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The History of certain doings in a Staffordshire Dingle, July, 1825

George Borrow and Thomas Seccombe

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ISOPEL BERNERS

BY

GEORGE BORROW

The History of certain doings in a Staffordshire Dingle, July, 1825: An Episode in the Autobiography of George Borrow.

THE TEXT EDITED WITH
INTRODUCTION & NOTES BY
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INTRODUCTION.

I.

The last century was yet in its infancy when the author of *The Romany Rye* first saw the light in the sleepy little East Anglian township of East Dereham, in the county distinguished by Borrow as the one in which the people eat the best dumplings in the world and speak the purest English. "Pretty quiet D[ereham]" was the retreat in those days of a Lady Bountiful in the person of Dame Eleanor Fenn, relict of the worthy editor of the *Paston Letters*. It is better known in literary history as the last resting-place of a sad and unquiet spirit, escaped from a world in which it had known nought but sorrow, of "England's sweetest and most pious bard," William Cowper. But Destiny was weaving a robuster thread to connect East Dereham with literature, for George Borrow {1} was born there on July 5th, 1803, and, nomad though he was, the place was always dear to his heart as his earliest home.

In 1816, after ramblings far and wide both in Ireland and in Scotland, the Borrows settled in Norwich, where George was schooled under a master whose name at least is still familiar to English youth, Dr. Valpy (brother of Dr. Richard Valpy). Among his schoolfellows at the grammar school were Rajah Brooke and Dr. James Martineau. George Borrow, a hardened truant from his earliest teens, was once horsed, to undergo a flogging, on the back of James Martineau, and he never afterwards took kindly to the philosophy of that remarkable man. We are glad to know that Edward Valpy's ferule was weak, though his scholarship was strong. Stories were current that even in those days George used to haunt the gipsy tents on that Mousehold Heath which lives eternally in the breezy canvases of "Old Crome," and that he went so far as to stain his face with walnut-juice to the right Egyptian hue. "Are you suffering from jaundice, Borrow," asked the Doctor, "or is it merely dirt?" While at Norwich, too, he was greatly influenced in the direction of linguistics by the English "pocket Goethe," William Taylor, the head of a clan known as the Taylors of Norwich, to distinguish them from a race in which the principle of heredity was even more strikingly developed—the

Taylors of Ongar. In February 1824 his father, the gallant Captain Thomas Borrow, died, and his articles in the firm of a Norwich solicitor having determined, George went to London to commence literary man, in the old sense of the servitude, under the well-known bookseller-publisher, Sir Richard Phillipps. In Grub Street he translated and compiled galore, but when the trees began to shoot in 1825 he broke his chain and escaped to the country, to the dingle, and to Isopel Berners.

To dwell upon the bare outlines of Borrow's early career would be a superfluously dull proceeding. We shall only add a few names and dates to the framework, supplied with a fidelity that is rare in much more formal works of autobiography, in the pages of *Lavengro*. From the same pages we may detach just a few of the earlier influences which went to make up the rare and complex individuality of the writer. Borrow's father, a fine old soldier, in revealing his son's youthful idiosyncrasy, projects a clear mental image of his own habit of mind. "The boy had the impertinence to say the classics were much over-valued, and amongst other things that some horrid fellow or other, some Welshman, I think (thank God it was not an Irishman), was a better poet than Ovid. {2} That a boy of his years should entertain an opinion of his own, I mean one which militates against all established authority, is astonishing. As well might a raw recruit pretend to offer an unfavourable opinion on the manual and platoon exercise. The idea is preposterous; the lad is too independent by half."

Borrow's account of his father's death is a highly affecting piece of English. The ironical humour blent with pathos in his picture of this ill-rewarded old disciplinarian (who combined a tenderness of heart with a fondness for military metaphor that frequently reminds one of "My Uncle Toby"), the details of the ailments and the portents that attended his infantile career, and, above all, the glimpses of the wandering military life from barrack to barrack and from garrison to garrison, inevitably remind the reader of the childish reminiscences of Laurence Sterne, a writer to whom it may thus early be said that George Borrow paid no small amount of unconscious homage. A homage of another sort, fully recognised and declared, was that paid to the great work of Defoe, and to the spirit of strange and romantic enterprise which it aroused in its reader.

After *Robinson Crusoe* there played across the disk of his youthful memory a number of weird and hairy figures never to be effaced. A strange old herbalist and snake-killer with a skin cap first whetted his appetite for the captivating confidences of roadside vagrants, and the acquaintanceship serves as an introduction to the scene of the gipsy encampment, where the young Sapengro or

serpent charmer was first claimed as brother by Jasper Petulengro. The picture of the encampment may serve as an example of Borrovian prose, nervous, unembarrassed, and graphic.

> One day it happened, being on my rambles, I entered a green lane which I had never seen before. At first it was rather narrow, but as I advanced it became considerably wider. In the middle was a drift-way with deep ruts, but right and left was a space carpeted with a sward of trefoil and clover. There was no lack of trees, chiefly ancient oaks, which, flinging out their arms from either side, nearly formed a canopy and afforded a pleasing shelter from the rays of the sun, which was burning fiercely above. Suddenly a group of objects attracted my attention. Beneath one of the largest of the trees, upon the grass, was a kind of low tent or booth, from the top of which a thin smoke was curling. Beside it stood a couple of light carts, whilst two or three lean horses or ponies were cropping the herbage which was growing nigh. . . .

As a pendant to the landscape take a Flemish interior. The home of the Borrows had been removed in the meantime, in accordance with the roving traditions of the family, from Norman Cross to Edinburgh and from Edinburgh to Clonmel.

> And to the school I went [at Clonmel], where I read the Latin tongue and the Greek letters with a nice old clergyman who sat behind a black oaken desk with a huge Elzevir Flaccus before him, in a long gloomy kind of hall with a broken stone floor, the roof festooned with cobwebs, the walls considerably dilapidated and covered over with stray figures in hieroglyphics evidently produced by the application of a burnt stick.

In Ireland, too, he made the acquaintance of the gossoon Murtagh, who taught him Irish in return for a pack of cards. In the course of his wanderings with his father's regiment he develops into a well-grown and well-favoured lad, a shrewd walker and a bold rider. "People may talk of first love—it is a very agreeable event, I dare say—but give me the flush, the triumph, and glorious sweat of a first ride." {5}

At Norwich he learns modern languages from an old *emigré*, a true disciple of the *ancien cour*, who sets Boileau high above Dante; and some misty German metaphysics from the Norwich philosopher, who consistently seeks a solace in smoke from the troubles of life. His father had already noted his tendency to fly off at a tangent which was strikingly exhibited in the lawyer's office, where

“within the womb of a lofty deal desk,” when he should have been imbibing Blackstone and transcribing legal documents, he was studying Monsieur Vidocq and translating the Welsh bard Ab Gwilym; he was consigning his legal career to an early grave when he wrote this elegy on the worthy attorney his master.

> He has long since sunk to his place in a respectable vault, in the aisle of a very respectable church, whilst an exceedingly respectable marble slab against the neighbouring wall tells on a Sunday some eye wandering from its prayer-book that his dust lies below. To secure such respectabilities in death he passed a most respectable life, a more respectable-looking individual never was seen.

In the meantime as a sequel to his questionings on the subjects of reality and truth, the Author was asking himself “What is death?” and the query serves as a prelude to the first of the many breezy dialogues with that gipsy cousin-german to Autolycus, Jasper Petulengro.

> “What is your opinion of death, Mr. Petulengro?”
>
> “My opinion of death, brother, is much the same as that in the old song of Pharaoh . . . when a man dies he is cast into the earth and his wife and child sorrow over him. If he has neither wife nor child, then his father and mother, I suppose; and if he is quite alone in the world, why, then he is cast into the earth and there is an end of the matter.”
>
> “And do you think that is the end of man?”
>
> “There’s an end of him, brother, more’s the pity.”
>
> “Why do you say so?”
>
> “Life is sweet, brother.”
>
> “Do you think so?”
>
> “Think so! there’s night and day, brother, both sweet things; sun, moon and stars, brother, all sweet things; there’s likewise a wind on the heath. Life is very sweet, brother: who would wish to die?”
>
> “I would wish to die.”
>
> “You talk like a gorgio—which is the same as talking like a fool; were you

a Romany chal you would talk wiser. Wish to die, indeed! a Romany chal would wish to live for ever."

