in the power of the Demon. I sprang from my bed, and opened the door cautiously. A gigantic negro, with a most extraordinary face, something like that of a

black Angus bull, stood before me smiling not unpleasantly. He saluted me in military fashion, and asked, in good English, would I be pleased to dress, and come out to breakfast. No, I was already dressed, not having undressed at all, and I had no appetite for breakfast. I was nearly saying 'sir' to the monster. He was a benevolent looking monster, too, and gazed at me curiously with his large blue-black eyes, as who should say: 'Ah! massa debble be good friend, belly good friend to you, sare.'

Then he asked me if I wished to have my boots cleaned! I replied in amazement:

'My boots cleaned! Heaven and earth, no, my good fellow, there is no mud down here; but only let me get a tight hold of your General Astoragus, and I will polish my own boots in fine style.'

The grenadier grinned diabolically.

Would I, he presently asked, be pleased to accompany his master to the Royal Park to see a grand review of the army.

'Certainly,' I answered, 'I will accompany him with great pleasure, as I am under his protection. There's nothing I take a greater delight in than a good review. I have seen many in the Phoenix Park, close by where I was born. Will there be many troops on the ground?'

'Only a million, sare.'

'What, a million! do you mean to say a million?'

The monster nodded gravely.

'Bless my very soul! a million of men in arms! thank Heaven it is not real war. Yes, tell your master I shall be very happy to bear him company, I shall certainly be there. A million of men under arms! what next, in the fiend's name?'

The sable grenadier saluted again, and withdrew. In about half an hour he returned, and informed me that his

master was ready, and that the carriage waited at the north postern gate. I forthwith followed him to that point of exit, where we found an elaborate kind of ammunition waggon to which were harnessed in deep and solemn array—oh powers of mercy! no less than twenty-four gigantic negroes!

At this extraordinary sight I hesitated before entering the carriage. The recollection of Astoragus and his Satanic couch flashed on my mind. But a sudden roll of fifes and drums announced the approach of the Demon himself; and forth he stalked, surrounded by his cringing slaves, driving away, by his all-absorbing presence, all inferior and subordinate thoughts from my mind. He smiled, condescended to offer me one of his fingers to shake, which I dared not for my life refuse, and hoped I had had a refreshing slumber. He had issued most positive orders, he said, that I should not be disturbed; and had stopped with his own hands the great bell of the palace clock until it was time for me to arise, lest its ringing should cause me uneasiness. After some more consolatory and complimentary observations, at which I bowed and scraped like the most contemptible of his courtiers, he requested me to take my seat in his military chariot. I obeyed in silence; he followed quickly, and away we went. No servants accompanied us, neither coachman on the box nor footman behind.

We drove for some time in silence, I in a dreamy trance, he unenviably 'chewing the cud of sweet or bitter fancy.' His negroes required no reins, as they obeyed his voice implicitly, 'needs must,' it is said, 'when the devil drives.' I wondered where he got these negroes from. I was overpowered with the grandeur of the streets through which we rolled. It was early morning, I could perceive by the waning and flickering light of the lamps, some of which appeared to be on the point of going out altogether. But,

alas ! there was no splendid light of day stealing softly on, with the modest pace of a lovely bride adorned for the husband of her choice. The palaces and houses looked like mere buildings of variegated cards, as we rapidly passed them by. There was a ghastly irregularity about them which I find it difficult to describe ; every moment I expected them to vanish out of sight, like the fragile structures one sees in dreams. In a moment, as in a tropical transition from night to day, the city became alive with bustle and activity. The lamps burst forth more brilliantly than ever ; and the people issued from their houses in crowds. Vehicles of all descriptions came forth from arched gateways, and rolled through the streets. The larrikins began to assemble at the corners, all preparing for an enterprising rush somewhere—I conjectured to the review ground.

‘Is this a larrikin’s carriage, sir?’ I asked of my royal companion with humility.

‘No,’ he thundered ; ‘death and fury ! do you think a larrikin would dare to play a trick on me ? As for Astoragus, he’s a rogue and a rebel ; he shall be drummed out of my army to the tune of the “Rogue’s March,” and you may play the drum, if you like. Fear nothing more ; I will take care of you ; my negroes are safe and sure ; they obey me like little dogs, and dote on me in their hearts.’

‘As the sweet Bellagranda does,’ I said to myself. It is a wonder he did not read my thoughts ; I was actually afraid to think.

The negroes flew along with surprising rapidity. They did not pause or hesitate, but rushed among the crowd, knocking them down by dozens when they would not get out of the way. When they tore forth into the primordial abyss their master ordered them to go on like lightning, and while the flying chariot was rolling from side to side in mad excitement, he, regardless of the number of other carriages

which we were constantly passing, and the numbers of people on horseback and on foot, all bound for the same quarter, deliberately took off all his clothes, and put on a gorgeous uniform and a splendid cocked hat and feathers, and girded himself with a sword-belt, to which was attached a heavy weapon, studded with innumerable brilliants. All these he drew from a spacious chest in his carriage, muttering to himself while he put them on : ‘They shall know me now ; I’ve been incognito for a long time ; they will not be satisfied without blood ; they shall have plenty, the grumbling, growling, pestilent knaves ; their rascally quarrels disturb even my peace of mind ; I’ll crush the troublesome brutes.’

‘I hope, sir,’ I said as respectfully as I could, ‘that there will be no real war to-day. I am a man of peace, and it would be a dreadful thing for me to see a million of men fighting and murdering each other on one battle-field.’

‘You are right, my friend,’ he bellowed ; ‘it would be a dreadful thing ; but you are always ready to take nonsensical notions into your head. Who is thinking about real war ? I’m sure I’m not. *L’Empire c’est la paix.*’

On we sped through and over the astonished multitudes. I conjectured that each quarter of that great city was separate and distinct, and that there were no covered ways or short cuts from one to another. The distance from one gigantic archway to the adjoining one, though very considerable, was rapidly traversed, and soon we found ourselves entering a vast square into which opened a number of wide avenues. Its size was immense, and the roof was supported by a great number of pillars of black marble, on which hung innumerable bright lamps. It was surrounded by fantastic buildings which appeared in the lurid light like the spirits of mediæval castles. There were peaceful-looking palaces, too, but these, as I afterwards discovered, were inhabited by the most treacherous and bloodthirsty of created beings.

There were also many columns of great size and beauty, and of venerable antiquity, with fierce fires burning on their summits. One was dedicated to Glory, another to Victory, another to Patriotism, another to Despotism. Several were ornamented with statues of the Angel of Death, crowned with flowers which seemed to have been dipped in blood.

The Demon's chariot stood still at last beside a suspicious-looking crimson pool. The people who had come from the other quarters to see the review had ranged themselves around the four sides of the square. The resemblance of a curtain like that in a theatre was drawn up before us, and a picture presented to view which made my hair stand on end. The scene at first was one of peaceful joy and exquisite beauty. A spacious and magnificent park, with a handsome, not to say a grand, residence, fit for a royal duke; two gentlemen were talking and laughing together, within a short distance of the mansion, while several men were lounging about in their neighbourhood, and some were extended harmlessly on the grass. At a given signal they started up and attacked the two gentlemen with long knives, and they, after a vain struggle, fell stabbed to the heart. The assassins fled, but were pursued by the three Furies, and disappeared from the scene; and our noble Phoenix Park, in which I played many a time with my school-fellows, was polluted with blood shed by murderers.

Are murderers mad? Have they lost, with all their moral feeling, every perception of wisdom and prudence too? They seem to be incapable of reflecting that the blood which they so freely shed will some day come flowing back to their own doors. They are remorseless, cruel men, who cannot remember that the death they are so ready to inflict on others will certainly present his stern visage to themselves. They flatter themselves that the arm of the law, however

strong, cannot reach *them*, and they refuse to believe that there is an avenging God in heaven. They are blind to the fact that they shall die a shameful death when their time comes, and inflict indelible disgrace on the relatives who survive them, through their ruthless deeds.

This scene vanished, and another succeeded it on the vacant space. This was a most clear and startling representation of the death of Robespierre and his wretched accomplices in guilt. As this horrible picture is only too well known to every reader of history, I shall not describe it here. It was represented before me in all its harrowing details, as it has been described by Thiers, Carlyle, and other authors. The people who surrounded the guillotine shouted with an insane joy. The world was relieved of monsters.

I turned to the Demon in desperation, and besought him to take me away from that dreadful place.

'No,' he replied, 'we are here now, and we must stay to see the end. What will your friends above say if you run away now like a coward, and have nothing to tell them when you return? It may be against my interest to show you these things, but show you them I must; so keep your eyes and your ears open.'

Other scenes, dark and terrible indeed in the history of our unhappy planet, succeeded each other quickly in this ghastly theatre. The last of these was that of a battle on the sea. Two dark lines of noble ships, splendidly built, manned and armed, wonderful creations of the intellects and hands of men, were battering each other with fire and cannon-balls, doing their very best to destroy each other, to rend, or burn, or sink each other in the sea. And this is honour, glory—certainly it is, and duty too, when defending the right against the wrong. The ambition of men and nations, which will resort to such cruel means as these for

mere glory's sake, must be absolutely insane. One, and the largest, of the beautiful ships was set on fire by the hostile cannon, and blew up with a tremendous explosion, and I saw with an astonishment which I cannot express her fragments, masts and yards, guns, officers and men, flying through the air. We are indeed on the devil's playground! Cursed are those passions which give birth to such scenes as these!

And now the real business of this remarkable day was about to commence, and the Emperor Artabanzanus commanded his chariot to be drawn to the top of a great heap of cinders which stood on one side of the square. There stood in silent ranks a battalion of Larrikin Guards; a banner was raised on high, and a salvo of artillery, sudden and awful, like the salute which Wellington gave to Badajoz at midnight, shook the marble pillars. The gates of the surrounding castles flew open, and forth issued from them dense masses of soldiers of all the nations upon earth, with drums beating and colours flying—regiment after regiment, squadron after squadron. There came first a crowd of officers of the highest rank in brilliant uniforms, who formed themselves into long ranks, and marched past the Demon, saluting him with military precision. They were in fact an immense concourse of emperors, kings, dukes, governors, councillors, who delighted, when they lived on earth, in war, in tyranny, and in shedding the blood of their fellow creatures. The master whom they so faithfully served, who now sat by my side, condescended to point out to me by name many a famous hero and potentate, whose histories had been the wonder of our youthful days. Many of the greatest of these broke off after they had passed, and took their places behind the carriage of their chief.

They were succeeded by the officers of lower rank, and then by the rank and file of the world's armies, horse, foot,

and artillery. They swept past in dense masses, knights arrayed in glittering steel, paladins in chain armour, and proud barons in golden helmets and nodding plumes, with drawn swords in their hands, which flashed in the firelight. There were white-faced men among them, men who seemed to be sorry they had ever been born; and men with swarthy faces whose eyes sparkled with the eager anticipation of battle and mortal defiance of their foes. Clouds of heavy and light cavalry appeared to be forming on the field for actual fight. Battalions of infantry continued to issue from the castles and palaces, and took up their positions here and there. Some were clothed in the old military style of Greece and Rome, and were armed in the same fashion. Many presented the appearance of mediæval hosts, and many more the modern panoply and pageantry of war. Troop after troop of horse artillery came thundering along, halting and unlimbering their guns, waiting and watching for the signal to open fire. The great conquerors and generals of the world dispersed themselves over the field, each with his brilliant staff. My obliging friend at the Demon's palace who wanted to clean my boots was no doubt right when he said there would be a million of men in arms on that field of blood.

I shaded my eyes with my hand, and said inwardly, 'Oh, blessed God! was it for this that all those undying souls were born? Where are the weeping mothers of these unhappy beings? For whose pleasure do they now renew their oft-repeated combats? Who is the author of all this fearful wickedness?' I stole a glance at the being who was sitting by my side. His grape-shot eyes were fixed in a glassy immovable stare, his rabbit-trap mouth grinding with the snaps of a galvanic battery, like the teeth of a wolf ravenous for food.

At that moment the fierce charges of horse began to be

heard in the distance, like the hoarse roar of advancing ocean waves, accompanied by long-continued shouting, whether of victory or defiance I could not tell. A thousand guns opened their fire, and we could see the balls plunging into the embattled ranks on either side, and hundreds of men falling in the agonies of death. Again and again were repeated those mighty charges of horse, those furious shouts, and that hurricane of shot and shell. At length there was a lull for a few minutes, and then the ground trembled beneath the regular tramp of great masses of infantry. They advanced against each other with heads bent forward, eyes flashing fire, teeth firmly set. The Romans locked their shields, and brandished their flaming swords. The Goths yelled savagely, and hurled their javelins at the advancing foe. The Macedonians formed themselves into an impenetrable phalanx, and received their Persian enemies on the points of their pikes. Hannibal led on his Carthaginian bands, and the battle of Cannæ was fought over again. Pompey fled from the field of Pharsalia, hotly pursued by Cæsar's victorious horse. Here in this ghastly panorama a famous modern hero again gained his greatest victories.

A sudden increase of illumination now burst upon the awful scene, on which I gazed with bated breath, expecting every moment to be my last. Those who have read Mr. Rider Haggard's startling romance 'She' will not be surprised at the wonderful pictures presented to my view in a hitherto unexplored region of the universe. He describes a mysterious fire which his hero saw deep in the bowels of the earth, stalking along like a giant with a roar like that of a great waterfall, coming from nowhere, and returning to the same place; and in which the beautiful form of 'She' herself was reduced to its original dust. But I describe some of those scenes (at the expense of originality, it is

true) which the world, and not the keen eye of imagination only, has actually witnessed with its own eyes. His description is undisguised fiction, mine undeniable truth. And if my readers are displeased with such revolting tragedies, what do they say to the narratives of slaughter, and shocking cannibalism, with which the world is now being flooded?

I looked around to see the cause of the increase of light, and, lo! some twenty or more of the castles and palaces on all sides of the square were wrapped in raging fire. The weird flames shot up into the black and hideous space above, and lost themselves in the dense obscurity of clouds of inky smoke. Now and again dreadful explosions of powder magazines rent the air, and the roofs and walls of many of the castles were hurled out with violence on the heads of the combatants.

While I gazed on this alarming spectacle, I became aware of a sharp pain at the back of my neck, very like the sting of a scorpion. Placing my hand hastily on the affected part, I felt a clammy cuttle-fish finger pressing upon it, and looking round in the greatest terror, I beheld the larrikin fiend, Astoragus, sitting in the dickey contemplating the battle as gravely and solemnly as a judge. I instantly gave utterance to a loud roar of pain and rage. The Demon was startled at the sound, and turning, saw the injured innocent, his thoughts apparently far from doing any mischief. Without hesitation he seized him round the body with his boa-constrictor tail before he had time to escape, and roughly hurled him out of the chariot right over my head. He fell kicking amongst the poor negroes, who were still harnessed to the carriage, and they, struck with a mortal panic, started away at a furious gallop. In vain the Demon thundered orders to them to stop, and swore the most frightful oaths I ever heard; they only flew the faster,

and they rushed—oh, how they rushed!—into the thickest of the raging battle.

Destruction now stared us in the face. The panic-stricken negroes continued their wild flight, dragging our carriage over the heaps of slain, and through the long lines of infuriated soldiers. It was impossible to escape a miserable death now, and I calmly resigned myself to my fate. Their almost omnipotent master, notwithstanding all his power to save his precious bones when he pleased, was dashed from his chariot across a broken gun-carriage. The cannon-balls still flew around us in a perfect storm, and the musket-bullets like a tempest of hail. The military vehicle in which I sat, and to which I resolutely clung for bare life, was at last violently wrenched asunder, and I was thrown pell-mell amongst the ruins. Even then I did not lose my senses, but I knew too well that it was necessary to prepare for instant dissolution. Oh! what had I done to deserve this cruel fate? I had always hated war: the sight of two dogs fighting had often been enough to fill me with—I shall not say fear or alarm—but a profound disapproval of what was contrary to my nature. I never fought an earnest battle in my life except once, and that was decided in one round; moral battles I have been fighting all my life.

But now, what was my wretched condition? A last farewell to the dear ones whom I loved was denied me; no watch-dog's honest bark would welcome me when I drew near home; no eye would grow brighter at my coming. The wife of my youth, now the cherished companion of my declining years, my children, my grandchildren, the chattering and laughing, the noisy, innocent, and beautiful little ones, where are they now? Oh, that they might never know how or where I was doomed to die! I should never see my shining silver lakes, or the green fields, or the grand forests, or the golden sunshine again. Never again

rest in my armchair at home, and pore over my favourite books, as in days gone by for ever. The trees I had planted with my own hands, and their lovely growing day by day, were now hidden from mine eyes. The friends whom I have loved, and who have loved me—have I lost them for evermore?

Thinking thus, and with a thousand other despairing thoughts, whether wicked or not I do not know, I became aware that the battle was not yet over. The thought of Astoragus crossed my mind, and a prayer from my heart ascended to Heaven that he might not find me out, or sting me again. Renewed shouting, and a violent shaking of the ground, alarmed me terribly. All the demons in that pandemonium seemed to be let loose once more. I raised my head, and beheld the crowned kings and emperors flying from and after each other, some torn in pieces by their enemies, others by their own subjects. One of them, whom I knew only too well, came panting and rushing from the field. His face was deadly pale, and his eyes were starting out of his head with terror, for he was pursued by thousands of armed men whom he had slain in cold blood or in battle. As he came near, I saw that the unfortunate being, who had been literally covered with earthly glory, in addition to his mental anguish, had a fearful disease rankling at his heart. He fell down groaning bitterly on my breast; his enemies cut and thrust at him as they rushed past. Notwithstanding my agonies and his, I was cruel enough to say, 'Ha! old fellow, are you getting enough of it at last?'

I do not know whether it is right for us to go off into fits of moralizing on the subject of war. The Israelites of old were permitted to wage it against their enemies by their Holy and Divine Master, but we can well believe that their wars were waged against barbarous, unclean idolaters. Christ said He came not to bring peace on the earth but a

sword ; and again, 'Put up again thy sword into his place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.' How are these contradictory statements to be reconciled ? I seek not of myself to penetrate or explain the hidden meaning of our Saviour's words, but I believe that unjust, aggressive war, is as contrary to His divine wish and command, as it is to commit secret murder or any other sin. Unjust war seems to me to be only worthy—if it is worthy even of them—of yahoos, of gorillas, of the evil spirits of the infernal and for ever cursed world. If the great men of the earth are not madmen, they should remember by whose hands they were made, and put away the accursed thing from them. My business, however, is not to moralize, but to tell my story.

Once more the earth shook : the brigades and squadrons and batteries swept over us as we lay helplessly on the ground ; shouting dragoons, whiskered pandours, fierce lancers, and artillery wheels, and masses of blaspheming infantry, trampled and crushed us into the gory clay ; but at last—all in a moment—the darkness of death covered us with its friendly mantle.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MILITARY HOSPITAL.

THERE is music, delicious music, in the air ; it is not the blare of trumpets and trombones, nor the beating of war-like drums that I hear, but a soft, sweet kind of music, which whispers of temporary, if not eternal, peace. It is such music as we might imagine was played by Ariel among the shipwrecked mariners of *The Tempest* ; it is now here, now there, now under my pillow, now rolling beneath the roof, now rising into loud strains, and now sinking into lower and gentler tones. I was about to open my eyes, perhaps in a world more fair and dazzling than that in which I was born ; possibly in the kingdom of darkness where the glorious light of heaven and the sweet rays of the twinkling stars never shine. For a long time I dared not open them. What shall I do, I asked myself with apprehension, if they open upon scenes of happiness and love ; or what if, on the contrary, I find myself still in the lost and ruined world, or even somewhere worse than that ?

The music continued ; a strange kind of music it was, like nothing that I had ever heard before. There was no harshness or grating in the strains : and yet the harmony which I had so often heard in our churches, homes, and concert-halls seemed to be lacking. It is impossible to

describe that music. The instruments seemed to be somewhat out of tune. It sounded like a machine band. If it was played by keys it was certainly played by the performers with taste and skill. I felt sure that voices of men or women accompanied the instruments. The tune was a plaintive one, and reminded me of the old favourite 'Believe me, if all these endearing young charms,' played with appropriate variations.

If the ineffable, cloudless glory should burst upon me, I mused, how could I ever bear it? Had I a thousand eyes they would not be sufficient to take it in. But I am not worthy of it, I could not look upon it and live: a poor creature of pitiable weakness; a helpless being of dust and ashes. Without supernatural help what human being could look upon it? I came slowly to my senses, and tried to collect a few scattered ideas. My eyes opened for a moment, and then closed again in another long period of partial insensibility; then they opened and closed as before. My mind was bereft of all power to realize where I was, and I seemed to be a drifting cloud, without either aim or control. The pains in all my limbs, in my chest, and in my head, were most intense. My breath came and went in short convulsive gasps, and I could not stir, for bandages were wound around me from my neck to my feet. The excruciating agony of bones cracking, and seeming to fly apart, and then knitting together again; of nerves which had been thrown together in tangled bunches slowly unravelling themselves; of sinews which had been loosened and unstrung being pulled, and screwed into concert pitch again; of muscles that had been pounded into jelly being hardened and strengthened into vigour and elasticity once more, was terrible to bear. Were not my tortures yet over? I could endure them no longer, and groaned aloud.

The music instantly ceased, and I opened my eyes wide. I was not in heaven, and could see no light of day. Despair, with gruesome face, darted into the centre of my heart. I was in a low vaulted room, which was dimly lit by a solitary lamp standing on a black table which was placed beside my bed. An open door at the foot of the bed communicated with a larger and better lit apartment, and while I gazed into it with intense curiosity, I heard an extraordinary noise for which I could not possibly account. It was like the scuffling of a number of cats, or dogs, or other creatures, scurrying out in haste at a narrow doorway. While my eyes were thus fixed, I was startled by an apparition, one of the very last I expected to see in that place. A man, or an angel in disguise perhaps, strangely and grotesquely dressed it is true, but middle aged, fresh coloured, and handsome in countenance, with a benevolent smile of interest and encouragement, in figure straight and perfect as a guardsman, in appearance portly and dignified, stood there gazing upon me. He was dressed in an old-fashioned suit of clothes of various colours—old-fashioned I may well say, as no living person has ever seen the fashion, except, perhaps, at a fancy dress ball. He wore a once elegant Vandyke costume, toned down to the style of Charles the Second's time, much faded and the worse for wear, and in many places stained with blood. A buff jerkin, with red sleeves and shoulder bands, a short doublet of green satin open in front where, down to his waistband, the remains of a rich shirt could be seen, petticoat breeches adorned with ribbons down the sides, lace collar and ruffles at his wrists; a cloak hanging at his left shoulder, and a Spanish rapier by his side, made up a costume which I contemplated with unspeakable pleasure, from the contrast between it and that worn by some of the fiends I had recently seen. Instead of a high-crowned hat he wore a strange-looking yellow

smoking cap. His breeches, being tied at the knees, exhibited a very handsome pair of legs in dark silk or velvet stockings. Altogether I found that my heart was warming to him before he spoke a word.

He advanced to my bedside, bent over me quietly and in perfect silence, and gazed long and earnestly into my face. My eyes closed ; oh the joy, the rapture of having a fellow creature, a being of flesh and blood, capable of feelings of consideration, of pity, near me again ! I felt him feeling my pulse, and placing his hand lightly on my heart, then he felt my cheeks, and I think he held some kind of polished metal over my nose and lips. Without the slightest warning I saluted him with a loud and violent sneeze. It racked me through and through like an electric shock.

‘Good, that’s a capital sign,’ said the stranger, ‘but it’s far too severe ; we must stop that, but you’re getting on splendidly ; it’s miraculous !’ He spoke in a soft and pleasing voice, and rubbed my nose with some kind of ointment which put an end to all inclination to sneeze.

‘Do not speak,’ he continued, ‘you are not strong enough ; you must be silent, and keep perfectly quiet for another week, and then you will be as right as ever ; yes, stronger than you were before, and better able to fight your enemies, and write your adventures in a dozen volumes for the everlasting wonder, and incredible delight, of posterity. At present you must not even think : I will give you sedatives, and tonics, and febrifuges, and plenty of doses of my famous medicines, *taxacorum squeezeetalis* and *t. puffinialis*, to pull you down and build you up again ; and you will not have to pay through the nose, as you must whenever an apothecary above ground catches you by that useful organ. Drink some more of this—it is bracing you up in grand style, and giving new life to your blood.’ He gently raised my head, and held a crystal cup to my lips ; the liquor it

contained tasted like delicious tea : I instantaneously felt its invigorating qualities.

‘Now,’ said the doctor, for such I concluded him to be, ‘I must leave you ; duty must be done. Keep yourself very quiet. I am overwhelmed with work just now—and such work !—after that cursed battle. I never saw the like of it before ; it must have been fought in your honour. A million of men mowing each other down like hay ! Old Arty is growing worse. But I must not excite you with my childish prattle. I will come again soon, and when you are well enough we will have a long chat together. I am a rare fellow to talk. I bother Old Arty himself out of his wits when he comes here, which is not very often. He says he can stand everything but the clack of my infernal tongue. But to whom am I talking ? I believe I was born to be a magpie. No more at present—no more, or your life won’t be worth a farthing candle ; no fretting or fuming, or flying through the air on fiery dragons ; put away that sort of thing altogether. You’ll be stronger when I come back ; bye-bye for the present.’

This extraordinary chatterbox withdrew accordingly into the adjoining room, and I immediately heard another door grating on its hinges, and the air was filled with horrid cries of agony and despair, and the yells of people in the last extremities of torture and anguish. The door was mercifully shut again, but did that mercy reach the sufferers themselves ? This was one of the certain bitter consequences of war—how many others there are it is impossible to say.

The chamber in which I found myself was a small dark room, a single lamp, as I have said, burning on a small table beside me. Being obliged to lie in an immovable position I could not see anything more in the room, and could do nothing but think and dream, in spite of the good doctor’s injunctions to the contrary. Ah ! what a relief

death—annihilation—would have been to me then; but it was not to be. My mind was in a perfect state of confusion. Occasionally I heard a distant door being opened and shut, and again and again the frightful yells, horrid oaths, howls, roars, and screams smote on my ears. What could it all mean? The Doctor was evidently a kind man; he spoke to me in the gentlest manner, and laid his hand, which was like that of a sensitive woman, lightly on my heart, and called me his dear boy. Where was I, then, and who was this mysterious doctor? Ha! the whole truth like a bright light flashed upon me—a great battle had been fought. I was in one of the military hospitals, and the Doctor was the man whom I had seen driving furiously past the Demon and myself on his way to see King Charles the Second.

What did the hospitals of the Emperor Valens and those of other potentates do without the ministering angels, the Florence Nightingales, of our day? Perhaps they had them, but there were none here—no Sister Rose Gertrudes, no fair and sweet daughters of love and charity to soothe with gentle hands and words the last moments of the dying, or communicate renewed joy day by day by their presence to those who were being restored to life. There were no flowers to scatter on the ashes of the dead, and no dear young hands to scatter them. There was no drum of the funeral march to proclaim to a sorrowing nation that its greatest warrior was no more. This may be indeed only a world of shadows; the shadows in it may have no sense or feeling, but still I say it is possible that it may turn out to be a more real and substantial world than the one of coarse matter and substance in which we live. For the things which we actually see and feel are temporal, while those which we have never yet seen or known are eternal. Whether for good or for evil there comes no death in that

world—even if it be one of shadows—to put an end to its people's pleasures, or to release them from their pain.

Within a reasonable time—that is to say, in about four or five hours—the Doctor returned. He was accompanied by an attendant, a young man to all appearance, dressed in a dark blue uniform with yellow facings, who bore a tray containing the service of a small dinner-table. This he laid on the table beside my bed, and then left the room without speaking. The Doctor came to my side, and had a long look at my face. 'Are you hungry?' he asked at length.

'A little, Doctor.'

'Thirsty?'

'Very thirsty.'

'Well, drink some of this; now you had better eat something. See, I'm going to dine with you myself, and I'll try to move my jaws to some other purpose than chattering like a monkey's baby.' And he drew a black chair to the side of my bed, and helped me and himself to portions of the food from the tray. Incapable of using my hands, this kind doctor fed me himself with an iron spoon. Eating and drinking what he gave me without asking questions, I knew no more what the viands were than a prisoner in a coal-hole, but I knew that the food which he put into my mouth was soft, pleasant to the taste, and invigorating to the body.

When we were both fully satisfied he called his attendant, Florian by name, who removed the tray, and the Doctor sat still and silent for a considerable time by my bedside. Although a man apparently younger than myself, with a fresh, florid complexion, brown hair and beard, and benevolent blue eyes, still I was mortally afraid of him, and held my breath while he sat near me, lest I should unwittingly provoke some unexpected display of supernatural power. I remembered the Demon himself darting suddenly to my side when sitting, doing no harm to a single soul, on the

shore of the Great Lake. Nor had I forgotten his infernal balloon and its horrible driver, or the fiendish general of his larrikin brigade, and his luxurious couch, and the grand review which became a battle worthy of the Pit of Acheron, or the burning castles of the ensanguined park. I remembered the artful Bellagrande, with her dangerous beauty and seductive wiles. What if this kind doctor, now that my strength had left me, with his brown hair, handsome face, honest blue eyes, and soft musical voice, were another of the Demon's instruments of torture, perhaps of temptation? His heart seemed to be overflowing with sympathy, notwithstanding his fearful calling, and mine was filled with respect and gratitude.

Was I to be again deceived? If this was one of the Demon's confidential servants, leagued with him in a nefarious conspiracy to accomplish the destruction of my soul, the dread fiend had only one further step to take, and that I believed he had already taken. He had tried his million of pounds per annum, and his fine castles as many as I pleased; now perhaps he intended to tempt me by means of one of my own sex, whom I could love and honour. Let him complete his work as he had commenced it, notwithstanding his pretended wrath with his offending daughter, let him send me a charming nurse, and enchant me with the wit, the fascinations, the accomplishments, and the loveliness of the opposite sex, and what is to become of poor Ubertus? What can he do indeed but rush into the jaws of destruction, as the harnessed negroes rushed into the raging battle?

These thoughts swept painfully through my throbbing brain, and the Doctor, who perceived my uneasiness, arose from his chair, and bent over me. My eyes were closed as if in sleep. I felt something fall on my forehead which made me start with a thrill of joy. Was it a tear from that

singular man's eyes which fell there? And yet how could it be? Demons cannot weep; perhaps he was not a demon. A tear of sorrow or remorse, or vain regret and repentance, in a place like this, from one accustomed to such scenes? It could not be; and yet I distinctly felt it—nay, I think I heard the splash of that tear as it fell.

'Poor fellow!' I heard him say in an audible whisper; 'how on earth did he come here, so young, and apparently so innocent? He never died, or he would have the brand of death upon him, and he has not that of the black angel upon him either. Neither have I, and yet he may be doomed to dwell here as I am. Two negroes brought him here, with a message from their master that I must save his life. He is the devil himself, that Demon; why could he not save him from the battle that he provoked, the doubling and twisting liar? He must have decoyed him here, or else compelled him to come before his time. If so, he has determined on his ultimate destruction. I wish I could save him from the arch-fiend's fangs, but I cannot; although I have great power he has far greater, but I may outwit him yet. Patience, patience, and be watchful and ready, O Julius!'

Here I groaned aloud in absolute terror, and shivered convulsively from head to foot.

'What's the matter?' he asked. 'But I forget, you must not speak. I know what's the matter with you; keep your mind and body quiet, and all may yet be well. In one week's time I will have you up, and then you may speak, and tell me all about everything, and how you came here, and when you are going back to the country you came from. Until then ask me no questions, and don't encourage me to talk, for if you do I shall not know how to leave off, there is so much to talk about in these precious times.' And, smothering a laugh with a great effort, he went away to

attend to his duties, leaving me to my heart-breaking meditations.

The week passed by—slowly and painfully if I lay awake, rapidly and lightly if I slept. Indeed, I could not say that I slept at all, for what passed over me for sleep was only a half-dreamy state of semi-existence; a mentally frenzied, outrageous, idiotic description of obscure insect life, very slightly removed from oblivion itself. I asked myself, while more sensible than usual, ‘Have I been drinking with the shepherds of the Great Lake, and am I suffering from delirium tremens?’ That could not be, for I am one of the most temperate of men. No; it was a different kind of thing, something mysterious and inexplicable. It was not insanity; I felt quite certain of that. Now I fancied myself groping like a baboon on all fours among sharp rocks at the bottom of the sea; now I was hovering in mid-air over a vast ocean of milk, changing into a wilderness where there were nothing but icebergs and burning mountains. There was no end to my extraordinary visions. While I lay awake my thoughts were not such a chaos of confusion. But now and then the agony of my mind was intense; the pain of my wounds afflicted me terribly. The Doctor came and examined me several times a day—at least, so I judged; he and his assistants unwound my bandages, and rubbed my body with aromatic ointment, while they observed the strictest silence. He smoothed my pillow, administered medicine, and fed me with his own hands. He was kindness and tenderness of heart personified, and my heart bounded with gratitude whenever he came near me.

On the eighth day, according to his computation of time, which I did not understand, he redeemed his word by bringing in three or four of his attendants, who, under his directions, lifted me out of bed, washed and dressed me with gentleness, carried me into the adjoining apartment, whence

had issued the music that had surprised me out of my insensibility, and placed me sitting in a large arm-chair near a table, whereon burned a number of different-coloured lamps, which diffused a pleasing light through the room. This chamber was much larger than the one I had slept in, and my preserver, as I considered him to be, seating himself at the other end of the table, drew from a concealed drawer a large meerschaum pipe, which he proceeded to fill, asking me at the same time if the smell would be likely to disagree with me. I assured him that I would enjoy it more than anything he could mention; that in fact I had sometimes smoked when in the upper world—medicinally, however, and in great moderation.

‘Medicinally!’ he echoed. ‘What may your complaint be, and how does tobacco-smoke act upon it?’

‘I find it useful, sir,’ I replied, ‘as an antidote for the poison of low spirits.’

‘It may be of some use for that,’ said he, lighting his pipe, ‘but I fear of very little. I smoke for company’s sake. But I suppose you have a wife and family, and see plenty of company?’

I intimated that, although I had a wife and family, I lived a very retired life, and saw little or no company.

‘I did not smoke here,’ he continued, ‘while you were very ill, thinking it might make you cough or sneeze; but now I believe it will help you to gain strength. Tobacco in moderation, as you wisely observe, is a soother of sorrow, and a stimulus to joy when we have reason to be joyful; but smoked to excess it is a poison, and has a tendency to destroy vital energy. You must not smoke yet except by deputy, and I’ll do your smoking for you for another week. You are recovering your strength amazingly fast; your bones are now firmly knit, and your nerves and muscles are acquiring their former consistency and vigour. You have

had a narrow escape, and you may thank my powerful medicines for it, especially my *taxacorum puffinalis*; that's better than a blacksmith's bellows for building up a man. To whom were you talking before you came to your senses? Somebody was lying on your chest, and you were imploring him to get off. Who was it?

'If it was not Timour the Tartar, Doctor, it must have been ——,' and I mentioned the name of another great conqueror. 'He fell on my breast at the close of the battle, and his enemies hacked at him with their swords and lances as they passed by. I got a few good cuts and stabs as I lay under him, but the weight of his murderous carcass nearly killed me.'

'I think it did, and no wonder,' said the Doctor. 'Your whole body was completely mangled, and your breast-bone badly fractured. I never saw such a sight in my life; and as for your outcries, why, as I have been informed, Alexander the Great condescended to pause in one of his grand charges, and ask who it was that was being butchered like a pig. I have that hero whom you mentioned (great Emperor as he calls himself) in the hospital now, and he roars and groans more than any poor soldier there. How did you come to be in that battle? You are not a soldier; you did not die in the world above; you are not one of us.'

'The Demon, sir, or Artabanzanus, which he says is his proper name, took me to see the grand review in his artillery wagonette, drawn by twenty-four gigantic negroes, for whom my very heart bled. A friend, a General, too, to whom the Demon had previously introduced me, calling him Astoragus, got into the dicky by some means, and stung me with his finger at the back of my neck out of pure spite. His master, who had declared that no larrikin should dare to play a trick on him, with his tail hurled him out over my head. He fell with a crashing scramble amongst the

negroes, who all took fright, and ran away with the speed of cannon-balls, and took our carriage with them, in spite of the Demon's roars to the contrary, into the thickest of the battle. He was flung out; I saw him flying through the air like an enormous grasshopper, and he fell on a gun at the foot of a pillar, with the inscription upon it "To glory." I was crushed in the ruins of the carriage, and do not know how I escaped instant death.'

The Doctor sat quietly listening to my story, puffing out thick clouds of smoke. When I had finished he stared at me for some time in silence.

At length he spoke.

'It is a great wonder certainly that you were not killed outright. But how on earth did you get down here? It is the most extraordinary thing I ever heard of—a living man to come here without having died, and expect to go back again—for that, I believe, is your expectation?'

'It is,' said I. 'The Demon, who took me by surprise on the shore of the Great Lake in Tasmania, and brought me here against my will in a gigantic balloon, promised to take me back again.'

'What!' said the Doctor, 'was he prowling about so far off? Tasmania is a place many thousands of miles to the south of Cape Horn, isn't it? Or is it off the coast of Spitzbergen? I never heard of it before.'

I explained to the worthy Doctor the true position of our beloved little island, and answered a great number of questions respecting its history, and that of the whole world, of which he was profoundly ignorant. At last his thoughts returned to the place where we then were.

'I suppose,' said he, 'that this Demon, or Artabanzanus, as he calls himself, and he generally adds proudly Emperor of the World, took you to the first or sensual department of his own palace?'

'Yes, sir,' I answered, 'he did, and a very remarkable and attractive palace it is, too.'

The Doctor laughed: his laugh was loud, pleasant, and musical; but at present he seemed to labour under some constraint. He spoke in a low voice, as if fearful of being overheard, and looked about him nervously now and then.

'And did he introduce you to his charming, fascinating daughter Bellagrande, whom I take the liberty of calling "Old Cly"?'

'He did not introduce me to her, but she did not fail to introduce herself to me; but why do you call her "Old Cly," Doctor?'

'How old do you think she is?' he asked.

'About eighteen. She looks very young; and at first I thought her very sweet and innocent.'

'That lovely girl, as you thought her,' said the Doctor, 'is two thousand and fifty years of age. She is the celebrated Clytemnestra, the wife of Agamemnon, whom she murdered with a hatchet while he was trying to put on a tunic, the sleeves of which she had sewn up.'

'Gracious and merciful powers! you don't say so, Doctor?' I exclaimed in horror and consternation.

'I do,' he replied calmly; 'but tell me more of your adventures.'

'She made love to me, Doctor.'

'And you did to her: you kissed her, and promised to marry her, and vowed eternal constancy, truth, and all the rest of it, I have no doubt.'

'No, upon my honour, I would not let her kiss me; I pushed her away, and refused point-blank to marry her.'

'You did well; you acted like a brave and a strong man. Did she show you her black dogs?'

'Yes; she drilled them in my presence, and told me

that, if I persisted in my refusal to marry her, I should be one of their number within twelve hours.'

'You would be one soon if you did marry her; all those dogs were her husbands once, and private secretaries to her dear papa, as she calls him. I fortunately escaped her snares, on account of the strength of a previous attachment, a long-standing affection, which nothing can destroy or weaken. I hope you thought of your lawful wife at home when Bellagrande sat on your knees.'

'I did not say she sat on my knees, Doctor.'

'No, you kept it back, but I know she did: she sat on mine, and kissed me, too, before I could prevent her; but I made her beg my pardon on her knees. I upset her, throne and all, on her own hard floor, and kicked her dogs, in spite of her threats, into the fire. The consequence is, that I am the only one who can manage her: her papa flies from her sometimes like a thief before a bloodhound. But give me some more of your history.'

I accordingly gave him a full account of what I had seen and what I had endured in the Department of Pleasure in the Demon's city, winding up with my lamentable and undignified adventure in the voluptuous couch of Astoragus.

'Ah, I remember!' he replied; 'you mentioned that ruffian before. I am astonished that the cunning Demon should have trusted you to the tender mercies of Astoragus so soon. Age is telling upon him, or he is going off his head; whether or not, he is sure to overreach himself in the long-run. There is not a more malicious toad or vampire in the whole city than that same Astoragus. The Demon knew very well what would be the upshot of that fine couch, and I have no doubt that he saw how quickly you shot up from the thing, and he had a roaring laugh at you. And Astoragus must be made a general forsooth—General of the Larrikin Guards! He found you out, too, while the battle was going

on. I expect his kind master will bring him here soon, and order me to boil him in sulphuric acid, or some other devilish compound. I must settle the incurable scamp once for all if he is brought to me; and, between ourselves, I only wish I could settle his master as easily; but he is too cunning, too strong, and has too much supernatural power for me: but I may outwit him yet. I never think of the horrible fiend without swearing and cursing in the most fearful manner to myself, and I do not know why he is permitted to exist, and to do all the mischief he does. He is, without exception, the greatest liar, the most abominable deceiver, and the biggest robber and murderer, that ever walked upon the earth, or sailed through the air in a lightning-car. I can't tell why he was ever begotten or born, unless it was to try the children of men, to ascertain whom they are willing to serve. If so, it is a hard trial for them, that they should be exposed to the temptations of a remorseless ruffian, who would think no more of blowing us all into the eternal fire of the sun itself than he does of blowing his own nose.'

A loud 'Hem!' here interrupted the eloquence of the irascible Doctor, for whose safety I began to tremble. We both turned in dismay; and there, in the middle of the room, his Field-Marshal's uniform flying about him in ribbons, stood our great enemy himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

DOCTOR JULIUS.

His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of the World did not come alone. He grasped by the collar of his long cloak, which, like his master's, now hung in tatters about his person, my especial friend, Astoragus of the luxurious couch.

'Glad to see you, my lord Demon—I mean your Majesty,' said the Doctor with great coolness; 'we were just talking about that incurable villain Astoragus, who I see is a safe prisoner in your royal hands.'

'Oh, were you?' growled the Demon huskily.

'Yes, sir, we were; my young friend here, who has marvellously recovered from the fearful injuries sustained in your late battle of the justly infuriated nations, thanks to the potency of my wonderful drugs, especially to——'

'Hold!' roared the Demon in a terrible voice; 'I came not to hear you praise your abominable physic to the skies, which you are never tired of doing; I came to command you——'

'To take every care of this gentleman, sir? Yes, I am doing that; I have cured him, I have brought him back to life, I have given him a taste for existence which he never felt before; I have talked to him about the charms of your

beautiful city, your gold, your castles, your kindness; have I not, Mr. — But I believe I have forgotten to ask him his name,' said the Doctor with animation.

'His name is Ubertus,' said the Demon loftily, and with the air of a patron. 'He is the owner of the mountain on which lies the Great Lake of Tasmania, and the proprietor of all the fish.' (It need not be said that this was wholly untrue.)

'Mr. Ubertus,' continued the Doctor, 'has been giving me an account of an extraordinary luxurious couch, which he had the pleasure of lying upon at the corner of a street, and in consequence thereof I expected you to come every moment with Astoragus.'

'Oh, did you?' said the Demon sharply.

'Yes, sir, I did,' answered the unabashed Doctor, 'and I have the irons hot; shall I operate on his eyes?'