"In sickness, Jasper?"

"There's the sun and stars, brother."

"In blindness, Jasper?"

"There's the wind on the heath, brother; if I could only feel that I would gladly live for ever. Dæta, we'll now go to the tents and put on the gloves, and I'll try to make you feel what a sweet thing it is to be alive, brother."

Leaving Norwich and his legal trammels, a few weeks after his father's death, in 1824, Lavengro reaches London—the scene of Grub Street struggles not greatly relaxed in severity since the days of Newbery, Gardener and Christopher Smart. As the genius of Hawthorne was cooped up and enslaved for the American "Peter Parley," so that of Borrow was hag-ridden by a bookseller publisher of an even worse type, the radical alderman and philanthropic sweater, Sir Richard Phillipps. For this stony-hearted faddist he covered reams of paper with printers' copy; and we are told that the kind of compilation that he liked (and probably executed) best was that of *Newgate Lives and Trials*. He had well-nigh reached the end of his tether when he had the conversation with Phillipps's head factotum, Taggart, which we cite below and recommend feelingly to the consideration of every literary aspirant. Sordid and commonplace enough are the details; simple and free from every kind of inflation the language in which they are narrated. Yet how picturesque are these vignettes of London life! How vivid and yet how strange are the figures that animate them! The harsh literary impresario with his "drug in the market," who seems to have stalked straight out of Smollett, {8} the gnarled old applewoman, with every wrinkle shown, on her stall upon London Bridge, the grasping Armenian merchant who softened at the sound of his native tongue, the giddy young spendthrift Francis Ardry and the confiding young creature who had permitted him to hire her a very handsome floor in the West End, the gipsies and thimble-riggers in Greenwich Park—what moving and lifelike figures are these, stippled in with a seeming absence of art, yet as strange and as rare as a Night in Bagdad, a chapter of Balzac, or the most fantastic scene in the *New Arabian Nights*.

This brief recapitulation—in which it has been possible but just to touch upon a few of the inner springs of Borrow's life as revealed in the autobiographical *Lavengro*—brings us once again to that spring day in 1825—May 20th—when

the author disposed of an unidentifiable manuscript for the sumptuous equivalent of £20. On May 22nd, after little more than a year's residence in London, he abandons the city. From London he proceeds to Amesbury, in Wiltshire, which he reaches on May 23rd; visits Stonehenge, the Roman Camp of Old Sarum and Salisbury; on May 26th he leaves Salisbury, and (after an encounter with the long-lost son of the old applewoman, returned from Botany Bay), strikes north-west. On the 30th he has been walking four days in a northerly direction, when he arrives at the inn where the maid Jenny refreshes him at the pump, and he meets the author with whom he passes the night. On the 31st he purchases the horse and cart of Jack Slingsby, whom he had previously seen but once, at Tamworth, many years ago when he was little more than a child. On June 1st he makes the first practical experience of a vagrant's life, and passes the night in the open air in a Shropshire dell; on June 5th he is visited by Leonora Herne, the grandchild of the old "brimstone hag" who was jealous of the cordiality with which the young stranger had been received by the Petulengroes and initiated in the secrets of their gipsy tribe. Three days later, betrayed to the old woman by Leonora, he is drabbed (*i.e.* poisoned) with the manricli or doctored cake of Mrs. Herne; his life is in imminent danger, but he is saved by the opportune arrival of Peter Williams. He passes Sunday, June 12th, with the Welsh preacher and his wife Winifred; on the 21st he departs with his itinerant hosts to the Welsh border. Before entering Wales, however, he turns back with Ambrose ("Jasper") Petulengro and settles with his own stock-in-trade as tinker and blacksmith at the foot of the dingle hard by Mumper's Lane, near Willenhall, in Staffordshire; here at the end of June 1825 takes place the classical encounter between the philologer and the flaming tinman—all this, is it not related in *Lavengro*, and substantiated with much hard labour of facts and dates by Dr. W. I. Knapp in his exhaustive biography of George Borrow? The allurement of his genius is such that the etymologist shall leave his roots and the philologer his Maeso-Gothic to take to the highway and dwell in the dingle with "Don Jorge."

Lavengro's triumph over the flaming tinman is the prelude to what Professor Saintsbury justly calls "the miraculous episode of Ysopel Berners," and the narrative of the author's life is thence continued, with many digressions, but with a remarkable fidelity to fact as far as the main issue is concerned, until the narrative, though not the life-story of the author, abruptly terminates at Horncastle, in August 1825. There follows what is spoken of as the veiled period of Borrow's life, from 1826 to 1833.

The years in which we drift are generally veiled from posterity. The system of

psychometry carried to such perfection by Obermann and Amiel could at no time have been exactly congenial to Borrow, who spoke of himself at this period as "digging holes in the sand and filling them up again." Roughly speaking, the years appear to have been spent comparatively uneventfully, for the most part in Norfolk. In December 1832 he walked to London to interview the British and Foreign Bible Society, covering a hundred and twelve miles in twenty-seven hours on less than sixpennyworth of food and drink. He was thirty years old at the time, and the achievement was the pride of his remaining years. Six months later, on the strength of his linguistic attainments, he managed to get on the paid staff of the Society, to the bewilderment of Norwich "friends," who were inclined to be ironical on the subject of the transformation of the chum of hanged Thurtell and the disciple of godless Billy Taylor into a Bible missionary. In July 1833, then, Borrow sets out on his Eastern travels as the accredited agent of the Bible Society, goes to St. Petersburg, "the finest city in the world," and obtains the Russian imprimatur for a Manchu version of that suspicious novelty, the Bible. He carried this scheme into execution to the general satisfaction, and he returns to London in 1837; then to the south of Europe, whence he reappears, larger than life and twice as natural, in his masterly autobiographical romance of *The Bible in Spain*, the work which made his name, which was sold by thousands, which was eagerly acclaimed as an invaluable addition to "Sunday" literature, and pirated in a generous spirit of emulation by American publishers.

We are now come to the circumstance of the composition of *Lavengro*. *The Bible in Spain*, when it appeared in 1843, implied a wonderful background to the Author's experience, a career diversified by all kinds of wild adventures, "sorcery, Jews, Gentiles, rambles," gipsies, prisons,—what you will. {12}

The personal element in the book—so suggestive of mystery and romance—excited the strongest curiosity. Apart from this, however, the reading public of 1843 were not unnaturally startled by a book which seemed to profess to be a good, serious, missionary work, but for which it was manifest that *Gil Blas* and not Bishop Heber had been taken as a model. Not that any single comparison of the kind can convey the least idea of the complex idiosyncrasy of such a work. There is a substratum of *Guide Book* and *Gil Blas*, no doubt, but there are unmistakable streaks of Defoe, of Dumas, and of Dickens, with all his native prejudices and insular predilections strong upon him. A narrative so wide awake amidst a vagrant population of questionable morals and alien race suggests an affinity with *Hajji Baba* (a close kinsman, we conceive, of the Borrovian picaro). But, above all, as one follows the author through the mazes of his book,

one is conscious of two strangely assorted figures, never far from the itinerant's side, and always ready to improve the occasion if a shadow of an opportunity be afforded. One, who is prolific of philological chippings, might be compared to a semblance of Max Müller; while the other, alternately denouncing the wickedness and deriding the toothlessness of a grim Giant Pope, may be likened, at a distance, to John Bunyan. About the whole—to conclude—is an atmosphere, not too pronounced, of the *Newgate Calendar*, and a few patches of sawdust from the Prize Ring. May not people well have wondered (the good pious English folk to whom *Luck* is a scandal, as the Bible Society's secretary wrote to Borrow),—what manner of man is this, this muleteer-missionary, this natural man with a pen in the hand of a prize-fighter, but of a prize-fighter who is afflicted with the fads of a philologer—and a pedant at that? The surprise may be compared to what that of a previous generation would have been, had it seen Johnson and Boswell and Baretti all fused into one man. The incongruity is heightened by familiarity with Borrow's tall, blonde, Scandinavian figure, and the reader is reminded of those roving Northmen of the days of simple mediæval devotion, who were wont to signalise their conversion from heathen darkness by a Mediterranean venture, combining the characters of a piratical cruise and a pious pilgrimage.

That Curiosity exaggerated and was a marvel-monger we shall attempt to demonstrate. But, in the meantime, it was there, and it was very strong. As for Borrow, he was prepared to derive stimulus from it just as long as it maintained the unquestioning attitude of Jasper Petulengro when he expressed the sentiments of gipsydom in the well-worn "Lor', brother, how learned you are!"

In February 1843 Borrow wrote to Murray that he had begun his *Life*—a "kind of biography in the Robinson Crusoe style,"—and was determined that it should surpass anything that he had already written. It had been contemplated, he added, for some months already, as a possible sequel to the *Bible in Spain* if that proved successful. Hitherto, he wrote, the public had said "Good" (to his *Gypsies of Spain*, 1841), "Better" (to the *Bible in Spain*), and he wanted it, when No. 3 appeared, to say "Best." Five years rapidly passed away, until, in the summer of 1848, the book was announced as about to appear shortly, under the title of *Lavengro: An Autobiography*, which was soon changed to *Life: a Drama*. The difficulty of writing a book which should have "no humbug in it," proved, as may well be supposed, immense, and would in any case be quite sufficient to account for the long period of gestation. His perplexities may have often been very near akin to those ascribed to the superstitious author in the

sixty-fifth chapter of *Lavengro*; his desire to be original sadly cramping the powers of his mind, his fastidiousness being so great that he invariably rejected whatever ideas he did not consider to be legitimately his own. As a substitute for the usual padding of humbug, sycophancy and second-hand ideas, he bethought himself of philology, and he set himself to spring fragments of philological instruction (often far from sound) upon his reader in the most unexpected places, that his ingenuity could devise. He then began to base hopes upon the book in proportion to its originality. At the last moment, however, the Author grew querulous about his work, distrustful of the reception that would be given to it, and even as to the advisability of producing it at all. Much yet remained to be done, but for a long time he refused, not only to forward new copy to Albemarle Street, but even to revise the proofs of that which he had already written, and it required all the dunning that Murray and the printer Woodfall dare apply before *Lavengro* with its altered sub-title (for at the last moment Borrow grew afraid of openly avowing his identity with the speaking likeness which he had created) could be announced as "just ready" in the *Athenæum* of Dec. 14th, 1850.

Lavengro; the Scholar, the Gypsy, the Priest, eventually appeared in three volumes on Feb. 7th, 1851. The autobiographical *Lavengro* stopped short in July 1825, at the conclusion of the hundredth chapter, with an abruptness worthy of the *Sentimental Journey*. The Author had succeeded in extending the area of mystery, but not in satisfying the public. Borrow's confidences were so very different in complexion from those which the critics seemed to have expected, that they were taken aback and declared to the public almost with one accord that the writer's eccentricities had developed into mannerisms, that his theories of life were political manifestoes, that his dialects were gibberish, and his defiance of the orthodox canons of autobiography scarcely less than an outrage upon the public taste.

From the general public came a fusillade of requests to solve the prevailing mystery of the book. Was it fact or fiction?—or, if fact and fiction were blended, in what proportions? Borrow ought to have been prepared for a question so natural in the mouths of literary busy-bodies at any time, and especially at a time when partisan spirit was rampant, and the vitality of the lampoon as a factor in politics so far from extinct. To show his contempt alike for the critical verdict and the popular curiosity, after a quarrel, or at least a sharp coolness with John Murray, he published in two volumes, in May 1857, *The Romany Rye*, which carries on the story of *Lavengro* for just about a month further, namely, down

towards the end of August 1825, and there again stops dead. Whether we regard coherence or the rate of progress, no more attempt at amendment is perceptible than can be discerned in the later as compared with the earlier volumes of *Tristram Shandy*. The peculiarities of the earlier volume are, indeed, here accentuated, while the Author had evidently only been confirmed by the lapse of years in the political philosophy to which he had already given expression. At the end was printed an appendix (a sort of *catalogue raisonné* of Borrovian prejudices), satirising with unmeasured bitterness the critics of *Lavengro*.

The resumption of a story after an interval of over six years, with appendages so extravagant, whether we regard their tenor or their length, and with an indifference so sublime to the popular desire that he should get along with his personal narrative, was hardly calculated to conciliate critical opinion; but it had one capital effect. It drew from Whitwell Elwin, himself a Norfolk man, and a literary critic of the widest grasp and knowledge, this remarkable testimony: that far from exaggerating such incidents as were drawn from his own experience (not a few, as he himself could verify), Borrow's descriptions were rather *within the truth than beyond it*. "However picturesquely they may be drawn, the lines are invariably those of nature. . . . There can be no doubt that the larger part, and possibly the whole of the work, is a narrative of actual occurrences."

Here, then, is the heart of the mystery, or of the mystery that is apparent; the phenomenon is due primarily to the fact that Borrow's book is so abnormally true as regards the matter, while in manner of presentation it is so strikingly original. There are superficial traces, no doubt, of not a few writers of the eighteenth century. In some of his effects Borrow reproduces Sterne: essentially Sternean, for instance, is the interview between the youthful author and the experienced Mr. Taggart.

> "Well, young gentleman," said Taggart to me one morning when we chanced to be alone, a few days after the affair of cancelling, "how do you like authorship?"
>
> "I scarcely call authorship the drudgery I am engaged in," said I.
>
> "What do you call authorship?" said Taggart.
>
> "I scarcely know," said I; "that is, I can scarcely express what I think it."
>
> "Shall I help you out?" said Taggart, turning round his chair, and looking at me.

“If you like,” said I.

“To write something grand,” said Taggart, taking snuff; “to be stared at—lifted on people’s shoulders.”

“Well,” said I, “that is something like it.”

Taggart took snuff.

“Well,” said he, “why don’t you write something grand?”

“I have,” said I.

“What?” said Taggart.

“Why,” said I, “there are those ballads.”

Taggart took snuff.

“And those wonderful versions from Ab Gwilym.”

Taggart took snuff again.

“You seem to be very fond of snuff,” said I, looking at him angrily.

Taggart tapped his box.

“Have you taken it long?”

“Three-and-twenty years.”

“What snuff do you take?”

“Universal Mixture.”

“And you find it of use?”

Taggart tapped his box.

“In what respect?” said I.

“In many—there is nothing like it to get a man through; but for snuff I should scarcely be where I am now.”

“Have you been long here?”

“Three-and-twenty years.”

“Dear me,” said I; “and snuff brought you through? Give me a pinch—pah, I don’t like it,” and I sneezed.

“Take another pinch,” said Taggart.

“No,” said I; “I don’t like snuff.”

“Then you will never do for authorship; at least for this kind.”

“So I begin to think. What shall I do?”

Taggart took snuff.

“You were talking of a great work. What shall it be?”

Taggart took snuff.

“Do you think I could write one?”

Taggart uplifted his two forefingers as if to tap; he did not, however.

“It would require time,” said I, with half a sigh.

Taggart tapped his box.

“A great deal of time. I really think that my ballads—”

Taggart took snuff.

“If published, would do me credit. I’ll make an effort, and offer them to some other publisher.”

Taggart took a double quantity of snuff.

Equally Sterne-like is the conclusion to a chapter: “Italy—what was I going to say about Italy?”

Less superficial is the influence of Cervantes and his successors of the Picaresque school, down to the last and most representative of them in England, namely Defoe and Smollett. Profoundest of all, perhaps, is the influence of Defoe, of whose powers of intense realisation, exhibited in the best parts of *Robinson Crusoe*, we get a fine counterpart amid the outcasts in Mumper’s Lane. Bound up with the truthfulness and originality of the Author is that

strange absence of sycophancy, which we may flatter ourselves is no exceptional thing, but which is in reality a very rare phenomenon in literature.