'No!' roared the Demon; 'I have sworn by the fire-tipped spear of my favourite minister Giovanni Maria, who used to course the streets of Milan at midnight with blood-hounds, that I'll boil him in the venom of *crotalus horridus*' (rattlesnake) 'and rackarock, and I'll get you to do it.'

'Very well, sir,' said the Doctor coolly; 'I'll do it.'

'And you won't mind his howls?'

'Not at all, sir; they'll be music to my very soul.'

'Then here he is—hold him fast; if he escapes you will have some trouble to find him again. He has a particular talent, or genius, for turning himself into a flea, and I shall not wonder if he eludes even a clever man like you, while you are looking for him as a flea, by quietly slipping away from you. Put your spell upon him at once.'

'It is done already, sir; he is fixed. May I ask you, my gracious Sovereign, why, in the plenitude of your wisdom, you ever thought of appointing a fellow like him to be the General of your Larrikin Brigade?'

'Ask me no questions, Doctor,' replied the Demon, 'and I'll tell you no—— You know the rest. As for this fellow, as soon as you have boiled him well, he shall be publicly drummed out of my army. I offered Ubertus the privilege of beating the drum on that occasion, and he said he would do so with the greatest possible pleasure.' (This was untrue.)

'I understand, sir,' said the Doctor, giving me a significant glance, 'I believe you implicitly, my lord; I shall certainly boil him according to your wish, and let you know when he can be put through the ceremony of drumming out; but I fear my friend Mr. Ubertus will not be able to beat the drum for some time yet.'

'I want Ubertus to come with me now,' said the Demon emphatically. 'He has been with you long enough—too long, I fear, for all the good he is likely to learn from you, but which I thank my stars I can counteract. In another week he returns to the place he came from; but you need not be sorry for that, we shall see him again soon.'

'I beg your pardon, my lord,' replied the Doctor, 'he cannot go just yet. He is not by any means restored to health; in fact, he is weaker than milk-and-water; it would be most dangerous to his soul and spirit, to say nothing of his precious body, to take him from my care so soon.'

'Well, if you say so, Doctor, I shall submit,' said the Demon graciously. 'Have him ready here where we are now on the eighth day from this time.'

'And, my lord Demon, if you will, with your usual goodness, pardon me once more, may I beg that you will take me with you on your next trip. You have often promised me this favour, and I have a very powerful desire to know what the world is like now, and Mr. Ubertus will introduce me to his family and friends.'

'You are very well off where you are,' answered the Demon curtly.

'So I am, sir, and well aware that I enjoy many happy privileges through your condescending kindness; but remember your own promises. You have often said that I really was due for a holiday, and richly deserved one. I have worked night and day in your service for nearly two hundred years, and have not had a good holiday yet. A little shooting in a green forest, or boating on a lake with the sun shining on the waves, or swimming in the sea with the fishes playing round and round; or even a quiet stroll through the streets of London or Paris with the fine ladies and gentlemen, would set me up wonderfully, and give me strength to serve you with redoubled energy and faithfulness for another two hundred years. And in addition to that, sir—do not be impatient, I beg of you—I shall be able to do you immense service on the earth just now: now is the happy time for extending your empire. I can give splendid lectures on the beauty and wisdom of free-thinking philosophy, and can prove by actual experiment the truth of evolution, and show people a sweet little chattering monkey growing in a few hours into a charming girl who dances like an angel, and sings like a nightingale. I can do a thousand things in your interest which you do not trouble yourself to think of. I hope you will remember my past services, and the number of times I have saved your most amiable daughter—the true ornament and delight of your Majesty's Court—from long and painful illnesses by reason of her own little indiscretions, through being rather too fond of creature comforts; and remember, sir——'

'Oh, enough, enough!' broke in the Demon angrily; 'do you mean to assassinate me with that jaw-breaking tongue of yours? You would drive an army of old women and parsons mad. I acknowledge your cleverness, and

your faithful services, but really you must spare me now; your extraordinary eloquence is too overpowering. Give me a cordial at once, or I shall faint away on the spot, if I don't die altogether.'

'With pleasure, my lord, and with many apologies for not having offered you one before. What say you to a glass of my great revivifying antiarthritic *taxacorum puffinalis*?'

'No objection, Doctor, so long as it is not your cursed *taxacorum squeezezatalis*, which you administer to my daughter Bellagranda so often.'

When the Demon had quaffed the effervescent cordial which the Doctor set before him, he prepared to depart, saying:

'I'll think about what you have said touching the holiday, Doctor, and will endeavour, as a particular friend of yours, to make it possible, but I am afraid you cannot be spared just now, the hospitals are full.'

'I can discharge a hundred thousand patients to-morrow morning, sir,' said the Doctor.

'And who will undertake your duties while you're away working for me above ground?'

'My Assistant Inspector, sir—Doctor Horatio Mancus, a careful and clever man.'

'Well, I shall not say "no" at present,' said the Demon with a dubious cough and a chuckle; 'but mind, my clever friend, I have not said "yes" yet,' and he stalked out of the room with the air of a conquering hero.

'Now, General Astoragus,' said the Doctor, seizing that hopeful gentleman by the collar, 'now for you, my boy—were you ever boiled before in rattlesnake's poison and rackarock, eh? are you ready for that interesting experiment in chemistry, eh? If you have howls prepare to howl them now! See the Bard of Avon, who is responsible for everything nowadays. Come along, sir.'

When he heard these words the chief of the larrikins, trying in vain to escape from the Doctor's grasp, commenced to howl in the most frightful manner I ever listened to.

'Please, Doctor,' said I, raising my voice above the awful din, 'don't boil the poor fellow! let him off this time with a caution, admonish him to be more careful in future; over-severity in punishment will surely defeat itself, and it is cruel. Make him promise not to do so any more and forgive him; I forgive him. I never bear malice. I never bore malice in my life.'

'Oh yes, of course,' replied the Doctor severely. 'I could not think of boiling or hurting a hair of the "poor fellow's" head; he never thinks of hurting anyone, man, woman, or child, at all. Oh no! You will "poor fellow" him with your very last sigh when you are on your bed of death. Your "poor fellow" will cover your million of sins, I have no doubt. But keep your mind easy. I'll only tickle him a little. I'll simmer him very gently for your sake. He will soon be ready—and willing, too—to sting you again, my dear boy; do not distress yourself on his account, I beg of you. Have you no larrikins in your part of the world?'

'We have a good many, Doctor.'

'Well, I suppose you make perfect pets of them; you keep some of them in glass cases in grand shop windows, and fatten them on butter and honey, and Stilton cheese, and lollipops, and strawberries and cream, and ham and eggs. But I need not bother you with my chatter, although we were all born to be bothered and stung to madness, and many of us to be butchered like pigs in a sty. Never mind, don't let your heart get too low or too soft, and take care, you will tell me, not to let yours require a brickbat to soften it. Stick to the happy medium, that's my motto. What ho, Florian!'

The attendant bearing that name entered the room immediately.

'Here,' said his master, 'take this fellow to Doctor Mancus and Chief Inspector Squabblequash; tell them he is to be boiled for one hour in the venom of *crotalus horridus* and rackarock—here, what are you afraid of? He won't hurt you. I have made him innocuous—lay hold!'

'My master,' said Florian, to my great astonishment, as I had not hitherto heard him say a word. 'I hope your warrant will bear out the deed.'

'What!' shouted the Doctor. 'Are you a larrikin, too? Are you going to be the new General of the Larrikin Guards, eh? Do you dare to quote Shakespeare, or anybody else to me, you rascal! Go and obey my orders, or I'll show you a warrant which will turn you into a dancing goat before you're one minute older.'

'I said very little, sir, and all on the side of mercy,' said Florian humbly. 'I beg your pardon; the quality of mercy is not strained, it droppeth——'

'Death and fury!' roared the Doctor. 'Shakespeare again!'

But here I took it upon myself to interpose:

'For the love of heaven, Doctor, or my dear friend and benefactor, if you will allow me to call you so, do not permit the evil spirit to take possession of you in this way; remember that you are yourself an erring mortal,' I said solemnly, but I forgot to whom I was speaking.

'Eh! what's that you say? I an erring mortal! No, sir, I am an unerring immortal at your service. As for you, Florian, I forgive you—see that you do not offend me again. Take Astoragus to the tenth dungeon and lock him up.'

Florian left the apartment hastily, dragging the howling General after him.

'Now, Ubertus,' said the Doctor, lighting his pipe, 'I must have some serious talk with you, private and confidential, you must remember. Our friend the Demon has the power to insinuate himself unseen through a keyhole into any company he pleases; but I have a privilege which he knows nothing about, one that I found out by long study and many experiments, and it is this—I can detect his presence. He may be totally invisible, or he may appear in the shape of man, woman, or child, or as a bird, beast, or fish, but I shall know the fact. He is not here now, and we may speak our minds freely. What agreement exists between you and him? Tell me without prevarication and hide nothing. What did he bring you here for?'

'He brought me here, my dear Doctor, if I do not presume to offend you, for the purpose of getting me to consent to be his private secretary, and he offers me a salary of a million pounds per annum.'

'A million rabbits' tails per annum! What else?'

'As many fine castles to live in as I like.'

'As many fine dog-kennels and pigsties to live in as you like! Anything else?'

'Nothing else, sir, except pleasure and happiness for ever.'

'Yes—for ever—the pleasure and happiness of the cursed and the damned for ever. You saw his lovely daughter, Bellagranda; did you dine with her?'

'I neither tasted the dainties nor the wine which she and her maids offered me, Doctor.'

'That was well,' said he, stroking his beard; 'that was very well, and a great point gained. Have you consented to be his private secretary?'

'No, sir, not yet.'

'Did you tell him you would take time to consider his proposal?'

'No; I did not lead him for a moment to suppose that I would accept his proposals.'

'That's right. I think I shall be instrumental in saving you from him, and from that female fiend Bellagranda. Have nothing to do with either of them! Ubertus, I fear that you are rather a weak kind of man. Are you fond of wine? I am not impertinent; my profession, position, and the fact that you are under my especial medical care, do away with the suspicion of impertinence and idle curiosity.'

'I acquit you of all ideas of the kind, Doctor. But why do you think I am a weak kind of man?'

'I cannot tell you why. I am not gifted with the power of reading men's thoughts; they are only to be guessed at by visible signs, and frequently the guesses are erroneous, and evil opinions are formed because we delight in tearing holes in each other's coats. I shall not give you any advice. Somebody has said that no one is ever the better for good advice. Some day perhaps I may give you some, but not now; you are not ripe for it. This only I will say: Beware how you sign articles with the Demon, and beware how you encourage his daughter. If she should assail you again, here is an antidote for her poison.'

He took from one of the pockets of his doublet a small packet, and, opening it, displayed a curious shining powder. 'Take a pinch of this,' he said, 'and sprinkle it before her—on her face if possible.'

'And what will be the result, Doctor? It might be terrible!' I exclaimed.

'She will then know that you are protected by a superior power, and will not trouble you again. I have asked you if you are fond of wine, but you did not answer me, I think, because the volubility of my own precious tongue precluded the possibility of your doing so.'

'My good friend,' I answered, 'I beg to assure you that

I am not fond of wine. You may make yourself easy on that score. I never was fond of wine, or any other intoxicating drink. It is one of the greatest blessings I have ever enjoyed, and one for which I have always been most deeply grateful, that I am able even to reside in a house where intoxicating liquors are sold without feeling the slightest temptation to partake of them myself. In the present state of our world, the desire for stimulating beverages is a prominent and gloomy feature. There is no greater cause of dishonour, dishonesty, lasciviousness, violence, and even downright murder itself. The love of it reduces thousands of men and women, who were once clever and beautiful, aye, and good and true, to degrading, wretched poverty, and associates them with hardened criminals and revolting crime. What will they say, I wonder, when they stand before the judgment-seat of God, and hear the sentence of perpetual banishment from His presence pronounced because they could not or would not resist that vile temptation! Yet we must hope and pray for the mercy of God for the poor, weak, deluded creatures.'

'You can lecture well on temperance, Ubertus,' said the Doctor, 'and you have improved your knowledge by your residence here. You saw the multitudes of people in the Pleasure Department of this city; if you called all those people together in the great primordial abyss, which is more than ten miles in diameter, the place would be crowded to suffocation, and I believe if you asked them all what had brought them to ruin, ninety-nine out of every hundred would answer that it was love of wine, or gin, or brandy, or rum, or whisky.'

'It is, indeed, most astonishing,' I replied, 'to perceive how this gigantic disease keeps spreading, and is ever on the increase. Among men and women, too, who ought to have sense and discretion, who are in possession of their intellectual faculties, who have wit and talents to guide them

through the world, and perhaps genius to astonish and delight their fellow men. They may be the children of honest and sober parents, reared in the lap of the heart's best and noblest affections, loaded with blessings and the abundant enjoyments of life from their very cradle, educated and brought up as ladies and gentlemen, the centres of attraction in peaceful and happy homes, the future hope and joy of those who love them; and yet we see them day by day falling into the horrible pit dug for them by this deceitful, cruel, earthly god! all unhappy examples in the past, all solemn warnings for the future, unheeded or despised; husbands robbing and starving their wives and children; wives insanely driving their husbands away from their hearths and homes; children arrayed against their parents! See the terrible conflagration in which lives are lost, and hundreds of thousands of pounds' worth of merchandise destroyed, caused by one miserable drunkard trying to get into his bed. Read of the dreadful war which has arisen between two friendly nations through the unreasonable obstinacy of a king or a minister inflamed by wine. What a long list of abominable crimes, of vicious folly, of malicious injury to peaceful and innocent people, of poverty and degradation, has intemperance to show us! And to think that it ruins the peace of thousands of families, and makes a hell where we should expect, not a heaven, indeed, but a comparatively happy home. Was this the curse that made Absalom a rebel and a traitor to his father and his king; bade him listen to the parricidal counsel of Ahitophel, and drove the wretched David to cry out in the bitterness of his heart, "O my son, Absalom——"

'Stop, stop, for Heaven's sake!' broke in the Doctor. 'You are enough to drive any ordinary man wild. I'll have to clap you into the tenth dungeon with Astoragus if you go on much longer. I thought I was a bit of an elephant

at speech-making, but you're a perfect whale. I can't stand any more,' and so saying he ran out of the room.

I sat still in dismal silence for a couple of hours, and when the time came for us to partake of our frugal supper he returned and took his seat. We ate in quiet reserve; he, perhaps, unwilling to obtrude his usual table-talk on me, who might have some serious cause for grief, and I from a growing determination to keep all further manifestations of weakness to myself. What right have I, was my reflection, to bore people with my griefs; for what are those griefs to them? They may have their own, with which they do not trouble me. Their sympathy, be it ever so kind and real, will not cure what may or may not be curable. No; henceforth I will be strong, not weak. This strange and strong-minded friend of mine shall see that, as long as we remain together, I can be as firm, as strong, or as hard-hearted, if he wills it, as he is himself. So away with heart-breaking cares, and 'hence loathed melancholy'! I am Oliver Ubertus, and will not identify myself with any other man in any part of the habitable world.

The Doctor lit his pipe, and smoked for a long time in perfect silence; and I sat still, afraid to move lest I should disturb the current of his thoughts. At last, when I had become thoroughly tired of silence, he suddenly spoke, and his words alarmed me exceedingly.

'That confounded Astoragus!'

'What of him, Doctor, for Heaven's sake? Has he escaped? Has he become a flea?' I asked with bated breath.

'He has not escaped, Ubertus, and you are safe so far; but he has made me guilty of an act of cruelty which my very soul abhors.'

'Gracious powers! You surely have not boiled him in serpents' poison and rackarock, have you, Doctor?'

'Well, no, not exactly, although the Demon ordered me

to do so; but I sometimes take the liberty of modifying that worthy person's commands. I will tell you what I did. I had him tied up to a post, and made Florian, as a punishment for his own late misbehaviour, administer fifty lashes to his bare back, another of my servants standing by with a whip to make the flagellator do his duty properly. Then we put him to bed, and rubbed his body all over with strong mustard and vinegar, and left orders that when he woke up in the morning he should be dusted with powder of Spanish flies and cayenne pepper.'

'Oh, Doctor! how could you do it? I can scarcely believe it—but the latter part at least you can revoke. Do so, do so, for mercy's sake, and for my sake!'

'Hush, hush!' he said hurriedly; 'are you going into one of your fits again? You haven't got the gizzard or the heart of a chicken. I am ashamed of you, upon my soul.'

'Remember, sir, he is a fellow-creature, though a fallen one—a human being; he may be misguided, he may be hardened; if you are cruel to him, it will only harden him still more.'

'Fiddlesticks,' said the Doctor.

'I beg your pardon, sir,' I replied. 'So far as I may dare to speak, but not to dictate, I recommend moderation. Nothing was ever gained by going to violent extremes, but a great deal has been lost, and lost without hope of recovery, by that unwise policy. I do not want to provoke an argument, or ruffle your temper, or interfere with your duties. You know what our great bard says about mercy; let no future poet or historian have to say, even of this place, that mercy was denied to such fallen creatures as Astoragus.'

The Doctor seemed moved by my appeal, and responded: 'Well, well, I will arrange that the dusting shall not be carried out; but let him not fall into my hands again—he may not have you here to beg him off. I believe you'd beg

him off if he murdered your wife and family, of which I think he is fully capable. I will tell you what you are, Ubertus. I don't mince matters or bite you on your back. You are a fool, an ass—you're as soft as butter; you haven't got the hardness of a flea. If you want to get on in the world, you must be as hard as iron, as cruel as a bear, and as selfish as a pig. Now, after that, off with you to bed. Take this physic with you; drink it when you lie down; it will make you dream pleasantly.'

As he spoke he mixed seven drops of a very dark fluid with water, and, putting the vessel containing it into my hand, wished me good-night.

'May I presume to ask you one question, Doctor, before I go?' said I deferentially.

'My dear boy,' he replied, 'at any other time I would give you leave to ask me a dozen, but I have an engagement to-night—I am going to see Helen.'

'To see Helen! Who is Helen, Doctor?' I asked in surprise.

'You do not know Helen,' he answered gravely. 'I will introduce you to her before you go hence. Your question quickly—one only.'

'Dear sir,' said I—'my dear benefactor, I hope you will not be offended. You know my name—Oliver Ubertus, of Tiger Gully, Tasmania, but you have not favoured me with yours, and I am very desirous of knowing it.'

'My name,' he replied, while a smile of subdued astonishment illuminated his handsome face—'my name, Ubertus? do you really do me the honour to ask after my name? Why, you will be inviting me to a small bottle-jack party soon, if I do not take care. My name is not to be found in your Tasmanian Directory, or whatever you call it. My name—I believe I have forgotten my name. Let me try to remember—Smith, Brown, Jones—no—Johnson, Tom,

Jack, Harry—no, none of these—stay—yes, I have it at last—my name, sir, is Doctor Julius Rabbitonius, M.D.M., R.C.S.L., etc., etc., Director General, etc., etc., Minister of Scientific Possibilities in the city of Pandapolis, and Premier;' and, with a loud laugh, he hurried from the apartment.

which lately had shone so brightly ; our ship was tossed awhile like a bubble on the angry waves, and then went down into the deep. We, its passengers and crew, paralyzed and despairing, struggled for our lives. After awhile I ceased from struggling, fell asleep, and awoke on the shore all alone.

The storm had passed away ; the sea and sky were now serene and lovely. I was on an island which had shores and rocks of the brightest gold, on which the sun shone with dazzling lustre, but I could see no grass or trees growing upon it. The waves beat gently on the strand, and sent up now and again showers of pearls and diamonds, with rubies, emeralds, and other precious stones, but nothing that had the slightest sign of life. In some of the bays, where the water was calm and clear, I could see a countless number of human skulls, and other bones, lying on the bottom. I began to be tormented with hunger and thirst, and looked about anxiously for something to appease my desires, but I could find nothing but gold and gems, which I longed to change into bread. Tasting the water of the sea, I found it as bitter as gall ; and then I fell down in despair, and expected to die.

While lying on the golden sands I suddenly saw a strange and startling object becoming visible in the heavens. It was a star of surpassing splendour, outshining the sun, but presenting a different appearance. It appeared to be a strong concentration of light, glowing with the power of pure oxygen-gas within an amber-coloured, transparent globe. It cast its brilliant and beautiful rays over the sparkling sea for awhile, and then gradually faded away.

Wondering what this appearance might mean, I looked around me, and then beheld a fleet of ships and boats, which were approaching the island with marvellous rapidity. The ships had all their white sails set, and these were filled

CHAPTER IX.

THE STAR OF VICTORY.

THAT night I really did not know whether it was night or day. In accordance with the prognostications of my learned and powerful friend, I had, in the course of a deep sleep of about twelve hours' duration, the following singular but vivid dream.

I thought I had embarked on board a large vessel, in company with a great number of noisy passengers, who had determined to sail round the world in search of wealth and happiness. We touched at many previously unknown lands, which presented many strange varieties of scenery, and wonderful peculiarities of climate, but failed to reach the objects of our desire. So far from finding wealth, we seemed to be ourselves the targets for the cupidity of the people at the places we visited, for crowds of them ran about while our ship was approaching their shores, holding up their hands, and bellowing with loud voices, 'Give ! give !'

At length, one evening, we descried an island in the distance, which shone in the midst of an emerald sea with the brightness of the noon-day sun. As in our delight we gazed upon it, and fancied that at last our most sanguine anticipations would be realized, a sudden hurricane burst upon us. Fierce and cold rain rolled down from the island

with a prosperous gale; the rowers in the boats tugged at their oars with all their might. Suddenly another terrific storm arose, and after battling with the waves in vain, the violence of the tempest mocking all their efforts, they all disappeared from my sight.

And yet not quite all. One very small skiff survived, in which there was only one person, and that person was a beautiful girl. She rowed her tiny boat with graceful ease, and mounted on the billows like a fearless and majestic swan. Her golden hair clustered in rich masses around her pearly shoulders. Her watchful eyes glanced quickly from side to side like twin stars. She was clothed in garments of the purest white, but wore no covering on her head. Her boat touched the shore, and in a soft, bewitching voice she addressed me:

‘Dost thou wish to leave this island?’

‘I do, madam,’ I replied; ‘I am hungry and thirsty, and can find nothing to eat or drink.’

‘Come with me then,’ she said, ‘and do not touch its riches!’

I entered her little boat in a transport of delight, and she rowed hastily away from the shore. Never in my life had I seen such a transcendently lovely creature. Her beauty cannot be described in words. While her tiny bark flew over the now calm water, I could see the remains of the lost fleet, and the bodies of the unfortunate sailors, lying beneath the surface. My fair fellow-passenger did not utter another word, but on my offering to take the oars she bent her head, intimating that I should sit still. She looked at me sometimes with, I thought, a pitying gaze; at other times, after a hurried glance, she betrayed by a celestial smile an inward consciousness of the sweetest and purest joy. We now approached another island, or continent, very different indeed from that golden shore of destruction which

we had left. Landing upon it, my conductress graciously invited me to follow her. We ascended a rising ground through a rich meadow studded with brilliant flowers, into a garden more charming than any I had ever seen before. A sweet river flowed gently through it, at which I knelt down and quenched my burning thirst; but of the luscious fruit hanging in profusion over the walks I felt that I dared not eat without permission. Now I saw a mansion in the distance, a mansion of exquisite loveliness. It looked like a castle of painted porcelain, just finished. A sudden illumination fell upon it. I turned to see the source of the wonderful light, and again beheld the amber-coloured star. At that moment the young lady stood before me, took my hand in hers, embraced me, and said:

‘Welcome, welcome—happy art thou, for thou hast seen the Star of Victory!’

With a beating heart, and with indescribable joy and pleasure, I walked on by her side. As we approached the mansion, which grew in my dream larger and brighter in its magnificence, my attention was attracted by a personage, clothed in white robes, who suddenly issued from the entrance gate. When the lovely creature at my side saw him she bounded forward, took him by the hand, and danced round him, saying:

‘He is come, Julius; here is Ubertus; I have brought him from the world of Death, and he has seen the Star of Victory!’

He welcomed me with a bright smile. I recognised my old friend, Doctor Julius, but the sweet girl who had saluted me, and danced round him, I had never before seen. Then I awoke from my dream, as all sons of earth must.

‘Had you a good night’s rest?’ asked the Doctor, as we sat down to breakfast. ‘You look flushed and rather bewildered. Did Old Arty, or Old Cly, disturb you? Was

the "poor fellow" Astoragus sitting on your breast all night with his octopus fang at the back of your neck—eh?"

'I am very well, Doctor, thank you,' I answered. 'I have had a most refreshing sleep. Of course the personages you have named do disturb me more or less, but there is no remedy; we must try to endure all things, and resist their evil influence. I wish to take the world as I find it, and fight my way through like a brave soldier.'

He did not reply immediately, and I finished my breakfast in silence. I had been frequently warned never to say too much, and being somewhat garrulous by nature, required warning; and I was determined not to say 'poor fellow' again in that mighty presence, in reference to Astoragus, or any other person. My companion, or patron, or hero, or director—I might appropriately call him the good genius of those subterranean realms—remained wrapt in meditation for some time, and at length lifting up his head, like a lion which scents blood from afar, spoke thus as if in soliloquy:

'Wearisome platitudes, wild speculations incapable of proof; indiscriminate nonsense; universal folly; scandalous desires; wealth, pleasure, fashion; stifling of conscience; contempt of virtue and honour; dangerous political changes; neglect of experience; disregard of frightful examples of decay, disease and death; baseness in the soul, the blood, and the heart—this is the world into which we were born! . . . To what kind of country are we, children of men, now drifting? Who can devise an infallible cure for these diseases? Why are we expected to be as hard and unfeeling as the rocks of the wilderness, and as insensible as the trees of the forest? Our spirit—is it immortal? tender, delicate, sensitive! Our flesh, different from the dust of which it is made, and tortured by heat, by cold, by famine, by excruciating pain. Our limbs may be smashed like rotten sticks, our shivering bodies pierced by the pitiless

blast, or drenched by benumbing rain. Our best affections trampled under foot; the victims of rogues, liars, and villains; the dupes of egregious fools, who think themselves clever and wise. Is there mercy, is there peace, in store for us in the terrible future? What mercy have the winds and the waves, the tigers, scorpions, and serpents for us? Tell me, with your deep analysis of psychological metaphysics, if you have met with it in your dream world. Is there another world where we may yet live, where these persecutions have no existence?"

'Since you ask me, sir, I will also take up my parable. Yes, there is virtue, wisdom, prudence, love, faith, gentleness, feeling and consideration for others! Charity that can give away its gold; ministering spirits who can deny themselves, and watch over beds of cholera and leprosy! There are honest and honourable men and women—blessed be God for them! who are as high above baseness as the golden stars are above the earth. There are men who walk in light and not in darkness, who can subdue evil passions, who can pity and help the poor and the oppressed; who can rejoice in life's pleasures, and weep for its miseries; and for our consolation we have this in our Bible: "I know that my Redeemer liveth!"

'Our Bible! Is it true then?' said the Doctor. 'It speaks of dreams and visions; it gives us wonderful promises: "No plague shall come nigh thy tent"—"Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder"—"I will deliver him and honour him"—"I will set him on high because he hath known my name." Tell me the vision that you had last night upon your bed.'

I accordingly related my dream. The effect it had upon the Doctor was totally unexpected, and perfectly astounding. He started up from his chair, dashed his cup violently to the ground, and growled with set teeth.

'Ha! you have trespassed on my domain! You have seen that fearful star of my destiny, and you have seen it twice; I have also seen it twice in my dreams, when I thought it foretold me nothing but evil—and undying powers of heaven or hell—you have seen my Helen, and she embraced and kissed you. What mysterious chain is binding your fate to mine? Answer me!

I was dumb.

He now walked rapidly up and down the room, foaming under the influence of some ungovernable passion. Then he stopped suddenly before me and spoke again.

'When you see that star for the third time, I have been told, your victory will be won, and you will be a happy man. Shall I be happy, too, when I see it for the third time? I cannot be happy without my blessed freedom, and the light of the sun of heaven. You saw it twice in the same vision, but from the time I saw it first to its second appearance more than one hundred years elapsed. You saw my Helen, and her mansion, and her garden, and you drank the water of her celestial river, and she embraced and kissed you. I have also seen her in my visions, but she embraced and kissed me not. She took my hand, and smiled on me with her enchanting smile, and danced round me like an enraptured fawn. Tell me,' he shouted fiercely—'tell me, are you that villain, Banwell Reginald?'

'I am not; I never heard of him.'

'You are not; he never had your eyes or your forehead, or your lips which my Helen hath pressed with hers.'

'You forget, Doctor, that it was only in a dream; and how can you say that the girl I saw was your Helen? Remember also this very remarkable fact, in which I see a prodigious quantity of ointment to heal your wounded spirit; you say that Helen smiled sweetly upon you, and danced round you like a fawn. Does not that show plainly

that she regards you as her wedded husband, and I believe you cannot dispute that her conduct to me proves quite as clearly that she looks upon me as her brother.'

'Her brother!' He laughed disdainfully. 'Weak words—vain words of duplicity and self-deception. Beware of the devil's arts! She was my Helen, and I believe her spirit was present with you while you slept—"angels have charge over us." When I saw her in my dreams she pointed to that amber star and said: "Behold the STAR OF VICTORY! Look upon it and be happy for ever!" When I saw it again a hundred years later, she was also present, and said, half laughing, half crying, and her delicious voice thrilling through my heart: "Happy art thou, O Julius, for thou hast seen the STAR OF VICTORY!" And now to be buried in a living tomb, with devils for my playfellows! Oh, merciful God! Oh, Christ, thou blessed Son of God, save me! Oh, Helen, Helen, angelic spirit of my lost love, deliver me!'

Here the poor Doctor broke completely down. He threw himself upon the hard stone floor, and wept as if his very heart were breaking. I became dreadfully alarmed, and implored him to be calm, and arm himself with manly courage and resolution. He commanded me, as well as he could in his agony, to retire to my room and leave him to himself. I obeyed, lay down on my bed, and slept again.

When I returned to the breakfast-room it was empty, and I sat there for a long time, not knowing what to do. I could not go out into the hospital for fear of annoying my host, nor out into the streets for fear of being annoyed or knocked down myself. I therefore whiled away the time by alternately sitting still and walking up and down, like a soldier on guard. While so employed I heard a repetition of the strange music which had aroused me out of the insensibility into which I fell on the field of battle. It commenced at a considerable distance, and gradually ap-

proached, until it seemed to be actually in the adjoining room. It sounded like a band of curious instruments, played by a number of persons, and they played a slow and solemn march, very much like those familiar ones, the 'Dead March in Saul,' and 'See the Conquering Hero Comes,' blended together. The band ceased, and after a short pause commenced another tune, a more lively air, and an extremely pretty one, and I thought I recognised the sound of voices accompanying the instruments. After a few more tunes the music began to recede, the performers playing a quick march, and I was left to my own reflections.

My protector made his appearance at last ; his serenity, if not his cheerfulness, had returned, and, except for the fiery redness of his eyes, no observer could tell that anything more grave than usual had happened to him. He told me that the great conqueror who had crushed me was much better, and had expressed his regret at having caused me additional discomfort. He hoped to have the pleasure of meeting me at his next battle, and would certainly make me a Marshal of his Empire on the field. 'You are quite a hero with most of them already,' continued the Doctor with a laugh. 'They saw you in the Demon's carriage, and think you are somebody who is going to do great things and become famous, and if you do you'll have all the world bowing and scraping to you. Julius Cæsar wants you, and promises to make you a conqueror. Alexander the Great says that if you are placed on his staff, you shall have the honour of polishing his armour and boots. But perhaps you are famous already ; are you a poet ?'

'A poet, Doctor ?' I replied ; 'why, nearly everybody writes poetry ; but if a man wants to be famous, he must go in for breeding rams and bulls.'

'Recite me a verse or two of your composition ; it will cheer me up ; I am in low spirits.'

'I wrote an ode to my native river many years ago ; here it is, sir :

" Romantic Dodder ! in the murmur
Of thy swiftly flowing stream
I think I hear a soft, faint echo,
Like the music of a dream,
While wandering on thy verdant bank,
Where brilliant daisies richly growing,
All tell me truly how they love
To dwell where thou art flowing ;
Far in the deep and sheltered glade,
Beneath the bright laburnum flower
That hides the lonely student's cell,
And sweetly shadows maiden's bower ;
Or winding through the gardens fair,
Where children, romping, playing, skipping,
In summer robes so gaily dressed,
With tiny hands thy water sipping.
Now gliding by the meadow's marge,
With birds' unceasing twitter,
Heardest thou the mower's jest
So well repaid by milkmaid's titter ?
Onward by the village green,
The gray-stone bridge thy ripples spanning ;
Faster by the noisy mill,
Thy face the gentle breezes fanning ;
Gushing o'er the stony dam,
From point to point with mimic thunder,
Sparkling in thy snowy spray,
While infant barks are dashed asunder ;
Roam thou to thy ocean home,
No longer to mine eyes displaying
The rosy hues of years gone by,
When on thy dear and green bank straying.
And still, O Dodder ! still thou art
The loveliest queen of rivers flowing."

'Humph ! ha ! thank you,' said the Doctor. 'Where is that "Dodder" which you are trying to make famous ?'

'It is a beautiful little river, sir, which falls into the Liffey, near Dublin, my native city.'

Doctor Julius now had recourse to his pipe. It seemed to be his only solace in that gloomy place, where a sunbeam never penetrated, where a sympathetic pressure of the hand of fellowship was never felt. He had spoken about going

to see Helen, and of introducing me to her, and I certainly longed to see again the lovely lady of my dream. I asked myself if it were possible she could be the famous Helen of Troy, or was she, alas! only another Bellagranda? Perish the infamous thought! I dared not ask the Doctor a question on the subject; I had everything to fear if I excited his displeasure, but he had nothing to fear from me, as I was not gifted with supernatural power.

'I have an insatiable curiosity, Ubertus,' he said, through his clouds of smoke, 'to know more about that bright world of yours above-ground. It is so long since I was there that my life upon it appears to me now like a far distant dream. I wish I could see it again. How happy would I be if I could exchange my palace here for the poorest, lowliest hut on the surface of the earth. I am rich and powerful here, as you have seen and shall see, and as I do not abuse my power like the Demon does, I am very well liked by the people. They call me by the simple name of Doctor Julius; some of them call me the good physician. I gave to you the name of "Rabbitonius" because you raved so constantly and piteously about rabbits, fines, taxation, and ruin, in your delirium, that I thought it would do as well as any other. I ran the risk, it is true, of bringing on a relapse by recalling disagreeable recollections, but then I have powerful drugs. You are getting strong again; in a few days you will be as well as ever. I can see by the returning clearness of your eyes, and the freshening up of the colour of your skin, that, if you are not likely to grow young again, you will not grow old for a number of years to come.'

'I owe you a debt of gratitude, Doctor,' I replied, 'which I could not repay, were I to live for another hundred years.'

'Well, don't consider yourself in my debt,' he rejoined; 'I did my duty. But it surprises me exceedingly to see you here at all, so young, so apparently childlike in your ways

and habits of thought. I cannot imagine why the Demon brought you here; he can get plenty of private secretaries—hardened, unprincipled old rascals—without seeking to beguile an innocent, inexperienced youth like you. But remember what I told you: if you dally with his offers you are lost. Put your foot down on them at once. He does not know his own mind for two minutes together. The only thing he is constant in is the ruin of the human race, and he is so clever and artful that he succeeds in making countless thousands of poor weak men and women quite as bad as himself. Take my advice, Ubertus; I am older than you. I am two hundred and thirty-one years of age. I died at the early age of fifty-one, and have lived in this hole one hundred and eighty years.'

'A hundred and eighty years!' I exclaimed in awe and astonishment.

'Yes. I was born in London in 1644, and remember when Charles the First was beheaded.'

'What brought you here, venerable sir?' I asked, trembling, 'if I may dare to put such a question. You are to all appearance young, healthy, and vigorous. You wear your own natural hair, and your skin is clear and unwrinkled. You do not seem to be bearing the weight of a load of care, and you have no marks that I can see of deadly, unrepented sin. What brought you here, then? Did the Demon beguile you, or force you, as he did me?'

'I could treat you to a long story,' he answered, 'but you might not consider it a treat, so I will make it a very short one. The Demon, or some of his brethren, for their name is legion, did certainly beguile me, hardened my conscience, and deprived me of my sense. I am here through my own carelessness and indifference, fostered by foolish, evil companions, and blinded by love of their approbation. I forgot or despised the gravity of demeanour which is most

becoming in an intellectual being, and gave myself up to lightness of thought, frivolity of speech, and laxity of manners, if not of principles. That is why I am here. I never committed a crime against society, but I was fond of parties, and could drink my glass and sing my song. I was praised by my large circle of acquaintances, who conferred upon me the nickname of "Jolly Chirurgeon"; that is why I am here. I was too fond of the world: not an open scoffer at the religion of Jesus Christ: a believer at one time, a doubter at another, I could not make up my mind. I did not treat religion with contempt, but I gave it no deep consideration. May I be pardoned for my folly! And to crown all I became an idolater.'

'An idolater, Doctor!'

'Yes, I fell in love—madly, deeply, desperately, in love—and fell down, so to speak, and worshipped the object of my love; another reason why I am here. That is my story for the present, and you must be satisfied with that.'

'Have you no hope, my dear sir, of ever being released from this horrible pit?' I asked deferentially.

'Very little,' he replied sadly. 'But I do not think that the good God, whom I have now learned to love and worship above all persons and things, will leave me here for ever. It can give Him no pleasure, and it certainly gives me an immense amount of pain. For one hundred and eighty years I have followed the same round—setting these men up again who have been struck down in battle, and trying to heal the diseases of other poor wretches. That is my occupation. It is true I have learned many things which are not known, or even suspected, in your world, and many things are concealed from me which perhaps you know. My researches in chemistry have made me master of some wonderful secrets. If I could only induce that infernal Demon to take me up in his balloon,

I might be able to outwit him and make my escape; but he will not, and I cannot go without his consent. He says that I dare not escape from him, and defies me to outwit him.'

'I would to heaven I could help you, sir!' I said fervently.

'Perhaps you may,' he replied. 'Who can tell what a day or a week may bring forth? I am always on the watch for an opportunity, and when it comes, Mr. Demon, I'm your man. What are you doing up there just now in your world?'

'It would take me too long to tell you everything, sir; but we are not doing very much. The world is at peace now, but the great nations have been expecting war, and making preparations for it. They do little but hound each other on, and scowl and growl at each other through their newspapers. Every day sees some new invention for the destruction of men. Every hour some cause of bitter jealousy and hatred crops up. England, as some say, is more or less unprepared, relying on the courage and abilities of her sons should her peace be disturbed. But she is torn to pieces internally by the ferocity of party spirit and democratic combinations; blown to a white heat by factious mob-orators, who study only their own interest, the breath of whose nostrils is popular applause. Ireland is on the verge of a revolution, clamouring loudly for Home Rule. If she took my humble advice she would be satisfied to remain as she is. France is preparing to do some mighty deeds of bloodshed, and ruffles her feathers, and takes off her coat, at every wind that blows. Russia, Germany, and Austria are steadily arming and watching each other; and no doubt the devil is watching them all, and laughing.'

'Hush! hush! You said something about having come from the Great Lake of Tasmania; I never heard of the

place before. Do the people there inhabit houses like the people in England, or do they live underground? Can they read, and write, and spell properly? Are they rational beings, or do they walk on their heads or their heels?

I now gave the simple-hearted Doctor, for whom my respect and affection kept on constantly increasing, as full an account as I could of our great Australian colonies, with which I need not trouble the reader. He drank in every word with greediness. If I had sat with him for six months, I could not have satisfied his eager thirst for knowledge of the world.

'Tasmania is an island,' he said. 'When was it discovered?—by whom? How large is it? What kind of a place is it? Is it barren or fruitful?—happy or miserable?—beautiful or ugly? What do its lakes look like?' etc.

'A hundred questions to answer all in a moment. Forbear to ask, sir, and I will tell you all I know. It is one of the most lovely islands of the Southern Hemisphere, worthy of being beloved not only for its healthy and pleasant climate, but for the value of its mineral wealth, and the excellence and variety of its productions.'

I described to my delighted friend in glowing language the surpassing beauty of its mountains, lakes, and rivers; the grandeur of its trackless forests; the glory of its enchanting scenery, here, there, and everywhere. Its temperate climate favoured the growth of cereals and fruits; its delicious apples were famous in London. Its soil was most fertile in many favoured spots. It was free in summer from suffocating heat, and, except in the lake country, from intense frosts in winter. I was also careful to explain that there were thousands of acres of land in Tasmania which were worth nothing, being barren rocks and useless marshes, sandy and impenetrable scrubs, and woods choked with prickly heaths, and dense masses of ferns—land totally

unfit for cultivation, where only opossums and wild cats exist. It is certainly true that the agricultural and pastoral wealth of the country is confined to a very small proportion of its actual surface.

'What kind of a Government have you in Tasmania?' he asked.

'That is exactly where our boots and shoes pinch us, sir,' I answered in a subdued voice; 'we have grown too big for them. It is dangerous to speak of our Government: it might be better; it might be worse. I remember when we had a moderately careful and economical Government—one that condescended to inquire, "How will it fare with generations yet unborn?" Now we have one—a Home Rule, which is incurably puffed up—and we are an aspiring and ambitious people. We have a Governor sent out from England, a grand Legislative Council, and a House of Assembly, which enact as many laws for a community of about one hundred and fifty thousand people as would suffice for one of ten millions. Our public debt now amounts to about eight millions sterling, and is constantly increasing. The taxes we have to pay for the interest of our debt, and the expenses of our Government, are very considerable, and we are constantly being threatened with additional exactions. We ought to be a happy people, but we are little more than slaves, ground down by all kinds of evils and exactions.'

'"Evils and exactions!"' echoed the Doctor, puffing away at his enormous pipe—"evils and exactions!" What do you mean?

'I mean this: I have no desire to be witty at the expense of others, or to be offensive to anyone in particular, but I am of opinion that our Government is driving us to ruin without pity or remorse.'

'Why do you let it?'

'We cannot help ourselves. There is scarcely any

unanimity of thought or sentiment in the island. The genii of apathy and indifference sit on the tops of her mountains and rule over the land. Her House of Assembly is one of inflated millionaires. Have you a famous drug here which has the effect of puffing out the patient who swallows it, and making him think he is a great being, who is raised immeasurably above all mean and contemptible ideas of care, caution, and economy?’

‘I have the very thing—*taxacorum puffinalis*, extracted from the cube root of electric fire.’

‘A very appropriate name and derivation,’ said I, laughing, although I was more inclined to cry. ‘And have you another which has the opposite effect—which reduces the unfortunate creature until he is a mere bag of bones, and deprives him of all energy, bodily comfort, and mental peace?’

‘Yes, another very powerful medicine—*taxacorum squesezatalis*, distilled from the concentrated essence of flea and scorpion broth.’

‘It is another most appropriate name and derivation, and I think that the very first thing which our House of Assembly does, before it enters upon any public business, is to administer a strong dose of the first medicine to itself, and a dose of the last, equally strong, to the unhappy people who elected it.’

The Doctor laid down his pipe, used his pocket-handkerchief with a startling report, and laughed again.

‘I wish I could see you, Ubertus, at the bar of your House of Assembly,’ he said. ‘I’d like to see you on your knees apologizing to the Honourable Members. But, seriously, you know there must be a Government of some kind, and the people must be taxed to pay its expenses.’

‘Undoubtedly, sir—moderate, sensible, and necessary taxation; but, unhappily, we are being governed at a ruinously fast and extravagant rate. We must appear before

the world as a great and rich community, or be a mere nothing at all in its eyes. There is no such thing as a prudent medium to be observed.’

‘You must be satisfied to pay for substantial and permanent improvements, my friend.’

‘Substantial improvements! Yes, indeed, and it amounts to this: we are to be improved off the face of the earth! We are to have railways all over the island, whether there is traffic for them or not; we are to be mocked by reproductive works which cost hundreds of thousands of pounds, and do not reproduce one penny. We are to be hoodwinked, and told that our riches are inexhaustible while we are borrowing millions! We have additional taxation laid upon us after the severe droughts, which wither us to the core, and cause enormous losses. We have our country flooded with labourers while the borrowed money is being squandered, and these will, in another year or two, constitute a grand army of unemployed. This House of Assembly, which is composed principally of merchants and the denizens of towns, says that nearly all the wealth of the colony is appropriated by the owners of land, consequently all their efforts are concentrated on making these unlucky men bear the heaviest burdens.’

‘Why are you not in the House, Ubertus? You might bring it to its senses.’

‘No, sir, the House would not listen to me. It will listen to no reason, and take no warning. It waits to be taught by bitter experience. It has not a penny laid by for a rainy day, such as the landing of a foreign enemy on our shores; nothing but debt, always increasing debt, to stare us in the face. The gigantic machinery of Government must be kept in motion, and it must be well oiled so that it may run smoothly; but I expect that some day it will fly to pieces.’

'Like the Demon's lightning balloon,' said the Doctor with a laugh.

'Surely *that* has not gone to pieces!' I cried in great alarm.

'Not yet, but it may go some day.'

'The members of our Parliament, who are all men of undoubted honour, and whom I would treat with every possible respect, sit or recline on their luxurious couches——'

'The couches of Astoragus!' broke in the Doctor with another roar.

'I did not say so, sir. If they kindly, and for my own good and for that of my family, robbed me of every farthing I possess, may they be spared from the couches of Astoragus! They bask in the glory of their electric lights, and feel conscious of being heroes, with the attention, the eyes of beauty, and the criticism of the press, riveted upon them. It is no wonder that they should nearly explode with the pride of place and power, and be determined to show the world that the charming island which they govern is now, whatever it may have been once, no insignificant dusthole. The newspapers are teeming, day by day, with articles and letters full of remonstrances, warnings, and entreaties against their headlong course to financial destruction, but in vain. If any member is hardy enough to talk to them about prudence and economy, he is immediately snubbed, and treated to floods of cold water. It is heartrending to think that we are altogether at the mercy of men like these, who are indifferent to our future freedom from a crushing debt, and to the future happiness of our children's children.'

'And what remedy would you suggest for this alarming state of things?'

'There is no remedy that I know of but the power, the will, and the firmness to say, when large sums of money

are demanded, by portions of the public, for this new road or that new railway, or for some indispensable bridge or jetty, "Gentlemen, we cannot afford it—we must check the growth of our enormous liabilities. We must limit our expenses, and dispense with the services of many public servants. We have reduced the salary of our Governor, and our own salaries as responsible ministers, from nine hundred pounds a year to seven hundred pounds."

'Very praiseworthy of them, too,' said the Doctor.

'Yes, and they should continue: "We are entrusted by the public at large with the management of their financial affairs, and it would be gross malversation in us to spend their money, which the majority of them find it very difficult to procure, with undue extravagance, and so add to their burdens. We are, in fact, the paid servants of the community, and we are bound to protect our employers."'

'There is sound sense in that.'

'There are truth, justice, and mercy in it, sir. It ought to be the invariable governing principle of every Parliament, but it is not. Overwhelming desire for office, for patronage, for the pleasure of spending money, and so purchasing popularity, are always rising to the surface, and must be gratified whenever opportunities occur. I do not condemn improvements that are shown to be necessary and advisable, but I do condemn reckless and wasteful expenditure of borrowed capital. I do not constitute myself the judge of our Government—the newspapers, and some members of Parliament, tell me enough about it. My abilities, whatever they may be, shall not be devoted to the thankless task of exposing every public abuse. Our Home Rule Parliament intends, doubtless, that we should all be happy and rich, yet it passes Acts which command what I must call tyranny and robbery. Tyranny, my dear sir, is the ruin of our world—the tyranny of wealth, of creditors, of

pertinacious mischief-makers, of cursed political agitators. Must we always submit without a murmur to the iron-hearted disturbers of our peace ?

'You are a thinking man, Ubertus,' said the Doctor gravely ; 'but many people would call you a downright fool. You know nothing at all about tyranny or cruelty. Your Government is one of angels. What if you had a Council of Ten, as they had in Venice long ago ; or a Star Chamber, as they had in England in the days of Charles the First ; or fiery stakes, as in the days of Queen Mary ?'

'If I were not a thinking man, sir,' I answered, 'I should despise myself, though I am not in the habit of despising those who do not think—I only pity them. It is likely that I am myself despised. My serious thoughts dwell far beyond our present state of existence. Eternal life is to me something real and awful. I believe that men and women are the germs of mighty beings, as tiny nuts and berries are those of the giants of the forest. The power of their Creator can make them grow great, and decree that they shall never die. Are they justified, then, in wasting their time in frivolous amusements, in hunting wildly after pleasure and excitement ; in gambling, drinking, evil speaking, or breaking the heads of their neighbours ? They think a great deal of themselves, of their drastic changes and wonderful improvements, which are to stop people's mouths from asking for anything more for ever and ever, so perfectly happy and contented they shall be. Every frothy agitator lays down the law to his audience, and to the world, as who shall say, "I am Sir Oracle, and when I ope my lips let no dog bark !" Men, intellectual men, who are on the brink of the grave, worship their worldly power, and will not surrender one particle of it even when it is likely to plunge a peaceful nation into all the horrors of civil war !'

'Go on, sir,' said my companion, laughing ; 'your eloquence

charms me. Were I like you I'd make a noise in the world ; you may do so yet. But if you expect people to be models of perfection—as wise, as true, as prudent, as thoughtful, as you are yourself, in your own modest opinion, you will be mistaken.'

'My opinion of myself, my friend, is that I am nothing. To be simple Oliver Ubertus to the end of my life is all my desire. I am weak and foolish now, but the universe is thronged with mighty beings who perhaps had their origin in creatures far lower than I am. We are surrounded by giant suns hundreds of times greater than our own sublime source of light and heat. Who can imagine their vastness, or conceive the wonders they contain ? But in our self-satisfied state of existence there are but few who care to think of things like these.'

'Few, indeed,' said my companion ; 'but you have your infallible philosophers, who can tell you all about your origin, the cause of your present exaltation and degradation, and your future destiny. Well, we must have faith—not in them, but in God—and patience, and be cheerful, and hope for the best. We shall undoubtedly see some very wonderful things. We shall become acquainted with realities, the knowledge of which all the money in the world could not buy : yet they may be made known to comparative children. Happy would we be if we were more simple and honest ; if we did not seek to blind and confound the faculties of others by the display of the blindness and foolishness of our own. But *ita lex scripta est*, we cannot alter our own nature ; we can only make war upon our wicked inclinations. There are many who can say with Troilus :

"Alas ! it is my vice, my fault,
While others fish with craft for great opinion,
I with great truth catch mere simplicity :
While some with cunning gild their copper crowns,
With truth and plainness I do wear mine bare."

The world was always full of scourges and tyrannies, ever since the days of Cain. Shall it be always so? There is no sign of any change. One of our greatest scourges is a too vivid imagination, and I am strongly inclined to think it is yours. Beware of it, it is the parent of a thousand crimes. I can see through you, and read your heart like printed paper. If you could die before God called you, without committing a deadly sin, your friends above-ground would long for you in vain. You are too sensitive. You are thrown into agonies by the contempt of men. But be wise and strong; avoid the errors of self-conceit; amuse yourself with your work and your books, and learn to wait until your time of deliverance shall come. Love not the foolish world; thirst not for its wealth or fame; its praises are questionable, its pleasures are contemptible. No man need envy Wolsey, or Buckingham; no woman need wish to change places with Catherine de Medici, or our Bellagrande. Now tell me something about your Irish people, and the Home Rule which you told me they are going mad about.'

'It is a most painful and delicate subject, sir, and in every well-balanced mind creates nothing but sadness and bitterness. No native of the Emerald Isle, whether Catholic or Protestant, loves his country more than I do. She is a small island on the earth, a little larger than Tasmania, yet she makes more noise, and causes more confusion, than two or three mighty empires. She has suffered from time immemorial from the diseases of worldliness and inflation of mind. I feel compelled to tell the truth, exaggerating and extenuating nothing. A large majority of her inhabitants think that she is, or ought to be, a nation within herself, entirely distinct and separate from the English nation, with which they have no desire to be amalgamated. There are about three millions of them, all burning for the power and

profit which self-government would, as they think, confer upon them. Patriotic leaders spring up from time to time, men who are gifted with the power of speaking in public, but who have greater talents for political disturbance than for governing any country to its satisfaction; whose love of self is far stronger than their love of peace; and they fan into a flame the fierce anger and ambition of the multitude. They take delight in making small things appear great, in deceiving their hearers by misrepresentations, bitter words, and ferocious threats and gesticulations. The populace are ravished with their talk; they are heroes and demigods. If we listen to these men, we are told that the justice and innocence are all on their side, while the barbarous tyranny and cruel injustice are all on the side of their enemies, as they deem the English people. While admitting that Ireland has been treated with great severity in the past, I must confess that she brought much of her trouble on herself. Cannot something be done to secure peace?' PUBLIC LIBRARY OF VICTORIA

'Unquestionably,' said the Doctor; 'I remember that in my time there was a rebellion. Ireland was always in hot water and giving trouble then. Cromwell made the disturbers respect his military talents.'

'All this is old news to you, sir; some men are always giving trouble; nothing but the wholesome discipline of the army or navy will keep them in order. My unruly countrymen—alas! that I should say so—are hated and despised all the world over, and are called in derision "Pestilent Irish." And is it any wonder? According to my belief, the British Islands were intended, by Him who formed them, to be one united nation, great and powerful in our little world; able to make itself respected, and to insist on peace to the farthest parts of the earth; and having been united as one for centuries, what reasonable man can have patience with those unprincipled orators who drive a

profitable trade by stirring up the most savage passions of the human heart?’

The Doctor groaned in acquiescence.

‘I have spoken of the national, or patriotic, party, boiling over with hatred of England. There is another party, numbering about two millions, certainly the better informed and more peacefully inclined party, which is loyal to the Crown, and in favour of the closest union with England. It is bitterly opposed to Home Rule, which means throwing the governing and taxing power into the hands of the majority, no matter of what disloyal and discordant elements it may be composed.’

Here I was alarmed to see a wonderful change coming over my auditor. He began to fidget uneasily in his chair, stare wildly about him, shuffle with his feet, and betray by other signs of disquietude his consciousness that a formidable and unwelcome presence had intruded itself upon us. Then he suddenly started up, and walked hastily into his hospital. At the same moment the lamp on the table emitted a blue light, and a suffocating odour diffused itself through the apartment. I looked round me in terror, and distinctly saw, in my mind’s eye, the Demon’s fiendish balloon driver, Obeltub, scowling, and shaking his fist at me from a corner of the room. I immediately retreated into my own cell, and took refuge in my bed, where, happily, my spiritual enemies left me in peace; but, as I closed my eyes in sleep, I heard a wild, sardonic laugh ringing through the vaulted chambers.

CHAPTER X.

TALKS WITH THE DOCTOR.

I MAY now give some more careful details respecting the underground city which it was my good or evil fortune to visit in company with the Demon. My readers may wish to know how the inhabitants got there, for the balloon, notwithstanding its monstrous size, was only provided with four comfortable seats. What, I may be asked, did their food consist of, and how and where did they procure it? How did horses, and other creatures, get there, and how were they fed? Where and how was the gas, which was in constant consumption, manufactured? Where did they get wood to make their furniture? How make their carriages, their cannon? Who supplied them with gunpowder, and the necessary materials for their mysterious existence?

Once for all, in answer to these questions, I must reply that I cannot tell. My adventure seemed to me so like a hideous dream, with a bright gleam of moral sunshine in it here and there, that it did not occur to me to gather all the information which I ought to have collected. It must be remembered that my visit was a very short one, and more than half of it was spent on a bed of sickness.

With the exception of eating a certain kind of food, the ordinary functions of nature were entirely suspended. The

food was a kind of porridge, and seemed to have been dug out of the earth. A very small quantity was sufficient at each meal. No drink, except for the hospital patients, was required; but great princesses, like Bellagranda and Cleopatra, had wine like blood. In Doré's Milton there is an illustration of the lines:

‘Their summons called,
From every band and squared regiment
By place or choice the worthiest—

which represents an innumerable host of the armed inhabitants of hell assembling to the sound of trumpets. While looking on splendid masterpieces of art like that, we do not pause to inquire where all the beautiful horses on which the demons are mounted came from, or where they got their dresses, arms, and accoutrements. So I hope my readers will not be hypercritical. I try to describe the scenes that met my view as simply as possible. Of nearly all the mysterious matters connected with the gloomy pit I am entirely ignorant.

There were no children in this place, and the city seemed sad and desolate without them. I questioned Florian as to the number and quality of the patients in the hospital; but he shook his head, and looked round him with a peculiar smile, intimating that he was forbidden to speak. I myself stood too much in awe of the Doctor to question him on that or any other subject, although he had answered some of my inquiries without getting into a rage. He was evidently possessed of some wonderful powers, for he had threatened to turn his faithful servant into a dancing goat. Could he really do so? and if so, how did he come by his power? If he were the Demon's minister, or colleague, he certainly knew how to play the part of a finished hypocrite. He was either a friend to me, and an enemy to the Demon, or the converse. If my enemy, what object had he

in view by pretending to be my friend? If *his* enemy, how was it that the powerful potentate did not find him out, and punish him accordingly? His power was inferior to that of his master, for he could not effect his own release, and return to the earth. He had no jurisdiction over the lighting balloon. There were diseases among the people which he could not cure. His power appeared to me to be a check upon, or a counterpoise to, that of the Demon, but why should the latter permit this? These were tangled webs, which I could not and did not try to unravel.

Another web, as distracting as that of Penelope, remains behind. The Doctor had asked me what mysterious influence bound me to him. And I now asked myself what extraordinary combination of circumstances was binding him to me. I found myself loving and respecting him more than I had ever loved or respected any man on earth, except two or three very near relatives. If he were in reality a hypocrite and a villain, I could not be drawn to him in this remarkable manner. He was certainly true and honourable, and had a noble and generous mind, although doubtless afflicted with various eccentricities. My astonishing dream had touched him most keenly, and opened up a chapter of his secret history, and I burned with a longing desire to know more about him and his beautiful Helen, but felt that it would be great insolence on my part to ask him to tell me what, possibly, he might have good reasons for concealing.

It was most surprising, too, that he should have seen in his visions the same amber-coloured star that I had seen, and that it had been named to him also as the Star of Victory. What could this mean, and what did it portend? The star and Helen appearing to us both; I sailing with her in her little boat, and walking by her side in her magnificent garden; he coming forth from the grand

mansion, fresh and young and in shining garments! And now the possible answer flashed upon me. Did it mean that it was to be my glorious privilege to help him to make his escape from this dreadful den? Was it probable that I, a poor weak creature who could not save himself, could assist him to outwit the crafty being who held him in durance! Oh, if I could only help him in the smallest possible way, so that with my help he could fly to the ever-open arms of Him who alone can save, I should be happy—happy for evermore!

My preserver came in for the evening while I was absorbed in these meditations. He seemed tired and woe-begone as he sat down, and lit his pipe in silence. I sat in deferential silence, too, stealing a furtive glance at him now and again, wondering if it could be really true that a man of his appearance had been actually born before King Charles the First was beheaded! He did not remain silent long, but, after emitting about a dozen whiffs of smoke, which seemed to cheer him up wonderfully, abruptly addressed me thus:

'You are getting on famously, Ubertus: in four days the Demon will be here, and you must be ready; you will be well enough to go up with him then. I fear that we must then part for ever. During our short acquaintance I have learned to regard you as a friend; I might say to love you as a son, or a brother. I shall be glad on your account when you are gone, sorry enough on my own, if I shall be left behind.'

My eyes filled with tears. 'Is there no probability of your being able to come with us, Doctor?' I asked.

'Scarcely any,' he replied. 'If the Demon should take an obstinate fit it will be impossible to move him. He is jealous and suspicious of me, and he fears my power. He thinks that I have some portion of a Spirit within me

which is superior to his, and I think he is right. To go no further than your fascinating friend Bellagrande, he, whom she acknowledges to be her "dear papa," cannot control her when she gets into her tantrums, but is obliged to apply to me for assistance. She is powerful, too, and would fly out on the earth with all her dogs, as an innumerable army of fiery serpents, were it not for my spells and physic. It shows you what evolution is. There is hardly a limit to the power and perfection to which we may arrive in the fulness of time. Seeing that our power is divided—he monarch of the upper world, and prince of the power of the air, and I his physician and supreme elder here in his absence—he thinks that his affairs would go to ruin if I made my escape, which he knows I am longing to do. He will not take me up. Every time he goes himself he has the balloon searched, lest I should be there in the shape of a bird or a mouse. He is pleased to set a very high value upon me and my services, and has told me several times that he would sooner lose a million of his ordinary subjects than his great and clever Director-General. Of course he is a gross flatterer, and a liar and deceiver to the back-bone; but we must not speak of him; he may astonish us when we least expect it. What kind of people have you in your world now?

'I should think they are nearly the same kind of people as you had in yours, sir, in the days of Cromwell and Charles the Second. We are changed, of course—improved, if you will allow it; our minds expanded by a wider sphere of knowledge, and perhaps made wiser, though that is doubtful, by the additional experience of two hundred years. Our outward manners may be more refined, our habits more pacific, and our vices less prominent than they were; but men are still, and I suppose always will be, subservient to their ruling passions. If all men lived to be a hundred

years old, two-thirds of them would not live long enough to learn sense and gentlemanly manners. We have good men, men of sterling worth, who abound in charity and benevolence. We have good and upright clergymen who do their duty faithfully. We have hospitals and asylums, where noble-minded men and women minister to the necessities of the sick, and the wounded in battle. What more can I say?

‘A great deal more; what is your own history?’

I gave him a *résumé* of my own history, of my early follies, my great calamities, all my serious troubles, and my wonderful escapes from terrible injuries or death. I told him that I had cause to thank God every waking hour for renewed and undeserved mercies, especially for being saved from mental blindness, debauchery, and dishonour, and the degradation of being a mere money-making machine.

‘What place does England hold now among the nations?’

‘A greater place than ever. She is greater than all other nations in civilization, and in physical power. All other nations seem to be a compound of hatred and evil passions, with many noble individual exceptions. England alone (though I might also say the United States of America) is calm and free, willing to be friendly with all other nations. She rules over a world-wide empire. Oh that she might remain united, contented, and happy! There sits a Queen on the throne of England whom all her subjects adore, and she has some three or four hundred millions of them. We have great and wonderful men, great in politics, law, science, medicine, and divinity. We have men and women, sir, who are famous authors, poets, historians, novelists, writers on every subject you can think of. I could tell you of our generals and admirals, who have fought and conquered the enemies of their country since you were taken from the

world—of Marlborough and Wellington, of Benbow and Nelson, and hundreds more. We lived in the reigns of William the Third, Anne, and the four Georges in the heroic age; now we are living in the golden age.’

‘Why the golden age?’

‘Because people almost worship gold. Everyone, without exception, is thinking of it constantly, and desiring to possess it. The rich are perpetually craving for more. The poor think and dream of it night and day with sighs and tears. And, indeed, we can hardly blame the poor creatures when we know that in our world a man without money is a despised and miserable being. Thousands are rolling in riches and revelling in pomp and luxury, many of them still unsatisfied; tens of thousands cannot get food enough to eat, or clothes to keep them warm in winter.’

‘How do they conduct themselves?’

‘They have their evil passions, which they nurse and keep hot in their bosoms, as if they were angelic messengers of love, instead of being what they are—venomous destroyers; they have their pride, envy, jealousy, malice and bitterness. We have tyrants and self-worshippers who cannot bear the slightest opposition to their will—despots of society, all the more dangerous because they have the gift of eloquence; political plunderers who are never tired of devising schemes of legalized robbery—insatiable bugbears who keep us in constant hot water.’

‘We have plenty of that stamp here,’ said the Doctor; ‘but they are not allowed to have their own way. A pot of boiling pitch, moral or physical, is not a bad cure for their diseases. You have larrikins too; I think I heard you use that word.’

‘Yes, we have larrikins, and larrikins who curse and swear, and insult passers-by, who stand for hours at the corners of streets. And we have liars, and drunkards, and

cheats, and villains of all descriptions. And let me not forget that we also have our kind-hearted and talented doctors like you, sir, without whose help in time of need our lives would not be worth a farthing.'

'Well,' said he with a laugh, 'you can flatter and poke fun, I see and hear, Mr. Oliver Ubertus. You will make a capital private secretary to the Demon; that exalted individual knows how to choose his servants. And as a new husband for Bellagrandia you will be unrivalled. Tell me something more. What are your social habits? What are your fresh scientific discoveries, and your latest great literary productions. Tell me the names of your wonderful men and women; tell me everything. I believe your world above ground is far more astonishing than this which is below it.'

'We are certainly living in a wonderful world, Doctor,' I answered. 'We are living in a plurality of worlds. Our fashionable world is naturally gay, giddy, and thoughtless, but not having been born into it I know but little about it. Of our sporting world I am still more ignorant. Our literary world is more to my taste, but it scarcely reaches so far from England as Tasmania. There is but sorry encouragement for literary men in our quarter of the earth. The world is full of books, and books do not produce wool or even goat's hair. England supplies us with plenty of literature of all kinds, and we have our public libraries and local newspapers to keep us abreast of the times. Our scientific world is indeed a world of wonders. Our electric telegraph flashes intelligence to us from England, a distance of sixteen thousand miles, in a couple of hours. By means of the telephone we can converse with each other while we are many miles apart. The phonograph brings to us again the voices of the dead just as they were spoken, and of the living who are at the other side of the broadest oceans. We can

hear the Prince of Wales and Mr. Gladstone speaking in public assemblies, and bands of music playing fifty years ago. It is possible that we can hear the cries of an infant in its cradle who is now the ruler of an empire; or the voice of a darling daughter singing "Meet me by moonlight alone," who has long since departed from our sight. By means of steam, the vapour of boiling water, we can travel in luxurious carriages, which are made to roll along iron rails at the rate of sixty and even seventy miles an hour. The same mighty power enables us to fly in large ships like palaces, without sails, and against wind and tide, at the rate of fifteen or twenty miles an hour. Our ships of war are protected by iron or steel plates from ten to twenty inches thick, and some of them are armed with guns which can send shot or shell of one thousand pounds in weight a distance of six or seven miles. Our torpedoes can blow up the mightiest vessels. Our rams can shatter and sink ships which cost a million of money.'

'Is all this true?' asked the Doctor, laying down his pipe.

'Most certainly, sir; I should never think of telling *you* a lie.'

'I believe you to be a true man, Ubertus,' he said. 'If I did not so believe, I would say you were the greatest liar that ever put his feet into boots.'

'And now, my dear Doctor,' said I, 'since I have told you so much that is new to you, will you allow me to ask what was that music which aroused me from my insensibility, and which I heard again on that day when I told you—my singular dream.'

'Yes—ha! your dream—your dream! And you dared to dream that my darling Helen embraced and kissed you, and showed you the Star of Victory; and you saw her mansion, and walked in her garden by her side; but, great God! is it to be always thus? Hush, Julius; keep silence,

and all may yet be well. It was your own fault ; you gave him the elixir, and what is there in a kiss ? Nothing ; it is possible that it may be pure and innocent. There are men who would sooner die than do a wicked and unclean thing, and I believe this Ubertus is one of them. Did you speak, sir ? Music, did you say ? What music ?

'The music, Doctor, which I heard played in this room——'

'Aye, that music,' said he, beginning to laugh ; 'would you like to see the musicians ?'

'I greatly desire that pleasure.'

'Florian !—Florian, I say !—Florian !'

No Florian appeared. The Doctor touched a little speck on the wall ; a gong sounded with a stunning sound, and immediately the attendant entered the room.

'Let the band approach,' said his master.

In a few minutes the music commenced at a distance, and gradually came nearer. The Doctor touched another speck on the wall, and to my great surprise a pair of large folding doors, of which I had not suspected the existence, opened before me. The band played a lively march, and came nearer—nearer. I expected to see at least a company of elegantly-dressed men or women, beautiful to the eyes. At length with a loud flourish it entered the room. Oh, powers of mercy ! what will my readers say ? There before me stood about fifty grotesque and extraordinary creatures, in the likenesses of animals and demons, hairy bears, tigers, apes, bearded goats on their hind legs, sheep, pigs, and a number still more outlandish. I was transfixed with astonishment. The Doctor roared with laughter, while the music continued, and was certainly well worth listening to. The master was a white elephant of great beauty, and he played a trumpet with considerable skill. It is impossible to describe them all ; some of the players had no instru-

ments, but appeared to be singing with some kind of whistle in their mouths, and they ranged themselves at one end of the room, and played tune after tune well and in good time.

After playing several overtures and strange fantasies, the greater number of the musicians laid aside their instruments, and took up positions for a dance. This performance speedily gave me aching sides with laughter. A huge bear led out a woolly sheep ; an old bearded goat with long horns advanced with a young chattering monkey hanging on his arm, and gracefully holding her tail in her hand ; a fine dog led out a handsome smiling cat ; a tall ape an interesting young pig. They danced round dances in very quick time, and hugged each other with the greatest affection. When they got tired of dancing they began a series of mock heroic single combats, sparring at and pounding each other like trained prize-fighters. Then they changed their tactics, and ran furious races round the apartment ; the apes on bearback, the cats and monkeys on dogback, the opossums and little dogs on goat and kangaroo back. Now and then the bears, apes, and all rolled on the floor in the wildest confusion.

'Now build me up the Tower of Babel,' said the Doctor.

The larger creatures immediately formed a circle, holding each other's paws ; then the apes and monkeys mounted on their shoulders, then the pigs and goats clambered up, and then the dogs and opossums climbed higher still, until a sharp cat, with eyes like coals of fire, mounted to the highest place, and waved her paws in the air. The circle then to the sound of a fife and drum began to move round its centre, at first slowly, but presently with accelerated pace, until it suddenly toppled over and fell to pieces with a discordant and deafening explosion of roars, growls, grunts, screams, and yells.

I was convulsed with laughter. The players quickly

resumed their instruments, and fell into rank. A few words from the Doctor, I believe of thanks and encouragement, and away they marched to their quarters.

'What do you think of them?' asked the Doctor.

'They are most extraordinary, most astounding; who are they, sir?'

'They are choice specimens of the inhabitants of this place,' he answered; 'my servants and companions: they help me to pass away the gloomy time. They would like to play their music in the merry sunshine, as they did once, but they must be content with fire and lamplight now.'

It will be strongly suspected, no doubt, that this scene was contrived by the Premier of Pandapolis, and intended to be a stinging satire on our own social habits and innocent amusements; and that I, who ought to have known better, aided and abetted him in grossly insulting the civilization of the present age, by reporting such ridiculous and incredible proceedings; but I solemnly protest that I am as guiltless as an infant in its cradle of all intention of satirizing, or ridiculing, my fellow creatures, whom I love, admire, and respect. The pictures I essay to paint, and hold up before the eyes of the generous public, need not be mistaken for mirrors. My simple object is, by hook or by crook, to amuse my readers, for we must all acknowledge that the world must be amused, and kept in good humour. 'Make a man laugh while you pick his pocket,' might be sound advice from Diogenes: to please and instruct at the same time may fall to the lot of a few authors in the general crowd.

'I have an affection for you, Ubertus,' the Doctor said to me, shortly after the exhibition of his acrobats, 'and I think I will let you into a few more of the secrets of our prison-house.'

I replied that anything of an amusing or refreshing nature

would be most agreeable and acceptable to me; but without wishing or intending to offend him, I hoped to be excused from looking on horrible and repulsive things. They made me ill, very ill indeed, especially in my mind.

'Come with me, then, I will keep you well; you must have more pluck: you are afraid of everything—of sickness, of poverty, of the sight of blood, poor cowardly creature! There are many things which you must look upon which will give you pain. You must drink the cup of humiliation to the dregs, and I will have no flinching. You must be discreet and silent, and breathe not a word to the Demon. He is armed with tremendous power; where he got it from Heaven only knows. But he is not omnipotent, and he does not know everything, and in some small things at least I am his match.'

He took up a lamp, and led me out into the hospital, through several gigantic apartments or wards, which were crowded with beds, and to my great surprise nearly all of these were empty. A few groans and sighs issued from some of them. He explained to me as we went on that the wounded soldiers had been healed and discharged, and that those whom I saw lying dead on the battle-field had been brought back to life, and would be ready to fight again.

'When will the next battle be fought, sir?' I asked.

'Whenever the Demon pleases. He summons his armies to a review of peace, as he calls it, but when he sees them gathered around him in all the dread panoply of war, he cannot resist the temptation of setting them by the ears. They know his mind, or suspect his intentions, and take care to come with ball-cartridges. Then the vials of wrath are uncorked, the ammunition boxes of devilish passions opened. Now they will be busy for some time in rebuilding their castles, repairing their arms, mending their carriages, casting new cannon, making rifles, bayonets, and gunpowder.'

What a fiendish thing is war! How the demons delight in it, and how soon men become demons who indulge in it unjustly. Look, there lies your friend Astoragus!

I started at the name. On a bed in a remote corner lay a human figure. He was awake, and moaning piteously. I pitied him in my heart, and asked my guide if I might speak to him.

'Certainly,' he replied, 'but don't go too near him.'

I went to his bedside and found it necessary to muster up all my courage; the fellow had been so insignificant to look at, and yet had contrived to be so detestably venomous. I addressed him thus:

'Astoragus, I am sorry for you; these are the wages you earn by being a larrikin. Why does the power of inflicting pain on those who are not interfering with you give you pleasure? Would it not be more manly and noble in you, and in those whom you induce to follow your evil example, to try and improve your minds, and so become useful members of society? I come not here to triumph over you, or add to your punishment. The very best of men are liable to fall, but the path of redemption lies open to the very worst. Your treatment of me was undeserved and unnecessary; but I bear you no malice—farewell!

He seemed entirely subdued, and did not answer a word. When I rejoined the Doctor, he nearly burst out laughing in my face. I thought he was rather cruel, but said nothing.

'You did not "poor fellow" him again, did you?' he asked, as he led the way onward.

I replied: 'Ah! my dear friend, we are all liable to error; I do not like over-severe punishments.'

'What do you say to this, then?' said he, as he opened a secret door in the wall by which we were passing.

The terror of Bluebeard's wife, when she beheld the

mangled remains of that hero's former spouses, lying in ghastly heaps in the forbidden closet, was nothing to mine when I saw the interior of that secret chamber. A gigantic wheel was revolving, filling half the space, its diameter reaching from the floor to the ceiling. Chains and ropes were attached to this, by which the bodies of those miserable beings who were sentenced to undergo this punishment were secured. As the wheel revolves it carries the wretches up with it and down again, mangling them twice in every revolution. In addition to this 'Mangling done here,' every victim receives a sharp electric shock when he is drawn between the wheel and the ceiling, and again between the wheel and the floor. That is why it is called the Electric Wheel.

'Does it not kill them, Doctor?' I presumed to inquire, trembling.

'No,' he replied, 'they cannot be killed, but they can be shocked and flattened. This is how we punish traitors, agitators, and disturbers of the public peace in the city of Pandapolis. The wheel is also frequently turned by back-biters, liars, slanderers, plunderers, and enraged women when they have a victim whom they wish to punish.

'I am about to introduce you,' he resumed as we went on, 'to a number of great persons whom you will be surprised to see and to know, especially in this place; men who achieved their own greatness, and were therefore deserving of the rewards which the world had to bestow, but did not get them in every case; men who were born great; and men who had greatness thrust upon them. It is a strange thing in our eyes that one man should be born a king, another a beggar; one a genius, another a fool; one a good man, another a villain. But these are things we cannot help, and I suppose they are finally settled by the great law of compensation.'

CHAPTER XI.

THE ENCHANTED HALL.

WE now left the large rooms, and entered a series of dark and narrow passages which had evidently been cut through the solid rock, and they brought us, after many turnings and windings, to the foot of a steep staircase. My mysterious leader began to descend, telling me to be careful, and not fall back again. His caution was not unnecessary, for I found the ascent very difficult and dangerous, and in the poor light afforded by his single lamp I stumbled and fell forward several times. The steps were rugged and unequal in height, and seemed to wind round in a large circle. At last they came to an end, and a solid wall barred our further progress.

'How is this?' he said; 'have we come up the wrong stairs? What will happen to us if the lamp should go out? Here, hold it; you are trembling. Oh, you are a brave soldier! A thousand recruits like you under Bonaparte would conquer the universe. Take the lamp, and take care!' I took it accordingly, trying with all my might to be brave; and I had scarcely done so when it went out. Oh, darkness, blackness of the horrible pit! ye are bright moon-light compared to this.

'What have you done?' roared the Doctor in a terrible voice.

'I do not know; the lamp went out of itself; perhaps my hand shook; perhaps, sir, Astoragus has followed us.'

'May all the devils——' he said; 'but I beg pardon—let us be brave. Misfortunes will happen. But how, in the name of all that is frightful—how shall we find our way back again? How shall we get down these rugged steps?'

'In the name of all that is bright, noble, and true,' I answered, 'we shall get down safely; but my pockets are empty of matches, and I do not know what we shall do. Doctor Julius—if that is your name—have I offended you? Have you resolved on my destruction?'

'Hush, you foolish boy; why should I destroy you? Have I not saved you? You do not know my power. Mind what you say. We are about to enter a glorious presence. We are going to see Helen! Be brave and fear nothing.' I could now hear him breathing in a short and peculiar manner, as if he himself were affrighted. 'Come nearer,' he said; 'give me your hand; take care of that lamp!' My heart was beating with a wild fear. I heard a click, and then a harsh grating sound as if a heavy door were being turned on rusty hinges, and then my guide trying the ground with his feet.

'There is a step here. Stop that shaking; come forward, bend low, now up with you!'

I obeyed without doubting him; it would not have served me had I doubted and mistrusted him. I was in his power. I found myself now standing on a soft carpet, and heard the heavy door shutting again, with another great pang of terror. All was of a pitchy blackness, and dreadful silence reigned around, which my friend did not disturb for some minutes.

'Shut your eyes,' said he at last.

'There is no need, sir,' I was foolish enough to reply; 'there is nothing here to dazzle them.'

'Shut your eyes, I tell you,' he repeated more severely;

'how long will it be before you learn to obey my commands?'

I did as he required. He now began to speak, as if to himself, in a language which was quite strange to me. After uttering a few sentences, he addressed me again :

'Are your eyes shut?'

'They cannot be faster or closer, Doctor.'

Then he stamped energetically on the floor, and, behold ! a flood of brilliant light, splendid to me even through my closed eyelids, illuminated the place.

'Open them now cautiously,' he whispered ; and immediately added in a loud voice, 'These be thy gods, oh Israel !'

Completely dazzled by the unexpected glare which now assailed me, I was obliged to put my hand over my face. The fixed and unmistakable evidence of sight is before me still, and never will it be effaced. My conductor and I stood side by side in a very large cave or hall, furnished like a magnificent drawing-room, with a number of handsome lamps burning on tables, giving forth brilliant light of a pale red colour. Around the walls, and in deep recesses, were seated several figures of ladies and gentlemen, in various life-like attitudes, and under a lofty canopy at one end were enthroned four ladies and two gentlemen, and at their feet sat two lovely children—a boy and a girl.

'Father, mother, Agnes, Mr. St. Clair—HELEN ! let me introduce Mr. Oliver Ubertus, a stranger from the surface of the earth, and an esteemed friend of mine. Bid him welcome !' said the Doctor with becoming gravity. And when I bowed low, and fully expected them to return my salutation, not one of them spoke a word or moved.

After a few moments spent in silently contemplating the lovely group, he turned to me and said : 'This is my private retreat, my oratory, drawing-room, treasure-house, exhibition,

or what you please. I have done my duty ; I have introduced you to my friends, and they take no notice of you. Father, mother, Helen, this is Oliver Ubertus, come from the upper world to see and hear you, and you will not speak to him !'

Under the canopy of lofty state, adorned with countless barbaric gems, silver, gold, and pearls, they sat motionless statues, yet so real and life-like that I believed they were flesh and blood of the most refined and delicate description. They had no appearance of being ordinary waxen figures got up as a catch-penny show to charm the taste of the curious crowd. A globe of pale pearly light hung above their heads, and smaller globes surrounded the canopy, so that the bright rays as it were of three or four full moons played upon their features. The scene was enchanting. The ladies were elegantly attired in flowing robes of the purest white, with scarlet and blue sashes around their waists, and ornamented mantles folded round their bosoms. She on the right represented a fine woman, handsome and robust, and of mature years. Next to her sat a gentleman whose appearance was stern, yet honest and manly, dressed in the ordinary civilian's costume of the Cromwellian period. On his left hand was seated a young lady with plain features, and by her side another lady, whose pale and delicate countenance told the sad tale of a deeply-seated inward grief, and next to her—could I trust the evidence of my senses?—the charming girl of my dream ! I felt, as before, that her exquisite beauty could not be described in words. She had long, silken, golden hair flowing over her shoulders ; her eyes were of the brightest blue, sparkling with the rays of immortality ; her whole figure was that of an angel of light. I thought of Helen of Troy, but my soul revolted from the thought ; then of Helena, the mother of Constantine, and then of that Helena who said :

'But now he's gone, and my idolatrous fancy
Must sanctify his relics—'

But I could not find a parallel to the Helen now before me.

'Ubertus,' said the Doctor, 'this gentleman represents my honoured father, who was a merchant of some note in the city of London, in the days of King Charles the First. This lady of mature age is the likeness of one of the best and sweetest of mothers; this is my only sister Agnes, and this girl—see how fresh, how fair, how beautiful she is!—is the image of my Helen. This gentleman represents her father, and this melancholy lady her mother. These children are effigies of my twin brother Charles, and of Helen's twin sister Clara, who died when they were children. They will not greet you now, nor will this Helen say, "Welcome, thou who hast seen the Star of Victory!" I can do a great many things, and can command the services of artists who are cunning workmen in marble and alabaster, and silver and gold. These figures are as perfect likenesses as I could make them, and I have given them all I had to give—beauty and riches, society and a splendid dwelling-place; but I cannot give them life. I would not give it to them if I could, unless I were sure of being able to take them away into the light of heaven. Can you help me to leave this place? All the wealth which you see here—and it has been valued at twenty millions sterling—I will give you if you can help me to see the glorious light of the sun once more.'

My tears fell. 'My friend and preserver,' I exclaimed, 'I would to God, solemnly and fervently, that I could help you to leave this place, not for the wealth contained in this hall, but for the gratitude and love I bear to you, and the pain I feel at seeing you detained here for ages, a prisoner against your will. If it is the will and pleasure of the Almighty that you shall leave it, you certainly shall when the time comes. If it is not His will my help would be in

vain. I have thought upon this until my brain became on fire, and I cannot devise any scheme, or hit upon any plan. If an opportunity should occur, we, like skilful generals, must take advantage of our adversary's stupidity or default, and if we catch him tripping, you may depend upon my very best and warmest assistance.'

'Enough, Ubertus,' he replied, pressing my hand. 'Now I will show you round the room; but first would you like to hear a few simple verses which I wrote for Helen one evening, after I had vexed my darling with my cursed jealousy—yes, jealousy of a fiendish villain, the sight of whom she could hardly bear? I wrote but little then or since, either poetry or prose, never having had the ambition of becoming an author. But the sight of Helen always reminds me of my weakness and my cruelty, as much as it does of her sweetness and gentleness. How little do the jealous know what poisoned daggers they plunge into the hearts of those who have vowed to be faithful! Shall I repeat them? Her angelic spirit may be here to listen.'

'Certainly, Doctor; I am very anxious to hear them.'

Then he recited the following stanzas in a loud and clear voice, whose echoes through the vaulted chamber penetrated my startled brain like wizards' bells:

'Oh, Helen! Helen! thou art weeping, have I made thee sad?
Yet ask me not, my dearest love, what darkens on my mind;
The lamb that wantons on the hill, that seems so sweet and glad,
May oftentimes feel the ills of life, and quarrel with its kind.'

'I cannot tell—all reckless fly the busy changing hours,
And thoughts that are not happy *will* wander through the brain;
Our lips enwreathed in smiles may be, our dreams in summer flowers,
But cheerless lies the doubting heart, and galling is its chain.'

'Oh, Helen! be but true to me, as I my love have given
To thee, my life, my soul, my heart—a heart that knows no guile;
The sun, the moon, the stars, the glorious orbs of heaven
Are dark as winter's night, my darling, if thou dost not smile.'

'And this believe, my only love—we cannot perfect be,
Our wish is pure and true, yet sorrow still must reign;
But when we meet to part no more, from care and anguish free,
Let Heaven seal up its charms from me when I shall give thee pain.

'Oh, blessed hope! for thee alone how gladly would I die,
For thee I spurn the mocking world, and all my wealth I give;
When shall I, as on eagle's wing, soar through the radiant sky,
And be encircled in thine arms, and near thee ever live?

'A perfect light—a burning light—shines brightly on my soul.
The love that conquers years of pain shall never hence depart;
My Helen, speak! thy words shall live while heavenly ages roll,
And death can come to me no more with thee within my heart!

'I like your verses very well, Doctor,' said I, after a short pause, 'that is, if I may presume to judge. I think there is good poetry in them, but there is also a good deal of idolatry.'

'I know there is,' he answered, 'but I could not help it. You, however, with your knowledge and experience, can apply them to whom you please. They need not be devoted exclusively to any Helen or Mary in existence. Substitute for a woman's name that which you most reverence, even that of the very highest, and the idolatry will disappear.'

'It is true I can do so; still the name of a woman, and the leading idea it conveys of worshipping a woman, makes it sound idolatrous.'

'My dear boy,' he answered, with animation, 'what would you have? I was never born to be a Milton or a Shakespeare. Men must have idols; they must either worship God, whom they cannot see, or one or more of the beings or things He has created, which they can see and feel, either men or women, or land or gold. Do you not know that the heart of man is as full of follies and iniquities as the rock of adamant is of the hardest substance to its very centre? Do you not say of a woman, "When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man thou didst not abhor the virgin's womb"?''

'But you must not worship the virgin.'