Apart from this independence of character which he so justly prized, and a monomania or two, such as his devotion to philology or detestation of popery, Borrow's mental peculiarities are not by any means so extravagant as has been supposed. His tastes were for the most part not unusual, though they might be assorted in a somewhat uncommon manner. He was a thorough sportsman in the best sense, but he combined with his sporting zeal an instinctive hatred of gambling, of bad language, and of tyranny or cruelty in any form. He entertained a love for the horse in the stable without bowing down to worship the stage-coachmen, the jockeys, and other ignoble heroes of "horsey" life. He loved his country and "the quiet, unpretending Church of England." He was ready to exalt the obsolescent fisticuffs and the "strong ale of Old England," but he was not blind either to the drunkenness or to the overbearing brutality which he had reason to fear might be held to disfigure the character of the swilling and prize-fighting sections among his compatriots. {20a}

Borrow was a master of whim; but it is easy to exaggerate his eccentricity. As a traveller who met with adventures upon the roads of Britain he was surpassed by a dozen writers that could be named, and in our own day—to mention one—by that truly eccentric being "The Druid." {20b} The Druid had a special affinity with Borrow, in regard to his kindness for an old applewoman. His applewoman kept a stall in the Strand to which the Druid was a constant visitor, mainly for the purpose of having a chat and borrowing and repaying small sums, rarely exceeding one shilling. As an author, again, Borrow was as jealous as one of Thackeray's heroines; he could hardly bear to hear a contemporary book praised. Whim, if you will, but scarcely an example of literary eccentricity.

Borrow developed a delightful faculty for adventure upon the high road, but such a faculty was far less singular than his gift—akin to the greatest painter's power of suggesting atmosphere—of investing each scene and incident with a separate and distinct air of uncompromising reality. Many persons may have had the advantage of hearing conversation as brilliant or as wise as that of the dinner at Dilly's: what is distinctive of genius is the power to convey the general feeling of the interlocutors, to suggest a dramatic effect, an artistic whole, as Boswell does, by the cumulative effect of infinitesimal factors. The triumph in each case is one not of opportunities but of the subtlest literary sense.

Similarly, Borrow's fixed ideas had little that was really exceptional or peculiar

about them. His hatred of mumbo-jumbo and priestcraft was but a part of his steady love of freedom and sincerity. His linguistic mania had less of a philological basis than he would have us believe. Impatience that Babel should act as a barrier between kindred souls, an insatiable curiosity, prompted by the knowledge that the language of minorities was in nine cases out of ten the direct route to the heart of the secret of folks that puzzled him—such were the motives that stimulated a hunger for strange vocabularies, not in itself abnormal. The colloquial faculty which he undoubtedly possessed—for we are told by Taylor that when barely eighteen he already knew English, Welsh, Irish, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, Danish, French, Italian, and Portuguese—rarely goes with philological depth any more than with idiomatic purity. Borrow learnt some languages to translate, many to speak imperfectly. {22}

But as a comparative philologist, with claims to scientific equipment, his *Targum*, with its boasted versions from thirty languages or dialects, pales considerably before the almost contemporary *Philological Grammar*, based upon a comparison of over sixty tongues, by the Dorset poet William Barnes, who, like Borrow himself, was a self-taught man. To mention but two more English contemporaries of Borrow, there was Thomas Watts, of the British Museum, who could read nearly fifty languages, including Chinese; and Canon Cook, the editor of the *Speaker's Commentary*, who claimed acquaintance with fifty-four. It is commonly said of Cardinal Mezzofanti that he could speak thirty and understand sixty. It is quite plain from the pages of *Lavengro* itself that Borrow did not share Gregory XVI.'s high estimate of the Cardinal's mental qualifications, unrivalled linguist though he was. That a "word-master" so abnormal is apt to be deficient in logical sense seems to have been Borrow's deliberate opinion (with a saving clause as to exceptions), and I have often thought that it must have been Shakespeare's too, for does he not ascribe a command of tongues to the man who is perhaps the most consummate idiot in the whole range of Shakespearean portraiture?

> Maria. That quaffing and drinking will undo you: I heard my lady talk of it yesterday, and of a foolish knight that you brought in here to be her wooer.
>
> Sir Toby Belch. Who? Sir Andrew Ague-cheek?
>
> Maria. Ay, he.
>
> Sir Toby. He's as tall a man as any in Illyria.
>
> Maria. What's that to the purpose?

Sir Toby. Why, he has three thousand ducats a year.

Maria. Ay, but he'll have but a year in all these ducats: he's a very fool and a prodigal.

Sir Toby. Fie that you'll say so! He plays o' the viol de gamboys, and speaks three or four languages word for word, without book.

The extraordinary linguistic gifts of a Mezzofanti were not, it is true, concentrated in Borrow (whose powers in this direction have been magnified), but they were sufficiently prominent in him to have a determining effect upon his mind. Thus he was distinguished less for broad views than for an extraordinary faculty for detail; when he attempts to generalise we are likelier to get a flood of inconsequent prejudices than a steady flow of reasoned opinions.

We can frequently study an author with good effect through the medium of his literary admirations; we have already noticed a few of Borrow's predilections in real life. With regard to literature, his predilections (or more particularly what Zola would call his *haines*) were fully as protestant and as thorough. His indifference to the literature of his own time might be termed brutal; his intellectual self-sufficiency was worthy of a Macaulay or of a Donne. A fellow-denouncer of snobs, he made Thackeray very uncomfortable by his contemptuous ignorance of *The Snob Papers*, and even of the name of the periodical in which they were appearing. Concerning Keats he once asked, "Have they not been trying to resuscitate him?" When Miss Strickland wanted to send him her Lives, he broke out: "For God's sake don't, madam; I should not know where to put them or what to do with them." Scott's *Woodstock* he picked up more than once and incontinently threw down as "trashy." As a general rule he judged a modern author by his prejudices. If these differed by a hair's breadth from his own he damned the whole of his work. He had to his credit a vast fund of quaint out-of-the-way reading; not to be acquainted with this was dense unpardonable ignorance: what he had not read was scarcely knowledge. He was not what one could fairly call unread in the classical authors, for in a survey of his reviewers he compared himself complacently enough with Cervantes, Bunyan and Le Sage. He had the utmost suspicion of literary models; to try to be like somebody else was the too popular literary precept that he held in the greatest abhorrence. The gravity of his prescription of Wordsworth as a specific in cases of chronic insomnia is probably due rather to the thorough sincerity of his view than to any conscious subtlety of humour. He

disliked Scott especially for his easy tolerance of Jacobites and Papists, {25} while he distrusted his portraits, those portraits of the rougher people which may have frequently been over-praised by Scott's admirers. We most of us love Scott, it is a fact, beyond the power of nice discrimination. As to the verisimilitude of a portrait such as that of Meg Merrilies we must allow Borrow to be a most competent critic, but we are at a loss to sympathise with his failure to appreciate studies of such lifelike fidelity as Edie Ochiltree and Andrew Fairservice, whose views anent "the muckle hure that sitteth on seven hills, as if ane wasna braid eneugh for her auld hinder end," had so much that was in sympathy with Borrow's own.

Of all such prejudices and peculiarities, no less than of his gifts, Borrow was ridiculously proud. In certain respects he was as vainly, querulously, and childishly assertive as Goldsmith himself; while in the haughty self-isolation with which he eschewed the society of people with endowments as great or even greater than his own, he was quite the opposite of "poor Goldy." If the latter had regarded his interlocutors straight in the eyes with a look that told them he was prepared to knock them down at a moment's notice upon the least provocation, we should probably have heard less of his absurdities. A man who even in his old age could walk off with E. J. Trelawny {27a} under his arm (as Mr. Watts-Dunton assures us Borrow could) was certainly not one to be trifled with.