I had listened with awe to the utterances of the singular

personage in whose presence I was standing; and now to my intense astonishment and pity, he turned abruptly to the image of his idolized Helen, threw his arms around it, kissed its lips passionately, fell on his knees before it, and addressed it thus: 'Helen, my adored Helen! if you could speak now what would you say? Would you not say again what you said with your last earthly breath? "Julius, I love you—we shall meet again—I am dying, but I am not lost, and you shall not be if—if——": and you said no more. You died in my mother's arms, as if, in the indignation of some mighty spirit, you were torn out of my very heart. Oh Helen! I love you still. I am faithful to you—I adore you—I worship you! For two hundred years I have been your slave. I created this chamber to be your dwelling-place, and yet not so, for you dwell with your loving Father, your God, in a home of joy and brightness, while I, miserable being! live in darkness, in the hatred of hell, and in the shadow of death. What shall I do, Helen? Shall I curse my Maker, and die for ever? Is it possible for me to die? I have died the First Death: the Second Death is utter annihilation, or eternal wrath and fire. If you are in existence—if you have the power—oh Helen, visit me! Advise with me! Pity me! Do you not remember how I told you that were I in heaven itself I could not live without you? No, were I with angels and just men made perfect! Did I not tell you, that to the Supreme Being Himself I would not bow, if you were denied me?'

When I heard this open blasphemy, I felt a spirit of indignation taking possession of me, and I interrupted the speaker sternly, but calmly, regardless of the consequences.

'Sir, sir, this is not well! rise from your knees, or still kneel—but turn away from your idol, and pray to the all-powerful Being who created you, and gave you life—who gave your Helen life and beauty. Are you bereft of sense,

gratitude, and prudence? Why will you trust to an arm of flesh? Has the Demon, the prince of destruction, blinded your eyes? Have the treasures you have created here for yourself hardened your heart, and darkened your understanding? If Helen could speak I am sure she would now say: "My beloved husband, be not foolish, worship not me!" She is beautiful, but she is dust; her spirit is, I know, divine. These riches cannot redeem you from the wrath of your offended Maker. Worship Him! Worship the Son who died to save you, without whom you cannot inherit eternal life! If you persist in your own way, believe me, you will never see your Helen again; you will never see the light of the sun again, or the grass, or the trees, or the splendid lakes and mountains. The beauty of your person will be changed into the revolting similitude of a demon—perhaps going, like him, up and down on the earth, seeking whom you may devour! Love your Helen wisely, but not too well. Turn and seek, as you well know how to do, a happy and glorious immortality!

He had risen from his knees while I was speaking, and now stood facing me with an offended air; but when I had finished, and expected nothing less than a great outburst of passion, he quietly said:

'You are right, and I am wrong; let us go!'

He led the way round the vast apartment. There was nothing in it except what might be supposed to give pleasure to its male and female occupants, had they been capable of enjoying them. Nothing revolting or horrible met my view. The walls were adorned with beautiful pictures. The tables, of which there were two long rows, were loaded with vases of artificial flowers, baskets and boxes full of precious stones, statuettes, and ornaments of gold and silver. There were exquisite models of mansions and castles, surrounded by beautiful parks and stately woods, similar to those I had

previously seen in my Day Dream at Lake Sorell. There were musical instruments of strange construction, on some of which he played with considerable skill. There were books which I did not venture to look into; models of ships of the time of Henry the Eighth. The fleets of Spain were represented hovering on the coast of England. Nor did my clever friend forget to portray some of the most charming scenes of antiquity, as they have been brought before us by the poets and historians of bygone ages.

Seated on massive antique chairs, and arranged in various and picturesque groups here and there, were a number of finely dressed ladies and gentlemen, represented as drinking wine and chocolate, and talking and laughing with each other. Their apparent thoughts could be traced in their faces in a most astonishing way: the young gentlemen with that self-satisfied smile which always follows a witty compliment to their fair auditors; the young ladies silently applauding with their bright eyes, ogling from behind their fans, and showing their pearly teeth. They had the startling appearance of being veritable *tableaux vivants*, without a trace of the tinselled impersonations of a wax-work exhibition. My guide brought me before a stately and severe-looking man, and formally introduced me to King Charles the First; then to a very different kind of person—Oliver Cromwell. I found myself suddenly brought by name under the notice of William Shakespeare, John Milton, John Hampden, Admiral Blake, Queen Elizabeth, and a number of other great personages whose names are written elsewhere in letters of gold. Finally he led me to the contemplation of a magnificent equestrian statue, nearly the size of life, of his beautiful Helen, formed of semi-pellucid alabaster. It was placed in a recess or grotto, adorned with a countless number of shells of wonderful grandeur. We now stood gazing through the centre of the hall from one

end to the other. It was a scene of perfect enchantment. Opposite to us Helen and her companions presented a splendid picture under their glittering canopy—a fitting termination to a vista of indescribable loveliness.

From the examination of these objects we turned to one of a totally different aspect, and one which I was not prepared to see. A curtain had been silently drawn up behind us, displaying what appeared to be a mirror of gigantic proportions. It reflected at first the scene which we had just witnessed, the whole length of the hall, the Doctor and I standing together in the foreground. We were very much alike, but he was apparently much the younger and larger man of the two. His light fair hair and juvenile ruddy countenance contrasted favourably with my grizzly locks, and weather-beaten features. By degrees the scene in the mirror changed. A cloud came between us and the brightness, and when it cleared away I saw depicted a picture of a dark and dismal country, with rugged mountains far away, and wild rocks and fantastic trees abounding in the foreground. A river that looked like one of molten lead appeared to flow sluggishly through the land. The atmosphere was grim in the extreme, and the obscurity was rendered still more palpable by the reflections of fierce fires in the distance.

The Doctor now prepared to leave the apartment. We passed along the side which I had not previously seen, and I beheld new wonders. He led me again up to the group under the canopy, and stood before them for some moments in silence. Then he kissed them all, and bade them farewell.

We returned to the secret door, and relit our lamp. The weird lights of the enchanted hall were suddenly extinguished. We descended the rugged steps in safety, and I hastened to my bed, where I was soon buried in profound slumber.

CHAPTER XII.

THE COURT OF A GRAND POTENTATE.

As we finished our frugal breakfast next morning, the Doctor, who seemed to be one of the most abstemious of men, although much stouter and heavier than I, ordered Florian to send his carriage to the door.

'Let the carriage be a strong one,' he said, 'and as the distance is considerable let us have four horses.'

'Yes.' Did he mean to take me with him, then?

'I am going to visit two old acquaintances of mine, whom I dare say you will recognise when I introduce you to them. I shall be glad of your company, but if you prefer remaining here——'

'I submit myself entirely to your guidance, Doctor,' I replied.

We went out into the street, and waited until the carriage came round. The street was narrow and rather dark, having but few lamps in it. Many people passed by, but there was no coarse laughter or pretended joy among them. The majority of these were evidently labouring under an accumulation of diseases, and many addressed the Doctor, imploring him to cure their complaints. His general reply was: 'I cannot cure you, I can only alleviate your pains; go round to the dispensary, Doctor Mancus and the apothecaries are there.'

'These people,' said he, addressing me, 'think I can do everything, whereas I can do but very little compared with what requires to be done. Their diseases are the results of their own, or their forefathers', wickedness and impenitence. There are men who cannot learn anything by their own or anyone else's experience; they think but little of health, the greatest blessing it is possible for a human being to enjoy.'

'Do they remain here for ever, Doctor?' I asked with some timidity.

'That I am not permitted to tell you,' he curtly answered.

The carriage now came to the door, and we took our seats. It was a heavy vehicle, drawn by four spirited, impatient horses. The Doctor took the reins from a smartly-dressed groom, who climbed up and seated himself beside another, and away we dashed. The street led us into the great square where the fatal battle had been fought. I recognised it by its tall columns to Glory, Victory, Patriotism, and so on, and by the crimson pool in the centre of the so-called Royal Park. What sad emotions, what bitter pangs, for fallen miserable men passed through my heart. We drove on rapidly out into the vast abyss, and straight on to the opposite side. On the way we skirted what appeared to be a large, gray, cloudy-looking rock, but we found, on approaching nearer to it, that it was the lightning balloon, lying prostrate and motionless on the earth, waiting its owner's time for his next important flight. Its hideous driver was there, pottering about, arranging portions of its gear and tackling, hauling on ropes, tightening screws, and hammering bolts here and there. He was singing, or rather shrieking, a most extraordinary song, which sounded in my ears like the filing of a dozen cross-cut saws, mingled with the beating of half a dozen tin kettles, and the hoarse braying of a jackass. The refrain of the song was rather difficult to catch, as the carriage and horses made great

noise, but I managed to secure the following valuable fragment, which I give with many apologies:

'Strike! Strike! Strike!
And wait till the devils come down.
Strike! Strike! Strike!
And away to Pandapolis Town, ho! ho!
For here we strike up, up, up!
And there we strike down, down, down!
And now we strike for'arder,
And now we strike back'arder,
And hurrah for Pandapolis Town, ho! ho!'

The Doctor pulled up his horses, and the balloon driver stopped his song.

'Well, Obeltub,' said the former, 'how are you getting on? How do you find yourself to-day, my dear and respected old friend? Getting ready for your next journey, I see. Rejoice, thou honourable pilot, I'm going with you, my boy!'

Obeltub grinned frightfully, and grunted in a very jocular manner, expressive, I thought, of derision and incredulity.

'Fact, 'pon my honour,' resumed the Doctor; 'I've made it all right. Your master is going to take me at last; he will keep his promise this time, and be as true, and generous, and faithful as you are yourself. So pump up a grand supply of lightning, stow away plenty of thunder, put in a lot of old moons for ballast, and have two of your fastest comets ready in tandem!'

Obeltub growled terribly, and scowled as who should say, 'I take no orders from you; be off, or it will be the worse for you.' He did not come within my friend's jurisdiction.

'And I shall not forget, my boy,' said he, laughing, and with difficulty suppressing a roar, 'to bring you a clothes-brush, and a comb, and a bottle of scented oil for your hair, and a tooth-brush, and a pot of my patent paste, and

a splendid hog, a prime barbecue stuffed with toads devilled for your dinner.'

The driver, who was in no humour to be the Doctor's butt, snarled like an enraged hyæna, and seizing a sledge-hammer which lay near him, he ran at full speed after our carriage. The Doctor roared 'Shatter me to bits if he's not going to strike!' then whistled to his horses, which flew away like the wind, and turning round he burst into a loud, ringing laugh in which I could not help joining.

We soon entered another of the gigantic arches. The scene that now lay before us differed materially from the other two of which I had had recent and painful experience. An apparently large, but very gloomy suburb received us into its inmost recesses. It was crowded with innumerable small houses, or rather huts; amongst them, rising at intervals, stood tall buildings, evidently devoted to grave and serious business. They were of all possible shapes, and were built of lead; many, of very large size, were the residences of rich people. This leaden city was thronged with inhabitants, who might be divided into two classes—those who rushed through the streets with breakneck speed, overturning and trampling on everything in their way; and those who sauntered about listlessly, with downcast eyes, looking from under their eyebrows as we dashed along, glaring furtively with stony glances. The former class seemed to have only one object in view; they hurried constantly in and out of the large business houses like swarms of bees. The latter class looked upon them with envy and jealousy. I asked the Doctor what people they were, and why they were in that place.

It was a long time before he answered my question, for he was absorbed in gloomy, perhaps in bitter, reflections. The unhappy aspect of the inhabitants by whom we were surrounded was certainly not calculated to engender

pleasant or cheerful thoughts. They wore their own hair, but their eyes were like balls of stone. Their features bore the sad traces of deep and unavailing regret. They talked with each other in low, muttering whispers; and I saw that each one carried a heavy roll of lead, some greater, some less, across his shoulders.

At length the Doctor spoke.

'You have asked me, Ubertus, who these people are, and why they are here? My answer is, I do not know who they are, and I can only guess why they are here. It is not for us to judge them, but the same Voice which told us not to judge lest we should be judged, told us also, "By their fruits ye shall know them." These people whom you see, wonderful as it may appear, are not real people of flesh and blood, but only shadows. If you hear them speak and tell their adventures, that fact you may refer back to your own imagination, and your knowledge of the past. But they shadow forth what punishments may be in store, in the dreadful future, for those worldly and unprincipled men who make the grandeur, the glory, the riches, the power, and the pleasures of this world the sole objects of their desire and ambition. We are told that there is eternal fire for those who will not worship, or acknowledge, God. Here there is no appearance of fire except the lamps in the streets; but the fires burn, nevertheless, in the hearts of these shadows—fires of sorrow and remorse for the priceless time which they wasted and lost in their insatiable grovelling for earth's glittering treasures; fires of pain and anguish when they find themselves shut out from the presence of God and His holy angels. And I tell you that it would be well for some millions of human beings if they could annihilate themselves entirely from the bosom of the universe. How many among us have thought that by laying violent hands on ourselves in our despair we could escape from the power

and the wrath of the Almighty! What fools, what madmen they were to rush with their eyes open, and all their sense about them, into that mysterious Presence!

At that moment a grand building, which I was told was a bank doing an immense business, suddenly fell with a tremendous crash, burying thousands of the unhappy people in its ruins. The scramble on all sides was terrific; the surrounding houses were crushed, and many of the large edifices at a distance trembled visibly. My companion did not seem to be much affected by this awful calamity. He merely chirruped his horses, and observed that such things were to be expected with houses built of lead.

Then he quietly resumed his former conversation. 'I am of opinion that the man who deprives himself of the life which God gave him is, for the time being, helplessly insane. Whether his madness be brought on by his own folly or wickedness, or by the folly and wickedness of others, he is mad.'

'You are right, I think, Doctor,' I answered; 'it is a charitable view to take, and I take it with all my heart. The Divine Author of our existence is doubtless a merciful Being, if we do not provoke His indignation beyond the possibility of forgiveness. Even when these people, whether shadow or substance, are suffering a punishment like this, they must in truth acknowledge that they deserve it. They were commanded, lovingly entreated, solemnly warned, yet they persevered in their own way, and at last they died in their sins. Was it not so?'

'You speak truly and wisely; these men whom you see around us were misers, worshippers of silver and gold, of wealth in all its seductive forms of worldly splendour, worshippers of a little brief authority and power, and tyrants over their fellow-creatures. Proud, haughty, arrogant, and unapproachable, many of them were: worshippers of them-

selves and their wealth, they drank to the dregs the cup offered to them by their god, the mammon of the world. Look at them now, and look at their dwellings; but here we are at our destination.'

Leaden walls with huge gates surrounded a great palace, standing in a garden in which were small offices and arbours, and statues of lead and black marble. The gates opened and admitted us into a courtyard, and several officers and servants dressed in mourning came forward. They seemed to know the Doctor, for they saluted him respectfully, but at me they stared in vacant surprise, while some of them, with strange significance, placed their hands upon their necks.

The Doctor told the principal officer that he wished to see his Majesty and his Eminence, and to introduce a distinguished visitor, if permitted so to do. The officer sent a subordinate to inquire the pleasure of these great personages, who returned in a short time with an invitation for us to enter the palace.

We were shown in by the grand entrance, and found ourselves in a large hall; then we passed through a vestibule, and into a corridor that led us into a picture-gallery, from which we emerged into what appeared to be a chapel, with a great organ, and some hundreds of kneeling figures. Communicating with this was an antechamber, also crowded with people, who were not kneeling. The gentlemen-in-waiting bowed to the Doctor, and looked suspiciously on me. One of them knocked at a large door, which he, on a signal from within, opened wide, and we entered the apartment.

It was a tolerably large one, surrounded with book-cases, but as the light was defective I could not see whether there were any books on the shelves or not. At one end of a long table covered with papers and parchments sat an

elderly gentleman, on whose shoulders hung negligently a scarlet robe. His face was quite yellow, his hair white, and his eyes were heavy and leaden gray. He rose from his seat when the Doctor was announced and extended his hand. The Doctor treated him with great respect, and introduced me thus :

‘Permit me to introduce my friend, Mr. Oliver Ubertus, to your Eminence—Ubertus, His Eminence Cardinal——’

I bowed low, and started back in astonishment—Cardinal !

‘Who is Mr. Oliver Ubertus, sir ? To whom have I the honour of being introduced ?’ inquired the Cardinal in a soft and mellow voice.

The Doctor gave him my history briefly, as I had given it to him in a previous interview.

The Cardinal was then pleased to say that he was himself glad to see us, but if Dr. Julius wished to introduce Mr. Ubertus to the King, he was not in a position to inform us whether his Majesty would grant us an interview. His Majesty was holding his Court of Justice just then, and was in a very peculiar humour indeed. ‘However,’ he added, ‘I will myself go and inquire : be seated, gentlemen !’

He retired by a small door, which opened silently into a dark passage, and after an absence of about ten minutes returned saying that his Majesty, although slightly unwell, would graciously condescend to receive us. We followed his Eminence through dark and tortuous passages, which appeared to lead to the secret dungeons of the grave, and entered, in a blaze of light, into the magnificent throne-room of the King, who sat in state on his leaden throne, surrounded by lords, great officers, halberdiers, buffetiers, leaden sticks-in-waiting, and secretaries.

There was no mistaking that formidable monarch. The frown on his brow, and the fierce glare of his bloodshot

eyes, filled me with fear and horror, and I wept inwardly at the sad history of my glorious country. To add to my grief and consternation, the Doctor pressed my arm, and directed my attention to a number of savage-looking men who were ranged along one side of the room, each with a black block before him, and a sharp axe by his side. The King was silent as the Cardinal approached him, and, bowing low, announced that the appointed hour for the execution of some of his Majesty’s enemies—traitors to their country—was come.

The King answered : ‘Ha ! then let them die !’

In obedience to this mandate, the traitors were brought in, strongly guarded. Their names are familiar to all readers of history ; I must not mention them here. I saw their heads rolling on the floor, but no blood appeared to follow them. Shylock here might have had his pound of flesh—if flesh there were—without a single drop of blood breaking his bond.

When the executions were over, and the bodies of the victims had been removed, I noticed a flutter and commotion in the room. A side door opened, and a number of ladies entered in solemn procession. They took their seats on each side of the King. They were clothed in black robes, and had crowns on their heads, and of the six who were thus seated, two had scarlet rings round their necks. A dead silence reigned in the hall, and I wondered why the Doctor had taken me there, as he well knew how abhorrent to me were scenes of blood, but I conjectured that he had some serious object in view. The King rose from his throne, and seemed to be absorbed by some mental agony. ‘The women I have loved,’ he murmured, ‘and two of them died under the headsmen ; it was too bloody—I was a monster, and I ask their forgiveness.’ The Queens rose from their seats and knelt before him, and then they all resumed their seats.

Several serious cases were now brought up for judgment, poor against rich, and rich against poor. The covetous and unjust rich were punished by being condemned to wander about for certain seasons with rolls of lead on their backs. How some seditious people were dealt with will appear from the following :

Ten strong, healthy-looking men were led in handcuffed to each other, and their accuser stood beside them. They were, he said, men belonging to the labouring class, men whose station in life was appointed by the Supreme Governor of the world, men who might be happy and contented if they would be so, and allow others to be so, but they would not. They had plenty of work, were paid fair wages, were kindly treated by their employers, all their complaints were listened to, and, if reasonable, promptly redressed ; but they were not satisfied. They said Capital had no right to rule over them ; they would be dictators and masters over their employers. They struck work, and formed themselves into impracticable and tyrannical combinations ; harangued their fellow-workmen, and made them as rebellious as themselves ; and left their wives and children in pitiable privation, alarm, and anxiety. They were disturbers of the social peace, and destroyers of the happiness and prosperity of the community.

The King asked the men if these charges were true ; they were silent ; they, who had been so eloquent and bombastic on their oratorical tubs, had now not a word to say. His Majesty then commanded that they should work in the lead and marble mines during his pleasure.

'My lord Cardinal,' said the King, when these trials were over, 'we would hear thee speak. We are told thou hast been on a visit to another world.'

'The visit of which your Majesty has heard,' answered the Cardinal, 'was an involuntary, and I believe a spiritual,

one. Whether it occurred to me during sleep, or I was carried up by one of those powerful genii of whom your Majesty has heard, I do not know. I was upborne into the regions of upper air, into the dazzling light of a warm summer's day, and set down, after a long journey over mountains and through clouds, beside a heavenly lake of delicious water, surrounded by magnificent woods and hills. It was the Field of the Cloth of Gold, bereft of its decorations of art. I saw trees growing tall and stately under a blue sky, and green grass and flowers under my feet, and rocks and ornaments of nature a thousand times more beautiful to me than the sapphires and diamonds of this wretched place. Then by degrees, as my eyes could bear them, I saw sheep, horses, and cattle grazing on the hills ; and as I travelled on without a guide through this splendid country, not knowing whither I was going, I saw a multitude of roads leading in all directions, some parallel with each other, and some crossing each other at all kinds of angles. They took up nearly the whole of the land, so that there was scarcely any room for gardens or meadows, or houses in which men might live. And I saw that a vast number of these roads had parallel lines of iron upon them, and every hour or so a long string of curious looking coaches would come rushing past me, suddenly appearing on one side and disappearing on the other, rolling on with a thundering sound, the horses flying so fast that I could not see them. I walked on and on in ever-increasing astonishment until I came to a large city, but it seemed only the ghost of a city. It had evidently been once rich and populous, but now had all the appearance of having been ruined by the wasteful extravagance of its inhabitants, or by the spoliations of a foreign enemy ; but the coaches on their iron roads came in constantly snorting and whistling, bringing nothing or next to nothing. I wondered exceed-

ingly what became of all the horses which must have drawn them, but concluded that they must have stables for them underground. Some of the coaches were kitchens doubtless, for they had boilers for cooking purposes, with fires and chimneys. And I saw an immense building, nearly in the centre of the city, with a great crowd of poor, unhappy-looking people surrounding it, and crying, "Bring them out! bring them out!" and lo! the doors were opened, and forth issued a number of ragged men, torn and bleeding; and each one had a long strap round his waist, at the end of which was fastened a kettle made of tin. And these poor men were immediately hunted through the streets, pelted with mud, and barbarously maltreated by the savage populace, until I pitied them and wept for their sufferings. Then I asked a bystander, who seemed to pity them too, who they were and what had they done. "They are our wicked woolgrowers and owners of land," said he with a frown, "who have ruined us, and swallowed up all our money." Then, sire, I was led down to the shore of a beautiful lake, whose waters were as salt as the ocean, and saw under the surface the black skeletons of hundreds of ships which had carried away the gold of that country, and brought back its merchandize and luxuries; and, behold, I heard a loud voice issuing from the heart of a great mountain which overlooked the city, saying: *This is the land that trusted in the glory and power of its riches!* And please, your Majesty, I remember no more.

'Very remarkable; you have remembered more than enough, I think,' said the mighty monarch. 'Where is that country?'

'I know no more than you do, sir,' replied the Cardinal.

'Is there no one here who can tell us where that strange country is?' shouted the King in rising wrath.

'Here is a gentleman, please your Majesty,' said the

Doctor, dragging me forward against my will, 'who can tell you all about it. He is just come from the very place. Mr. Oliver Ubertus, your humble and devoted subject—ahem!—and hopes your Majesty will be merciful to him, and not cut his head off this time.'

'That will be as he deserves,' replied the King. 'Come forward thou, Oliver U. Burstus, if that is thy name, and tell our Court what thou knowest of that strange land. Keep away from him, Doctor Julius; thou wilt prompt him; we know thy tricks and magic arts. Come to us anon: we would learn something of our precious body. Speak, man Ubustus; where dost thou come from?'

'From Tasmania, sire,' I answered, trembling from head to foot.

'Where is that?'

'An island in the South Pacific Ocean.'

'An island of cannibals, ha!'

'No, sire—an island of most civilized and respectable people.'

'Proceed, and be brief; explain what thou heardest fall from the lips of our minister the Cardinal.'

'Sir, I am but ill-fitted to speak to your Mightiness, and after his Eminence the Cardinal, but I will describe that land to you to the best of my ability. It is not the land of my birth, but it is dear to me as my place of residence for many years, and the birth-place of my children. It is evident to me that his Eminence has seen a miraculous vision. The country he saw is certainly a most beautiful one; the multitudes of roads with the carriages travelling rapidly without horses, show how the revenues of the land, millions upon millions, have been spent year after year. The impoverished state of the city which he saw shadows forth its probable condition in future years, when all its riches shall be spent on roads, railroads, and other improvements; and when its annual

public income will not be sufficient to pay the interest of its public debt. The unfortunate people whom his Eminence saw hunted through the streets, with tin kettles tied to them, represent, rather fantastically I admit, the landed proprietors of the island, who have been ruined by excessive taxation, and treated in a shameful manner by the misguided people of the cities, who have been led to believe, by their blatant politicians, that those persons were guilty of robbing them with their selfishness and rapacity.'

'Is that all?' asked the King.

'Sire, I could tell your Majesty a great deal more, but time will not permit me.'

'Shall we ever see that enchanted island of which thou hast spoken?'

'I cannot tell, sire; I am not a Jeremiah or a Daniel, and it is not an enchanted island. It is a sober, matter-of-fact island, as large as Ireland, and a thousand times more peaceable. The whole world has made similar advances and improvements.'

'Did we understand thee to say that there are real coaches there which travel on iron roads at great speed without horses?'

'Yes, my liege; I certainly did say so, and it is true.'

'What animals draw them then—asses?'

'Neither horses nor asses, nor animals of any kind.'

'What makes them go then? Have they sails, like ships?'

'No, sire; they are drawn by engines, which carry water and fire, and when the water boils, the vapour or steam rushes through pipes, and makes the wheels go round.'

'Doctor Julius, come forward! Is this man mad?' roared the King in a terrible voice.

'I think not, sire,' answered the Doctor, 'but he may not be quite well; he received very dreadful injuries in the

recent battle, and I am not prepared to answer for his hallucinations.'

'We do not believe a word he says,' said the King vehemently.

'Notwithstanding that, your Majesty,' said I calmly, 'I have told you the truth.'

'Be silent, thou caitiff! or, if thou wilt speak, tell us who governs England in these days. Who sits on our throne?'

'Queen Victoria—a good Queen, who never sheds the blood of her subjects.'

'Ha! dost thou say so? Then if she does not shed their blood or mar their white skins, it must be her duty and pleasure to hang or drown a good many of them, judging by your prepossessing countenance.'

'No, sire; only those who commit murder are hanged, and they only after a fair trial and plenty of time for deliberation.'

'I presume to hope your Majesty——' said the Doctor, with an evident desire that the King and I should part friends; but he was abruptly interrupted by the sanguinary tyrant.

'Doctor Julius, speak not for him; he is doomed to die, and that within this hour. I can forgive a robber, a murderer, an adulterer, a miser, an incendiary, and a wretch that is poor, but a liar I cannot and will not forgive. Varlet, I convict thee of having told me the greatest lies which it is possible for a man to utter, and therefore I sentence thee to death; away with him to the block! away with him! A liar shall not live!'

I looked round in dismay; the halberdiers approached to lay their ruffianly hands upon me; the buffetiers wagged their jaws and gnashed their teeth. My friend the Doctor seemed as if he could not or would not interfere; but to

my surprise the Cardinal stepped forward, and thus addressed the King :

‘I take it upon myself to speak to your Majesty on behalf of this man, who is a stranger amongst us. He has answered your questions, and I am inclined to believe has spoken according to his convictions. He may be deranged in his mind—who can tell? It falls to the lot of many who are not suspected. He has not rebelled against your government, or conspired against your person. Forgive me, O my King—why therefore should he die? The world has changed since you and I lived in it. Discoveries of a wonderful nature have doubtless been made. We believe in the existence of heaven, but we cannot tell what marvels may be there to astonish and delight us when we get there. When I was in the world I thought only of the world, of my wealth, grandeur, and power, like the blind idiot and drivelling fool that I was. My cursed ambition and avarice deprived me of all sense and prudence, and thought of the terrible future; and had I served my God as well as I served thee, O King, I should not have been allowed to die in wretchedness on my way to the Tower of London. Be advised; let this man go; shed no more blood!’

‘And dost thou charge me with thy death?’ bellowed the King. ‘What dost thou say to the Christian martyrs, Peter and Paul and Stephen, with hundreds more whom God allowed to die as they died?’

At that moment another commotion took place in the hall. A wild, foreign-looking man, with white hair flying behind him, rushed in and threw himself at the King’s feet. He was followed by an infuriated woman, who was armed with a stout stick, with which she attacked the man, and rained on him a shower of blows. He did not resist her or attempt to defend himself, but roared, ‘Save me! save me!’ The woman screamed, ‘Take that, you villain, and that, and that, and that!’

‘Unbearable outrage!’ shouted the monarch. ‘Seize that vile woman!’

She was instantly arrested, and disarmed of her stick. The man was commanded to stand up and tell the Court the meaning of the disgraceful disturbance.

He explained, with volleys of ‘Your Majesty,’ that he was quietly sitting in his house doing nothing at all, only thinking that if ever he went to the top of the earth again he would lead a different life, better becoming a captain and governor as he had been, when this woman, whom he acknowledged to have been his wife above ground, ran into the room suddenly, knocked him off his chair, and then with her stick drove him out of the house and into this hall, flying for protection and justice.

The King turned to the woman, and asked her why she had dared to beat her husband.

‘Because I was in the humour,’ answered the virago triumphantly. ‘I used to flog him when we lived above on the earth, and I’ll flog him still now we are in hell. If I did not flog him I should die of spite, malice, and vexation. He is a poor, miserable, pitiful coward, he is.’

‘Is she thy wife? Thou hast said so. Art thou a liar too?’ said the King.

‘She is, your Majesty. I will tell the truth, as I live.’

‘Then punish her sharply, and at once. There is a block, and beside it stands a headsman with his axe. Speak thou the word, and her miscreant head shall roll on the floor.’

‘No, your Majesty,’ replied the stranger, drawing himself up. ‘I will not imbrue, even by word of mouth, my hands in a woman’s blood. I would not even strike her, although she has struck me more blows than I can number. She has called me a pitiful coward, and I should be a coward if I struck her again—a woman was my mother.’

‘Go to—thou art a fool!’ said the King; ‘and thou

wouldst let a fool kick thee and spit in thy face because a fool was thy father. I hope she will murder thee in her next fit of spite. Loose her—let her go; now we shall see how soon she will tear him to pieces.'

But to the astonishment of all in the room, the woman, when she found herself free, fell on her face at her husband's feet, and implored him with tears to forgive her.

Greatly ashamed and bewildered at this scene, the tyrannical monarch turned to the stranger, and asked him who and what he was, and whence he came.

'I have been Governor and Captain-General, by my own appointment, of a large island somewhere on the surface of the earth, but the name of which has been obliterated from my mind. I came here from another island, to which I was sent against my will. I have been a great traveller, and have seen some strange sights. May I have the honour of relating some of my adventures to your Majesty?'

'Do so, but briefly. We will hear thee with patience.'

These adventures may not, critically speaking, be worth repetition, but I shall give them a place here, and a chapter to themselves, trusting to the kind forgiveness of my readers if they do not find them as interesting to them as they were to me when I heard them from the ghostly lips of the hero himself. From the fact of his having forgotten the name of the island of which he had been governor I concluded that there was a hitch in his intellect, and this was confirmed when he came to the close of his narrative. He appeared to be one of those imperfectly educated, or imperfectly trained, men who are so numerous in the world, men who possess great strength in some directions, but in others are like children; and I think we often receive more practical and useful lessons from the conduct and failings of such men than we are ever likely to do from whole libraries of Johnsonian moralities, with Bampton and Hulsean Lectures to boot.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STRANGER'S STORY.

'I AM a native of some curious country in the upper world, where the sun shines, and where there are mountains and oceans, but I have forgotten the name of it, although it has an ancient, and not an inglorious, history, according to the opinions of human beings. I have also forgotten the name of a large island which I once conquered, and of which I was the governor. My brain, please your Majesty, is now an incomprehensible jumble; I can remember many things, but I have forgotten as many. Amongst the things I have forgotten are my own name, and the place where I was born. Among the large crowd of friends and enemies whom I once knew, and who are now only faint shadows of bygone years, there is one, however, whom I have not forgotten—it is my wife.

'I was an author in my time, and wrote several books. Amongst others a treatise on the Treaty of Tilsit, a Tragedy on the death of the Duc D'Enghien, a History of the Afghan Revolution, etc. I believe I am descended from a great sea-king, named Ragnor Lodbrog, who sailed the German Ocean and the English Channel in search of prey, and carried all before him. He conquered Rouen, was bought off from Paris, and extended his excursions into

Spain. At length he determined to try his hand on England, but there he was defeated, and taken prisoner, in a bloody battle by Ella, King of Northumbria, and was shockingly put to death by being cast into a den in which numbers of poisonous reptiles had been thrown on purpose to destroy him. That is a clue for the knowing ones—let them find out my name.

‘I was fourteen when the splendid palace of the king of my native land was burnt to ashes. The palace was situated on an island, to which access could only be had by means of a drawbridge. The flames ascended to an immense height, and were grand and awful beyond description. The lakes around our fine city reflected the splendour of the conflagration; and as I stood on an eminence looking at it at night, and heard the fire roaring, and the falling roofs crashing, and saw the pictures of the old knights who had long been dead moving as the devouring elements swept over the canvas, so that they seemed again animated with life, my mind was filled with extraordinary emotions. The fire could not be subdued; the poor king refused to believe that his palace was being consumed, and his servants were compelled to remove him from his burning chamber by force.

‘A strong spirit of adventure took possession of me about this time, and I tormented my father until he bound me as apprentice to a ship in the coaling trade; at this I remained for four years, during which time I mastered the English language, read a great number of books, and made myself acquainted with astronomy, geography, and nautical science. At the age of eighteen I left the coal trade, and entered on board a South Sea whaler going to the Cape of Good Hope with stores. When we arrived there, I went to another ship bound for Algoa Bay. The captain told me he had been in many perilous adventures; he was an officer on

board the *Lady Jane Shore* when she was piratically seized by the prisoners and soldiers on her way to Botany Bay, and escaped death by leaving his bed in the dark.

‘When we arrived at Algoa Bay, we found two men-of-war belonging to England, and during the evening another entered the harbour, and cast anchor near them. I received an order immediately to pay the new arrival a visit; but, on going alongside in the boat, and being about to mount the side, I heard people talking in a foreign language, which I suspected was French. I returned to my ship with a report of what I had heard, and it was soon discovered that the stranger was the French frigate *La Preneuse*, of 44 guns, which had watched the English ships into the bay, and expected to make prizes of them in the morning. The latter lost no time in opening their fire, although both the captains were on shore. The battle lasted six hours, and at last the Frenchman spread his sails to the land breeze, and bade us good-bye.

‘My next change was to the *Lady Nelson*, tender to the *Investigator*, discovery ship, under Captain Flinders, and we proceeded to Sydney to join that officer. (My memory becomes better as I get deeper into my history.) We spent a long time in surveying the coasts of Port Philip and Van Diemen's Land, now called Tasmania, where I was destined hereafter to spend many years of my chequered life. We then sailed to the northern shores of New Holland, where we lost all our anchors and cables on the coral reefs, but saved our vessel by means of a wooden anchor. When we got back to Sydney, however, our anchor would no longer sink, and our ship, the *Lady Nelson*, went on shore.

‘In the year 1803 we set sail from Sydney with passengers and stores for the Derwent, and, after landing them, sailed to Port Philip, to bring over Colonel Collins and the persons who had attempted to form a settlement there. The soil

was so arid and barren, and fresh water was so scarce, that it was judged necessary to abandon the place altogether.

‘On the land where Colonel Collins stood, and which he abandoned in disgust, the city of Melbourne now stands and flourishes. People from Tasmania went there, and bought a few acres for a mere trifle, and found themselves in a few years’ time millionaires. The gold mines of Victoria were the magician’s wands.

‘While we were away the site of the present city of Hobart was fixed upon, and a part of the wild Bush cleared for dwellings. It is a small but very pretty city now, but at that time the largest gum-trees thickly overshadowed an almost impenetrable scrub. Returning to Sydney to refit, we again went to Tasmania, and surveyed the entrance to the Tamar. Then we went to King Island, and amused ourselves with hunting the emu and killing sea-elephants; and on going back to Sydney, after a trip to the new settlement of Newcastle, seventy miles north of Port Jackson, I left the King of England’s service.

‘A voyage to New Zealand next engaged my attention. We filled a vessel with skins, and came back to Sydney. I then entered as chief officer of the *Alexander*, a whaler, and we sailed for the Derwent, where I struck the first whale that had ever been struck in Tasmanian waters. Directing our course to New Zealand, we filled our ship, after nearly losing her in a skirmish with the natives, and sailed for London, taking two of our savage friends with us. Baffled in our attempts to double Cape Horn, and driven three thousand miles out of our course, we made for Otaheite for provisions. Plenty of fresh meat was to be had; but we were obliged to manufacture salt to cure it with, which detained us two months. Again setting sail, with an Otaheitan chief and a friend of his, we tried the Horn a second time, and succeeded in getting round,

though not without suffering many hardships. At St. Catherine’s, in the Brazils, we stayed over three months, putting everything in order, and, after another long stoppage at St. Helena, waiting for convoy, arrived safely in the Thames.

‘I soon became desirous of revisiting my native land, and, resigning the charge of my New Zealand friends into the hands of an excellent man, Sir Joseph Banks, I made my way to the city of my ancestors, which I found had just been bombarded by an English fleet. The most beautiful city in the world was a heap of ruins. Fifteen hundred of my poor countrymen had been destroyed. This made me detest England, a Power which I had previously respected, if not loved. To prevent our fleet from falling into the hands of the then conqueror of Europe, Napoleon Bonaparte, was her ostensible motive; but, although I did not love France, I determined to wreak summary vengeance on England. I therefore took the command of a fine ship, armed with twenty-eight guns, which had been purchased by my father and seven other merchants of—yes, Copenhagen, I have it now—and presented to the Crown. We cut our way through the ice a month before it was expected that any vessel could get out, and, coming unawares among the English traders, captured eight or nine ships. I then stood boldly over to England, determined to immortalize my name by a glorious conquest, and found myself suddenly in sight of Flamborough Head, and at the same time within the reach of an English sloop of war, while a little way beyond lay another. To save my ship was now my work; but we were obliged to fight. The enemy had a hundred and twenty men; I had only eighty-three; and in a few minutes we were hard at it, yard-arm to yard-arm, two against one. The fight lasted three-quarters of an hour; I fired seventeen broadsides, and did not cease until all my

powder was gone, and my masts, sails, and rigging were shot to pieces. To resist any longer was impossible, so I struck my colours, as many a brave man has had to do before me.

'I was not in England above twenty-four hours when a letter arrived from London, from a gentleman whom I had met in my native city the year before, requesting me to hurry to London on important business. Having my liberty, though not on parole, I lost no time in complying with his request. I soon became known to several high officials of those stirring times, and renewed my acquaintance with Sir Joseph Banks, of whose friendship and good offices I shall feel proud as long as I shall be allowed to remember anything. He was a distinguished naturalist, and an honour to his country; and he had the privilege of sailing with the great Captain Cook, the immortal discoverer of Australia. A great stir was made in London just then about the condition of a certain island belonging to my native country, the name of which I cannot remember, the inhabitants being reduced almost to the horrors of a famine on account of the fierce hostilities carried on between Great Britain and that country. Permission was obtained from the British Government to freight a ship with provisions, and I agreed to take the command of her. We sailed from Liverpool in December—a time when it was considered madness to venture into such a high latitude when there were only two hours of daylight out of the twenty-four. But we had plenty of light from the *aurora borealis*, and arrived in perfect safety, to the great joy of the starving people. Our cargo I foresaw would go but a little way towards supplying their wants, so I hastened back to Liverpool to get another.

'On my return to the island with more flour and other provisions, I discovered that an order had been issued pro-

hibiting further communication with the English; and not liking the idea of taking my cargo back again, I made up my mind to act in the crisis with independent decision and energy. The next day was Sunday, and waiting quietly until the people had gone into church, I then took twelve well armed sailors with me, went on shore and marched straight up to the Governor's house, in front of which I stationed six of my men, sending the remainder to watch the rear with orders to fire on any man who should attempt to interfere. I then walked into the house with a loaded pistol in each hand. His lordship, Count Tramp, had luckily not gone to church, and I found him reposing on the sofa, not in the least expecting such a visitor. His surprise was very great, but he wisely made a virtue of necessity, and quietly accompanied me on board my vessel. Here was something to be proud of, your Majesty. The government of a large island, with a burning mountain in it, changed in a moment, and not a drop of blood spilt! Let the bloodthirsty battle-mongers of the world think of it. The people were astonished, but thinking that I acted with the connivance of the British Government, submitted without a murmur. To strengthen my position, I secured the iron chest, and issued a proclamation, wherein I stated roundly that the people, being tired of constant oppression, had unanimously called me to the head of the government.

'There have been worse governors in the world than Captain —, it is wonderful that, in the multitude of things I can remember, my own long familiar name should have become a perfect blank. Well, perhaps it may come back some day, with interest, payable to the bearer. My proclamation, though written in rather a peculiar language, was eminently successful. The English residents never interfered, and the islanders made sure it was all right. Not being inclined to tyrannize over my fellow men, I resolved to

adopt popular measures. I established a free representative government and trial by jury. My Home Rule was not one of the Squelchers and the Squelched such as they are clamouring for in Ireland. I relieved the people from one-half of the taxes [think of that, ye plundering, insatiable Australian Parliaments—ye sons or daughters of the thirsty horseleech, think of that], supplying the deficiency by imposing a duty on all British goods imported and exported. I increased the salaries of the clergy, even that of the bishop—not forgetting, as richer governments do, the humble curates. Some of the latter had lived on twelve pounds a year, a sum upon which the foxhound of an English squire would starve. Consequently, I had pulpit eloquence on my side. I took the public schools and fisheries under my care, and compelled all public defaulters to cash up without delay. I next formally released (though without authority) the people from all debts due to the Crown of my native country, which had shamefully withheld the money subscribed for their relief by the nations of Europe, especially the English, after the terrible calamities of 1783. [The volcanic eruptions of that year from the Skeidara covered several fertile districts with lava, poisoned the water and atmosphere all around, drove the fishes away from the coasts, and caused a famine and pestilence which in two years destroyed 9,000 people, and thousands of horses and cattle.] Nor was I idle in organizing military defences. I established an army of eight hundred soldiers, well armed and mounted, and placed six guns in position to defend the harbour. Indeed, I am quite serious when I tell your Majesty that the laws and regulations I then made were so good that I have reason to believe they remain unaltered to the present day.

‘I now thought it advisable to make a tour of the island. The country was very beautiful, with high and precipitous

mountains capped with snow and ice, but there were very few trees to be seen. The people in general paid me the respect due to my exalted station; but I had some trouble with the prefect of one of the northern districts. He was so insolent as to refuse to acknowledge me as governor, or to surrender the iron chest which I was resolute in demanding. But I called from his door to the people around me to collect a quantity of brushwood for the purpose of burning him and his house too, if he did not quickly submit; and submit he accordingly did, though he eyed me suspiciously as if I were only a common impostor.

‘After settling all these important affairs to my own satisfaction, if not quite to that of everyone else, I determined to pay a visit to London, on business of a serious nature. I had taken possession of a ship belonging to Count Tramp, and embarked in her, leaving the other passengers on board my own vessel. We sailed in company, but my own ship outsailed the prize, and I was obliged to run the latter between a reef and the shore, a passage till then thought impracticable. I thus gained seventeen miles, but by daylight we saw our companion three miles to leeward with signals of distress flying. Bearing down upon her, we found she was on fire. The people on board were making no efforts to put the fire out, or to save themselves; they were, in fact, paralyzed with terror. With a presence of mind which never deserted me in moments of danger, I immediately ordered out the boats, and succeeded in getting every living creature safe on board the prize. But I remained close to windward, forgetting that the guns of the burning ship were loaded; and presently they went off in a thundering volley, sending a storm of shot over our heads. There were on board ten guns, and a cargo of wool, feathers, oil, tallow, and tar; the sight was magnificent, but it was disheartening to see our fine ship, and all it contained, so

suddenly destroyed. After this catastrophe we returned for provisions. I transferred my passengers to H.M.S. *Talbot*, which happened to be in the harbour, and resuming my voyage, reached Liverpool in eight days.