Borrow's absolute unconventionality was of course an offence to many; to Englishmen, who were dreaming in the fifties of a kind of industrial millennium, with Cobden as the prophet and Macaulay as the preacher of a new gospel of commercial prosperity and universal peace and progress, Borrow's pre-railroad prejudices and low tastes appeared obscurantist, dark, squalid, unintelligible. {27b} He ran out his books upon a line directly counter to the literary current of the day, and, naturally enough, the critical billow broke over him.

Hazlitt's proposition—so readily accepted by the smug generation of his day—that London was the only place in which the child could grow up completely into the man—would have appeared the most perverse kind of nonsense to Borrow. The complexity of a modern type, such as that of a big organiser of industrial labour, did not impress him. He esteemed the primitive above the economic man, and was apt to judge a human being rather as Robinson Crusoe might have done than in the spirit of a juryman at an Industrial Exhibition. Again, his feeling for nature was intimate rather than enthusiastic, at a time when people still looked for a good deal of pretty Glover-like composition in their landscapes.

One of the most original traits of Borrow's genius was the care and obstinacy with which he defended his practical, vigorous and alert personality against the allurements of word-painting, of Nature and of Reverie. He could respond to the thrill of natural beauty, he could enjoy his mood when it veritably came upon him, just as he could enjoy a tankard of old ale or linger to gaze upon a sympathetic face; but he refused to pamper such feelings, still more to simulate them; he refused to allow himself to become the creature of literary or poetic ecstasy; he refused to indulge in the fashionable debauch of dilettante melancholy. He wrote about his life quite naturally, "as if there were nothing in it." Another and closely allied cause of perplexity and discontent to the literary connoisseurs was Borrow's lack of style. By style, in the generation of Macaulay and Carlyle, of Dickens and George Eliot, was implied something recondite—a wealth of metaphor, imagery, allusion, colour and perfume—a palette, a pounce-box, an optical instrument, a sounding-board, a musical box, anything rather than a living tongue. To a later race of stylists, who have gone as far as Samoa and beyond in the quest of exotic perfumery, Borrow would have said simply, in the words of old Montaigne, "To smell, though well, is to stink,"—"Malo, quam bene olere, nil olere." Borrow, in fact, by a right instinct went back to the straightforward manner of Swift and Defoe, Smollett and Cobbett, whose vigorous prose he specially admired; and he found his choice ill appreciated by critics whose sense of style demanded that a clear glass window should be studded with bull's-eyes. To his distinctions of being a poet well-nigh incapable of verse, and a humourist with marvellously little pathos, Borrow thus added one which we are inclined to regard as the greatest of all—that of being a great nineteenth-century prose-writer without a style.

Though he did not elaborate, or strive to attain to the cultism or polite style of contemporary genius, Borrow seems to have written with some difficulty (or at any rate a lack of facility), and, impervious as he was to criticism, he retained in his prose a number of small faults that he might easily have got rid of. His manner of introducing his generalities and conclusions is often either superfluous, or lame and clumsy. Despite his natural eloquence, his fondness for the apostrophe is excessive; he preserved an irritating habit of parading such words as *éclat*, *penchant* and *monticle*, and persisted in saying "of a verity," and using the word "individual" in the sense of person. Such blemishes are microscopic enough. It was not such trifles as these that proved stumbling-blocks to the "men of blood and foam," as he called his critics.

Of the generality of the critics of that day it would probably be well within the

mark to aver that their equipment was more solid, and their competence more assured than that of their successors; {30} it would be safe to assert that their self-sufficiency was also decidedly more pronounced. Now for reasons which we have endeavoured to explain, the equanimity of the critical reviewers was considerably ruffled by *Lavengro*. Perplexed by its calling itself an autobiography, they were at the same time discontented both with its subject-matter and its style. To a not altogether misplaced curiosity on the part of the public as to Borrow's antecedents, the author of the *Bible in Spain* had responded by *Lavengro*, which he fully meant to be (what it indeed was) a masterpiece. Yet public and critics were agreed in failing to see the matter in this light. As the reader will probably have deduced from the foregoing pages, the trouble was mainly due to the following causes. First, baffled curiosity. Secondly, a dislike for Borrow's prejudices. Thirdly, a disgust at his philistinism in refusing to bow down and worship the regnant idols of 'taste.' Fourthly, the total absence in Borrow of the sentimentality for which the soul of the normal Englishman yearns. Fifthly, disappointment at not finding the critic's due from an accepted author in quotable passages of picturesque prose.

These views are appropriately summed up through the medium of the pure and scentless taste of the *Athenæum*. The varied contents of *Lavengro* are here easily reduced to one denomination—'balderdash,' for the emission of which the *Athenæum* critic proceeds (in the interests, of course, of the highest gentility), to give George Borrow a good scolding.

How sadly removed was such procedure from Borrow's own ideal of reviewing, as set forth in the very volume under consideration! Such operations should always, he held, be conducted in a spirit worthy of an editor of Quintilian, in a gentlemanly, Oxford-like manner. No vituperation! No insinuations! Occasionally a word of admonition, but gently expressed as an Oxford M.A. might have expressed it. Some one had ventured to call the *Bible in Spain* a grotesque book, but the utterance had been drowned in the chorus of acclamation. Now Borrow complained that he had had the honour of being rancorously abused by every unmanly scoundrel, every sycophantic lacquey, and every political and religious renegade in the kingdom. His fury was that of an angry bull tormented by a swarm of gnats. His worst passions were aroused; his most violent prejudices confirmed. His literary zeal, never extremely alert, was sensibly diminished.

This last result at least was a calamity. Nevertheless the great end had, in the main, already been accomplished. Borrow had broken through the tameness of

the regulation literary memoir, and had shown the naked footprint on the sand. The ‘great unknown’ had gone down beneath his associations, his acquirements and his adventures, and had to a large extent revealed *himself*—a primitive man, with his breast by no means wholly rid of the instincts of the wild beast, grappling with the problem of a complex humanity: an epitome of the eternal struggle which alone gives savour to the wearisome process of “civilisation.” For the conventional man of the lapidary phrase and the pious memoir (corrected by the maiden sister and the family divine), Borrow dared to substitute the *genus homo* of natural history. Perhaps it was only to be expected that, like the discoveries of another Du Chaillu, his revelations should be received with a howl of incredulity.

Almost alone, as far as we can discover, among the critics of the day Émile Montégut realised *to the full* the true greatness, the originality, the abiding quality and interest of Borrow’s work. Writing in September 1857 upon “Le Gentilhomme Bohémien” (an essay which appears in his *Ecrivains Modernes de l’Angleterre*, between studies on “Mistress Browning” and Alfred Tennyson), Montégut remarks of Borrow’s “humoristic Odyssey”:—

> “Unfinished and fragmentary, these writings can dispense with a conclusion, for they have an intrinsic value, and each page bears the impress of reality. The critic who has to give his impressions of one of Borrow’s books is in much the same case as a critic who had to give his impressions in turn of the different parts of *Gil Blas* as they successively appeared. The work is incomplete, but each several part is excellent and can be appreciated by itself. Borrow has resuscitated a literary form which had been many years abandoned, and he has resuscitated it in no artificial manner—as a rhythmical form is rehabilitated, or as a dilettante re-establishes for a moment the vogue of the roundel or the virelay—but quite naturally as the inevitable setting for a picture which has to include the actors and the observations of the author’s vagabond life. To a clear and unprejudiced mind, observation of the life of the common folk and, above all, of the itinerant population and of their equivocal moral code, of necessity and invariably, compels resort to the form and manner of the *novéla picaresca*.
>
> “The huge sensational romance [Sue], the creaking machinery of melodrama [Boucicault], with which it has been attempted in our own day to portray certain tableaux of the life of the people, only succeed, owing to

> the extravagance of their construction, in demonstrating the complete ignorance on the part of the writers of the subject which they pretend to describe. Borrow has not of set purpose adopted the picaresque form: search his pages where you will, you will find not a trace of such an intention. He has rediscovered the picaresque method, as it were instinctively, by the mere fact of his having to express sentiments of a certain description; he has indeed rediscovered it by the same process which led Cervantes and Hurtado de Mendoza to invent it—by virtue of that necessity which always enables genius to give the most appropriate clothing to its conceptions. To attain this result, however, it is necessary that genius should not be thrown off its balance by deliberate ambition, or too much preoccupied by the immediate desire to succeed. By his conformity to all these conditions, Borrow has become, without giving a thought to such purpose, the Quevedo and the Mendoza of modern England."

Beyond all this there is quite another and perhaps an even more potent reason why the critics of a later generation have felt constrained to place this work of Borrow's upon a higher pedestal than their predecessors did.

As within the four angles of a painting there is nothing more difficult to confine than sunlight and atmosphere, so in literature is it a task of the highest achievement to compass the wind on the heath, the sunshine and the rain. We know the dark background, the mystery and the awe of the forest, how powerfully they are suggested to us by some old writers and some modern ones, such as Spenser and Fouqué, by the author of *The Pathfinder* and Thoreau; the scent of the soil, once again, in rain and in shine, is it not conveyed to us with an astonishing distinctness, that is the product of a literary endowment of the rarest order, by such writers as Izaak Walton and Robert Burns, and among recent writers in varying degrees by Richard Jefferies and by Barnes, by T. E. Brown and Thomas Hardy? And then there is the kindred touch, hardly if at all less rare, which evokes for us the camaraderie and blithe spirit of the highway: the winding road, the flashing stream, the bordering coppice, the view from the crest, the twinkling lights at nightfall from the sheltering inn. Traceable in a long line of our most cherished writers, from Chaucer and Lithgow and Nash, Defoe and Fielding, and Hazlitt and Holcroft, the fascination of the road that these writers have tried to communicate, has never perhaps been expressed with a nicer discernment than in the *Confessions* of Rousseau, that inveterate pedestrian who walked Europe to the rhythm of ideas as epoch-making as any

that have ever emanated from the mind of man.

> "La chose que je regrette le plus" (writes Rousseau) "dans les details de ma vie dont j'ai perdu la mémoire, est de n'avoir pas fait des journaux de mes voyages. Jamais je n'ai tant pensé, tant existé, tant vécu, tant été moi, si j'ose ainsi dire, que dans ceux que j'ai faits seul et à pied. La marche a quelque chose qui anime et avive mes idées: je ne puis presque penser quand je reste en place; il faut que mon corps soit en branle pour y mettre mon esprit. La vue de la campagne, la succession des aspects agréables, le grand air, le grand appétit, la bonne sante que je gagne en marchant, la liberté du cabaret, l'éloignement de tout ce qui me fait sentir ma dépendance, de tout ce qui me rappelle à ma situation: tout cela dégage mon âme."

It is a possession in a rare degree of this wonderful open-air quality as a writer that constrains us in our generation to condone any offences against the mint and anise and cummin decrees of literary infallibility that Borrow may have from time to time committed. And when it is realised, in addition, what a unique knowledge he possessed of the daily life, the traditions, the folk-lore, and the dialects of the strange races of vagrants, forming such a picturesque element in the life of the road, the documentary value, as apart from the literary interest of Borrow's work, becomes more and more manifest.

Lavengro is not a book, it is true, to open sesame to the first comer, or to yield up one tithe of its charm upon a first acquaintance. Yet, in spite of the "foaming vipers," as Borrow styles his critics, *Lavengro's* roots have already struck deep into the soil of English literature, as Dr. Hake predicted that they would. {37} We know something about the dim retreating Arcady from Dr. Jessopp, we know something of the old farmers and tranters and woodlanders from Hardy, something of late Georgian London from Dickens, something of the old Lancashire mill-hands from Mrs. Gaskell, and something of provincial town-life in the forties and fifties from George Eliot. It has fallen to Borrow to hold up the mirror to wild Nature on the roadside and the heath.

> "The personages in these inimitable books are not merely snap-shots, they are living pictures; and, more than that, the people are moving about amid fluttering leaves and flickering sunlight and waves of shadow and rippling brooks. One neither misses the colours of the landscapes nor the very sounds of the voices. Moreover, the characters, though we feel that they

> have never come within the range of our experience, yet did actually live and move and talk as they are represented; and we know, too, that such characters have passed away from our earth—improved off the face of it. And we regret, in spite of ourselves, that these gypsies are gone. The rogues will never come back! A feeling of disappointment is apt to come over us as we read, and we are ready to stop and ask angrily, 'Why can't we drop in among the tents, and see an Ursula or a Pakomovna, and have our fortunes told as of yore?' And we know that it cannot be, and that the Romany Rye is a being who lived and moved in a different age from ours, as different as the age of Hector and Achilles, when warriors fought in their chariots round the walls of Troy, and the long-haired Achaians hurled their spears and stole one another's horses in the darkness, and kings made long speeches armed to the teeth, and ran away with other kings' wives or multiplied their own. We go on to confess to ourselves that we must be content with hearing about all the strange experience of the Romany Rye at second-hand, and since it must be so, we shall do well to surrender ourselves to such a magician as this and make the best of it." {38}

After the publication of the *Romany Rye* in 1857, Borrow made one more contribution to Belles Lettres in the book called *Wild Wales*, issued in three volumes in 1862. It commemorates a journey made in the summer of 1854, while its heroic championship of the Bardic literature recalls the earlier enthusiasm for Ab Gwilym. If after his return from Spain a definite sphere of activity abroad could have been allotted to Borrow (by preference in the East, as he himself desired), we might have had from his pen contributions to the study of Eastern life that would have added lustre to a group of writers already brilliantly represented in England by Curzon and Kinglake, Lane and Morier, Palgrave and Burton. With Burton's love of roving adventure, of strange tongues, and of anthropology in its widest sense, the author of the *Bible in Spain* had many points in common. As it was, the later years of Borrow's life were spent somewhat moodily, and with some of the mystery of Swift's or of Rousseau's, at Oulton, near Lowestoft, whence, at Christmas 1874, he sent a message to the neighbouring hermit, Edward Fitzgerald at Woodbridge, in the vain hope of eliciting a visit. {39a} His wife, who had been won with her widow's jointure and dower during the flush of his missionary successes in 1840, died at the end of January 1869, {39b} and on July 26th, 1881, after years spent in a strange seclusion at Oulton, tended latterly by his step-daughter Henrietta, George Borrow was found dead in his bed, dying as he had lived, alone. Not long after his death, which took place when he was seventy-eight,

Borrow's Oulton home was pulled down. All that now remains to mark the spot where it once stood are the old summer-house in which he wrote *Lavengro*, and the ragged fir-trees that sighed the requiem of his last hours. Without appealing to "the shires," but in the Eastern counties alone, he has been commemorated since his death by such writers as Henry Dutt, and Whitwell Elwin, by Egmont Hake, by Theodore Watts-Dunton, and by Dr. Jessopp. And now ere the close of the century {40} it has fallen to the lot of yet another East Anglian to place a small stone upon the cairn of George Borrow.

II.