'When I arrived in London I found that the *Talbot* had got in before me, and that the captain had represented to the Ministry that I had established a republican government in the island, for the purpose of harbouring all the disaffected persons in Europe, though nothing was farther from my thoughts. And, further, that I was not qualified to hold the governorship, because I had been an apprentice on board an English collier, and a midshipman in a man-of-war; fine reasons truly with which to crush rising genius! Nelson was also a midshipman; one of the Popes had been a cowboy; and Captain Cook a cabin-boy. At the instance of this false captain, I was arrested, and charged with having broken my parole, though I had never given it at all. They sent me to Tothill Fields' Prison, where I met with some sparkling fellows, who initiated me into the mysteries of gambling; and then to the hulk appointed for the reception of prisoners of war. After having resided in these places for twelve months, I was allowed to retire to Reading, on my parole of honour, and began to devote myself to literature; but going to London, with permission to employ myself as a British subject, I fell in with my friends from Tothill Fields, and was, in the space of six months, considerably stripped of every farthing I possessed. I advise all here, and all who may read my memoirs, never to sit down to a gaming-table, never even to look on while others are gambling. The fascination accompanying this dreadful vice is stronger than that of drunkenness itself. It absorbs every faculty, and steepes the soul in tremulous delight, leading only to disappointment, remorse, and despair. The professional gamester knows only too well how to cajole his

victim. He will smile pleasantly, and press his hand kindly, as he invites him to have a rubber, but he will eye him as a vulture does a lamb. Surrounded by a number of them, I have more than once congratulated myself on being a winner, when, lo! the cash was suddenly swept off the table, and half a dozen eager voices declared that I had lost. Indignant remonstrances and protestations were in vain.

'When I had lost every penny at the gaming-table, for the first time I determined to try my fortune in a foreign land, and took a passage to Lisbon. But here my evil genius pursued me, and I was arrested by the orders of General Trant, and sent back to England, for no crime in the world but reporting to the British Consul the assassination of Mr. Perceval by Bellingham, in the lobby of the House of Commons. I returned to Lisbon, gave way to my newly-acquired propensity for gambling, and again found myself without a farthing. I sold the clothes off my back, and putting on an old jacket and trousers (I could not well do with less) engaged as a seaman in a gunboat, and cruised off St. Vincent for ten days. We took a good many small prizes, sent out on purpose to be taken, furnished with false papers. Here I was promoted to the command of a watch, on account of the ready way in which I performed my duty; but my elevation immediately drew down such a storm of jealousy and dislike from the rest of the officers that I was made quite miserable. Going, however, into Gibraltar, I was lucky enough to be sent to the hospital, through representing an old complaint that sometimes troubled me to be ten times worse than it really was. Soon after I was sent to Portsmouth, and put on board the *Gladiator*, fifty guns, where from seven to eight hundred sick men were crowded together in a state of positive suffocation. Here I became really ill, and wrote a letter to the Admiral, craving permission to go on shore. When the doctor and captain

heard of this, they both attacked me as if I were a dog, and threatened to tie me up and flog me for "shamming Moses," so that my situation became worse than ever. The captain insulted me every day, and said he would teach me to apply to the Admiralty instead of to him. My first letter having produced no result, I made up my mind to try another, let the consequences be what they might, and the next day an order came for the captain and me to attend the Admiral on shore. We went accordingly, and I was extremely gratified to hear my enemy get a good rap on the knuckles, while I received permission to go where I liked.

'My footsteps were now turned towards London, where I had many friends of high rank and great influence, by whom, notwithstanding my coarse jacket and trousers, I was received with great kindness. In the tranquillity of a friend's country seat in Suffolk I wrote an account of the Island Revolution, which I presented to my friend Sir Joseph Banks. My host pointed me out to his friends as his majesty, the king of that island. My friends in my native city sent me a good supply of money, which was increased by the liberality of those I had in England. I then returned to London, made my appearance among my old acquaintances, by whom I was generously and rapturously received, sat down to the gaming-table once more, and again rose up a beggar.

'But instead of being cured by these repeated misfortunes, my propensity for gambling grew stronger every day. I was arrested for debt, and confined in the Fleet prison for two years. I had made some friends by the timely disclosure of a plot, on the part of the French Government, to take the Australian colonies from the English; and what money I received for this I squandered at the gaming-table. I was presented with sufficient to pay my debts and procure my liberty; but instead of doing so, I threw it all away on

this fascinating vice, thus losing both my freedom and my peace of mind. To protect myself against the dangers and horrors of idleness, I wrote while in prison a History of the Afghan Revolution, and the tragedy I formerly mentioned. I amused myself by making neat copies of these works, which I presented to different noblemen and gentlemen of whom I had some knowledge; and they rewarded me handsomely for my pains. At this period I was sent for to the Foreign Office, and was offered an employment which would oblige me to proceed to Belgium, where the British troops and their allies were already mustering, under Lord Wellington, in the hope of finally crushing the mad ambition of Bonaparte and the French. My debts were paid, money was advanced to provide an outfit, and permission was given me to draw when abroad for reasonable travelling expenses. And now will your Majesty believe it? If it is not true, cut my head off on the spot.'

The King started suddenly, like a war-horse when he sniffs the battle from afar, and growled, 'Ha! it's time it was off.'

'Sire, I gambled the money away, and instead of providing myself with an outfit, I sold everything except my shirt, so to speak, and found myself totally destitute. My shame and remorse amounted to agony. I went and told a bundle of lies to the master of a storeship, and got to Ostend; then I drew upon London for money, but the bankers treated me as an impostor, until luckily meeting with a military officer to whom I was known, he was able to testify to my identity, and I found myself again on my legs.

'I now began to taste the pleasures of freedom and a replenished pocket. The belligerent hosts of England and France rapidly approached each other, and it was soon evident where the decisive blow would be struck. I travelled on therefore hastily, and was an astonished spectator of the

battle of Quatre Bras, and a still more astonished witness of the crushing defeat of the boasting Bonaparte at Waterloo. Although I had no great reason to love England, I yet longed to see her victorious over the bloodthirsty, unprincipled conqueror of Europe. What terrible emotions did the thunder of the guns create in my breast!—every discharge carrying destruction to dozens of brave and healthy men, and for nothing but to gratify the fiendish lust of worldly power and glory: rivers of blood flowing on the fields of battle, and bitter cries of want and sorrow ascending from every side to the Judgment-seat of God! And for all this is a man exalted to be a hero and a demigod, by his vain-glorious and fickle fellow mortals.

‘I went to Paris with the army, and saw the prodigious number of four hundred thousand soldiers collected there. Meeting also with my friend of the Foreign Office, I received orders to proceed to Warsaw, and was furnished with a further supply of money to defray expenses. Instead of going, however, like a gentleman of honour, I went to a gambling hell, merely to see how they managed such matters in France, and with strong resolutions not to play. But the temptation became irresistible. I won at first, but the tide turned, and I lost for several nights, my employer thinking that I had started on my journey. Very soon I was without a farthing; I sold the shirt off my back to a sergeant for seven francs, in cold December, and buttoning up my coat, bade adieu to Paris, and set out for Warsaw on foot.

‘I now entered upon a course of minor adventures which might have furnished Smollet or Fielding with materials for some excellent novels, although I managed to get on without Narcissa and Amelia. Like a good many other adventurers, I discovered that something was to be always gained by a timely exhibition of cool, audacious impudence. Nothing lowers a poor wretch in this world so much as a

bashful demeanour, for in the opinion of men the modest, timid man, though he may be as honest as Fabricius, and as virtuous as Scipio, is nothing but an idiot, and they treat him accordingly. About one hundred and twenty miles from Paris, at the little village of Joncherie, I found myself without a sou, but I entered a cabaret, and called for a good dinner. While eating it the mayor came in to look at my passport. Along with this was a letter which I wished him to see, and on his looking at it, asked him if he knew the handwriting. I then explained that it was from the Duchess of Angoulême. He bowed and smiled. “I am,” said I, “an Irishman going to the Holy Land.” With which information he was so delighted, that he advised me not to leave the village until I had seen the Baroness D’Este, a religious and charitable lady. I waited upon her accordingly with the same story, had all my expenses at the inn paid, and received some coins to deposit at the sacred shrine. Here I remained for ten days, enjoying the good things of this life.

‘Continuing my journey, I arrived at Rheims. The prefect of this city was a zealous Bonapartist, and I, being in want of money, wrote him a letter, in which I said I had reason to believe that the Commissariat Stores had been robbed by the English. He sent for me, and I made such a favourable impression that he at once furnished me with money and a billet, which enabled me to receive a certain sum per mile to defray my expenses, besides the service of a horse to carry me from station to station on the road. After travelling some time, I was stopped by a blustering village mayor, told I was a lazy fellow, and ordered to stretch my legs, as he would not supply me with a horse; his conduct, indeed, was so offensive that I was provoked to bestow upon him a knock on the head which made his skull ring again; but seeing the villagers coming out like a swarm of bees, armed

with pitchforks and other weapons, I thought it advisable to take to my heels at once.

'At Metz I got my billet renewed through taking advantage of the Mayor's ignorance of the French language. At Frankfort I found myself penniless, but, with my usual *sang froid*, I entered a good inn, and ordered a sumptuous supper. In the morning I told my landlord I had no money, but expected a supply in the course of the day. Leaving my waistcoat with him in pledge, I went out to seek my fortune, and strolled into a mathematical instrument maker's shop, where I perceived a chronometer bearing my father's name. I then introduced myself to the proprietor, who was a Scotchman named Fraser. He was an amiable and humane man, and in addition to kind advice he directed me to Lord Clancarty, the British Minister. Here I found a gentleman from the Foreign Office who knew me, notwithstanding my shabby attire, and my pecuniary wants were again liberally supplied. Mr. Fraser also gave me a letter of introduction to the secretary of the Grand-Duke of Hesse Darmstadt, on delivering which I had the pleasure of being presented to His Royal Highness, with whom I had a most interesting conversation. I spent a long time in looking over his museum, and splendid gallery of paintings. On my departure His Royal Highness made me a handsome present.

'At Saxe Weimar I visited the Duke's splendid library of two hundred thousand volumes, and was introduced to the celebrated Goethe, no inconsiderable honour, I can assure your Majesty. Travelling thence to Leipsic, I surveyed with indescribable interest the scene of that memorable battle which lasted four days, and in which six hundred thousand men fought in deadly strife—some for glory and dominion, others for the liberties of their country. Here that sublime outlaw who had conquered and robbed the greater part of Europe was defeated. What wonderful

scenes in history can be created by one little man, whom I could have clapped into a basket, and carried on my shoulders from Cape Wrath to the Straits of Dover !'

'What was his name?' asked the King.

'Napoleon Bonaparte, sire. As for me, I began at last to rise in the world, and hired a carriage to Berlin, where I waited on the British Minister, and had my funds again recruited. In this city I remained for eight months, procrastinating from day to day my departure for Warsaw ; for, yielding to my gambling propensities, I gained a prize in the Prussian lottery for four hundred crowns, my ticket having only cost me three shillings. I now gambled to excess, in spite of good resolutions vowed and sworn while lying quietly in bed. I was not happy until again within the exciting whirlpool. One of my partners at several games of whist was that debauched old dragoon, as his great enemy called him, who helped Wellington to crush Bonaparte at Waterloo, the renowned Field-Marshal Blucher. Tearing myself away from Berlin at last, I found myself at Dresden, where I fell among Philistines, and was completely fleeced, losing so large a sum as five hundred pounds to a disreputable rascal who I knew was not worth ten shillings.

'The gentlemen with whom I got connected at Dresden tried hard to persuade me that I was in debt to them, so I was obliged to depart suddenly without even applying for a passport, though I knew I should suffer greatly for want of one. But travelling now on foot, crestfallen and miserable, I was too obscure to attract much notice. One evening, however, arriving at the gate of a small fortified town, the sentinel positively refused to let me pass unless I produced my passport. I was terribly annoyed, being very tired and hungry, and the noise I made brought out the gatekeeper's wife, to whom I immediately appealed. God bless the ladies ! Presenting her with two silk handkerchiefs, I

begged her to intercede, as it would be ruinous for me to be shut out that night, having a cartload of smuggled goods coming, which would stand a good chance of being seized if I were not at hand to receive them. In addition to the two handkerchiefs I promised her some very advantageous bargains when the goods came up. My story went to the honest woman's heart; I was invited into the gatehouse, regaled with supper, and accommodated with a bed. In the morning I fortified myself with a hearty breakfast, and in great astonishment that my cartload of goods had not come up, I walked out to see what had detained it.'

'I understand,' said the King; 'you told a falsehood; you had no cartload of goods coming.'

'No, your Majesty; it was an invention of mine to enable me to surmount a difficulty.'

'Ha! Proceed.'

'The want of a passport, sire, sharpened my wits. From the Continent I crossed over to London, and, notwithstanding my delays and delinquencies, received the approbation of my employer, and a liberal reward for my services. Led on still by my evil genius, from whose fangs I had been so often unaccountably rescued, I again sank into the vortex of gambling, and spent three years in the wicked and senseless excitement. At length an ungrateful and cunning wretch, a fellow-lodger of mine, laid a scheme to ruin me, and it succeeded only too well. I was arrested one day on a charge of having pawned some property belonging to my landlady; I was tried at the Old Bailey, and had the mortification to receive a sentence of seven years' transportation. Detained in Newgate until my innocence was made manifest, I had the pleasure of being pardoned on condition that I should quit the kingdom within a month of the day of my liberation.

'Your Majesty will now fully expect to hear that I turned a deaf ear to the solicitations of my fast friends; that I left

London forthwith, went to the Brazils, traded successfully, retired from business, bought an estate, and now live upon it, the owner of slaves and cattle without number; but weakness, not strength, prevailed. With a month before me, and money in my pocket, I did not wait for my fast friends to seek me, but went where I knew I should find them. The month flew by, and several weeks were added to it, when, as I was actually on my way out of England, I met a friend on Tower Hill whom I was very glad to see. He seemed to be delighted to see me, squeezed my hand heartily, and smiled in my face; he invited me to dinner, but while I was eating it sent for the police. My sentence on this occasion was transportation for life. A convict now, without a hope of pardon.

'Lodged in my old quarters in Newgate again, I resumed my literary pursuits. I now wrote a religious work, which raised up for me a host of enemies. The false representations of these snarling and disreputable people to the Ministry had the effect of putting an end to my useful and benevolent labours in Newgate, and I was shipped off, with many more unfortunate men, sorely against my will, to an island near the South Pole, which your Majesty has never heard of. It was a great and a sad fall; but the discipline, though severe, may possibly have been necessary to cure me of that abominable vice of gambling, of which I believe I am now cured for ever. And now, please your Majesty, as I have told my story without reserve, I most humbly beg and crave that you will be graciously pleased to give me a place in your honourable Court.'

'A place in my Court, thou snivelling idiot!' bellowed the King in a paroxysm of rage. 'Thou art a self-confessed liar, and thou allowest thy wife to beat thee, and to curse thee! Away with him to the block: he shall not live, a contemptible coward and fool—he shall die!'

'My lord Cardinal!' said the poor man, as the halberdiers

and the buffetiers approached him, wagging their jaws. 'I appeal to your Eminence. I am condemned to death by this arbitrary monarch for having told him the truth. He will not believe me. He is a type of the great and foolish world, the mass of self-satisfied mankind, which will not believe the things that it hath not seen, because it cannot or will not understand them. I compare not myself, or my insignificant abilities, to great and marvellous ones which are above my poor comprehension; but well I know—at least I believe—that in the millions of worlds of whose existence we are sure, because we see them as twinkling stars, there are possibilities and realities surpassing in sublime grandeur the most exalted conceptions of our miserable minds. Shall we presume to say they are lies, and exist only in our own imaginations?'

'King of England!' said the Cardinal solemnly, 'have I not advised you to shed no more blood, even as I would advise the princes and powers of the earth to wage no more unjust war? Have you forgotten my history? You will not believe this man's story, which is not, I venture to think, one whit more extraordinary than my own, which you well know to be true. I speak freely now as you have done your worst' (here the buffetiers laughed, and wagged their jaws again), 'and I fear nothing. Did I not rise from nothing, as the fungus in the night, or as the fiery rocket into the air, while thousands of poor creatures were left to grovel in poverty all their lives? I became your father's trusted and favourite councillor, O King! and then yours, because I had the genius to take advantage of the opportunities which rapidly presented themselves to me; no drivelling qualm of conscience, or wretched fear of offending the High Majesty of Heaven, keeping me back. Those men who study to please their Maker may become poorer but are better as they grow older, while those who study to please themselves and the world become worse. I

became Dean of Lincoln by a quick journey to France and back again; then Lord Almoner, and owner of Empson's forfeited house and lands; I pass over my offices and honours until I became a Cardinal and Lord High Chancellor. My riches grew with my honours. I grew rich beyond the dreams of avarice. I was the cynosure on whom men cast their envious or admiring glances. I enjoyed stipends from the Kings of France and Spain and from the Doge of Venice. I aspired to the Papal tiara itself, but that effulgent dignity was denied me. I lived in princely splendour at York House, and built a magnificent palace, which I presented to your Majesty, for I saw you were getting jealous of me, and "jealousy is cruel as the grave." My dress was gorgeous; my household included five hundred people; earls and barons were amongst my servants. With all this I was no mean scholar, promoting learning, encouraging genius, restraining the shedding of English blood, and helping the poor by a profuse expenditure of money. But my mind was still poisoned with pride and the lust of place and power, and I fell—and the greatness of my fall was a mortal blow. My earthly grandeur is now a dream. I have my weight of lead at my back, and tremble at every breath that may be wafted to me by the great God whom I neglected, if not despised, and took in His place an earthly idol, a king of corruptible flesh and blood, no better than mine own.'

No sooner had the Cardinal uttered these words than the King fell back on his throne as if struck by lightning. The crowd in the room became mingled together in a confused mass, and rose up to the roof as a cloud of blue smoke. The Doctor and I were left alone, staring at each other, and at last, instead of being struck, as I was, with intense wonder and astonishment, he burst into his usual boisterous fit of laughter.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PARLIAMENT OF PANDAPOLIS.

Two or three days were now to elapse, and then the time would come, if the all-powerful Demon should be for once true to his word, when I should be breathing again the delicious air of my beloved mountains, and climbing to their tops beneath the sunny canopy of heaven. I had a vague hope, too, but only a vague one, that my kind friend Julius would also be able, by some master-stroke of policy, of which I thought his extraordinary talents and fearless energy made him fully capable, to accompany me in my aerial flight out of this black and horrible abyss. I regarded him as a wonderfully clever magician, who could call at will spirits from the vasty deep, and, what is more, make them obey his call. I attributed to his power the sudden and complete dissolution of the court of the mighty potentate in which I was about to become such a prominent actor. The lesson to be learned from that strange scene, which we should all seriously and gratefully lay to heart, is that we are not now living under an absolute monarch, who has either the power or the will to make himself a scourge and a terror to his subjects.

A thousand times I asked myself how the Doctor, who has become the hero of my story nearly to the exclusion of the Demon himself, gained his terrible power. We have

seen that he had nearly as much as his master, whom he evidently hated and despised, and whom he seemed to fear but little. He was a younger man by far than many thousands whom I had seen and heard of in that city, and yet he appeared to be placed, in medical authority at least, above them all. To attain such a position he must have been endowed with the abilities of Æsculapius, Ætius, Galen, and their multitudinous successors. In addition to the constant pursuit of his studies and duties he had found time, in less than two hundred years, to construct, out of nothing that I could see or account for, a hall or grotto of vast proportions and astonishing magnificence, in which he produced effigies of his parents, and of his beautiful Helen and her companions, in the most marvellous similitude to the reality of life. In this I could only compare him to the author of the 'Arabian Knights,' or our own Sir Walter Scott. And yet, with all his strength and power, his character presented many eccentricities, if not absolute weaknesses. He could rebuke me severely for my deficiencies in wisdom, and yet fall down himself and worship the work of his own hands, the image of Helen, the ever lovely and mysterious Helen. He could roll on the floor and cry like a child when her name was mentioned; and become mad with jealousy and rage at one moment because I had kissed her in a dream; and, lo! in the next, he would be shouting with wild laughter at the antics of a troop of musical buffoons. He could take me in the morning to witness a solemn tragedy, and in the evening dissipate the same in a cloud of smoke and with ringing laughter. He would argue the gravest matters with Artabzanus himself, and then go out and crack jokes with the hoggish Obeltub, the driving fiend of the lightning balloon.

My reverie was suddenly interrupted by the subject of it rushing into the room, with much apparent excitement, a

roll of papers in one hand, and a black staff with white letters upon it in the other.

'Fortune is favouring me, Ubertus,' he said in a subdued voice, as if fearful of being overheard; 'I have been summoned to attend a great council. The Demon, Old Arty, as I often style him, has called his Parliament together, to discuss and decide upon the greatest and most important question of the day, which is the building of a new city on the surface of your world, and the removal of all the inhabitants of this place up to it. He is full of the project, and I shall support it by all the means in my power. It may give me my long-wished-for opportunity. The site of his new city, will, I believe, be fixed on to-day. I understand he is in favour of one in the neighbourhood of your splendid Great Lake; but of this I am not quite sure. I must leave you to yourself to-day, my dear boy; you can command Florian and the band, or you can read these papers if you like. I do not know whether I am right or not, but I think you are anxious to learn more about Helen. They will gratify your curiosity, if they do not—and I hope they will not—grate harshly upon your literary taste.'

I thanked him for this renewed proof of his confidence, and ventured to ask what the black staff with white letters upon it was for.

'It is,' he replied, 'my staff of office; by it I am known to be one of the Demon King's ministers. When you are appointed his private secretary you will be presented with a similar staff. It will insure your respectful reception into the highest and most fashionable society, and procure for you advantages and honours without number. You will be a lucky fellow.'

'My dear Doctor,' I enquired earnestly, 'may I not go with you? I have an insatiable curiosity to see this great Parliament.'

'What!—and leave these papers, and the history of my Helen here to take care of themselves?'

'I will keep them safely, sir, in my pocket, and read them another time.'

'Now or never!' he shouted, and snatching up the papers again, rushed out of the room just as he had rushed in.

I was utterly confounded. 'Now he is offended in earnest,' I mused, almost stunned with the suddenness of the occurrence, 'and Heaven only knows what will become of me. Without his friendship and protection, I shall be lost.'

After sitting there in a state of the greatest misery for about an hour, Florian came in, and told me that his master was about to start, and if I wished to accompany him, I could do so: the carriage was ready. I started up with alacrity, and followed the messenger into the street. There I found the Doctor waiting for me, pacing up and down impatiently. He uttered no word of reproach or reproof, however, but told me calmly to take my seat. We drove out, as before, into the great abyss, by the light of the enormous shields, which looked, in consequence of their proximity, like gigantic moons shining through the smoke of a Tasmanian bush fire. Then we passed under the high arch which marked the entrance into the Department of Pleasure; and after driving through many brilliant streets, and amongst dense throngs of people, found ourselves at last in front of the Demon's palace.

A great crowd had assembled there, for the news had spread like wildfire that the King had called his Parliament together for the first time for many years. All kinds of rumours, for the better or the worse, hung suspended in the air. A regiment of gigantic negro guards was drawn up before the royal residence. The Doctor was loudly cheered, but instead of alighting at the palace as I expected, he drove on past it, saying, 'We are too early; let us drive on,

and I will show you the Dark River, and the Bridge of Folly.'

We drove on accordingly through the streets until the houses became far apart from each other, and the lamps dwindled by degrees both in number and brightness. A plunging gallop of the horses brought us to a high, half-ruined bridge, which spanned a rushing torrent, whose waters were of a pitchy blackness. The deep caverns whence this horrible river issued were lit in the distance by a pale phosphorescent glow that reminded me strangely of St Elmo's fire. The scene was terrible, and though I only saw it for a few moments, I shall never lose the sight of it. The river flowed down under the bridge, causing alarming vibrations, and became a frightful whirlpool which dashed its waves against an island of the hardest rock, and this was as black as the waters themselves. Far below, among the subterranean mountains, echoed the hoarse roar of a tremendous waterfall, mingled with other far more fearful sounds.

'This is the Bridge of Folly,' said the Doctor; 'that island is the Island of Ignorance; the whirlpool is called Presumption, and the river itself is Infidelity.'

While we sat in our carriage on the centre of the bridge I was horrified to see an aged man advancing towards us from the opposite side. He was attended by a crowd of admiring followers, who, whenever he turned and spoke a few words to them, shouted and clapped their hands. He came up to the Doctor's carriage, saluted us gravely, and addressed my friend thus:

'Ho, ho, Doctor Julius! I am rejoiced to welcome thee again into the country of infinite light, love universal, and pleasure eternal. Freedom, freedom; hurrah for freedom! It was our cradle, and it shall be our grave. Do I talk about graves? We shall have no grave. Art thou come,

thou jolly Doctor, with thy milk-and-water, ratsbane-looking friend up there to join our holy circle? Freedom is our watchword, Liberty our banner. We have no master, and our eyes are bright; no deadly pall of future fear hangs over us, and our hearts are light. We can see, and judge, and put things together. We worship no Creator, for the good reason—there is not one to worship; we worship our noble selves; ha! ha! ho! ho! and we're jolly and happy, and careless and free. Are we not, my trusty followers and dearest friends? If I had a thousand wives and ten thousand children, I would have them all here about me now. Join us, Doctor; join us, Mr. Puddingface, or whatever your precious name may be.'

The followers set up a shout of approbation, but the Doctor drove his horses on to the end of the bridge, turned them round to go back to the Demon's palace, and as he passed the band of athiests spoke these few words:

'Professor Muddlebrain, if you can learn nothing yourself, attempt not to teach others. Your mind is a dark chamber where light cannot enter. You are a blind fool, and a leader of blind fools. Away with you; vanish from my sight!'

They obeyed him. They burst into shrieks of hideous laughter, and to my horror and astonishment leaped over the parapet of the bridge into the boiling gulf, following to the last man their hoary leader, and I could see them by the faint light dashed upon the rocks of the Island of Ignorance.

In the course of our drive my protector had said but little. Now, however, when he had dismissed his carriage, he spoke these words as we walked slowly up and down the courtyard of the palace:

'I ought to apologize, Ubertus, for my late abruptness, with which you have good reason to be offended. I have a

hasty temper and an imperious will, by which I conquer nearly all things, but no one can say that I am a false and unprincipled deceiver. You have asked me to bring you here to see the Demon King's Parliament in session, and I have complied with your request, although for several weighty reasons I ought not to have done so. You are in danger here, and so am I; but we must not be cowards. The fall and disgrace of Astoragus will most likely draw upon you the vengeance of the Larrikin Guards' (here I shuddered in my inmost soul); 'your rejection of Princess Bellagranda's hand in marriage will certainly provoke the hatred of that powerful personage. If she should invite you to lunch with her to-day, you must follow the guidance of your own inclinations; I must not influence you. Perhaps I was wrong when I told you who she was when she lived on earth, and if she knew I had done so she might find means to sting me, as Astoragus stung you.'

'She shall never know it from me, sir; I will not lunch with her!' I broke in vehemently.

'Reflect for awhile in silence,' he replied; 'we are in good time, and need not enter yet.'

I did reflect. A beautiful woman seldom fails to conquer the weak heart of the strongest man even if he be also wise and conscientious. Bellagranda was beautiful, graceful, charming, witty, and winning. Whether she was acting a basely treacherous part at the instance of her 'dear papa,' or was really capable of loving me at first sight, I had no means of knowing. If she were indeed Clytemnestra, she was a murderess, but she might not be that infamous woman. Did she intend to entrap me and turn me into a dog for her own amusement, or did she consider me a fine-looking fellow whom she could love and make happy for ever? Who can tell? The current of our lives becomes divergent streams; our better angel alone, and not our own prudence,

can tell us which to follow. My heart fluttered in my breast when her image presented itself before me. I was bewitched by the grandeur and loveliness of her outward person. A deadly influence was at work, and I trembled. The boundless ocean of eternity was within my view, on one side light, on the other darkness. What might not be the consequences should my resolution give way? Had I seen the 'Star of Victory,' and the virtuous wife or lover of my friend the Doctor in vain? 'Weak as water, weak as water,' I muttered to myself. 'Oh, poor Ubertus! pray now for the strength which conquers all weakness.'

The members of the Council now began to arrive. A number of chariots drawn by fiery horses dashed into the courtyard. The Doctor entered the palace, and I followed him into the large chamber in which I had first met my enemy Astoragus. My guide directed me to take a humble seat near one of the thrones; for, to my surprise, I saw two thrones, where on my first visit there was but one. He took a seat near me, explaining in a low voice that his proper seat was at the other side, opposite the Demon's throne, but he wished to be near me to point out by name the celebrated personages who were expected to take part in the forthcoming debate. The personages themselves need not be described. For the most part they were large, rough, shaggy-looking figures; I dare not call them men. It is needless to say that their appearance nearly drove me frantic with terror.

He told me many of their names, but I remember only few. There were seven Ministers of State; the Minister of Fires and Blazes was the chief, under the Premier; his name was Lord Flambo Combustus. The Minister of War rejoiced in the cognomen of the Hon. Kattyscalpa Bomblaza. He who had the charge of Foreign Affairs was by name Sir Dashmy Partigan. The Secretary for the Home Department

was Lord Cashup Humbuggings. The Minister of Coal had an altogether unpronounceable name. Sir Bumptious Rocketflight had charge of the golden and leaden portfolios. The Doctor himself was the seventh. When the noise of their tumultuous entrance had subsided, the great clock of the palace boomed forth its awful single stroke. The Doctor ran across the House, and took his seat on the ministerial benches. A door opened, a band of fifes and drums struck up a saluting flourish, and the Demon King, surrounded by a number of his guards, advanced to the throne, and took his seat. All the members rose to receive him. But what commotion was that which now succeeded? What was the meaning of the buzz of admiration that rose up from the crowd? Good angels, protect me! Be still—be still, oh beating heart!—Bellagranda herself!

If I thought her beautiful when I saw her first, she seemed now to be absolutely enchanting. She did not come carried by her women, but, lo! seated on the back of a magnificent lion. She looked like an innocent young virgin in whom there could be no guile. She had arrayed herself in an azure-coloured robe, adorned with buttons and spangles in gold and silver, thus showing her superior taste by discarding lead. On her head she wore a crown of gold, on which were fixed, in imitation of Urania, eight twinkling stars that sent forth a dazzling light. Descending gracefully from the back of her leonine charger, assisted by a number of elegant pages, she seated herself on the second throne at the Demon's right hand; but as she did so I saw, with a delightful sensation which I cannot describe, her glorious eyes riveted upon my face—an ugly face, too, compared with some it has been my privilege to see. It was in vain that I tried to divest myself of the idea that this splendid creature, whoever she was, loved me for my personal or mental attractions. I called myself an ass, an inflated

fool, a manifest and veritable idiot, full of vanity and self-deception. Surely, if she loved me for myself alone, she would never think of turning me into a loathsome animal. Could I reciprocate her love, and fly with her into bowers of bliss and pleasure, which mortal tongue never told, nor imagination conceived? *That* was the question.

The business of the day now commenced. The Demon opened the session by a long speech from the throne, of which I can only give a very brief and imperfect report. It was a matter of great rejoicing to his heart, he said, and to the heart of his amiable daughter, whom he had thought proper to admit to a share in the government of his extensive dominions, to see such a solemn and dignified assembly of lords and princes of his world-wide empire. He was pleased beyond measure to be able to announce that, owing to the exertions of his present constitutional advisers, a universal peace had been proclaimed which he fondly hoped would last for many centuries. As far as he was personally concerned he hated war, but there were many—far too many—discontented and sanguinary spirits in his kingdom who detested peace. Hence the unexpected and bitterly-to-be-regretted complications which had only lately been unravelled on the terrible field of carnage. This bloody climax had been, however, greatly alleviated by the spiritual exertions of his right trusty and beloved Premier, the Director General of Hospitals, whose report would be laid before them, and whose wonderful genius and talents had been successful in restoring the wounded to sound health, and the killed, of whom there were about two hundred thousand, to renewed life. He had the pleasure of assuring his faithful Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled, that he had received highly satisfactory despatches from all parts of his empire, which was annexing fresh worlds,

and constantly growing in dignity, and in the respect of all classes of beings, human and otherwise. It was his intention to lay before them, through his responsible advisers, and other experienced members of this honourable house, several very important measures, which, if they met with its approval, and became law, would conduce in no small degree to the extension of the boundaries, and increase of the power, of the empire. The most important of these he would take the liberty of alluding to, although it might be somewhat unconstitutional. He would explain, for their satisfaction, that in doing so he had no wish or intention to influence their weighty deliberations, or interfere with their highly-valued freedom of debate. Many years ago, in his numerous journeys to and fro, on business of importance, from his present subterranean city up to the surface of the world, which was inhabited and dominated by the human race, among whom he had very many, he might say millions, of warm admirers and staunch adherents, it struck him very forcibly that it would be a very great improvement, and an enormous stride in the right direction, if a large city were built on the outside of the world—a city of their own building—capable of containing all the inhabitants of this which they possessed below ground, and many millions more. In all his wanderings hither and thither, and in his aerial flights in his lightning balloon, this idea had grown to something like maturity, and he had of late years even gone so far as to select a suitable site, by anticipation, for this new city. He had—and he said it modestly—with his proverbially superior abilities and taste, selected one in a strange and far-off island, called affectionately by its inhabitants *Tasmania*. It is in their Lake country, as they call it, and they are particularly proud of it, and he thought a better or finer site could not be chosen in the whole world. The grandest of the lakes, which is called the Great Lake, is one hundred

miles in circumference, and has all around it abundance of room for a splendid metropolis. There was an inexhaustible supply of the sweetest water in the universe. There were rivers flowing in different directions; forests for their fires; rocky hills and mountains for their fortified castles, open fields for, if necessary, their battles, to which purpose he hoped they would never be devoted; and sheep and cattle all round them to which they could help themselves when they pleased. Added to all these advantages would be the pleasures of society, and closer and more intimate relations with the people of the island, of the plains below the lakes, and of the distant cities near the sea. A very sweet and refreshing intercourse might be established by means of a mountain railway from north to south, for which the inhabitants would gladly pay. Iron and metal roads would no doubt be cheerfully constructed; and multitudes of delighted visitors would fly in crowded carriages from one city to another. He believed there was a glorious future in store for the Great Lake of Tasmania. Other important measures would be laid before them for their consideration, particularly one to effect the Federation of the World; one for the reconstruction and better organization of the Larrikin Guards; one for establishing a close season of one hundred years for fleas, rats, rabbits, vindictive official tyrants, rogues, fools, snakes, and all other vermin, most useful assistants to them in their moral government of mankind: he trusted that these and many more desirable Acts of this honourable house would become law; and he would now thank them from the bottom of his heart for their devotion to his person, and for their warm and generous support in all seasons of trial and difficulty.

His Majesty then saluted the assembly, who all bowed profoundly to the ground, and marched away, the fifes and drums again striking up a flourish. I watched Bellagrande

most anxiously, expecting to see her rise and follow the Demon, but she did not move.

The Thunderer, as the Speaker of that Parliament was called, now took his seat at one end of the hall. The clerks arranged their papers at the head of a long table, the members flung themselves on their couches in easy, careless attitudes, and the serjeant-at-arms marched up and down with a drawn sword about seven feet long, in one hand, and an enormous revolver, loaded, as I understood, with thunder and lightning, in the other.

The address to the throne, in reply to His Majesty's gracious speech, was moved by the Hon. Member for the thriving suburb of Muddyhole, and seconded by the Hon. Member for the equally thriving district of Briarbank.

The Hon. the Premier caught the Thunderer's eye, and rose to speak to the question. He was received with loud cheers. He would merely say a few words before the resolution was carried. They had all listened with profound attention and respect to His Majesty's eloquent and luminous speech, which, he had no doubt, had given them all exquisite satisfaction. He was a man of few words, and would say but little. The man of few words was the best man, according to Shakespeare: he had no intention of praising himself. The hon. members, the mover and seconder of the address, had done their duty well. He cordially approved of the royal speech. The project of building a new city round the Great Lake of Tasmania met with his entire approbation. He had a guest and friend staying with him who could tell them a great deal about that delightful island, and its enchanting scenery. (Confound him, could he not let me alone!) He requested the Hon. House to allow him to introduce his friend, Mr. Oliver Ubertus, and (here, as I saw all their cat-like eyes directed to me, I thought it advisable to stand up and

make a respectful obeisance, which the House was pleased to return, cheering and clapping its hands) he, the Hon. Premier, had pleasure in assuring his hon. friends and colleagues that Mr. Ubertus had it in his power to give them some valuable information, when the Bill for building the new Pandapolis should be laid on the table. Amongst other wonderful things he could tell them that not very far from the Great Lake the coaches went along without horses, the vapour of boiling water making the wheels go round. (Loud laughter and ironical cheers.)

To cut my story as short as possible, and confine it within reasonable dimensions, I shall omit many of the very remarkable speeches which I heard on that wonderful day (or night). The general tone of the House was decidedly in favour of the Bill now laid on the table—that for building the new city. I pass by the etiquette of Parliamentary practice, not being very well acquainted with it. The different speakers enlarged with extraordinary eloquence on the new pleasures and conveniences awaiting them in their grand residences in one of the most salubrious and beautiful countries in the world. They contrasted them with their gloomy, though dazzling, abodes in the underground region, of which they were all heartily sick and tired, and where they saw nothing but lamp, lamp, night and day. There they would have the glorious light of the sun, and almost an ocean of delicious water, and exquisite fish, fat beef, excellent mutton, and indescribable bacon, to say nothing of fowls and hog-puddings, for which they were all constantly and miserably dying. They would be near their dear relatives and friends in the flesh, with whom they could maintain eternal and delightful intercourse; and when those friends were obliged to resign their fleshly dwellings, they would be close at hand to conduct their emancipated ghosts into the fine palaces prepared for them

on the shores of the Great Lake. 'And who,' shouted one impassioned orator—I think he was the member for a famous rotten borough called Lickdust—'and who, what monarch upon the aqueous and adamantine globe, be he or she whom he or she may, shall be so great, so rich, so magnificent, so exquisitely beautiful, and so enormously powerful as the Princess, the Queen, the Empress of that enchanting city, our lovely and voluptuous Bellagranda?'

This complimentary outburst was received with the wildest enthusiasm, and fairly brought down and brought up the House. Every member was instantly on his legs. Five hundred throats yelled, and roared, and cheered with delight: a thousand dusky paws waved frantically in the air. Five hundred tails flourished triumphantly round as many horned heads. The fair object of all this adulation, whatever her inward emotions might have been, took but little notice of it. She did not rise from her throne, but merely inclined her head slightly, and turning round, cast on me a stealthy look of triumph, as if she would say: 'What think you of this?'

When order was restored, several members gave notice that they intended to bring in the Bills which each one had in charge, and lay them on the table of this House. The titles or objects of some of them I distinctly remember. Extraordinary as it may appear, they all had reference, more or less, to our own pretty island of Tasmania, and embraced many wild and chimerical schemes. To avoid prolixity, I shall only acquaint my readers with two of them. The first was for borrowing fifty millions of pounds sterling to enable men and women to burrow, like rabbits, under the earth, especially of Tasmania, and hide themselves from persecutors and slanderers whenever they pleased; and the other, less ambitious but more outrageous, to borrow

at least one million for the purpose of introducing crocodiles into the Great Lake of Tasmania.

And now a most incredible and astonishing scene took place in this strangest of all Parliaments that I ever saw or heard of. A whisper—a horrid whisper—arose in the assembly during a lull after its late confusion. I heard with the utmost terror and anguish the name of Ubertus bandied about from lip to lip—at first, as I have said, in a low whisper, then in an increasing sound, like the rising of a distant flood, and at last in a tumultuous roar as when that flood bursts in an overwhelming torrent upon the inhabitants of a village, who realize the fact that it is too late for them to save themselves. 'Ubertus, Ubertus!' rose in a mighty whirlwind of voices; 'we will hear Ubertus!' I did not stir. The deafening clamour continued: 'Ubertus, we will hear Ubertus!' was shouted in all directions; and as I still turned a deaf ear, it was succeeded by shrieks, groans, serpent-like hisses, catcalls, and ferocious whistling. Matters were becoming most serious. It was in vain that the Thunderer rose up, and put on his hat, and threw his arms into the air, and rung his bell, and waved his tail over his head. In vain several of the more peaceably disposed members rushed about and tried to stop the tumult. I would have fled from the chamber, but could not. 'Put him on the table,' now became the cry. 'Let our orders be obeyed: seize him—hold him—force him to speak; on the table—on the table!'

The grim sergeant-at-arms approached me, and laid down his glittering sword. His horrid breath was like a blast from a furnace on my cheek, as he seized me by my coat collar, pressed the muzzle of his revolver to my heart, and compelled me to walk to the table, upon which I was lifted bodily by powerful arms, and then left to myself. The cries of the members were now changed into volleys of

cheers and 'Hear, hear,' and then the fearful tempest was entirely hushed.

I suddenly bethought me of Parliamentary etiquette, and 'caught the Thunderer's eye,' no very difficult feat, considering that every eye in the vast apartment, including Bellagrande's ravishing pair, was fixed upon me. My speech will hardly bear reporting by the public press. I spoke or rather blundered out my ideas—or my unintelligible jargon—in short convulsive gasps, which were as little likely to give pleasure to my hearers as they did to me. My 'hems' and 'haws' were most painful; my coughs, to gain time, horrible. I used my pocket-handkerchief with a shocking report that resounded through the room, and made many of the facetious members laugh aloud. The wonder is that I did not faint away, or die on the spot.

'Mr. Thunderer ("Hear, hear"). Mr. Thunderer, sir, I find myself in a very (hem) astonishing, and most painful position, one in—no, I mean *of*—which I am thoroughly and undesirably ashamed. I am on the horns—(disapprobation,—I beg pardon, a great many times—of a surmountable and incombustible dilemma. I feel like the noble New Ireland dog, who found himself—hem, her—surrounded by an immense concourse of b-b-baboons, and was so terrified that his tail he could not wag (laughter, "Hear hear," "No no!" "Turn him out!"). Sir, I humbly crave the pardon of this Honourable House: it is far, a great many miles, from my intention to insult, or to imitate—no, irritate, hem, learned and honourable members. I pity that man who, in this dignified and munificent House, cannot discriminate, or I mean assimilate, between what is noble and undisciplined, and what is entirely unworthy of profound imitation and utterly—demoniacal (sensation)—Mr. Thunderer, Sir, I am a very humble and a highly exalted—no, I mean a protracted, and compli-

mentary, individual. I am, as you will be undoubtedly, bad enough—hem, ha—to perceive ("Hear, hear" and loud laughter) almost equivalent, or equidistant, to the great I. I. I. himself, whoever he may be. I'm sure I don't care a pinch of snuff (laughter). And now, sir, with regard to the greatest, and most important question in the whole solar system—yes, without which the outermost planets, Neptune and Uranus, could not circumvolute (roars of laughter)—I mean Home Rule, for dear old Ireland ("Hear, hear," and "Did you e'er have the luck to see Donnybrook Fair?" sung by an hon. member). I have the greatest, most incomprehensible, pleasure in assuring this Honourable House that it is a matter of the greatest possible importance, that I was—yes, sir, that I myself was born, and so was Paddy from Cork, and so was the Duke of Wellington: what am I saying?—was born in that supremely happy and totally insalubrious island—my blessings on it for ever (loud cheers)!

"Ubertus is my name and Ireland is my nation—and Irish luck has been my game ever since my creation,"

(loud laughter)—by Irish luck, ladies and gentlemen ("Order, order!" "Chair, chair!"). Sir, Mr. Thunderer, I beg a thousand pardons—as I was saying when courteously interrupted, by Irish luck I mean, hem, a facility, or rather an unaccountable inaptitude for getting my head broken, or else getting into lions' mouths, which would instantly gnash their teeth and wag their cruel tails (loud roars of "Order, order! Knock him down!" etc.). I humbly implore the protection of the chair. I really mean no offence, no offence whatever. Home Rule is, I have no doubt, in high favour with this most Honourable House ("Hear, hear," and loud cheers). My own opinion is not worth two brass farthings, and I will not trouble them with it, notwithstanding it is this: Home Rule will be the rule of

Old Scratch (tremendous uproar, loud cries of "Knock him on the head!" "Hang him up by the heels!" "Burn him alive!" etc. Sir, if perfect—hem—freedom of speech, and innocuous ventilation of innocent and highly-inflammatory opinion is not permitted in this Hon. House, I will forthwith amputate my walking-stick out of it, as quickly as I can (cheers, and "The sooner the better"). I will not condescend ("Oh, oh!") to give any reason for my much-to-be-pitied opinion. That other great question—the Federation of the whole world—I feel that I can safely leave it with great confidence in their multifarious hands (cheers and hisses). I am sorry, sir, to provoke anything like a spirit—hem—of hostility or impracticability ("Hear, hear"). The day will come when one Federal Government will rule the world—"Yes, our Government"). But how, let me ask, could that Honourable—hem—and most respectable House expect to rule the world when it was in the dark with respect to that mysterious power, which can make the wheels of coaches go round? Why it can move tremendous floating palaces, carrying hundreds of men and women over the oceans of the earth, against wind and tide, about twenty miles an hour. ("Oh, oh," and derisive laughter.) His Majesty the Emperor was pleased to refer in his gracious—hem—speech to his matured plan of building a new city round the Great Lake of Tasmania ("Hear, hear"). I am bold enough to say that it has my cordial and patriotic approval—no, I mean my perpetual disapproval (groans and hisses). Yes, sir, and this is my reason for entertaining this perhaps highly reprehensible opinion: the inhabitants of this city of Pandapolis could not live even at the Great Lake in perfect peace; there would be perpetual war: the Salvation Army would be constantly attacking them, and precious blood would flow on both sides. In addition to this' [I now roared, my

blood being up] 'I must make the admission, which may be damaging to my reputation in this most respectable—hem—assembly, that I am, and always was from a baby (a stentorian voice, "The devil you were!") opposed to hypocrisy and devilment of all descriptions ("Oh, oh!"). I hate bunyips (uproar), I abominate demons (renewed uproar), I detest liars (hisses and cries of "Cut his tongue out!"). I move that the words be taken down ("Order, order"; "Kick the villain out"). Sir, I protest against this horrible treatment of a guest and visitor from a superior world. (Great confusion, in which the Thunderer joined with his bell.) Hon. members had better go and play cards or billiards (cheers), or perhaps a game of football in the courtyard would refresh them. ("With you for our ball!" and loud cheers.) I defy you all; if your grand city shall ever be built round the Great Lake of my darling Tasmania, I hope to see the day when it will be buried ten miles deep in the Pacific Ocean!

Here there burst forth a perfect hurricane of rage and abuse. A crowd of members jumped up on the table, with the furious intention of annihilating me on the spot, but a terrific scream from Bellagrande arrested them in their fell purpose. That unhappy princess fainted away after she had screamed, and was borne from the hall by her terrified pages; her lion, which had sat on his hams quietly all the day by her throne, following her, growling and wagging his tail viciously. Some of the Ministers had rushed upon the table with the crowd, and stood before me foaming. One of them shook his great fist close to my face, and shouted: 'You audacious insulting blackguard, you shall die! I'll cut your throat from ear to ear myself. I'll squelch you—to dare to say a word against Home Rule, what my posterity above ground are panting for! I'll grind you to powder, trample you in the dust, and drag your

carcase at the tail of my old coat through the holy mud of Ireland! I challenge you to fight me if you have the liver of a jackass—yaw, yaw!”

‘Stand back, Partigan, I’m his friend!’ roared the well-known voice of Doctor Julius. ‘For shame, all against one; back, you sons of perdition, and leave him to me. He shall fight you, Sir Dashmy, never fear; or if he won’t I will myself; we have been secret enemies long enough, let us be open ones now. Come, Ubertus, you have played the fool here to some purpose—’pon my soul, I begin to think you must be a brave fellow after all; but we are wasting time; who’s your friend, Sir Dashmy Partigan?’

‘The white-livered, hang-dog, cowardly rascal hasn’t accepted my challenge!’ roared the enraged Sir Dashmy.

‘Say you’ll fight him,’ said the Doctor; ‘never say die, or flinch now; I’ll be your second. I’ll see you through it. Who’s your friend, Partigan?’

‘My friend, sir,’ replied the wrathful Secretary for Foreign Affairs, ‘is the Hon. Kattyscalpa Bomblazo! but I’ve not heard your brave comrade accept my challenge yet. I’ll fight you both. If you hide him down among the black rocks in the valley of the Dark River, by the eternal fumes of brimstone and phosphorus I’ll find him out, and drag him from his hiding-place—yaw, yaw!’

‘I’ll speak for him,’ bellowed the Doctor, now thoroughly enraged; ‘you contemptible tiger-faced bully, he shall fight you!’

‘I can speak for myself, Doctor,’ I said at last; ‘I will fight this gentleman, and think myself highly honoured by so doing.’

‘Then we can go. Bomblazo, have your principal ready in the great quadrangle at the end of the third avenue at ten to-night.’

Bomblazo waved his tail gracefully, and bowed stiffly.

I followed my friend out of the palace, and into his carriage.

‘Now,’ said he with a laugh, as we drove off, ‘now we shall have some glorious fun! Crackers and bombshells. Ubertus, you *are* a trump, and no mistake.’

CHAPTER XV.

THE DUEL.

My hopes of being soon released from that detestable city without a stain on my character ; of leaving its barbarous inhabitants full of sadness at my departure, and lost in admiration of my exalted and multitudinous virtues, which it was not possible for them to emulate ; of being able, by one of those sudden and unaccountable fortuitous events which sometimes, to our intense astonishment, change the fate of individuals and of nations, to help my valued and beloved friend Doctor Julius to effect his escape also, were now scattered by one tremendous convulsion to the four winds of heaven. I solemnly cursed my evil genius a thousand times for having led or driven me into that fearful Demon's palace again, and exposed me once more to the dangerous fascinations of the bewitching Bellagranda. Had I only been content to sit still in the Doctor's room, or amuse and delight myself with the history of his angelic Helen, this awful *contretemps* could not have happened. I was now doomed to fight a brutal, perhaps a bloody duel, with no less a personage than the renowned Minister for Foreign Affairs, the fiery and vindictive Sir Dashmy Partigan. The possibility of my killing, or even wounding him, never once entered my head. Could I do so, and

actually did so, would not the Doctor and I be immediately sacrificed to the revengeful fury of the Parliament and the people? If he killed me! Oh, heartrending, maddening thought! to die in that place, and perhaps be kept there for ever—never to see my darlings again!

'Were you mad?' said the Doctor angrily, as we drove back to the hospital with the speed of lightning. 'Would nothing serve you but to grossly insult that powerful Parliament, and run me into all this trouble and danger, and your own head into the mouth of a roaring, ravening lion? Who are you that you must go and condemn Home Rule in Ireland? And you must forsooth go and do battle for your immaculate Great Lake, and abuse their glorious project of building their grand city round it, as if your confounded Great Lake was only worthy to be looked upon by your own divine angels in petticoats and breeches. I tell you what, Ubertus, you have brought me and yourself into a most disastrous and horrible scrape, and I only wish I could see our way well out of it. Partigan never misses his aim, and is an implacable fire-eater besides; he will demand twenty shots if necessary.'

'Shall we fight with pistols, Doctor?'

'Pistols, no; what are pistols? Partigan snaps his fingers at pistols.'

'You mentioned shots—rifles?'

'No.'

'Well, swords or bayonets?'

'No; do swords or bayonets shoot, you jackass?'

'With what weapons, then, sir?'

'With MAGAZINE BLUNDERBUSSES! Get on horses!'

I laughed uneasily, and said timidly, while affecting the greatest indifference:

'Don't you think, Doctor, that I gave them a pretty telling speech? I mean, don't you think, that if they were

a lot of pins stuck up, and I stood before them with a bowl in my hand, they would have all gone down?’

‘No doubt of it,’ he replied with a laugh; ‘you want a compliment, and shall have one. Your speech was telling enough, as the coachman said to the pig, after he had cut his ear off with the lash of his whip. If I had your talents, wit, and eloquence, Ubertus, I’d lose no time. I’d get into your Parliament above-ground, and I’d soon be at the top of the tree. Your great orator would be forced to acknowledge that he had at last heard of his match.’

We rattled on; our horses exhibited no signs of fatigue, but tore along at a tremendous pace. Their driver, the Doctor himself, only chirruped to them now and then, and took no further notice. He gave me the benefit of some of his hoarded wisdom while we were upon the road, and spoke, as nearly as I can remember, to the following purport:

‘Lo, and behold! Isn’t it something rich to meditate upon? We were nearly out of this cursed hole, you and I and the Emperor of Demons together, and all my dreams of glory, and fond anticipations of eternal love and joy with God and Helen—mark you that—are smashed to pieces as by the crash of a mighty tornado. You are not yet eighty years old, and you say you are an old man: perhaps you are in your dotage. I call you a young man, but you are not too young to have some sound sense, and be above the helpless condition of a child, nor too poorly educated to be deficient in the good qualities of prudence and forethought. Do not be too down-hearted, my young friend; I have no desire to sit upon you too heavily. I hate extremes as much as any man; nearly all man’s misery is owing to his incurable propensity to go to extremes. The foolish word of a single moment will blot out for ever the noble thoughts and deeds of a lifetime, and the act done in

a few minutes can bring in its train remorse and unhappiness that may last as long as reason and memory remain. Study carefully your fellow-creatures and yourself, and judge their feelings by your own. Man is a proud creature, and, to do him justice, he has some reason for his pride. Look at his genius, and even his minor talents. What wonderful works have been raised up by the architects of antiquity; what beautiful images have been carved from rude blocks of stone! what glorious thoughts, and noble creations, have been bequeathed to us by men like Homer and Æschylus, Shakespeare and Milton! And all these things, and other things—astonishing, innumerable, and almost incredible—done by a weak and insignificant creature who, one would think, in order to enable him to contend with the elements of Nature, as I think you have hinted, ought to have been made of the toughest iron. Yet, in the extremity of his pride, he becomes foolish. He presumes to think he is enrolled in the highest rank of living beings; he hardly stays to inquire who placed him in that rank. His philosophy is, in his own opinion, true and infallible; his religion—whatever religion he boasts of—the only right one; and his power and his cleverness almost supreme. He forgets that he is only an ephemeral creature. Sometimes, as we all know, he degenerates—although he may be polished, educated, civilized—into a debased and brutal being. What of all this, you will ask; you knew it before; you, at least, are no fool’ (he had called me one, though, more than once); ‘you have read multitudes of books, and heard lectures and sermons galore, and been taken to task by smooth-faced hypocrites and bullying tyrants. What do you think of the situation, eh?’

‘I am overwhelmed with sorrow, Doctor,’ I replied, ‘that my imprudence and defiant thoughtlessness should have led us into this awful scrape. It is, indeed, a dreadful mis-

fortune to us, and it comes at a time when we were about to be delivered from our prison, for I cannot give up the hope and belief that you will be able to come with us. I was wrong, I know, and very much clouded and confused. The only way I can see out of the difficulty is to apologize, and, whatever may be my inward feelings, I am quite willing to do it.'

'Chirrup! chirrup! get on, my pets; there is plenty to do, and little time for it! No, my good friend, you must not apologize. I am not a bloodthirsty man—thank God, I am not a hopeless demon yet—not a lost soul, I fully believe; but an apology to those fiends will only make them more savage and vindictive. They will now murder you in open fight; if you apologize, they will assassinate you in secret. Leave them to me, I know them well. If they are capable of respecting you at all they will do so on no other terms than those of your fighting and resisting them. Apology, indeed! why, I have met with men made more bitter by an apology, who, if you had held out firmly against them, would have slunk away like very curs—not that I object to an apology, if one does wrong, but when a man grossly insults another, and then demands an apology, it becomes as rich as Falstaff's valour. If I live here two or three years longer, I'll blow up that infernal Parliament with dynamite and rackarock. I'll be the Guy Fawkes of the whole happy family.'

'Doctor, I will not, I cannot, shed blood, even a demon's blood, if he has any. I will fold my arms, and stand before his fire.'

'Well, please yourself; he will not fire twice. I'm bound by what I said to bring you forward; when that's done, do as you like—go down on your knees and beg pardon, and listen to their howls of derision. I will tell you a short story about making an apology. I had business relations

with a man once, a clergyman; in the course of our business we had a quarrel, because I urged him to do his duty properly, and he grossly insulted me by accusing me of falsehood. I called a meeting of those interested, at which he would not appear, and shortly afterwards received a ruffianly letter from him, demanding an instant apology, one that his solicitors would approve of, and to be published at my expense in as many newspapers as he chose to name. I did not reply, and heard nothing more of the matter. If I had sent a humble apology, he would have ruined me by advertising it.'

'You can make peace, my dear friend, and all will be well: you are powerful here. Think of what you are doing, promoting bloodshed and murder, to say nothing of malice, hatred and revenge.'

'Talk no more on that subject, Ubertus; speak of something that will change our terrible thoughts of approaching bloodshed, of something that may be efficacious in washing away the indelible impress of a demon's blood. To shed man's blood is nothing, but it requires a villain of the first water to butcher a demon—and is it possible I can be driving such a villain in my carriage? But cheer up! spin me something, while we spin along, about the metaphysical and moral philosophy of your world: I like that subject. Keep up your heart—the man who never has an enemy is begotten of milk and born of water.'

'It is a dry subject, sir, that philosophy: and an unsatisfactory one, too. It is, properly but ungrammatically speaking, two distinct subjects. The former is the science of the soul, mind, and intelligence; the latter is that of our conduct in this world, and our duties to each other. The first is, if we regard it as we ought, an attribute of the Supreme Being, with which we have nothing at all to do over and above our duty of obedience. Men have un-

accountably grown into the habit of wrangling with each other on questions which they cannot answer, with arguments which they do not understand. They waste, without knowing it, their words by millions, and their paper and ink in hundreds of published volumes, in attempting to prove what for them it is impossible to prove. They jump to their own conclusions, and give us their opinions freely, and they have a right to do so, if we want them; and they believe in their hearts that the conclusions they have arrived at are true, solid, and incontrovertible. The proofs of our origin, the mysteries of our minds, and the causes of our pleasures and pains which one man will adopt are utterly contemptible in the eyes of another. The diversities of opinions on religious and metaphysical subjects are as numerous as the expressions on the features of different men. One would think they did not worship the same God, or believe in the same Redeemer. Who can make them alike? who can reconcile them? Amidst all their antagonistic clamour the dispassionate listener perceives nothing but nonsense, except in the few wise and sensible people who make their appearance from time to time, who, like our Doctor Johnson, cannot find solidity in froth, tenacity in soap-bubbles, or security in armour of spider's web.'

'Good!' said the Doctor, 'you're a wiseacre; chirrup, chirrup, my little diamonds, how sorry I'll be to leave you behind me! Go on, Ubertus!'

'If my remarks give you pleasure, my dear Doctor,' I continued, 'I am quite willing to go on, but as far as the world is concerned I had better leave off. If I should ever publish a book, and relate my wonderful adventures, this kind of philosophy will make it unsaleable. Dr. Johnson says, that when all the efforts of moral and religious writers are finished, they find that the world is just as they found

it at first. Yet increasing knowledge and experience tell us that there are a few, perhaps many, who are rescued from the sins and frivolities of this life, and induced to look upon the great question of eternity with becoming seriousness, by reading good books. For the vast majority of nominal Christians, wealth and pleasure seekers, dress and fashion worshippers, there seems to be no hope. I do not condemn them. Elijah despaired of Israel, and thought that he alone would be saved, but God humbled him by telling him that He had reserved seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal, and whose lips had not kissed him. If, therefore, in the evil days of Ahab and Jezabel, seven thousand could be reserved, can we count those by millions who may be reserved in our days? Still it is a mad world. The masses of the people who live by their labour are beginning to know too much for their employers. They want their fair share of the wealth of the world, and therefore they strike, and revolt, and throw everything into confusion. Nine-tenths of them, if they had the share they covet, would squander it in taverns, and then abuse their employers as loudly as before. Woe to the world! Woe to the rich who hoard up their money, and who do nothing for their unfortunate fellow-creatures! Woe to the poor who, to gratify the desires, and the craving for popularity, of their pestilent, self-constituted leaders, refuse to work for fair remuneration, and let their wives and children starve! What more shall I say, Doctor? Is it not a mad world? and would it not be well if it could be blotted out of existence?'

'In that case,' said he, 'what would become of the millions yet unborn, who might be destined to be reserved for the blessed life? But tell me something about yourself. Who are you, in the name of wonder? Are you a

Daniel come to judgment, or a Saint John the Divine, with another Book of Revelation for us ?

'I pretend to be nothing, sir. If I am allowed to do some little good to my fellow-men, I am only the weakest and most humble of all instruments for so doing. I hate egoism and self-laudation, although I may be unconsciously guilty of it, but it may gratify you to know that I do not owe a farthing to any man, and if I have wronged any, or forgotten anything, I am willing to make all the amends in my power. I am not given to secret vices, nor am I close-fisted, or close-minded. I feel the inestimable happiness of being able to approach all men with innocence, peace, and good-will. How does that man feel who meets another whom he has cruelly robbed, or whose home he has basely dishonoured? But, for all this, I confess with shame that I am overflowing with faults. My imagination is too vivid, and my temper is choleric when suddenly thwarted and opposed in ridiculously small matters: a false accusation or a false suspicion drives me mad. I try hard to keep myself from idols: my dreams are often encouragements, and still more often temptations: youth bewitches me; beauty overpowers me; music and the artistic pleasures of the world enchant me; but I constantly hear a *voice* warning me to beware.'

'Well,' said the Doctor, as he pulled up his horses at the hospital gate, 'thank you, you have been explicit. Thirty miles under ground in less than an hour, and the horses as fresh as when they started! Florian! Mancus! some of you, come here!'

'Go,' he continued, addressing me, 'into the sitting-room or to your bed, and stay there till I come, or send for you: I have my hands full. Florian, another team of horses—this carriage will do. I shall want a dog-kennel, a coil of wire, posts to mark the ground, ropes to keep the public from

pressing, for the news must be spreading now; and don't forget two of the best magazine blunderbusses loaded with ten charges each; and if you forget to put in the bullets, look out for the bastinado!

'For the love of Heaven, my honoured master——' said the alarmed and affectionate servant.

'You rascal!' roared the Doctor, 'be off—obey my commands, see that you forget nothing. Go in, Ubertus; the Demon has ordered out his balloon; you have only a few hours left; if he should come for you before this business is settled, we may go and jump into the Dark River. Go in, sir, I beg of you!'

I went in accordingly, and threw myself upon a couch which I knew would not sting me; but if it did not, my own thoughts did. What could this extraordinary personage mean by his dog-kennel, and his coil of wire? Patience! patience! I should soon know. In the meantime, let my thoughts be pleasant. I anticipated certain death. No power on earth could save me now, unless—but I count it almost blasphemy to breathe that Name, a Name holy above all names, that is so often blasphemously spoken by the most unclean lips. To die was nothing; I had nearly attained man's allotted period; but to die in that pit of darkness, to be cast out, to be abandoned to wretchedness and despair! I could not endure the thought, and yet I must await the bitter end. 'Courage—hope—hope—courage!' These words I repeated to myself about five hundred times.

After the lapse of two or three hours, I heard the sound of approaching footsteps, and a strange servant, whom I had not seen before, entered the room. He was a grim, stern old man, with a hooked nose, a cramped, low forehead, and eyes like small round shells of mother-of-pearl. He was a most extraordinary object, like the ghost of a Chinese Mandarin very far gone in his dotage. He an-

nounced himself as the Mancus, the Wonder of Pandapolis, the renowned inventor of Anti-bluebottle Pills and Parabolical Ointment, and requested me to rise at once and accompany him.

Who had sent him? Where was his warrant? I had an important appointment in another hour or two. I dared not stir without an order from Doctor Julius.

'Tush!' he answered testily, 'this is trifling—Julius is waiting for you. Florian is away—they are all away. They all rushed off to see the grand duel. The whole city will be present. But I don't care. Buy some of my pills; you'll want 'em, and ointment too. Julius is waiting. Julius is rough and ready, and can keep the Demon quiet. Good thing for you. Are you coming or not? Poor fool—to fight with Partigan! As well blow himself up with an earthquake. But wait till you are my age, wait till you are five thousand years old. Your blood won't be so hot—he! ha! ho! Come along; all isn't well that doesn't end well. Julius has got you in hand. Julius is a genius, and leads us all by the nose. Come; dear, dear, how the time slips away. I'm to be renewed in seven years, then I'll be young again—ugh, ugh, ugh! Buy some of my pills; they're better than Blowhard's; only a guinea a box.'

While the querulous old creature rattled on in this way, I was getting myself ready. It did not take me long to give my face a dry polish, to comb my hair with my fingers, and brush my clothes with my pocket-handkerchief. We at last issued forth into the street, where we found Doctor Julius, seated in his buggy, waiting for me impatiently. I took my place without saying a word, and away we drove.

Our journey was a comparatively short one. A rapid drive through half a dozen streets, and then into a magnificent, brilliantly-lighted corridor which seemed to be more than two miles in length. It was thronged with people, all

hurrying and scurrying in one direction. They all seemed to gaze on the Doctor and me, as we passed them, with surprise, partly vacant and partly contemptuous, and chattered to each other like apes. To some we were objects of wonder and unbounded curiosity. The news of the recent parliamentary proceedings had spread like wild-fire. 'There go Doctor Julius and his friend Ubustus, who's going to fight Sir Dashmy Partigan—won't he get skivered!' I heard them saying to each other.

The crowd became thicker and thicker, and it was with difficulty we could force our way through it. It consisted of the representatives of all nations of the world, soldiers, civilians, rich ladies and gentlemen in their carriages, paladins, and emperors on horseback; coal-heavers, and beggars on crutches. Several times our progress was stopped by the crowd, who began fighting among themselves, and many a coarse oath came to my ears as the swearer was dashed to the earth, and trampled on as he lay. At length we reached a square open space at the end of the street, which was guarded from intrusion by a number of the black police, assisted by a strong detachment of Larrikin Guards. The Doctor led me into this quadrangle, and to one side of it, concealed from observation, where I saw at a little distance an object like a dog-kennel, covered by imitations of green forest bushes. He was careful to guide me round at the back of this, and to some distance at the other side of it. From this kennel I saw a long, almost invisible wire stretched to the nearest wall, about twelve inches above the ground. While wondering what this very peculiar display of demoniacal energy might mean, I followed the example of the Doctor, who had seated himself quietly on the floor; and while we waited, he took the opportunity of giving me the following instructions:

'You must do what I tell you to do, Ubustus. Obedience

is your first duty—obedience unflinching and in silence: if qualms of conscience trouble you, put them in your pocket. Do not ask me a single question, or the magic spell will be broken, and we shall both be ruined. In this city all is fair in love and war; there is no such thing as treachery or deception. It is the virtue, the morality, of the place. To be virtuous, as you mean it, is to be vile, and to tell the truth an unpardonable crime. The old king who would not allow a liar to live would be hunted out of this quarter. You and I are at a low ebb just now; you took notice of the crowd in that brilliant avenue. Did you see their hang-dog scowls at you as you passed them? They had no cheer for you or for me, nor a look of pity for you because, in their opinion, you are a doomed, an unsuccessful, a ruined man. They will not believe, until they see it, that either you or I can conquer Partigan. He is as powerful a magician as I am, and far more cruel and unscrupulous; up to this day he has carried everything before him. This day will decide who is to be master, he or I. There will be a split in the cabinet, and all on your account; see what your visit has brought about. The Demon will be wild, but he has only himself to blame for bringing you here. You are the principal in this day's business, and yet you must be content to act only as an auxiliary—I am the principal.'

At this moment Florian approached his master, and delivered to him a mysterious parcel, and he had scarcely done so when a thundering cheer from the long Avenue announced the arrival of some important persons.

'Here they come,' said the Doctor, 'we must make haste; go down on your hands and knees!'

I had to bite my tongue to keep myself from asking the reason of this strange order.

'Pretend to be eating the grass, if you can find any hereabouts, and, as you value your life, do not stir more

than four feet or so from this spot. Above all things, do not go near that wire. You may lie down, and pretend to be asleep, but beware of taking a panic, and running away. I must leave you now; you have the outside of a sheep—have, at the same time, the inside of a lion.'

As he spoke he unfolded the parcel which Florian had brought, and spread over my back a large sheep-skin. I then felt that a most singular transformation had taken place, and with some difficulty suppressed a strong inclination to cry 'ba-ah!' and scamper off as fast as I could to the nearest hills; but I made up my mind to be brave, and await the event.

One question I asked myself, but took care not to ask the Doctor: Where were the magazine blunderbusses? I could not see anything of them. Were they concealed in the dog-kennel?

While pretending to eat the grass, as I had been ordered, my eyes did not cease to peer about with untiring activity. I saw two dark figures enter the quadrangle. They were soon joined by Doctor Julius, and a close conference took place which lasted, I believe, for nearly half an hour. The Doctor and my antagonist's second then moved away, and took up appropriate positions, while he, the dreadful Partigan, also retired to a distance. My heart beat wildly. I saw that fiend go down also on his hands and knees. The outward robe he wore assumed a shining variegated appearance, and he began a slow, stealthy approach. To my horror, it was not Partigan who approached, but a magnificent Royal Bengal tiger! He crouched down on his forepaws, his grand head resting upon them, his staring eyes darting fire. In awful silence he drew nearer and nearer. Nothing was between us but that almost invisible wire, placed there by the Doctor for a purpose on which he had been as silent as the grave. My terrific enemy was

now within ten yards of me, and I had nothing with which to defend myself. He paused to prepare himself for his last deadly leap. He sprang—the Doctor's wire caught his legs, and that instant a deafening report, as if the whole world had burst asunder, shook the quadrangle to its foundations, and the ill-starred Partigan, or whatever he was, was blown into a thousand fragments.

CHAPTER XVI.

OUR DEPARTURE.

WITH sorrow and humiliation, if not with consternation and horror, I took my place again beside my leader in his buggy, the dense and awful crowd crushing and surging to each side to open a way for us to pass. The fiendish Minister for War, Bomblazo, was the very first to congratulate me on my victory. A dreadful silence reigned around. The people gazed at us, as it were, in petrified surprise, in thunder-stricken astonishment. I regarded this terrible stillness as ominous of pent-up rage, and of a bloody vengeance rapidly approaching; and with a sigh of despair prepared myself for the worst. The Doctor, however, did not seem to regard it in this light. He chirruped to his horses, began to laugh, quietly to himself at first, then with gradually-increasing hilarity, until, finally, he burst into the loudest roars I ever heard, saying in the intervals of his paroxysms: 'Hurrah! hurrah! that rat won't squeak again—hurrah!'

'Hurraw!' shouted a larrikin recruit in the crowd, and instantly twenty thousand mouths were opened, and a wild and tremendous cheer burst forth from them. I did not take off my hat, or bow in return for their acclamations, although I knew they were intended for me. My heart was full of grief and bitterness, and I was surprised at the conduct of the Doctor, and more than inclined to be

seriously offended with him. The cheers of the delighted populace grew louder and louder, and they ran in multitudes after our buggy, and even wanted to take the horses out, and draw the buggy themselves—but this we both united in forbidding—and they shouted as they ran: ‘Hurraw for the great Ubustus wot come down from the sky, and skivered old Dashmy Partigan!’

At last we extricated ourselves from the crowd, and drove back quietly to the hospital, where we found the Demon’s great lumbering coach, with its six black gigantic horses, waiting before the entrance gate. It was surrounded, to our great dismay, by a number of gigantic negro guards.

‘Now,’ said the Doctor as we entered the hall, ‘as I have told you, your time for departure is come. Our friend Artabanus is inside waiting for you. He knows by this time what you have done, and I’m glad I am not in your shoes. We shall find him in a precious rage, but he is so blinded and infatuated by his worship of himself, and his determination to gain you over, that it is not likely to last long. Speak him fair; don’t insult or defy him, as you did the Parliament. Remember your experience of Partigan; if you make a slip you will be sure to fall, and you will drag me down with you. He admires your talents, respects you for your knowledge, and almost adores you for your industry, your youth, and the beauty of your person—ahem! But you must not fight him here. If that kind of spirit moves you, wait—have the goodness to wait until you can crow on your own dunghill. He will be in a rage with me, too—what then? do not interfere. I can fight my own battles. As for Bellagranda, poor soul! she is ready to die: she is passionately in love with you. That scream of hers pierced the hearts of those parliamentary demons, and saved your life for that time; but you are not yet out of danger—very far from it. We will enter now the Majestic Presence.’

We went in accordingly, and entered the Doctor’s reception-room, to find, as we anticipated, this chieftain among demons striding up and down, and not in the best of tempers. The moment he saw the Doctor he turned upon him fiercely, and roared:

‘How is this, Doctor Julius—is this the way you do your duty? Is this my reward for the confidence I have placed in you, for the power I have given you, for the honours I have conferred upon you, for the position of Premier to which I have exalted you? Did I give you permission to take Ubustus into my Parliament, when important and secret measures were to be debated, and where you knew he would not be personally safe? By what authority did you introduce a stranger to the House, contrary to the standing orders, and to all precedents? And what was that miserable Thunderer thinking of when he permitted him to be placed on the table, and to dare to address the House? Did you give him a dose of your horrible *taxacorom squeezetalis* which you carry about with you in bottles and in powders, ready for use to effect your nefarious purposes? And what is this terrible rumour I have heard, racing like a mad dog through the city—that you, one or the other of you, or both of you together, have murdered my trusted Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sir Dashmy Partigan? Is this true? Can this be true of Doctor Julius, the kind and soft-hearted physician, the benevolent philanthropist, who takes the liberty of altering my decrees because he thinks they are too severe, and of sparing those delinquents whom I condemn to the most terrible of punishments? Speak—rebel—conspirator!’

‘My lord Demon,’ began the Doctor submissively, ‘I humbly beg your Majesty’s pardon. I am a great rascal, I know, and a thundering rogue into the bargain, I plead guilty to all your allegations, and would not think for a

minute of defending myself, yet have some distant, and faint, cloudy, although infinitesimal hope that you will have some little microscopical shadow of mercy upon me on account of parliamentary excitement, and extenuating circumstances in general, which, as I will relate to your most excellent Majesty in very few words, and the simplest of all languages, will, I hope, have the beneficial and soporific effect which, for the sake of peace and the universal Federation of the whole world, I am naturally led to expect. When I received your Majesty's summons to attend your great Parliament, by virtue of my exalted office of Premier, I—rashly and foolishly, I am willing to admit—communicated that intelligence to your distinguished friend Ubertus, who immediately formed the resolution, in his thoroughly obstinate and wooden head, to come with me to the Parliament. I swore I would not take him, he swore he would go, and, sir, I had to give way on account of the youth's delicate state of health, but I believe his real reason for wanting to go was because he had set his heart on seeing the charming Princess Bellagranda again. Well, my good lord, I gave him proper advice——'

'Cut it short, sir, my time is precious,' broke in the Demon.

'What conduct he was to pursue, and it was solely with a view of doing you honour, my lord, that I introduced your valued friend to the House, and it was entirely unforeseen, and quite contrary to my desire, and frequently-expressed wishes, that the House was pleased to take the notice of him which it did, and which it did, I believe, with the generous and romantic object of amusing your amiable and enchanting daughter, the Princess. I am grieved to the heart to be obliged to say that our distinguished friend Ubertus suddenly and unaccountably lost his head, when he found himself stuck up on the table of the House, hunting

for, and at last catching, the Thunderer's eagle eye; notwithstanding which he made a very excellent and telling speech, as he presently found out; for, on account of his freedom of language, and being always boiling over with pure envy and jealousy, your Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Sir Dashmy Partigan was—or rather on account of his own selfish, bloodthirsty, unreasonable disposition—so much offended, that he savagely attacked your friend and my friend, and would have slaughtered him on the very table of the House, if the noble Princess had not uttered a piercing scream, and I immediately interfered. Then the furious Sir Dashmy, the hang-dog Bombastes Furioso, challenged him to fight him, and *me too*, Premier as I am, in a triple combat, then and there, or shortly afterwards; and as I know you, my lord, would never forgive me if I showed the white feather, I accepted his challenge, and advised Ubertus to do as he liked. It appears—you know, sir, what happened. His fate was a sad one, but he brought it on himself.'

'And you, sir—you—Ubertus, what have you to say?' bellowed the Demon, turning upon me furiously.

'Say, sir,' I replied trembling, 'I—I—have nothing to say, sir, except what this gentleman has said, sir, although he is mistaken in the motives he attributes to me for going to your Royal Palace, sir.'

'How about Sir Dashmy Partigan? Do you know that you have attacked the integrity of my empire, and made yourself responsible to me for the life of that valuable Minister? Answer me and excuse yourself if you can or dare; and let me not hear such a verbose abomination as that which your patron the Doctor has just stuffed down my throat.'

'The man of few words is the best man, sir; and as the carpenter is known by his chips, so is the murderer by his

blood-stains. I have none; therefore I am innocent of the death of Partigan, sir.'

'This is quibbling—this is lying!' cried the enraged Demon. 'You are covered with blood-stains from head to foot.'

'Yes, sir, I grant you, but it is the blood of a Bergal tiger, which attacked me and was going to tear me to pieces, when a concealed gun went off, perhaps by accident, sir, and killed the poor gentleman—I mean the big tiger, sir.'

'Who concealed the gun?'

'A strict and searching investigation will be made into the mystery of this matter, sir, and when we return from our contemplated visit to foreign countries, the result will be duly laid before you,' said the Doctor.

'*We!*' sneered the Demon. 'You are not fool enough to think that I am going to take you? No, sir; you must be punished for your share in this day's business. I have bound myself to take Ubertus, but we shall soon have him here again. Are you ready?'

'I am quite ready, sir,' I answered; 'but I hope your Majesty will be kind and generous, and allow our friend to come with us. He has been here a long time, and has never had a holiday. In my country, Tasmania, the Government and bank clerks have holidays two or three times a month, if I do not mistake. This good and hard-working Doctor, who has endeared himself to the inhabitants of all parts of your wide dominions, sir, has saved my life no less than three times during my short residence here. It will be impossible for me to prove my gratitude to him, unless you will graciously permit me to take him to my happy home in Tasmania, and introduce him to my family and friends. It is possible, sir, I admit, to thank him in words; but words are often the despicable froth of empty

and ungrateful hearts. I earnestly beseech you, sir, to let him come with us; he is too honourable to make any attempt to escape from you by unfair means.'

'Escape from me!' said the Demon, 'impossible; he cannot escape from me; I defy him to outwit me, clever as he is. But he has duties to attend to here; he cannot be spared; he shall not come—I have said it.'

'My lord Demon,' pleaded poor Julius, who was nearly distracted with grief and terror at the prospect of being left behind, 'if you will graciously condescend to hear me, I hope to be able to convince your Majesty that my projected, and often promised, visit to the upper world will redound to your own glory, and the glory and power and dignity of your empire, to an extent most marvellous to behold, which you will yourself be the first to acknowledge when you come to behold it. You admit that I am clever. Perhaps the time is approaching when you will be forced to admit that I am more than clever—that I am a great Genius! I am in possession of important and dangerous secrets, which it would not benefit even you to know. You alone, sir, in all your wide dominions, can be my master. Can I think of leaving the service of so good a master? Give me only a six months' holiday on the outside world, and I will gain for you a million of new subjects, each one as valuable to you as I am myself. I will not go about among the poor and forsaken men of the world; no, I will fly at higher game. I will blind the eyes of the great and noble, the rich, the learned, and the wise. I will poison the minds of good, kind, charitable people, and confound the judgments of critics, and judges, and make the greatest lawyers, doctors, and professors of the most exalted philosophy, fall down at your feet. Beautiful, charming women shall not be wanting. Kings and Queens on their thrones will not be able to resist my power when I shall

choose to exert it. I shall be a snake in the grass, or a favourite dog or cat in the lap of beauty, or a solemn adviser, or a lying spirit when I please, and I can charm them with music to which that of Orpheus himself cannot be compared; and I have not told you the half of my power, sir, to do you service. Let me go!

'I will not let you go. You are as cunning as a fox, and as deep as the Pit of Acheron,' said the Demon.

'You said yourself, sir,' answered the Doctor, 'that, clever as I am, I cannot deceive, or outwit you, or escape from your power, and I know it would be useless for me to try; will you now doubt your own talents or your genius? I do not compare myself with you. I shall never try to emulate your superiority as a leader, or be your equal in strategy or finesse, or in the forethought and prudence that are inestimable, or in the unflinching bravery which levels mountains; but I will do as I have said—gain for you, in six months' time, a million souls of priceless value.'

'How will you do it?'

'By writing a fashionable book against Christianity: a grand display of mystical rubbish which everybody will read and nobody understand.'

The Demon, who had been hastily walking up and down the room, now stopped suddenly, and looked hard at the Doctor. 'I do not,' he said, 'doubt or distrust you overmuch, Julius, for I must confess that I have a lingering affection for you, and woe to you if you deceive me. I cannot deny that you have often saved me from the remorse which sometimes follows cruelty. I believe, also, that you are capable of some sincerity, and I do not doubt my own power to overcome hostile machinations, but for all that, and not because I fear you, if I take you with me I shall require security.'

'Security, my lord!' said the Doctor aghast.

'Security!' repeated the Demon, 'real, substantial, valuable, and irrevocable security! Am I a fool to run the risk of losing you without security? How can I tell what might happen? You might be wrenched from me by a thunderbolt from the hand of an angel of light, and then where should I be without security? The soul of a man whom I shall accept, one in whom, when I have once gained him, I can place implicit confidence, and in whose intellectual society I can take delight. I could name one man whom I would accept, but his heart appears to be hardened against me now. He declines my friendship, and spurns my service, but I have every hope of gaining him over. If he offers himself, I will accept him.'

I understood the fiend's meaning only too well, and my mind was in a state of positive torture. I had sworn to myself that I would rescue Julius if I could, but my resolution nearly gave way when I heard his extraordinary speech. But, unable to control a sudden impulse, I turned to the Demon, and said:

'I understand you, sir; I will be security for Doctor Julius.'

'No, no, Ubertus, you shall not,' said the alarmed Doctor. 'Do not mind him, my lord; his brain is weak; he does not know what he is saying.'

'If,' interrupted the Demon, without heeding the last speaker, and addressing me, 'you fully understand the drift of our present conversation, and agree to put yourself in this man's place, and give yourself for all eternity in exchange for him if, by any falsehood or treachery on his part, he succeeds in making his escape from me, or fails to appear at the appointed place and appointed time, I will take him to the surface of the earth.'

I stared at the Doctor, and he at me. His countenance was open, manly, and honest. I reflected with bitterness

that it was often the lot of honest and noble-minded men to humble themselves to solicit favours from the narrowest and meanest of their fellow-creatures; and even to stoop to dissimulation, and pretend to be what they are not. But surely he could not be capable of treachery to me which would involve me in eternal destruction? Ah! what did I know?—how could I tell? No encyclopædia in the world could tell me whether he would be true or false.

'My lord Demon, and friend Ubertus,' said he, 'this contract must not be entered into hastily, without due consideration. Do I understand you to mean, sir, that if by any mischance, accident, or second death, or through evil design, treachery, or falsehood, or intervention of a Superior Power, or convulsions of Nature, I fail to return with you, the condition of your consent is that Ubertus shall return in my place?'

The Demon answered in the affirmative.

'Then,' said the Doctor sadly, 'I will not go. It only remains for us, Ubertus, to say farewell to each other.'

The tears rolled down our cheeks as we clasped our right hands together in momentary silence.

Then I calmly spoke to the following effect:

'Mr. Demon, you have signified your willingness to accept me as security for Doctor Julius, and I repeat that I am willing to become his security on these conditions. I have the fullest confidence in his truth and honour, and on the ground of truth and honour I will be his security; but you will see for yourself, sir, if you will be so good, that it would be manifestly unjust to hold me responsible for his second death, or for any accident or mischance which might overtake him, through the bursting of the balloon, or any convulsion of Nature, or on account of anything which might occur to yourself, to him, or to me, for which nobody in the universe can be held responsible, in a legal point of view,

with the exception of falsehood, evil design, treachery, or cunning, and knavery, and chicanery on his part; and if hereinafter described your Majesty shall be induced or persuaded from any cause hereinbefore noted and set down to dismiss him from your service for ever with your own free will, all consequences and remonstrances to the contrary notwithstanding, then I am free to serve whom I please.'

'Say it again!' said the Demon, coming closer to me, and, on my repeating the above speech with emendations, he cried out with rapture: 'Good!—very good! A clever fellow! I agree—I consent! A capital secretary!'

I now sat down to the table, and drew up a tripartite agreement to the desired effect, sticking as much learned and legal phraseology into it as I was master of, in order to drown the sense of such an important document to me; for I regarded myself as the only one of the three whom it seriously affected. The Demon had had his full measure meted out to him long ago. The Doctor's ultimate fate was still undecided, and could not be influenced, I thought, by the document in question. I alone was yet to be born for heaven or for hell. The risk was tremendous; the thought was distracting. Should my friend prove treacherous, or openly resist, it only remained for me to return into the bosom of my family for a few short months, and then bid them farewell for ever. Nevertheless, my courage rose, and the remembrance of all he had done for me came upon me with mighty force. The protocol was finished, and duly signed by the contracting parties, witnesses being thought unnecessary.

As soon as I had signed the paper, another overwhelming thought of dismay and distraction darted into my mind. The Doctor, I now remembered, had promised the Demon verbally that he would write a fashionable book against Christianity, by whose means a million of valuable souls

would be added to his empire in the course of six months. Now, this was, in my opinion, the most deadly and terrible of all sins. He who wrote a book against Christianity incurred a responsibility which there were no words in any language sufficiently strong to describe or denounce. What did it matter to them whether it was true or false? They did not choose to believe it, and there the matter, as far as they were concerned, might be allowed to rest. If they can *prove* it to be false, then let them write against it; but they cannot. They cannot prove any other creed to be true. I abhorred in my heart this most foolish and wicked desire to destroy a pure and undefiled religion that has been promulgated for the good and not the evil of the human race; and I had, by my recent act, made myself an accessory before the fact to this diabolical villainy. Oh, how I cursed my folly and my ignorance; and how bitterly I bewailed my ever-recurring misfortunes and calamities! The deed was, however, now done; I could not recall the past; but I might yet have power given me to counteract the evil design, should the Doctor make any serious attempt to put it in execution.