The two books *Lavengro* and *Romany Rye* are in reality one work, an unfinished autobiography, commenced upon a moderate and quite feasible scale; but after about a third of the ground is covered the scale is enormously increased, the narrative, encumbered by a vast amount of detail, makes less and less progress, and finally stops short, without any obvious, but rather a lame and impotent conclusion, at chapter xlvii. of the *Romany Rye*, or chapter cxlvii. of the work considered as one whole. The disproportion of the scale will be sufficiently indicated when we point out that the first twenty-two years of the author's life are treated pretty equally in fifty-seven chapters (i. to lvii.). The remaining ninety chapters (lviii. to cxlvii.) are wholly taken up by the incidents of less than four months, the four summer months of 1825. The first twenty-two years of the author's life are far from commonplace. The interest is well sustained, but is seldom intense,—at no point is the author's memory sufficiently teeming to cause an overflow; but with the conclusion of his sojourn in London, May 22nd, 1825, commences an itinerant life, the novelty of which graves every incident in the most vivid possible manner upon the writer's recollection. With his emancipation from town life a new graphic impulse is developed. Borrow seizes a new palette and sets to work with fresher colours upon a stupendous canvas. This canvas may be described as taking the form of a triptych. In the first compartment we have the first sensations of the roadfarer's life and some minor adventures: a visit to Stonehenge; the strange meeting with a returned convict, who turns out to be the old applewoman's son; the vignette of the hostelry, with the figures of the huge fat landlord and the handmaid Jenny; the visit to the stranger gentleman who protects himself by "touching" against evil chance; the interview with the Rev. Mr. Platitude, and the bargain struck with the travelling tinker, Jack Slingsby, whose stock-in-trade and profession the writer determines to adopt. Then comes the word-master's detection in his new sphere of life by the malignant gipsy godmother, Mrs. Herne, from whose remorseless attempt to

poison him he is rescued by the kindly hearted Welsh preacher Peter Williams and his wife Winifred. In requital he manages to relieve the good man of a portion of the load of superstitious terror by which he is burdened. This section of the narrative is terminated by a graphic description of his renewal of associateship with his old friend Jasper Petulengro, the satisfaction he gives that worthy for having been the innocent cause of Mrs. Herne's death, and his decision to pitch his tent in the dingle. Chapters lviii. to lxxxii. are taken up with the foregoing incidents, which lead up to the central episode of the autobiography, the settlement in the dingle, with which the reader is here presented. This episode, forming the second panel in the detailed scheme, occupies chapters lxxxiii. to cxvi., but it is bisected near the middle by the termination of *Lavengro* at chapter c. The two parts are united now for the first time, and are given a prominent setting in relief from the rest of the narrative. The third compartment of the triptych, which occupies chapters cxvii. to cxlvii. (that is, chapters xvii. to xlvii. of the *Romany Rye*), is devoted to what we may call the horse-dealing episode. After the loss of Isopel Berners, the Romany Rye, as the author-hero is now termed, consoles himself by the purchase of a splendid horse, to obtain which he consents, much against his will, to accept a loan of £50 from Jasper Petulengro, the product of that worthy's labours in the prize ring. He travels across England with the horse, meeting with adventures by the way, narrating them to others, and obtaining some curious autobiographical narratives in return. Finally he reaches Horncastle, and sells the animal at the horse fair there for £150. Here, in August 1825, the narrative of his life abruptly ends. {43}

It must not be supposed by any means that the interest of Borrow's two autobiographical volumes is concentrated in the last eighteen chapters of *Lavengro* and the first sixteen chapters of the *Romany Rye*. The quality of continuity is, it is true, best preserved in the dingle episode. Artistically the Brynhildic figure of Isopel serves as the best relief that could be found for Borrow's own "Titanic self." There is undoubtedly a feeling of unity here which is hardly to be felt in any other part of the Borrovian "Odyssey."

It is nevertheless true that, taken as a whole, a marked characteristic of the two volumes is the evenness with which the charms are scattered hither and thither betwixt the four covers. Attractive, therefore, as the Isopel Berners episode unquestionably is, and convenient as it is to the reader to have it detached for him in its unity, its perusal must not be taken for a moment to absolve the lover of good literature from traversing chapter by chapter, canto by canto, the whole

of the Borrevian epic. It is outside the dingle that he will have to look for the faithfully described bewilderment of the old applewoman after the loss of her book, and for the compassionate delineation of the old man with the bees and the donkey who gave the young Rye to drink of mead at his cottage, and was unashamed at having shed tears on the road. The most heroic of the pugilistic encounters takes place, it is true, in the thick of the dingle, but it is elsewhere that the reader will have to look for the description of the memorable thrashing inflicted upon the bullying stage-coachman by the "elderly individual" who followed the craft of engraving, and learnt fisticuffs from Sergeant Broughton. In the same neighbourhood he will find the admirable vignette of the old man who could read the inscription on Chinese crockery pots, but could not tell what's o'clock, and the life narratives of the jockey and of the inexpert thimble-rigger, Murtagh, who was imprisoned three years for interrupting the Pope's game at picquet, but finally won his way by card-sharping to the very threshold of the Cardinalate. In the second half of the *Romany Rye*, too, he will find the noble apostrophes to youth, and ale, and England, "the true country for adventures," which he will compare, as examples of Borrovian eloquence, with the stirring description of embattled England in the third chapter of *Lavengro*, or the apostrophe to the Irish cob and the Author's first ride in chapter thirteen.

Borrow's is a wonderful book for one to lose one's *way* in, among the dense undergrowth, but it is a still grander book for the reader to lose *himself* in. In the dingle, best of all, he can "forget his own troublesome personality as completely as if he were in the depths of the ancient forest along with Gurth and Wamba." Labyrinthine, however, as the autobiography may at first sight appear, the true lover of Borrow will soon have little difficulty in finding the patteran or gypsy trail (for indeed the Romany element runs persistently as a chorus-thread through the whole of the autobiographical writings), which serves as a clue to the delights of which his work is so rich a storehouse. The question that really exercises Borrovians most is the relative merit of stories and sections of the narrative—the comparative excellence of the early 'life' in *Lavengro* and of the later detached episodes in the *Romany Rye*. Most are in some sort of agreement as to the supremacy of the dingle episode, which has this advantage: Borrow is always at his best when dealing with strange beings and abnormal experiences. When he is describing ordinary mortals he treats them with coldness as mere strangers. The commonplace town-dwellers seldom arouse his sympathy, never kindle his enthusiasm. He is quite another being when we wander by his side within the bounds of his enchanted dingle.

This history of certain doings in a Staffordshire dingle, during the month of July 1825, begins with a battle-royal, which places Borrow high amongst the narrators of human conflicts from the days of the Iliad to those of Pierce Egan; yet the chapters that set forth this episode of the dingle are less concerned with the “gestes” than with the sayings of its occupants. Rare, indeed, are the dramatic dialogues amid the sylvan surroundings of the tree-crowned hollow, that surpass in interest even the vivid details of the memorable fray between the flaming tinman and the pugilistic philologer. Pre-eminent amongst the dialogues are those between the male occupant of the dingle and the popish propagandist, known as the man in black. More fascinating still, perhaps, are the word-master’s conversations with Jasper; most wonderful of all, in the opinion of many, is his logomachy with Ursula under the thorn bush. We shall not readily forget Jasper’s complaints that all the ‘old-fashioned, good-tempered constables’ are going to be set aside, or his gloomy anticipations of the iron roads in which people are to ‘thunder along in vehicles pushed forward by fire and smoke.’ As for his comparison of the gypsies to cuckoos, the roguish charring fellows, for whom every one has a bad word, yet whom every one is glad to greet once again when the spring comes round, or Ursula’s exposition of gypsy love and marriage beneath the hedge,—these are Borrow at his best, as he is most familiar to us, in the open air among gypsies. With the popish emissary it is otherwise: his portrait is the creation of Borrow’s most studied hatred. Yet it must be admitted that the man in black is a triumph of complex characterisation. A joyous liver and an unscrupulous libertine, sceptical as Voltaire, as atheistic as a German professor, as practical as a Jew banker, as subtle as a Jesuit, he has as many ways of converting the folks among whom he is thrown as Panurge had of eating the corn in ear. For the simple and credulous—crosses and beads; for the hard-hearted and venal—material considerations; for the cultured and educated—a fine tissue of epigrams and anthropology; for the ladies—flattery and badinage. A spiritual ancestor of Anatole France’s marvellous full-length figure of Jerôme Coignard, Borrow’s conception takes us back first to Rabelais and secondly to the seventeenth-century conviction of the profound Machiavellism of Jesuitry.