Then, after some necessary preparations, we entered the Demon's carriage. The coachman, a fiend of great muscular strength and shaggy appearance, drove his horses three abreast, slowly but surely. When we reached the primordial abyss, I noticed that the population was much denser than I had seen it before. The people preserved an ill-omened silence, and regarded us as we passed with gloomy, dissatisfied, and scowling looks. All their hilarity at the result of the late duel had disappeared. In its place there appeared nothing but hatred and defiance. The Demon was greatly disturbed, and showed it by agitation and impatience. He ordered his coachman to drive faster, but the gathering crowd impeded our progress; and from the

gigantic gateways that led from the different departments of the city we saw fresh, and apparently infuriated, crowds pouring forth like flooded rivers into the sea.

The Doctor noticed my anxiety and consternation, and strove to divert my attention from the fearful prospect. We spoke in whispers, being in the demon's presence. He told me that the people who inhabited the hidden recesses of that city were once men like myself, but they lived in the world by robbing and defrauding others, and were guilty of rapine and cruelty, of drunkenness and debauchery of all kinds; men who studied themselves and their pleasures above all other things, and who prided themselves on their lofty station, their superior abilities, and the magnificence of their wealth. Some of them had been the devisers of wicked schemes, and plotters of the ruin—moral, financial, or religious—of other men. What a vast concourse is here!—men without conscience, with hearts like the cold and rugged rock, vain, stern, uncompromising; political agitators; promoters of turbulence and war; extortioners, hypocrites, systematic liars, swindlers, and those who could see no pleasure in forgiveness or in paying debts. What deep misery is their portion! How they must weep sometimes and gnash their teeth!

'Is there no escape for them?' I inquired, with the deepest grief.

'Time will tell,' he answered, and relapsed into silence.

I had learned some useful lessons during my short stay in that wonderful city. The luxurious couch of Astoragus taught me that I must not settle myself down in careless, self-satisfied ease and inactivity while there is work to be done in the blessed service of my Heavenly Father, or abandon myself to the enjoyment of the good things and pleasures of this life without counting the cost.

The visions of blood, and the part I took in the great

combination of battles, gave me some idea of the oppressive weight which slowly accumulates upon the minds of all students of the history of mankind, and the anguish with which the most sensitive of them must reflect, that they belong to a race of beings that are not only capable of the greatest enormities, but are actually guilty, in thousands of instances, of the bloodiest and most shocking barbarities. For these things every sensible man knows that there is retribution in store; the pity is, that the perpetrators will not believe it. My own extraordinary adventure with the great conqueror who fell upon me need not be wondered at, when I confess that in my youth I was a warm admirer of that magnificent hero; but since my arrival at years of maturity and discretion, I have learned to estimate him at his true value.

The meditations into which the writer of a work of this nature is liable to fall are often weighty, if not terrible, but they are not likely to affect others, and, indeed, many would think it is not at all necessary to put them on paper. Men do not like to have the peaceful serenity of their lives disturbed by prosy platitudes which, if they please, they can manufacture in any quantity for themselves. Some authors, as Bacon, Addison, and Swift, had talents given them to instruct by letters and essays; others are permitted to do the same thing by writing histories and tales; but, unfortunately, there are men who cannot profit by either. Some men read and forget everything; others read and digest, but, like gluttons, the bigger they grow the fuller of diseases they become; others never read at all, or they will take pleasure in the story and despise the moral. The Bible itself is a sealed book to them, and their own minds are sealed—they do not require to be taught; and the writer of a book who tries to make the world better only wastes his time. Speak to them of money, glory, ambition, and

they will understand you. 'Soldiers,' said Napoleon at the Battle of the Pyramids, 'forty ages are looking down upon you!' The worldly-wise conqueror did not indicate what good the 'forty ages' would do for his thirsty, bleeding, butchered men.

The dreamy visions of the immense crowds of excited people still passed before me. Hoarse roars of desperate rebellion rose up from all parts of the abyss. What was the matter? Were the people suffering the pangs of famine? Good God! if so, how were they to be fed? An aide-de-camp galloped up to the side of the carriage, and after saluting the Demon, informed him that a revolution had suddenly broken out; that every working man in the city had struck for the highest amount of wages, in return for the smallest possible quantity of work, and that a general and frightful mutual massacre was impending.

'Then order out the Guards!' replied the Demon hoarsely. 'Call out Hannibal and Cæsar with their armies to assail them in front; let Sylla and Marius attack them in the rear; and command Antony and Belisarius to annihilate them on either flank. I cannot stay.'

'Sire,' replied the officer, 'if you do not stay, the city will be destroyed.'

'No matter; let it be destroyed. I am going to build another beside the Great Lake of Tasmania; it's pleasant and cool up there, and we'll have none of these rows. Hold your own till I come back; I will put a stop to their strikes.'

The officer galloped off. Then I saw several individuals in the black throngs around us jump upon casks, or any other things they could stand on, and make impassioned, soul-stirring speeches to those around them, being received with cheers and plaudits of the most encouraging kind. In the midst of their oratory, however, and the bombastic

display of their wonderful abilities, they contradicted each other, then fell to mutual abuse; called each other liars, rogues, traitors, scoundrels, and every other vile name they could think of, and finally jumped down from their casks, and joined in a general boxing match all round.

Then it was that a sudden roar, as of a tempest bursting through a thick forest, reached our ears from a distance. It increased in volume every moment, until it became a loud roar as of continuous thunder. The situation was becoming dreadful. The menacing crowds gathered and thickened round our carriage.

'They mean to stop us by force,' said the Demon.

'We must unite our powers, sir, and strike them blind,' said the Doctor.

'I fear it will be necessary,' replied the Demon, 'if the Generals do not come up in time. Drive on, Damnabad—drive on over their necks and heels, if they do not clear the way!'

There was a lull in the tempest, and an awful silence reigned for a moment: and then another kind of storm, of which we had not the slightest expectation, burst upon us. It was the fierce baying of bloodhounds, and the terrific roar of a lion.

'Drive on!' roared the Demon; 'Bellagranda is out, she's on the rampage again, though I told her I was only going to the Bridge of Despair to smoke a pipe: now for the tug of war! Doctor, have you got your *squeezatalis* about you?'

'I have it ready, my lord, for all cases of emergency,' replied the Doctor.

We were now within a couple of hundred yards of the balloon, which was standing upright ready for flight, and could see the faithful Obeltub at his post in the car. The enormous crowds of people, as if struck by some extraordinary fear, had not approached nearer; but the roaring

of the lion, and the baying of the hounds grew louder and louder, into a din that was absolutely stunning. I looked round in terror. There, within a few yards of us, strode Bellagranda's superb lion, carrying his majestic mistress, in her robes of azure and gold, and her crown of stars glittering on her head. Her horrible dogs were baying loudly behind her, but they were still at a distance.

'Father,' she screamed, 'come back! is this a time for you to be absent? The city is in open rebellion, and the Third Avenue is on fire!'

'Daughter,' he answered, 'go home! We shall soon have water enough in the Great Lake of Tasmania to quench all the fires in the world. I shall be back to-morrow, and all will be well. The armies, artillery and cavalry, are coming. Obey me! I have a Master whom I must obey.'

'I will not go home,' she cried passionately, 'without Ubertus. I will die on this spot if you do not surrender him. You gave him to me! he is my husband! he is mine! he is mine!'

'Will you stay with her? you are free to choose,' said my enemy.

'I will not,' I shouted. 'I will die first. I demand to be released; she has no claim upon me as husband or lover; I am not yours to give to her or anybody else!'

'Then rush to the car, and be hanged!' muttered the Demon.

I sprang from the carriage, and the Doctor after me, but Bellagranda was as quick as we were. She made her lion execute a splendid demivolt upon us as we rushed for the balloon, and tried to transfix me with a spear which she carried; and her furious dogs came up with foam dropping from their mouths.

'Hold him, Syrax! pin him down, Picklock!' she screamed,

'but hurt him not—he is my husband! And yet he has rejected me—yes, yes, avenge my insulted love!'

And at the moment when I felt the hot breath of the terrible brutes upon me, and when the paws of the lion were reared over my head, and I had given myself up for lost, the Doctor drew his hand hastily from a pocket of his doublet, and scattered a gray impalpable powder in the faces of our enemies. In an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, they were all transformed as they stood into statues of black marble.

'There,' said he, 'remain as you are until I come back to transform you again.'

We lost not another moment, but scrambled into the car. 'Turn on the lightning, Obeltub,' sang out the Demon. 'The rebels are coming on again!' and sure enough they were advancing upon us like a tumultuous whirlwind. Obeltub gave his wheel a turn, and the balloon snorted and puffed, and sprang up from the ground. Just then the thunder of a hundred guns, a long roll of musketry, and a rapid charge of horse broke upon them, and the distracted mob fled away in every direction.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DOCTOR'S APPARENT FATE.

IT was early morning when we emerged from the abyss. The gibbous moon was sinking behind the long chains of mountains in the west, and the stars were shining brightly. A grand comet, which added intense interest to the wonderful scene, hung like a splendid jewel in the sky. The cold would have been unendurable by an ordinary mortal, but, owing to some merciful dispensation, I was not affected by it. I shall not attempt the impossible task of describing my own mental sensations or personal feelings.

My three companions did not altogether escape my watchful observation, and by the light of the moon, stars, and comet I could see them distinctly. The Demon sat opposite to me, his head resting against the top rail of the car, with part of his hedgehog robe wrapped closely around it. Obeltub nodded—Homer sometimes nods—but was careful enough to keep his hand on the driving wheel. His thoughts, half sleeping, half waking, appeared to be of an amusing character, for he smiled and showed his pointed fangs, and twisted the muscles of his face into all kinds of contortions. The Doctor sat by my side; he seemed to be rather dazed and stupefied, though perfectly awake; opening his eyes at short intervals, but only keeping them open for

a few seconds at a time. The morning was still too obscure for me to see the landscape now below, and the driver still directed the balloon upward, lest it should be dashed to pieces upon the tops of the mountains of Mongolia and the Burmese Empire. We had a long journey before us, but our rate of travelling was rapid in the extreme; and if no accident happened we might reasonably expect to arrive at our destination before night.

The faint glow of dawn began to appear in the sky, which was one vast, dark, ethereal expanse without a cloud. Beneath us there seemed to be gathering a white mantle over the earth, like a boundless sheet of snow. My attention was all at once arrested by a strange increase of light. It was behind me, and as I was contemplating my friend the Doctor, who had saved my life no less than four times, wondering what was to be his future destiny and my own, I saw the rays of this extraordinary light illuminating the back of his head. I turned round in renewed astonishment, mingled with fear and awe, and beheld suspended in the sky, like a beautiful pale-red lamp, and not very far from us, the STAR OF VICTORY!

I had been thinking very much within the last two or three days of this glorious vision, which had only appeared to the Doctor and myself in dreams. It seemed to be the harbinger of some unspeakable pleasure, or inestimable happiness, yet in store for us both; and taught us plainly that, no matter how great our fall when we *did* fall, or how dark and deep the abyss into which we had fallen, there is still, if our agony and despair will permit us to see it, the load-star of hope and consolation shining upon us. The ineffable brightness of the mercy of our Almighty Creator is not withdrawn so long as we have life to animate, or sense to enlighten us. It is only, as far as we in our ignorance can possibly know, when Death interposes his grim visage

between us and our hoped-for day of repentance, that the gates of paradise shall be closed against us. And yet may there not still be a blessed hope, that those gates will not be rigidly closed to the entrance of many thousands who did not, while they lived, appear to have altogether abandoned the pomps and vanities of this wicked world; but whose wishes to be endowed with strength to do so were strong, and, to their deep regret, only partially successful. The career of the friend who sat by my side illustrates this thought.

The appearance of the grand and wonderful star brought with it also most joyous remembrances of what I had seen and heard of the Doctor's lovely friend Helen. The sympathetic reader who takes the trouble to read this book will, I am sure, take almost as much interest in her as I did. Still, she was a total stranger. I knew nothing of her, and had foolishly thrown away the excellent opportunity lately afforded me for acquiring that desirable knowledge. If she had not been the Doctor's actual wife, she certainly was his betrothed bride, prevented probably from being his wife by one or more of those unforeseen, perhaps tragic, incidents which sometimes intervene between our expected happiness and its fulfilment. The love and reverence due to her in the former relation was admirably foreshadowed by his passionate adoration of her in the latter. He had himself darkly hinted that such an event had occurred, and had mentioned the name of a man whose machinations had destroyed the happiness of them both. My interest in him and in her, on account of my dream, had been so powerfully excited that I felt myself longing to know more; and my pain when he snatched up the papers referring to her, and carried them away, was excessive. Her exquisite beauty, as I had seen her both in my dream and in the enchanted hall, was certainly sufficient to command adoration. The difference between

her and Bellagrande was at once apparent. Both were magnificent young creatures, but the beauty of Helen alone was fit, and appeared to be designed to adorn, the regions of Heaven.

I aroused my half-insensible companion, and in a whisper bade him look at the star, which still shone brightly in the north-eastern quarter of the firmament. A strong convulsion shook him from head to foot when he saw it, and he pressed my hand so tightly that the pressure gave me actual pain. But no sound passed his lips; he opened his eyes for a moment, and I saw its red light reflected in them, and then he closed them again, as if satisfied now, and at rest for ever. A terror took possession of me. He had talked about his second death as a possible event. What if he were to die with us in the balloon? It is true that in such a case my responsibility for him would cease; but the departure of such a noble soul would be not the less a pain which I could hardly endure.

Our wonderful conveyance travelled on rapidly. Obeltub or his master seemed to have a supernatural power of creating a hurricane in the air, and it was blown along in the right direction at a speed of which it was impossible for me to estimate the velocity. The bright and glorious morning was breaking slowly, the STAR OF VICTORY had faded from view, and the sun rose in indescribable grandeur. Below us, as far as the eye could reach, nothing was to be seen but a vast ocean as white as snow, bounded only by the rosy sky. Here and there, indeed, we saw the tops of high mountains making their appearance above this fleecy mantle. The sun rose higher, and I began to feel his welcome, genial heat. I felt as if I were soaring through the blue vault of heaven on the wings of a powerful bird, and thought it strange that no sensation of fear affected me. Was it all a sublime, mysterious dream? My courage and faith seemed to increase.

As the day advanced, the Demon roused himself up, and partly unrolled his majestic form from his hedgehog robe. His keen eyes wandered restlessly from the rigging of his balloon down to the earth beneath his feet. He was now literally, as far as I could see, the monarch of all he surveyed. Obeltub also became more animated. He condescended to notice me occasionally with sly nods, winks, and grins; and shook his black fist now and then at the semi-insensible Doctor.

The condition of the latter gave me increasing anxiety. I was alarmed to perceive that he sat rigidly, never moving hand or foot. His face was uncovered, and had assumed an unnatural bluish colour; and he kept his eyes closely shut, as if he feared to open them upon the enchanting world. In good truth the sight of such a world, although we could not yet see its loveliness, was, after the dismal pit from which we had emerged, almost enough to turn the strongest brain into the most foolish. I noticed, too, with some disturbance, that the Demon stared fixedly at his rigid form. I could hear my poor, but entirely helpless, friend breathing stertorously, and was thus assured he was not actually dead.

In the meantime the sun was gliding over our heads hour after hour, at his usual pace, and we were still careering through the air at lightning speed. The dense mass of clouds beneath us was becoming gradually broken up into detached but confused fragments. The surface of the earth began to appear, but, being still at a great height, I could see nothing distinctly. The balloon seemed to be travelling over an immense continent, which I conjectured to be the largest island in the world. My eyes were constantly strained to see if I could obtain a glimpse of the narrow sea which cut off my beloved little Tasmania from its gigantic neighbour. But no, all was confusion worse confounded. To add to my uneasiness, the sun had long

passed the meridian. Evening was approaching, and I was terrified at the idea of arriving at the Great Lake at night, and perhaps being unceremoniously dismissed by the Demon. The remembrance of previous adventures, scrambling over logs, falling among rocks, tumbling into stony creeks, or being torn by the prickly pear-tree, with its fruit akin to stones, came upon me with vivid force. And then what could be done with Doctor Julius? The prospect before me was almost as maddening as the scenes which I had left—I hoped and prayed—for ever far behind me.

On and on we swept, like a proud bird, through the air; as proud indeed, but hardly as happy and secure. I could not help reflecting, with a most painful feeling, that we were entirely at the mercy of the Demon and his diabolical driver; and what extraordinary or bloodthirsty notions might they not take into their heads? The most barbarous murder was to them no more than a puff of smoke. The balloon itself, though strongly constructed, was nothing but a child's toy in the strength of the elements of Nature. If it encountered a thunderstorm, a flash of lightning could annihilate it in a moment. If its machinery or tackling should give way, what would become of the poor Doctor and myself; or what would be our condition should we be suddenly hurled into the opposing track of another tempest?

On and on we swept, like a ray of light from Arcturus or the Dog-Star; around us the vapours of everlasting space gurgling and hissing, below us—

Come, come, that will do, give us something more substantial, Mr. Ubertus, if you please.

We were gradually sinking down closer to the earth, for the objects below became more and more distinct. The rays of the afternoon sun were lighting up sea and shore and mountain and forest with beautiful rainbow tints before leaving them shrouded in the blackness of night. I became agonized with unutterable anxiety. Could I only

see Tasmania once more before the darkness should steal upon us! Tasmania! A little, weak, insignificant spot on the face of the earth; even but a pin's point compared to the vastness of the British Empire itself; and yet it contained my little fraction of property, most of the few friends I had, and was all the world to me. There were extensive banks of clouds here and there between us and the earth still, and down into one of these we plunged, and were instantly enveloped in a dense fog.

My attention, hitherto absorbed by the earth beneath us, was now directed to the condition of the unfortunate Doctor. My alarm for him increased tenfold. He was visibly swelling to an extraordinary size. I looked at the Demon; his grape-shot eyes were fixed upon the sick passenger in a deadly stare, and while I looked he spoke.

'Obeltub, the Doctor is going to die, look at him swelling, growing bigger and bigger! I ought to have foreseen this: he will burst the balloon, and send us all to destruction! We must throw him out, and do it quickly.'

The fiendish driver grunted some unintelligible jargon. I had no time to think.

'Come on then!' shouted the Demon, and before I could interpose by even a single word, these two atrocious devils actually seized the miserable Doctor, and commenced their murderous endeavour to hurl him over the rail of the car. It was no easy task even for them, though they were as powerful as gorillas. They puffed and strained, but their victim, with all his remaining consciousness and bodily strength, resisted their efforts to the last. I was petrified with horror, and roused to a fury which I have no words to describe. What could I do to help him? Absolutely nothing. Was it possible that, after all our plotting and planning, and within sight of my happy home, I was destined to lose him in this shocking way? I bellowed and blubbered with fear and pity, and frantically seized one of his legs.

Obeltub gave me a vicious kick, and the Demon roared :
 ‘Come and help us, you Ubertus ; the balloon will be lost.’

But I flatly and positively refused to raise my hand against my friend and benefactor. If I could do nothing to save him, I certainly would not help them to destroy him. I called them fiends and wretches, and every other brutal epithet to which I could lay my tongue.

‘If you don’t help us,’ roared the Demon, ‘we’ll pitch you out too !’

‘Do your worst !’ I roared in return ; ‘I am in your power ; you cannot murder me more than once, and God will take care of my soul.’

While I was speaking, and groaning, and shouting with impotent rage and terror, the annihilation of the wretched Julius was completed. His murderers compelled him to relinquish his hold on the ropes and sides of the car, and he fell sheer into the awful space below us.

The balloon, relieved of his weight, now commenced to roll and plunge violently. The Demon began to haul on various ropes like a distraught sailor in a cyclone, and trumpeted out at the same time :

‘Choke up the lightning, Obeltub—choke up, I say, or we shall go slap-dash into the blazing sun—steady, not too sharp—steady she goes, ease her off—warily, old girl, gently, bring her to—luff, luff, you son of a —— ; round she comes, let it on now—half blast ; you have not ballast enough ; but who on earth would have thought of our being obliged to throw that son of perdition overboard ?’

As for me, I was overwhelmed with horror and indignation. I lay down in the bottom of the car, and shed a torrent of tears. Alas ! my poor friend Julius, to be taken from me thus, when I had so few friends left ! Was this to be the cruel, the bitter end of your career ?

Gradually recovering my self-possession and intellectual

strength, I ventured to peep over the side of the car, and take a view of our environment. We had emerged from the stratum of cloud, and were descending with velocity to the earth, getting into thicker air, and I, at least, owing to its influence, beginning to feel in better spirits. My grief, if continued until doomsday, could not recall Julius to life ; and I determined to seek relief from my misery by letting my mind dwell on other subjects. I looked out upon the surrounding landscape, and was delighted with the scene. Though still about ten thousand feet above the ground, the rocky hills, plains, and rivers came distinctly to my view. If, I reflected, the immortal soul of man shall be permitted to soar in this way, not only through the regions of the atmosphere, but into the remotest recesses of space, to have the privilege of surveying Jupiter and his satellites within the distance of a hundred miles, or perching on one of Saturn’s rings, or flying through the labyrinth of coloured stars at the Southern Cross—what an existence it will be ! But it is vain to call the attention of men to these things ; give them what they desire most on earth, that is all they care about.

As we approached nearer to our destination I began to recognise several important landmarks which had but lately become familiar to me. Lakes Sorell and Crescent, and the two Arthur’s Lakes, I knew from their close proximity to each other ; the Wild-dog Mountain, the Wild Horse of the Great Lake, the Ironstone, the Split Rock, and lo ! my lovely mirror, the Great Lake itself ; the evening sun, shining through a rift in the clouds, lighting it up with a rosy glow exactly like that of the STAR OF VICTORY. It was a magnificent picture of fairyland itself.

Obeltub, notwithstanding his forbidding exterior, was a very skilful balloon-driver ; the Demon could not have suited himself better had he searched the whole universe for a driver or a murderer. He now steered his formidable

vessel down to the margin of the lake, to the very place whence we had started. I knew it well; a belt of forest extended for some distance along the shore on one side, and on the other a wide open marsh lay between the water and the adjacent rocky hills. At the opposite side of this marsh stood a solitary shepherd's hut; not the one which I had made my temporary home, but one whose occupants I knew to be hospitable people. At the edge of the forest a gigantic tree had measured its length upon the ground some ten or twenty years before, and there it lay still, blackened by successive fires, yet not consumed. Within twenty yards of this fallen giant the balloon-car touched the stones, and I was requested to alight.

This I did with the greatest alacrity, thanking Heaven in my inmost soul that I was again permitted to touch the solid earth; but the dreadful fate of poor Julius still rankled in my breast. Nevertheless, I began to indulge in the hope that I should also see the last of my patronizing friend, the Demon. Alas! why is it that our wishes, even if they are the wild ones of doing the greatest good in the world, or the simple ones of being allowed to live in peace with our friends and enemies alike, are so seldom gratified? He jumped from the car with the agility of an ape, muttering something to his obsequious servant, and waved his club in the air. The balloon shot up again with a roar; Obeltub roared out his usual sardonic laugh, and his master and I were left alone facing each other. The *tête-à-tête* was but a short one, but the contest was sharp and decisive. The conquering power did not belong to me; never shall I claim the slightest merit either for my victory, or for my weak ability to make my reader acquainted with it.

'Come now,' said he in a wheedling tone, speaking slowly and distinctly, and smiling as sweetly as his rabbit-trap jaws would let him, 'you will be my private secretary, won't you? You know my power; you have seen the

power I gave the Doctor. I will give you far greater. I was never unkind to him. His death—ah, yes, his death! Well, he brought it on himself. I'll bet my existence that the cunning rogue swelled himself up on purpose, so that I might throw him out, and thus release him from his engagements, and that he is hiding somewhere as much alive as ever. But woe betide him if I ever catch him again! Will not Flambo Combustus and Cashup Humbuggins satiate their vengeance! Perpetual roasting in molten lava will be nothing to it. But you'll be my private secretary, I know? You can bring your wife and family, and all your friends, too—a million sterling British pounds a year, as many grand castles to live in as you like, gardens and parks, libraries, hunters and hounds, and as many fine, beautiful——'

'Away! begone! Demon of hell!' I shouted in a perfect fury of rage; 'away, liar and murderer! tempt me no more! What! was I, an intellectual being, born into this grand world, of a God-fearing mother, for nothing better than to help you to fill it with wickedness, violence, brutality, and bloodshed; with spite and malice, and hatred and jealousy; with pride, avarice, adultery, drunkenness, and every other abomination? Away, fiendish author of our rebellion and our madness! That human soul cannot exist which will not for ever curse you and the spirits that serve you. I refuse your service, I scorn and defy you!'

To this passionate outburst the Demon did not answer a single word. He stared at me in apparently stunned astonishment, but, recovering himself immediately, and before I had time to perceive his intention, he unwound his tail from his arm, and struck me a savage blow with it above the region of the heart. I fell and rolled over on the stones in an agony of pain and shame, but, gifted with sudden, almost supernatural strength, I sprang up in an instant with a heavy stone in my hand, and hurled it at

him with all my might. It caught him fairly between his leaden stony eyes. 'Now,' was my startling thought; 'now for the battle of the giant and the dwarf; now for utter annihilation at least!' But, to my surprise, and infinite relief, he turned slowly round and commenced howling, and walked deliberately into the lake, whose waters opened to receive him, and closed over him, and he troubled me no more.

* * * * *

'Ha! ha! hurrah! Bravo, well done, Ubertus!' shouted a well-known voice, with a loud laugh. 'Well done, my boy; you've given that fellow a salute which he will not get over in a hurry; bravo! hurrah!' and while I gazed in transfixed astonishment I saw the burly form of Doctor Julius rising from the ground at the other side of the fallen tree. I was struck dumb.

'Hurrah!' he continued, still laughing uproariously, and beginning to dance as he advanced towards me, 'you're a hero, Ubertus; you've done the trick! I never saw a neater or a better thing done in all my life; why, the slaughter of Partigan was nothing to it. We are both heroes, and jolly fine fellows! I have outwitted the Demon, and you have conquered him. Hurrah, hurrah! our agreement is null, you are witness to that—he pitched me out himself, and dismissed me of his own free will; he cannot claim me again, and you are free and I am free; we are both free to go where we like—hurrah, hurrah!'

'Doctor Julius,' I managed to ask at length, 'how in the name of a thousand wonders did you get here? I thought you were dashed to pieces on the rocks, or buried in the lake.'

He sat down on the fallen tree, took off his hat, wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and looked all around him. He could hardly make any reply, for his fits of joyous laughter nearly choked him. At length he said:

'I am bewildered, stunned, electrified; am I in my senses? I came here, my dear boy, sooner and easier than you did. When those two black villains threw me out of their car in spite of my pretended resistance—for I was suffering from a dreadful attack of *taxacorum puffinalis*, to an enormous dose of which I had slyly helped myself—I fell rapidly at first, but, when I came to a denser stratum of air, I floated down here just like a snowflake—and here I am; and here I would stay for ever, but I must go and look for Helen. I have risen to a kind of glory here, and the scene for me is glorious—most glorious beyond description; but I must rise higher still, I must find Helen—I will find my darling.'

'And behold, an omen of success, my dear friend! Do you see that pretty island out there? That is Helen Island.'

'I accept the omen!' said he joyfully. 'Helen Island! I am in a world of wonders. I never saw such a ravishing, enchanting scene. What charming mountains! what lovely trees! what a splendid silvered mirror of water! It is a heavenly scene! What is the name of this grand lake?'

'It is the Great Lake of Tasmania, Doctor. It has no other name that I ever heard of; and it has borne it now for nearly one hundred years.'

'No name but the Great Lake! Why, you amaze me! Great lakes are common enough in the world. I will give it a more definite name—one that will stick to it until the mountain on which it reposes so majestically shall be dissolved into the boiling steam that makes the wheels of the world go round—and I christen it now, with all due solemnity, LAKE UBERTUS!'

'Oh no, no, sir!' said I, blushing like a schoolgirl. 'I am entirely unworthy of such an honour. A humble man, not troubled by worldly ambition; unknown to, and uncared for, by the world—unknown even to the small world of

Tasmania, and, for all I know to the contrary, condemned and despised by those who do know me. I decline the honour with thanks. To accept it would only expose me to derision and contempt. A very slight thing, Julius, if I may dare to call you by your Christian name, will often raise up for us a tempest of indignation when we least expect it, and the friend of years will suddenly become our bitterest enemy. And while we are on the subject of names, why may not I give this magnificent lake, which is, to borrow the exclamation of a classical friend, *Lacus Superbus* rather than *Lacus Magnus*—a name which will stick to it until the trees around us shall become so many balloons, to waft all good men and women to realms of eternal bliss—why not, I say, call it *Lake Julius Rabbitonius*?’

He roared with laughter, and exclaimed: ‘No; that would be too absurd altogether. *Lake Ubertus* let it be for ever and ever, amen! I have said it. I am entitled to respect; I am the oldest man in your beautiful and romantic island.’

We were now approaching the lonely shepherd’s hut, where we hoped to procure food and lodging for the night. Before we entered it, however, the Doctor stopped suddenly, and, with a solemn air, addressed me thus:

‘*Ubertus*, before our spiritual intercourse shall be, as it must soon be, broken in upon by the earthly language and opinions of men still in the flesh, and by the presence of those to whom our lamp of knowledge and experience is nothing but a dark shadow, or an impenetrable veil, I will be serious, and make this confession for the good of my soul. I have been too light and vain, and too fond of the world. For every loud laugh I have enjoyed at the expense of my fellow men I have paid the full price in tears, as it were, of blood. For every evil desire and impure thought a certain penalty has been exacted. Even when an over-

warm heart, or a feeling of sympathy for distress, or gratitude for a passing kindness, seduced me into an innocent departure from the conventional rules, I was visited with a fierce and cruel retribution. Take these lessons from me, my friend: beware of wolves in sheep’s clothing; beware of wine: there is deadly poison in the cup; and oh, *Ubertus*, beware of women! They are our sweetest companions and most delightful advisers; but if we are guilty of any folly they become whips to scourge us, and they can strike without mercy. I need say no more. I must leave you to-morrow. You want to know more about Helen? Ah! you lost what you shall never find again when you rejected those papers I offered you, and preferred going to the Demon’s Parliament. But you must forgive me; I will tell you more about her as we walk round *Lake Ubertus*. Is it not a grand name? It only wants the *de* to it to make it worthy of the days of William the Conqueror. And now, before we go in, let us unite our voices and hearts in saying fervently: “Blessed be God, who has in mercy brought us out of that pit of darkness into His marvellous light!”’

‘I heard you telling the Demon, Julius, that you would write a fashionable book against Christianity, and secure a million of valuable souls.’

‘Hush! hush! not another word! Did you really think me serious? For whatever lies I have told that malignant being, for the purpose of making my escape from his toils, I hold myself pardoned and justified. I am not such a fool as to write a book against a religion which, in the full conviction of my heart, I now know to be true. And of this I am sure: for whatever we have done we need not look for any reward in this world. There is no Jubilee medal reward for you, my boy, or for me either.’

‘No, indeed,’ said I, laughing. ‘Why should there be?’

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE STORY OF HELEN AND JULIUS.

THE good Julius—for I considered him good, and, with all his faults, loved him as I love my country, my proud and strong and passionate, but still generous England—and I, after a comfortable night's rest and an early breakfast, set out on our walk round the lake, intending to stay for another night at the hut where young Mr. Pepper and his nephew kept watch over their sheep. The weather continued fine, and as we rambled on quietly, my companion found it difficult to satisfy his insatiable curiosity. I answered all his questions to the best of my ability, and in perfect good humour. His was not an idle or impertinent curiosity, and it gave me infinite pleasure to be able, in some measure, to gratify it. No feeling of annoyance came over me, as I must confess it sometimes does when I find myself the victim of impertinent curiosity. I regarded this Doctor as my *alter ego*, though immeasurably inferior to him in general talents, and my respect and affection for him, I felt, were growing stronger as hour succeeded hour.

All this time we were in sight of Helen Island, and we duly arrived at the fallen tree where my terrible combat with the Demon had taken place, and sat down upon it to enjoy a short rest. My thoughts were inexpressibly happy;

I anticipated with delight my approaching re-union with my family and friends. Doctor Julius seemed to be tired, and oppressed with some kind of gloomy apprehension. The wanderings of his eyes from one object to another, on the earth and in the sky, were incessant. He had promised to tell me some of Helen's history, but gave no indication now of remembering his promise. I could not ask him to mention her name. He had not brought his pipe with him out of the lower regions, and had made no allusion to his habit of smoking. Now, however, he asked me if I had a pipe, and on my offering him my pocket meerschaum, he lit it and commenced :

'If Helen,' said he with a sad smile, 'should come to me now, as indeed I expect she will, she will not be pleased, I shall smell of tobacco; yet what would poor Roman Catholic priests be without their pipes? What was tobacco given to us for? What were brandy, rum, gin, and wine given to us for, with which so many thousands of people ruin themselves? Did God give them to us, who gave us wheat and sheep and flowers; or did the prince of wickedness, from whom we have made our escape, who gave us nettles, serpents, and prussic acid, give them to us?'

'We cannot answer such questions, sir,' I replied, 'and it is useless to ask them. You spoke of Helen just now, and you promised——'

'Yes, I know; I promised to tell you more about her, and I will keep my word, but I have not brought my papers with me, and my memory is, I fear, but as a broken reed. Helen's history must be a short one, for we have but little time now to dwell upon it. You will hardly find anything in it to amuse you, though something, perhaps, to excite your sympathy and pity.

'My father was the proprietor of some two or three hundred acres of land, in the beautiful county of Devon.

I remembered nothing of London in those days, although I had been born there. Before he purchased an estate in Devonshire, my father had been a merchant in the City, where he had been tolerably successful. Our home lay in a secluded valley through which flowed the river Torridge on its way to the Bristol Channel. It was surrounded by grand hills and forests, and a rocky, dangerous coast from Hartland Point to Barnstaple Bay was not far off, for from our house we could hear the thunders of the waves beating on the coast. There were a good many well-to-do people in our neighbourhood, and I remember still the delightful walks I used to take with my father and mother to visit our neighbours, or to pass away our time in the charming dells and groves. There were romantic castles to be seen here and there; the times were lively; the military element predominated. The great civil war between Charles I. and his Parliament was commencing. You may imagine how the joints of society were dislocated, and what wild confusion reigned through our once peaceful country. What crimes were committed hour by hour! what dreadful intelligence spread every moment from lip to lip, pallid with agony and fear! what scowling looks men cast upon each other! We saw troopers in mail of brass and steel, and in buff jerkins, riding through the glens; and infantry and artillery, with their culverins and falconets, hurrying to and fro when the army of King Charles besieged Exeter: when Digby defeated the Parliament's forces at Torrington: when Barnstaple, and the Castle of Appledore, surrendered to the King. Then came the astounding news that Essex had retreated into Cornwall, followed by the King himself, and was obliged to capitulate. Then Sir Thomas Fairfax appeared for the Parliament, and carried everything before him. It is a blessing for you that you have had no such times in Tasmania. All the evil spirits of hell seemed to

be let loose upon unfortunate England. We could hear the groans of the wounded and dying, and the screams of insulted women; and we could see distracted people flying from their homes which were in flames.

'But I must go back a little. Our nearest neighbour was a Mr. Henry St. Clair. He and my father had been great friends before the civil war broke out, but that cursed event caused the sudden termination of many friendships, and changed life-long friends into the bitterest enemies. So it was with my father and Mr. St. Clair. The former embraced the cause of the Parliament, the latter that of the King. Those days were happy ones, and now they appear to me to have been most holy. They were not seared and embittered by the accumulated hardness and selfishness of riper years. I had come to Devonshire with my parents at an early age, and the two families lived for some time in perfect peace, and took the greatest delight in each other's society. My parents, with their only daughter, myself and my twin brother Charles, would frequently walk to Rhyndal House, Mr. St. Clair's residence, and, though uninvited, we were always welcome to spend the day there. On these occasions we would all go out romping and gipsying together—we three of the Winbourne family, and two of the St. Clairs. These were Helen and Clara, and, strange to say, they were also twins. They were a pair of most lovely girls. We often took our ponies out with us, and the sight of Helen and Clara on horseback made my heart beat with pleasure. Our fathers took their guns, when the seasons permitted, and rambled about together, or they would sit at home and talk over their books. Our mothers loved each other like affectionate sisters, and we, their children, I frequently detected, were often the subjects of laughing conversations and plans for the future. Helen and I were, and must have been, according to their delighted

fancies, born for each other; and of course Charles and Clara were actually made to be husband and wife. Those charming visits were regularly returned. There was no such thing as ceremony between us, as there was with our other neighbours.

‘But the cruel war broke out, and all was changed. The St. Clairs and the Winbournes no longer visited each other; indeed, it was dangerous to go anywhere. And we barricaded our houses, and kept within them as much as possible. The two neighbours who had been such friends became at first cold and distant, and finally haughty enemies; but the ladies and children never ceased to love each other. At every opportunity they could get they exchanged kindnesses, but while the war continued an entire reconciliation between the families was impossible. The insincerity and arbitrary conduct of the King filled my father with abhorrence. St. Clair declared that he was justified by policy, by the factious opposition he met with, and by the Divine right of kings, in everything he did and said. When the King triumphed, St. Clair’s exultation was unbounded. When the Parliamentary forces prevailed, his strong passions found vent in bitter expressions and biting sarcasms against the “brutal mob,” as he was pleased to term us.

‘For seven years this bitter war continued to rage in unhappy England. The fatal obstinacy of the King, and the foolish tenacity with which he clung to his notions of royal supremacy and despotism, marked him as the certain object of popular vengeance. Had I been in his place, I would have flung my crown into the Thames sooner than see the horrors of civil war let loose upon my miserable country. But men’s passions prompt them to overcome all things, and no man likes to be beaten. The hearts of those who are blinded by ambition are as hard and cold as rocks of adamant. No experience of themselves or of

others will teach them, no tale of distress will soften them, no apprehension of future judgment will move them. The sad history of those times, you have told me, has been written over and over again by several excellent historians, and therefore I need not dwell upon it. It may be summed up in these words: “The History of the Reign of Evil Passions.”

‘Wearied out with constant watchfulness and anxiety, and almost driven to desperation by ever-recurring insults, and depredations on his cattle and other property, my poor father determined to abandon his little farm and take refuge in London. We had endured a life of extreme hardship and isolation for two years; often for weeks without the bare necessaries of life. But we were destined to retire from our beloved home under one of the darkest clouds which are allowed to rest upon the human race—one which seemed like the grave of what was past, and the ominous shadow of what was to come. My brother Charles, a gentle affectionate child, the idol of his parents, and one of the sweet sisters of Rhyndal House, Clara, quite as beautiful as Helen, sickened and died. Words cannot paint the grief and despair of the afflicted mothers. They contrived to meet and spend some hours weeping in each other’s arms. My father felt the blow keenly. He loved his three children, but I think the fragile Charles found a deeper and warmer place in his heart than either my sister or myself. Now, I felt, with a slight qualm of jealousy—my first attack of that fearful disease—that the place of Charles would be occupied by Agnes. I was a strong and healthy fellow, able to take care of myself; often annoying my father by my propensity for mischief, but spoiled by my mother, who doted on me.

‘We arrived safely in London, having availed ourselves of a strong military escort proceeding thither. My father

had friends who received him into their house, and he immediately cast about for the means of subsistence. He had brought a small sum of money with him, and this, with some borrowed capital, he immediately invested in a wholesale and retail chemist's and druggist's establishment, having been in that business before he settled in Devonshire. I was then in my tenth year, and commenced studying for the medical profession. I took to the shop wonderfully, and watched my father's right-hand man, old Mr. Kerford, compounding drugs and making up prescriptions with great interest. We lived in a populous neighbourhood, that of St. Paul's Churchyard, in a large house, but my mother preferred to have the rooms empty rather than run the risk of admitting strangers into them in such terrible times; especially as only a few months had elapsed since the conspirators Tomkins and Chaloner were hanged on gibbets before their own doors, and their associate and leader, Edmund Waller, the poet, condemned to death, but, on his almost frantic submission, let off with a fine of ten thousand pounds.

'Our household was composed of ten persons—father and mother, Agnes and myself, Mr. Kerford and three assistants in the shop, and two elderly female servants. We had a clerk in the wholesale warehouse, and porters who did not reside in the house. It was a large business, and to make it likely to succeed, my father had gone considerably into debt. He had every hope and prospect of succeeding, displayed great energy and talent, and was delighted to see me taking a kindly interest in it. Indeed, I had determined to second his efforts with all my heart; but I was very young, and soft and malleable for good or evil as a piece of dough. His principal creditor was an old friend named Reginald, whose eldest son, Banwell, became an apprentice to our business—a handsome, if not

a high-principled and kindly-natured boy, two years my senior. He and I became fast friends; we were, in fact, inseparables. We read, studied chemistry, walked and played together. He was pale and dark-haired, but could boast of handsome, regular features, a decidedly Grecian cast of countenance. His eyes were large and black, and his forehead was high, but narrow. He gained an ascendancy over me at first for which I cannot now account. His address was polite, and free from that doubtful hesitation and uncertainty by which one is sometimes enabled to detect the double-dealer. His honesty was apparent by his anxiety to account for every farthing that passed through his hands. My father sometimes told him laughingly that he should be the chief cashier of the firm of Winbourne, Son, and Reginald. I regarded him as my particular friend; Mr. Kerford alone seemed to have some distant doubts about him.

'The state of London at that time cannot be well or faithfully described. Startling events succeeded each other with rapidity, and the constant arrival of couriers from the army was hailed by the people with ever-varying emotions. The city rang with shouts of joy when it became known that the army of the Parliament had achieved a victory. The Battle of Marston Moor, in which Cromwell established his growing fame, gave rise to the greatest joy. The execution of Archbishop Laud took many of the more enlightened citizens by surprise, and showed them plainly to what extreme lengths the Parliament was determined to go. Then came the news of the successes of Montrose in Scotland, at which they pulled long faces: and then came the fatal battle of Naseby, where the power and the hopes of the unhappy King perished for ever.

'Years passed away, and the bitter end drew near, but no sensible man thought for a moment that that dreadful

event would terminate our increasing troubles. On the 30th of January, 1649, King Charles the First died calmly on the scaffold at Whitehall, in the presence of a multitude of his exulting or sorrowing subjects.

‘I was then fifteen years of age, and had, with my father’s and Banwell’s assistance, made good progress in my medical and chemical studies. Our business, if it had not advanced very much, had not retrograded. My father had been enabled to pay some of his debts, for Kerford was an able manager, and a faithful servant. My mother received very little company, and was comparatively happy in a quiet and retired life. We derived scarcely any profit from our estate in Devonshire; but I looked forward anxiously and joyously to being able at some future time, when the country should be settled, to revisit the scene of so many pleasures. Helen was constantly in my thoughts. What had become of her and of her parents? Should I ever see her again, and would she be ever nearer and dearer to me than when I last had the pure delight of seeing her, and kissing her sweet lips? At last we heard, I believe when we were making no enquiries, that they had disappeared from Rhyndal House, and it was not known where they had gone to, or what had become of them.

‘I must not spin out my story to an unreasonable length. One day Banwell and I carried a sum of money to a goldsmith in the City, who did business in the way of keeping his customers’ cash in safe custody. We were old enough to wear swords, and we walked arm-in-arm for mutual security and defence. On our return we agreed to take a little country tour, which embraced one of the suburbs, for the sake of fresh air, and if possible a change of scene which might remind us of the green smiling country beyond. As we passed through the outskirts we heard a poorly clad woman, who seemed weary and travel-stained, warmly

expostulating with a coarse tavern-keeper. By her side was a tall girl whose face was partially concealed in the folds of a shawl.

“‘You cannot lodge here, my good woman!’” said the man with the decision of one who meant what he said.

“‘For the love of Heaven, sir!’” said the poor creature, weeping bitterly, “‘give us shelter for to-night, for this night only—my daughter and I have come a long way, and we are starving and ready to faint. I have friends in London, but do not know where to find them; we will find them to-morrow and then repay your kindness—have mercy on us, sir!’”

“‘I have said what I have said,’” replied the man gruffly; “‘the town is full of beggars and impostors—you cannot lodge here.’”

“‘Only for one night—only for one night!’” said the miserable woman.

‘I turned round quickly, and looked at her.

“‘Surely,’” I said, “‘I know your voice; you are Mrs. St. Clair, of Rhyndal House in Devonshire!’”

‘She started violently and asked:

“‘And who are you, young sir?’”

‘I did not answer. Extraordinary sensations overpowered me as my eyes wandered from her to her daughter. The old adoration of childhood returned with a wild rush in a moment. This muffled up girl was Helen herself!

‘She was the first to recognise me, and said quickly to her mother:

“‘Dear mamma, do not cry; it is he, it is Julius Winbourne!’”

“‘Yes, it is he, I know now!’” said Mrs. St. Clair, hysterically. “‘It is Julius Winbourne, thank God! thank God!’” and the poor creature seized my hand, and bedewed it with her tears.

‘When I recovered my self-possession, I asked the tavern-keeper to call his wife, and as the demeanour of that worthy had undergone a considerable change, he obeyed, and I placed the forlorn pair in her charge, slipping some money into her hand at the same time. Then promising to come and see them the next day, we took our leave and went home.

‘My good mother, when she heard that I had found Mrs. St. Clair and Helen, was overjoyed. She had loved them both with true affection, and her love, in all the changing years which had intervened since our last meeting, had not died out. She immediately appealed to my father for his consent to offer them a home. He hesitated, saying it might be imprudent and dangerous; they belonged to the party of the hated Cavaliers. St. Clair himself might be hiding in the city, and if so would certainly find means of communication with his wife and child. He entertained no vindictive feelings towards St. Clair, but feared future complications. Taking another serious view, he had four young men living in the house, and Helen was an attractive girl. He looked at me keenly, with a quiet smile, and asked me if I would like to fight a duel with Banwell Reginald. But my mother carried her point by her affectionate pertinacity, and I was despatched the next day to bring them to our house.

‘The joy of Mrs. St. Clair and Helen, when they found themselves again in the arms of my kind mother, was indescribable. They were installed in a nicely-furnished room, and everything the house contained was placed at their disposal. It soon became known to us that Helen’s mother was a widow. Her husband had been killed in a violent skirmish with some soldiers of the Parliament, and she and her daughter had been burnt out of their house soon afterwards. For some time they had managed to live amongst the neighbours, who were very kind to them.

They could do nothing with their landed property, and their live-stock had been taken from them. Mrs. St. Clair had tried all kinds of expedients to earn a subsistence; and at length found her way to London, in a helpless and destitute condition. If Julius had not recognised her, she said, she and Helen must have perished in the street, and she thanked God over and over again for having brought her among friends, and preserved her and her darling from serious personal injury.

‘But although she tried to keep in good spirits, and make herself as useful as she could to my mother and the two girls, she had received her death-blow. The overwhelming sorrows and anxieties of years of the worst kinds of turbulence and brutality were too much for a poor, weak woman, whose heart admitted of no alloy of coarseness or hardness, and in spite of all that my mother and Agnes, and her own Helen could do, assisted by two of the best physicians of the day, she died after some months of severe suffering.

‘Helen was now alone in the world; and the death of her mother nearly broke her heart. She had relations somewhere in the north of England, and wrote to them, but received no answer. She now seemed to feel that she had trespassed long enough on our hospitality, and wished accordingly to take a situation in another house, if it were only that of a menial servant; but my mother insisted on her remaining with us as a friend and companion for Agnes, and she consented with, I believe, secret joy, but apparent reluctance.

‘When a young girl of tender and delicate sensibilities, who could not but be aware that she was in possession of great personal charms, finds herself in the position in which Helen was placed, it is no wonder that she displays doubt and hesitation before accepting it. There were four young

men residing in the house, two of whom were of the ordinary stamp, having nothing to do with my history. Agnes was a good, but plain, girl, very quiet and reserved, with no accomplishment but a sweet voice. Helen had, in addition to her transcendent loveliness, every accomplishment which society in those days expected, and her parents could afford to give her. She could sing well, and play skilfully on the harpsichord. I was a plain young man, almost ugly in countenance, without any particular talents, ungainly in person, and averse to the elegant refinements of fashionable life. Banwell had a handsome face, a smiling, cheerful, winning air, and was a beau in dress and manners. His head was full of vanity and aspiring ambition. His quickness, and the talents which he displayed in his profession, surprised us all. He told me one day that he had discovered a medicine, or rather a certain compound of medicines, which would cure all known diseases, and by which he intended to make a colossal fortune. Lady gossips who came to talk to my mother said that Banwell and Helen were made for each other. I was the youngest of the house, except Helen, and too insignificant to be taken into the account.

‘But I noticed that while Banwell was trying, with a gay and careless affectation of simplicity, to become the life and soul of the establishment, Mr. Kerford was watching him with the attention of a professed detective. As for me, I heartily disliked such keen-eyed scrutiny. It was not long before he admitted me into the inmost recesses of his most secret thoughts. He commenced by asking me if I loved my father. I was inclined to be angry, although I had great respect for the honest old man, and demanded if he doubted it, and why he asked the question. He replied that he did not mean to offend me; he had a good reason for asking.

“If you love your father,” said he, “you’ll kick that artful hypocrite Banwell out of doors; he is robbing your father, and if you intend to marry that girl Helen, he’ll rob you!”

‘I inquired, with surprise, how he came to know this, and who informed him that I intended to marry Helen.

“Oh,” he replied, “I’m an old fox, and when there’s a wolf in the kennel the fox begins to open his eyes! I have only this proof as yet: I went on a voyage of discovery yesterday—it was Sunday, as you know, and your father and I only were at home—into Banwell’s room, and found this between the leaves of a book concealed under his pillow.”

‘He handed me a folded paper. I knew that Banwell was an excellent penman, and could write almost anything he liked, and in any way he liked, but I was not prepared for the curious evidence which it afforded me of one—and apparently no trifling one—of his means of private amusement. It was a paper of signatures—my father’s, mine, my mother’s, my sister’s, and Helen’s—exact imitations, repeated over and over again. I was utterly confounded. I had believed Banwell to be perfectly honest and true; but this paper opened up a terrible vista of doubts and complications, and perhaps ruin in the near future. If he was artful and unprincipled, everything in the house was in his power. Mr. Kerford called to my remembrance the fact of some suspicious-looking characters sauntering into the shop, sometimes making purchases, and often only inquiries, holding private conversations with him. When he saw they were observed he betrayed impatience, and spoke as if angry with them for their idleness and impertinence.

“There is something brewing,” said Kerford, putting back the paper into his pocket, “and we must try and find it out; but as yet let him see no change in you, and not a

word to your father, or mother, or anyone else. Ascertain the balance at Soames's, and let me know."

'My father had fallen into ill-health of late years. The barbarous execution of the King had been a heavy blow to him, and he almost accused himself of having been one of his murderers. He certainly would not admit that Charles was fit to reign over a free and enlightened nation like the English. A King of England, he was in the habit of saying, should be like Cæsar's wife, and as she should not be even suspected of unchastity, so he should be above the suspicion of unfaithfulness to his people. The days of the false King John, and the bloodthirsty Henry the Eighth, were gone by for ever. The nation was not to be suffered to fall back into the barbarism of Richard the Third, or the religious tyranny of Queen Mary. England was not to be insulted with impunity by any other Power before a scornful world. Cromwell was a favourite with my father, but he did not approve of making him King. He had read enough of history to know that men who were taken from amongst the people and made kings were frequently changed for the worse in the transformation. Under him as Protector, and through the genius and bravery of Robert Blake and his gallant men, England resumed her proper place in the world. The insolence of Holland, France, Spain, and Portugal was deservedly punished, and changed into respect, if not admiration. And as time rolled on, and comparative tranquillity began to be restored to the hitherto distracted kingdom, right-thinking men confessed that it was much better, in times of popular ebullition, to be ruled by a strong and vigorous, if severe, hand, than by one weak, as it were, as water, who would allow every puffed-up agitator and brewer of sedition to become a dictator.

'In painfully watching the progress of events, and in dread uncertainty as to what might happen next, the time

passed by, and we existed from hand to mouth as well as we could. The air was as full of strange and alarming rumours as the streets were of outrages and brutalities. Anything like order was with difficulty kept by Cromwell's soldiers; and he himself found it necessary to send the once all-powerful Parliament about its business. Peace had been summarily restored in Ireland and Scotland. The Battle of Worcester was followed by a few years of confidence and security. Cromwell was not the man to be guilty of any melting softness in grappling with a great and growing evil; but things were not to be allowed to go on in this way for ever; a great and overwhelming change was about to take place.

'Kerford and I continued to keep our eyes on Banwell Reginald; but that gay young gentleman was too vigilant and clever to allow himself to be easily caught. If he was in the habit of robbing us, as our old manager suspected, it was only by little and little; nothing was seriously missed, and there was no perceptible falling off in business. My father and old Mr. Reginald were on excellent terms with each other. Indeed, it was true that the former was indebted to the latter in a considerable amount. Under these circumstances, and also in consequence of my father's infirm state of health, we dared not turn Banwell out of doors, as Kerford had advised. And there was one hideous thought constantly obtruding itself upon me, go where I would or do whatever was in my power to do to overcome it or banish it from my mind. Reginald—so I shall call him in future, as I detest the name of Banwell—was in love with Helen! And as a consequence of this the suspicion arose, and would not be put down, that Helen was in love with him!

'We had lived in the same house together now for some years as brothers and sisters, amusing ourselves and each

other as well as we could, and I am pretty sure in innocence of heart: for I had no proof as yet that Reginald was a villain. I still prosecuted my medical studies vigorously, walked the hospitals, and saw dreadful operations performed. Reginald excelled in chemistry, I in surgery. Together as partners, and with full mutual confidence, we could have conquered the world. But now our confidence was gone, our mutual respect was at an end. A demon, the demon of jealousy and mistrust, had come between us. Still we maintained an outward semblance of friendship, but it was daily becoming more hollow and strained. I was inclined to be rather reckless and extravagant; I had a certain set of companions with whom I caroused at favourable times, and to whom I was known as the "Jolly Chirurgeon." This displeased my father, and I was often reprovèd gently by my mother, who regarded with positive terror the possibility of my being ruined by a short and rapid course of dissipation, as she knew many other young men had been. My sister loved me, but seemed to pity me. My own conscience stung me severely, and I constantly vowed change and reform; but who is to answer for our human weakness?

'My dear mother had frequently urged me to come to a decided understanding with Helen. She longed ardently, she said, to see us united before she died. Helen was not only a beautiful girl, she was also prudent and heroic. She had nursed both my parents through severe illnesses, and had once unmistakably saved my sister's life, and the house—perhaps the whole street and city—from being burnt down. My sister's garments had caught fire—a commonplace incident—and Helen, instead of screaming and helplessly wringing her hands, had instantly wrapped her in blankets, and emptied every vessel she could find with anything in it over her. She was, in a word, the idol of the house. I had not yet spoken to her of love, or told her

how much in my secret heart I worshipped and adored her, for the simple reason that I did not think myself worthy of her. And all the while I accused myself of being a fool, for my sense told me that if I held back, some more fortunate man—Reginald himself, perhaps—would step in and carry off the incomparable gem. I had often essayed to speak to her, but could not find words.

'My mother urged me on with renewed energy: she told me she did not think that Helen loved Reginald. She was almost sure that, notwithstanding the inferiority of my "personal attractions," I was the elected of Helen's heart. The words nearly sent me off my head with delight, and I made up my mind to speak to her without delay. My maternal adviser told me to be courageous, and not be too ready to take no for an answer.

'I found Helen in the drawing-room with Agnes; the latter was at needlework, the former had been reading aloud.

"A love story, of course?" I queried, affecting quiet indifference.

"No, Julius," said Agnes, "do you think that young ladies never read about anything but love? We were very far from it, and from London, too, I can assure you, enjoying ourselves on a certain desert island with a sea-faring gentleman whose name has not been yet given to the world. The book has only just been published, and who do you think has brought us back to this stupid old city again? why, Julius Winbourne, of course."

"That will never be a favourite book with ladies," I replied, "if there is no love in it; and I cannot see how that can exist on a desert island; but it might be self-love, or love of the table, if there are plenty of oysters there."

"You are very—well—ill-conditioned, I must say, Julius," said my sister, "to disturb our dream of future bliss on a desert island with your self-love, and your table, and oysters.

Helen and I intend to be true poetesses, and admit no thoughts of tables or oysters, unless they be the mothers-of-pearls: and we will not permit the intrusion of gentlemen, especially of those who are called 'Jolly Chirurgeons,' who profess to be independent of the female sex. Yes, mother, I am coming."

"She ran out of the room. Whether our mother called or not I do not know. Helen had smiled archly while Agnes was speaking, but now, finding herself alone, a burning blush suffused her face and neck, and I never saw her looking more lovely. For a short space I stood in awed silence, as in the presence of a superior being; I felt miserably little, and utterly unworthy of her.

"Helen," I said at last, "I came to speak to you about——"

"About what, Julius?" she said, with an alarmed air. "Has anything gone wrong? What is the matter?"

"About my unhappiness, Helen; I am very miserable."

"You miserable, Julius! one of the gayest of the gay, overflowing with high spirits and wit—it cannot be; and, if it is so, why tell me of your unhappiness? you have a father and mother—go to them."

"Helen, you are clever, you can do many things, can you not minister to a mind diseased? If I am the gayest of the gay, you are, you are—pardon me—the fairest of the fair! Helen, I love you, I worship you!"

"She rose quickly from her chair, and appeared as if about to fly from the room, and replied hurriedly:

"You are ill, Julius, you are talking nonsense; do not speak to me now, I cannot bear it—love me! a poor dependent girl, it cannot be!"

"We do not all require our wives to be independent women," I answered, as I took her hand; "be my wife, Helen, my own darling, adored, happy wife! We all love

you; you are the angel of our house. You are with us now, and you shall never leave us—unless you love another, and if so, you are free. Helen, tell me truly, by the light of Heaven, and in the honour of your heart, do you love Reginald?"

"The colour suddenly left her cheeks, and she became rigid as marble. Though by nature sweet and gentle, she seemed now to be totally changed, and she spoke slowly and decisively. Her words were:

"Ask me if I love—a serpent!"

"Good God!" I exclaimed, "and is it so? Why do we suffer him in the house?"

"Oh, Julius!" said the noble creature, "we are living in evil times, and you—yes, you—with your brilliant talents and splendid opportunities—I cannot help speaking thus—you are breaking your mother's heart. You are drifting day by day into hopeless ruin. Think not of marriage; I do not, and I will not think of it."

"Marriage! marriage with you, Helen," I cried passionately, "will save me! nothing else will save me! I feel it, I know it. Alas! I am as weak as water; you, as my darling wife, will give me strength."

"No," she answered; "I can never give you strength. Ask it of a higher Power. You speak only from charity or compassion, and while I thank you with all my heart, I will answer with an iron sense and determination of duty. I banish love, and fly from all sentimental, and even grateful, thoughts, and I tell you, Julius, firmly and finally, although my telling you may break my heart, I will never be your wife; I will never be the wife knowingly of a careless, pleasure-seeking, dissipated man."

"For the love of God, Helen," I said, falling on my knees before her, and bathing her hand with my tears, "have mercy on me! I shall be a changed man. Say

that you love me, and I will cast everything which offends you away for ever. Oh, Helen, would you cruelly destroy me? Darling, darling, save me from destruction!"

"Be sensible, be true, be a brave man; arise from your knees," she replied calmly; "be wise, and forsake the meanness of worldly idolatry in every shape. The happiness of a lifetime should not be bartered for the pleasures of an hour, or the lightness of a fugitive passion. Prove to me in a year from this time that you are capable of being changed, and I will then say, 'Julius, I love you, and will be your wife.'"

'I rose to fold her to my breast, but she fled from the room. At the door she encountered Reginald, who was gliding in in his usual cat-like style. I marked both of them. She was blushing like a rose; he assumed the appearance of a dead man just risen from the grave. The demon of jealousy entered into my soul.

"Julius," he said, speaking as if something was choking him, "a gentleman is in the office waiting to speak with you, and there is a guard of soldiers in the street."

'In the office, seated in my father's chair, I found a noble-looking gentleman of middle age. He appeared to be suffering from partial, if not total, blindness, and he shaded his eyes from the light. He did not move or speak when I entered, but seemed to be lost in some splendid day-dream, for a seraphic smile was playing around his lips, and I thought it necessary to announce my presence by saying: "You wish to see me, sir?"

"Yes," he replied with dignity, "I wish to see Mr. Winbourne, the head of this house. I am informed that he is ill."

"My father, sir, has been confined to his room for several weeks. I represent him in this business."

"Are you his only son?"

"I am his only son."

"Ah! has he not another representative, a nephew, or young cousin?"

"No, sir; the son of an old friend resides with him, and transacts business for him, but he is no relation."

"What is his name?"

"Banwell Reginald."

"And what is your name?"

"Julius Winbourne."

"I knew your father, young man, years ago, before he went to live in Devonshire, and I respected him. He was a good Latin scholar; but I dare say he has forgotten me. I came to speak with him, but it is better perhaps that I should not see him; I will speak to you. My business is of great importance. Are we alone?"

'I went to the door, and opened it hastily, and, to my astonishment, there stood Reginald.

"Kerford told me to give you this letter instantly," said he; and he turned and walked away quickly.

"So," said I to myself, "a serpent; Helen is right."

'I now took proper precautions against being overheard, and returned to the visitor in the office.

"I am sorry, sir," he began, "to be the vehicle of an unpleasant communication. I am only so by my own choice, on account of the respect which I always had for your father and his house; but perhaps what I have heard is false, and as Cicero says, 'Nihil est tam volucre quam maledictum; nihil facilius emittitur, nihil citius encipitur, nihil latius dissipatur.'" (I shall give you English for this, Ubertus, as you might not remember it: "Nothing is so swift in its progress as calumny; nothing is more readily received, and nothing can be more widely spread abroad.")

"May I have the pleasure of knowing, sir, to whom I have the honour of speaking?" I inquired, with something like awe.

“Yes, sir, I will tell you; my name is John Milton. I am the Latin Secretary to the Lord Protector’s Council of State. I came here to speak a single word, if, possibly, it may be in time, and not to bewilder you with a language that is dead, and that word is ‘*Beware!*’”

“Sir, you astonish me; we are loyal and peaceable people.”

“Who is the president of the Underground Spitfire Club, sir? Answer me that.”

“I was utterly confounded, being myself that president. A dozen or so frolicsome young gentlemen had called themselves by that name, and established a club. They had foolishly bound themselves to secrecy, but their meetings were of a convivial and literary, and not of a treasonable, nature. This I explained to my questioner.

“And who is your secretary?” asked Mr. Milton.

“Banwell Reginald, sir.”

“Do you know,” said he, lowering his voice, “what kind of man the Lord Protector is, and how he has but one remedy for those who hatch treason, and for those who are only suspected of it? Stay in your house! What your secretary would not make you acquainted with I acquaint you with. Stay in your house. I have fulfilled my mission. Show me to the door.”

“Sir,” I said, “I am deeply grateful.” But he quickly interrupted me.

“Say no more. Do you use words to conceal or belie your thoughts? Are you one of a nest of traitors, agitators, and disturbers of the public peace, or are you not? You need not answer me. If you are conscious of being honest, and as loyal to English freedom as your father was, give me your hand; if you know yourself to be otherwise, do not give it. For his sake I will take the risk, but stay in your house.”

“In the name of God, sir,” I replied fervently, “here is my hand!”

“It is well,” he replied, pressing it gently. “Now give me your arm to the door.”

When we were out in the street, where Mr. Milton’s chair was waiting, a military officer approached, and asked me if my name was Julius Winbourne; and when I had replied, said: “Then, Julius Winbourne, I arrest you on the Lord Protector’s warrant of high treason.”

“Stay, sir,” said Mr. Milton; “do not touch this gentleman. I am John Milton, Latin secretary to the Council of State. I will satisfy the Lord Protector.”

The officer bowed, and retired with his guard, and I saw my preserver safely deposited in his chair with a respect and reverence which I cannot describe, and for which I could hardly account. And—will you believe it, Ubertus?—that very night the members of the Underground Spitfire Club were arrested by a guard of soldiers (the President’s and Secretary’s chairs being vacant), charged with harbouring treasonable designs against the Lord Protector’s person and government; tried by court-martial on the following day, found guilty on the evidence of one of their number, and hanged that same evening!

‘Gracious Heaven!’ said I, ‘you had a most wonderful escape, Doctor; and saved, too, by no other than John Milton, the famous author of “Paradise Lost”!’

‘I know nothing,’ continued Julius, ‘about “Paradise Lost,” but I know I was saved by John Milton—God bless him! Almost every member of our club was in favour of the Commonwealth, but advantage was taken of the jealousies and turbulence of the times by some designing villain to excite against us the suspicious wrath of the ruling powers. Cromwell, though a man of great mental strength and violent passions, had the heart of a coward. The

conspiracy of the millenarians in the army struck him with the greatest apprehension, and he lived in the continual dread of assassination. The historians said that the death of his favourite daughter, Mrs. Claypole, a lady endued with many humane virtues and amiable accomplishments, depressed his anxious mind. He never moved a step without strong guards attending him; he wore armour under his clothes, and further secured himself by offensive weapons—a sword, falchion, and pistols—which he carried wherever he went. He returned from no place by the direct road, or by the way he went. Every journey he performed with precipitation. Seldom did he sleep more than three nights together in the same chamber, and he never let it be known beforehand what chamber he intended to occupy.

‘The name of the designing villain who assumed the odious functions of informer and perjurer was not allowed to transpire, but I believed in my heart that Reginald was that man. I could not prove it, however; and this event, sad and solemn as it was, was soon superseded by others of greater domestic importance. My father still lived, but he was a helpless invalid. Helen and Agnes nursed him tenderly. My mother’s health was also in a very precarious state. For both their sakes I dared not provoke an open quarrel with Reginald; and he never seemed to dream of going away and leaving me master of the situation, which he might have done to his much greater pecuniary advantage. Helen and I, although we appeared to be full of confidence in each other, were, I grieve to say, mutual objects of frequent, though distant, doubts and suspicions. If she suspected the sincerity of my reformation, I was wicked enough to, on more than one occasion, admit doubts of her fidelity. She was so very beautiful; and beautiful women, I reflected, had often inconstant hearts,

like the lovely Helens and Cressidas of antiquity. Agnes was devoted to my cause, and always reassured me respecting my Helen’s honour and truthfulness. I often found her in tears; she saw that I was frequently visited by a cold, silent humour; and as the first spark of a destroying fire only waits to be blown into a flame by malignant breezes coming from without, so our social peace was driven to the verge of destruction by two anonymous letters.

‘The letter which Mr. Kerford had sent to me by Reginald contained these words: “Have inquired about club; it is all right; you need not fear. Under seal of secrecy, important business to-night. Found the enclosed in a certain apartment; be cool and cautious; apple not ripe.—C. K.” The enclosure struck me like a thunderbolt. It was, or seemed to be, in my darling Helen’s handwriting, and ran thus:

“MY DEAREST,

“I am nearly ready now; the happy time is coming. Oh, how tired I am of this wretched state, and how I long for the sweet, quiet country with you, darling! The J. C. is watching closely, but we shall elude his vigilance. Do not forget the twelve hours’ notice. Destroy this instantly.”

‘To this astounding paper there was neither date nor signature. Could Helen be guilty of falsehood and treachery like this? I would not believe it. I showed the note to Agnes, and she undertook to sound Helen quietly. I was, of course, the J. C.—the Jolly Chirurgeon.

‘The other anonymous letter was addressed to Helen herself. It was left in the shop for her by a stranger, and was put into my hands by my sister, who cautioned me against any dangerous excess of passion, adding also that the note supposed to have been written by Helen was an

infamous forgery, the nefarious work of some miscreant who was plotting to ruin us all. The last letter was as follows :

“ ‘ London, June 26th.

“ MISS ST. CLAIR,

“ ‘ I knew you when you lived in Devonshire. I am an old friend of your father’s. I struck a blow for him when he died, and killed the man who killed him. This is Gospel fact. I live now in London—rather too far from you to do you the service I would wish, but I have seen you several times. The days are evil. I am a God-fearing man. You are in great danger in this London. You must fly from the place. If you do not, you will fall into a pit from which even death itself cannot afford you the means of escape—at least, for your memory and immortal reputation. Do not marry J. W. ; he is a son of Belial and perdition. Say you will fly, and I will honourably help you. An old woman will call at W.’s shop-door on Saturday, at nine p.m. Ask her from whom she comes, and she will say from D. Address your reply to D., and sign it C. Destroy this at once.”

‘ In an alarmed consultation with Helen and Agnes, we decided to take no notice whatever of these letters ; but my beloved bride-elect insisted on a further postponement of our marriage. In vain I urged her to comply, and let it take place at once, privately if she wished it, but she replied that, although her heart was mine, yet she believed that our earthly marriage was not ordained in Heaven.

‘ The letter purporting to be from Mr. Kerford was also I believed, a forgery. It was evidently designed to decoy me to the Club on the very night when the members were arrested. If found upon me after my arrest it would have been sufficient to seal my doom. Here there was cold-blooded diabolical wickedness ; but, as it said, the apple

was not yet ripe. I determined to have an immediate explanation from Kerford, as I could not understand why he had sent it by Reginald ; but the poor old man was taken suddenly ill, and after about seven hours’ intense suffering, died, deeply regretted by the family, who were his only friends.

‘ The dismal time rolled on. The fearful distractions of London increased rather than diminished day by day. Men were afraid to speak to each other, or breathe above a whisper. A terrible rumour was spread one day over the doomed city, which proved to be true—the Lord Protector was dead ! Rapidly now, like meteors in the sky, flashes of conflicting and alarming intelligence flew from mouth to mouth. There was no order or Government. Henry Cromwell, it was said, had been assassinated in Dublin ! Richard had absconded in a ship, carrying away the Great Seal, the mace, the crown jewels, and all the money in the Treasury ! Fleetwood had hanged himself ! Lambert and Monk had met each other in the north with large armies : a tremendous battle had been fought, and both Generals and thirty thousand men had been killed ! In the midst of all this confusion and false news, Monk quietly marched his army into London, and took peaceable possession ; and shortly after that event King Charles the Second ascended the throne of his unfortunate father.

‘ The real events which nearly broke the heart of England, and followed each other in rapid succession, wore the same extravagance as those which were proved to be fictitious. Englishmen could scarcely believe that our enemies without, over whom they had been so often victorious, France, Holland and Denmark, still battered us incessantly with their hatred and their cannon. The Dutch fleets sailed up the Thames, and Sheerness was taken. English ships were burned by them at Chatham. Our enemy within, the

King, in the midst of his profligate court, cared nothing about this disgrace: he had allowed the navy to become almost powerless, and spent his time and money in frivolous and wanton pleasures. I trembled for my idolized Helen, for I had heard sinister rumours of diabolical proceedings with respect to beautiful young girls. To add to the horrors and miseries of the wretched metropolis, the Plague broke out, and raged with fearful virulence, and the fear of even a more fearful visitant, famine, began to descend upon the citizens. At the commencement of these visitations my poor father died. The death of Kerford had added greatly to his fears and anxieties. The latter had died under most suspicious circumstances. He had constituted himself a spy upon Reginald, and made some damaging discoveries, and I could only imagine the cause of the fatal result. Why did I not take the wolf by the throat, and hurl him out into the street? The answer is—the Plague paralyzed everything.

‘To bring my long story to a conclusion. One day I returned home from some business elsewhere a full hour sooner than anyone expected. The young men were busy, but Reginald was not with them. I went upstairs, and suddenly entered the apartment where Helen usually sat at her work. She was there, sitting with her back to the door, and she could not see who had entered. *He* was there also—bending over her, and leaning on the back of her chair. I paused at the door, scarcely breathing, the fiend of jealousy rankling in my heart, and whispering thoughts of desperation and murder. I heard him say: “Helen, dearest, the time is come; let us fly from this dreadful city. All is ready. I have money and trusty friends; Julius will not care: he loves others.” And I heard her answer: “Dare you speak to me thus?—leave the room, wicked creature, or I will call Agnes, and alarm the house!” Then

I sprang forward, and said, while my whole frame shook with suppressed fury: “Reginald, you are a villain; it is time your artful plots came to an end—begone from the room, and from the house!” He looked at me with his black, staring eyes, and his corpse-like aspect, as if he could have annihilated me on the spot, and slowly turned, and walked out without saying a word. My poor Helen burst into an agony of weeping, and she permitted me to kiss her tears away.

‘And while I pressed her to my heart, the often-renewed thought of a spiritual purity burned within me. We had lived together in the same house for years, and still stood, as it were, in the relationship of brother and sister; inexpressibly dear to each other, yet far apart, separated by mutual respect, and obedience to the laws of God. And while on that occasion I pressed her to my heart of hearts, I regarded her as a noble and a sacred being upon whom I could not for my very life inflict injury or insult.

‘Feeling the determination working within me mightily to put away Reginald’s hypocrisy from our house for ever, I followed him up to his room. He was already engaged in packing a trunk. He looked at me as I entered, and I saw that my fierceness frightened him.

“Are you going?” I said, with my teeth set, and my hands clenched, ready to spring upon him. I was the stronger of the two, and he knew it.

“What a fuss,” he said with a sneer, “you are making about nothing! Yes, I’m going. I would not stay another hour in your cursed house if you offered me its weight in gold; I have taken a lodging opposite, and I’ll watch how you’ll all get on without me, with not a man in it able to make up a prescription for a dog. A very fine thing! a man cannot speak to a girl, when he gets encouragement, without bringing down upon himself the wrath of Prince

Raw-head-and-bloody-bones; but you'll be sorry for it some day. But—but, merciful God, Julius, the plague—you have got the plague! it is true—I can see it in your eyes! Here is the medicine I discovered. I have cured fifty people with it—drink it; it's your only chance!"

'The sudden change in his manner, his earnestness, and the mention of the fearful scourge, of which no less than ten thousand people had died in the previous week, deprived me of my senses, and entirely threw me off my guard. Mechanically I swallowed the contents of the phial which he put into my hand. As I said before, the plague paralyzed everything, and I was myself now paralyzed. I felt myself reeling, falling, and then became totally insensible.

'When I came to myself it was with a feeling of intense coldness, and I had most painful sensations all over my body, particularly in my shoulders and down my back. With a great effort I raised myself in bed, and looked towards the window. To my intense astonishment, Helen was standing beside it, contemplating the silent street below. She turned and looked at me, her eyes fearfully gazing, and without uttering a word fell down on the floor in a deep swoon. I sprang up to fly to her assistance; my bed fell on the floor with a loud crash; I looked back at it, and saw that I had been *lying in a coffin!*

'I left Helen as she fell, and rushed into Reginald's room. He was there, compounding some more of his infernal medicines. I cried aloud: "What—assassin!—not gone yet!" He started up with an air of wildness, kicked his table down, shouted "Liar—villain—dog—crocodile!" then made a furious blow at my face, which I was fortunately able to elude, and finally flung himself down the stairs and out into the street—an unhappy being deprived of his senses.

'Agnes flew up to the scene of distraction. She was

calm and self-possessed, although she felt, while bounding up the stairs, as she told us afterwards, her blood turning into ice. When she saw me she threw her arms around me, and said, sobbing, "My dearest brother, I would not believe you were dead." I threw on some clothes hastily, and we carried the insensible Helen down to her room. Then, having sent for a doctor, Agnes prepared my mother for the reappearance of her living son; and while she embraced me, she inquired for Helen, and on being told, she said, "Lay me by her side; we will die together."

Her wish was complied with. The physician for whom we had sent gave but little hope of Helen's recovery. She had sustained a very severe shock. The action of her heart was as faint and weak as it could be. It was just possible, and that was all, that she might live for a few years. The dreaded plague had not entered our house.

'Slowly and sadly the hours, the days—one, two, three—passed by. Slowly and sadly, and miserably for Agnes and me. Our house was shut up: Reginald had robbed us by repeated forgeries, and we were poor. On the evening of the third day we sat together beside our darling ones as they lay calm and still, in resigned and holy confidence. Helen had again declared her love. And we—Agnes and I—watched them as we sat, and our hands met and pressed each other, for we knew then that the darkest shadow of our hapless world had fallen upon blighted hearts and a ruined house—our mother and Helen were dead!

CHAPTER XIX.

I LOSE THE GOOD DOCTOR.

WHEN Julius Winbourne finished his remarkable story we were still advancing slowly along the eastern shore of the lake, directing our course southward. The waters lay in calm repose, and the rays of the declining sun fell upon them with a heavenly but transient glow. I now regarded that lovely, half green, half gray crystal mirror with a more concentrated interest than ever.

We pursued our way for some time in silence: he, perhaps, thinking deep thoughts upon which I might not intrude, and I of the strange occurrences that may happen to any one of us when we least expect them. We had turned away from the lake at a place called Boggy Marsh, and now walked more briskly up a rugged path which would lead us, I knew, to the hut where, in all likelihood, I, if not both of us, should remain for the night. We had passed a deserted cottage with an iron roof, and reached a spot where stood the ruins of a large chimney that had been built for some shepherd's residence in the days when civilized Tasmania was younger than she is now. Here Julius proposed that we should sit down awhile and rest, previous to ascending a wooded hill in front of us, and we did so after taking precautions against cold stones and damp grass.

'I do not know why it is,' he said; 'there is a feeling

of strange and majestic solemnity coming over me. I am sure an awful event is about to happen to one of us, if not to the other also. This place is either holy or cursed. Did anything remarkable ever happen here, Ubertus?'

'Nothing here that I know of, Julius,' I answered; 'but near the southern end of the lake, on the other side, there is a hill called Murderer's Hill. It is covered with dead ghastly trees, and is said to have been the scene of a lamentable tragedy many years ago. It was a case of long cherished revenge. An overseer at Macquarie Harbour, an establishment for prisoners, gave evidence against a man, who, whether justly or unjustly, was sentenced to receive a severe flogging, as the custom was in those unhappy days. The former came, in after years, to live near that hill; the latter followed, and accomplished his fell purpose.'

'We are like travellers,' said Julius, 'in those flying carriages you have described, or in a fine ship bounding over the ocean. We dance, and laugh, and sing, and enjoy ourselves to the uttermost, not knowing, and evidently not caring, how soon we may, with a mighty crash, be hurled to destruction. I have died once, and I believe, Ubertus, I am about to die again; but a death of a different kind. Start not, my dear friend: tremble not! Your time is not come yet, but mine is very near. And I am glad of it. Oh, what agonies I have suffered! What depths of miseries I have endured! How my undying spirit within me groaned and shrieked with anguish, when it found itself cut off from that Eternal and Divine Essence from whom it derived its existence, and all that it ever knew of sweetness and pleasure. When will the foolish, proud, vain world learn wisdom and humility? When will the thoughtless and ignorant acquire knowledge? When will the wicked cease from their wickedness? But I have given you enough of my moral philosophy, and if you write a successful book,

how much better will the world ever be for it? Did you not tell me that you had once written a short poem about a shipwreck?’

‘Yes, on the loss of the ship *Dunbar*. She sailed from London, and traversed the ocean in safety; but her captain, in attempting to enter Sydney Harbour one night in August, 1857, made a fatal mistake. The ship was dashed to pieces on the South Head, and all on board, with only one exception, perished.’

We proceeded up the hill, and through the wood beyond it, I taking the lead, as the path was familiar to me. A light wind had arisen, and a number of small white clouds chased each other up the hills from the surface of the Great Lake, which we had left behind us. On reaching an elevated open space, we stood still, and looked back to survey the beautiful scene. I am compelled to pause, as I find it difficult to describe what then occurred. It took place in a moment, like a sudden flash of thought through a poet’s brain. A luminous cloud descended towards us as we turned; Julius convulsively seized my arm, his eyes nearly starting out of his head.

‘Who is this?’ he cried, ‘who is this? Is it a dream? Is it true? It is Helen! It is Helen herself, as I live. Yes, Helen—my heroine, my darling! I am ready; wait for me; I am coming! Farewell, Ubertus! I shall be with you in your hour of need.’

And while he spoke he changed. What appeared to be a thick veil of blue gauze fell between him and me. His form assumed the likeness of a luminous cloud, which ascended into the air, and the two clouds mingled together and became one, ascending still higher into the air, and disappearing gradually from my sight.

EPILOGUE.

Now that the book is completed, a brief analysis of it may be given, with a few hints concerning the author’s leading purpose. It was in a time of tedious recovery from serious illness, and while I lay in a perfectly helpless state, that the principal details of this work passed through my mind. When I found myself restored to health I made a prolonged stay at the scene of the strange opening, and stranger close, of the story. The exuberance of imagination which some may find in my work is at least excused by illustrious examples such as have been set by Virgil, Dante, Milton, or as may be found in the ‘Pilgrim’s Progress,’ ‘Vathek,’ ‘King Solomon’s Mines,’ and works of a similar class.

The Demon of the under-world has often been personified, and his appearance has been graphically described. In the Book of Job he is presented to us as a being capable of going to and fro on the earth, and walking up and down in it; and the experience of poor Job testifies that he did not exercise himself in that way—which to us appears harmless and even commendable—for nothing. It is dreadful to reflect that, but for a merciful restraining influence, we are all at the mercy of this being. The great author of ‘The Talisman’ addresses some such potent individual, and asks:

‘Say, hast thou feeling, sense, and form,
Thunder thy voice, thy garments storm,
As eastern magi say;
With sentient soul of hate and wrath,
And wings to sweep thy deadly path,
And fangs to tear thy prey?’

I have not given wings to my Demon, but presented him with a handsome balloon, worked by powerful machinery, and guided by a clever and obedient driver. I have not, it

is to be hoped, blackened the character of the master in describing the characteristics of the servant; if so, the former will be more indebted to a great many whiter and fairer followers than they seem to be at all aware of; and I am not without some anxiety lest I should have dealt with him too severely, for we read that the archangel Michael, when contending with him for the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, 'The Lord rebuke thee.' The question therefore arises, Was it my duty, or my mission, to paint him as I have done, even supposing him to be the sole author of all the evil that is in the world? Many will say that, as I have thrown so much ridicule upon him, I cannot myself believe in his existence. In his existence as a spiritual power I certainly do believe; but I believe that every human being, however weak and humble he may be, can successfully resist him; for there is another, and an infinitely superior, Power always ready to help those who can firmly resolve to try that resistance.

The description of Hades on which I have ventured is not half so shocking as I might have made it, if I had been guided by precedents of a very eminent kind. It has been, and is, known on paper, and by oral tradition, under such names as the 'Infernal Regions,' the 'Pit of Acheron,' the 'Shades of Tartarus,' the 'Valley of the Shadow of Death,' and 'Hell.' Dante has painted it in extraordinary and almost unimaginable colours, with vivid and revolting horrors, which one would think no human being could have possibly conceived. Milton has peopled it with billions of fallen angels, who are condemned to live amongst rocks of ice and lakes of fire, with fearful monsters and leviathans to bear them company. It is a pity that Shakespeare has not given us an extended view, according to his ideas, of the gloomy world. I forget what Homer says on the prolific subject, but remember Ford's particular vision :

' There is a place in a black and hollow vault,
Where day is never seen; there shines no sun,
But flaming horror of consuming fires;
A lightless sulphur, choked with smoky fogs
Of an infected darkness; in this place
Dwell many thousand thousand sundry sorts
Of never-dying deaths; there damned souls
Roar without pity; there are gluttons fed
On toads and adders; there is burning oil
Poured down the drunkard's throat; the usurer
Is forced to sup whole draughts of molten gold;
There is the murderer for ever stabbed,
Yet can he never die; there lies the wanton
On racks of burning steel, while in his soul
He feels the torment of his raging lust;
There stand those wretched things
Who have dreamed out whole years in lawless sheets
And secret incests, cursing one another.'

The extremity of vindictiveness defeats itself: excessive tyranny begets the spirit of revolt. Surely a God of infinite mercy would not suffer such horrors to continue for ever; and hence men, because they are told that they do continue for ever, become deists and atheists, and will not believe in the existence of things which are altogether beyond their comprehension.

If the introduction of a character like Bellagrande into my otherwise unsullied romance requires any apology, I am quite willing to make it. She, like a great many more of a similar stamp, has found her way into multitudes of stories and histories; and I do not see why she should be rigidly excluded from mine. We can hardly take up a newspaper without finding, either in the Divorce Court or out of it, something about her and her wayward and wanton proceedings. I have taken care, however, not to exhibit her in an offensive or revolting manner, as was often done shamelessly by authors of the old school, when Fielding and Smollet favoured the world with their choice productions. She is, perhaps, as a personification of a very large class—her homicidal and other outrageous tendencies of course always excepted—the most powerful and irresistible instrument of

temptation at the command of her powerful parent, the King of Demons. I shall not insult her sex by throwing upon her side the whole of the blame. God knows, and we all know, what heavy burdens of guilt the majority of men have to bear. If Potiphar's wives are not scarce, Josephs are very few and far between.

The readers of history, particularly of Josephus, Froissart, and Gibbon, will fully appreciate my attempted description of the grand review and bloody battle. I have seen many fascinating and imposing reviews, but an actual battle only with a historical glance. In our riper years these oft-repeated pictures of our darkest world become burdens on the brain; and it is hard to say what kind of creatures we should be now if there had never been any war to disturb the even tenor of our lives.

I now take leave of my book, and, after the fashion of the illustrious 'Childe Harold,' bid my readers 'Farewell.' Every reader must make his own applications. I may be accused of taking upon myself to deal severely with some of the follies and vices of mankind: but I have also dealt with their better and nobler qualities, by presenting Julius Winborne's constancy and hatred of wickedness, and Helen St. Clair's purity and elevation of soul. I have not in any case descended to the perfidy and meanness of satirizing any living person. The dead are happily free from all shafts of enmity or sarcasm.

The characters of the kind, liberal, charitable, and sincerely religious people by whom we are surrounded, and to whom many allusions have been made in this work, shine like Stars of Victory in contrast with the meanness, hardness, and sordid selfishness of many of their unblessed fellow-creatures.

THE END.