The man in black and Jasper are great, but the master attraction of the region that we are to traverse is admittedly Isopel Berners. It will perhaps be observed that our heroine makes her appearance on the stage rather more in the fashion of Molly Seagrim than of that other engaging Amazon of romance, Diana Vernon, whose “long hair streaming in the wind” forms one single point of resemblance to our fair Isopel. In other respects, certainly no two heroines could be more dissimilar. Unaided even by the slightest assistance from the graphic arts, the

difficulty of picturing the lineaments of this muscular beauty, as she first burst on the sight of our autobiographer upon the declivity of the dingle, may be freely confessed, ere an attempt is made to describe her. We know, however, on the testimony of a sincere admirer, that she was over six feet high, with loose-flowing, flaxen hair; that she wore a tight bodice and a skirt of blue, to match the colour of her eyes; and that eighteen summers had passed over her head since she first saw the light in the great house of Long Melford, a nursery in which she learnt to fear God and take her own part, and a place the very name of which she came to regard as a synonym for a strong right arm. Borrow's first impression of her was one of immensity; she was big enough, he said, to have been born in a church; almost simultaneously, he observed her affinity to those Scandinavian divinities to which he assigned the first place in the pantheon of his affections. She reminded him, indeed, of the legendary Ingeborg, queen of Norway. It is remarkable, and well worth noticing, that the impression that she produced was instantaneous. Our wanderer had never been impressed in any similar fashion by any of the gypsy women with whom he was brought into contact, though, as many a legend and ballad can attest, such women have often exerted extraordinary attraction over Englishmen of pure blood. But it is evident that his physical admiration was reserved for a tall blonde of the Scandinavian type, to which he gave the name of a Brynhilde. Hence, notwithstanding his love of the economics of gypsy life, his gypsy women are for the most part no more than scenic characters; they clothe and beautify the scene, but they have little dramatic force about them. And when he comes to delineate a heroine, Isopel Berners, she is physically the very opposite of a Romany chi.

Fewer words will suffice to describe Isopel's first impressions of her future partner in the dingle. She unmistakably regarded him as a chaffing fellow who was not quite right in his head; and there is reason for believing, that, though she came to entertain a genuine regard for the young 'squire,' her opinions as to the condition of his brain underwent no sensible modification. She herself is fairly explicit on this subject: she seems indeed to have arrived at the deliberate conviction that, if not abnormally selfish, he was at any rate fundamentally mad; and there was perhaps a germ of truth in the conclusion, sufficient at any rate to colour Lombroso's theory of the inherent madness of men of genius. One of the testimonies that we have as to Borrow's later life at Oulton is to the effect that he got bewildered at times and fancied himself Wodin; but the substratum of sanity is strongly exhibited in the remedy which he himself applied. "What do you think I do when I get bewildered after this fashion? I go out to the sty and listen to the grunting of the pigs until I get back to myself." {49}

Of Isopel's history we know extremely little, save what she herself tells us. Her father was an officer who was killed in a naval action before he could fulfil the promise of marriage he had made to her mother, a small milliner, who died in the workhouse at Long Melford within three months of the effort of giving birth to an amazon so large and so fierce and so well able to take her own part as Isopel. At fourteen this fine specimen of workhouse upbringing was placed in service, from which she emancipated herself by knocking down her mistress. After two years more at the "large house" she was once more apprenticed; and this time knocked down her master in return for an affront. A second return to the workhouse appearing inadvisable, she traversed the highways of England in various capacities, and became acquainted with some of those remarkable though obscure characters who travelled the roads of our country at that period. A sense of loneliness drove her among unworthy travelling companions, such as the flying tinker and grey Moll, in whose society she breaks upon our notice. Some of the vagrants with whom she came into contact had occasionally attempted to lay violent hands upon her person and effects, but had been invariably humbled by her without the aid of either justice or constable.

Of her specific exploits as a bruiser we hear of at least two near Dover. Once, the cart she and her old mistress travelled with was stopped by two sailors, who would have robbed and stripped the owners. "Let me get down," she exclaimed simply, and so saying she got down, and fought with them both until they turned round and ran away. On another occasion, while combing out her long hair beneath a hedge, she was insulted by a jockey. Starting up, though her hair was

unbound, she promptly gave him what he characterised as "a most confounded whopping," and "the only drubbing I ever had in my life; and lor, how with her right hand she fibbed me while she held me round the neck with her left arm! I was soon glad to beg her pardon on my knees, which she gave me in a moment when she saw me in that condition, being the most placable creature in the world, and not only her pardon but one of the hairs which I longed for, which I put through a shilling for purposes of pleasant deception at country fairs." The hair with the shilling attached to it eventually became a treasured possession of the Romany Rye.

Rude as some of these characteristics may appear, we are left in no manner of doubt as to the essential nobility, befitting her name, of Miss Berners—her character and bearing. Her carriage, especially of the neck and shoulders, reminded the postilion of the Marchioness of ---; and he took her unhesitatingly for a young lady of high rank and distinction, who had temporarily left her friends, and was travelling in the direction of Gretna Green with the fortunate Rye. The word-master, in disabusing the postilion of this idea, gave utterance to the conviction that he might search the world in vain for a nature more heroic and devoted.

Like a lady of the highest quality, the beauteous queen of the dingle was subject to the vapours and to occasional fits of inexplicable weeping; but as a general rule she shared with Borrow himself a proud contempt for that mad puppy gentility, and her predominant characteristic, like his, was the simplicity that puzzled by reason of its directness and its purity. {52} That these qualities were not unaccompanied by a considerable amount of hauteur, is shown by her uncompromising rejection of the ceremonial advances made to her by that accomplished courtier, the man in black.

> "Lovely virgin," said he, with a graceful bow and stretching out his hand, "allow me to salute your fingers."
>
> "I am not in the habit of shaking hands with strangers," said Belle.
>
> "I did not presume to request to shake hands with you," said the man in black. "I merely wished to be permitted to salute with my lips the extremities of your two forefingers."
>
> "I never permit anything of the kind," said Belle. "I do not approve of such unmanly ways."

His importunity is rebuked more forcibly upon another occasion, when the nymph bids the priest with asperity to "hold his mumping gibberish."

The striking beauty of Belle, especially that of her blue eyes and flaxen hair, and the impressiveness of her demeanour, calm and proud, which compelled the similitude to a serious and queenly heroine, such as 'Queen Theresa of Hungary, or Brynhilda, the Valkyrie, the beloved of Sigurd, the serpent-killer,' is emphasised by the contrast drawn between her and the handsome brunette Mrs. Petulengro, who is for the nonce subjugated by Isopel's beauty, and craves the privilege of acting as her tire-woman.

Alas, as is so often the case in life, Lavengro and the reader are only just beginning to realise the beauty and the value of the "bellissima," as the man in black calls her, when she is on the point of sinking beneath our horizon, passing away like the brief music of an aubade.

Rapidly, much too rapidly, do we approach that summer dawn when Belle, dressed neatly and plainly, her hair no longer plaited in Romany fashion or floating in the wind, but secured by a comb, uncovered no longer, but wearing a bonnet, her features very pale, allowed her cold hand to be wrung—it was for the last time—by the unconscious Rye. The latter ascended to the plain and thence looked down towards the dingle. "Isopel Berners stood at the mouth, the beams of the early morning sun shone full on her noble face and figure. I waved my hands towards her, she slowly lifted up her right arm; I turned away, and never saw Isopel Berners again."

Hardly less forlorn is the reader than the philologist when the latter arrives back at the dingle, after a visit to the tavern two miles away, to find that the tardily recognised treasure is lost to him for ever,—resolved at length, too late, to give over teasing Belle by pretending to teach her Armenian, determined, when the need is past, to regularise his "uncertificated" relations with the glorious damozel, and resigned, when concession is fruitless, to sink those objections to America which Belle had disavowed, but which he had been proud to share with disbanded soldiers, sextons, and excisemen. To this decision his tortuous conferences with Jasper, and his frank soliloquy in the dingle, had bent him fully forty-eight hours before Belle's ultimate departure, unwilling though he was to incur the yoke of matrimony.

> "I figured myself in America" (says he, in his reverie over the charcoal fire), "in an immense forest, clearing the land destined by my exertions to

> become a fruitful and smiling plain. Methought I heard the crash of the huge trees as they fell beneath my axe; and then I bethought me that a man was intended to marry—I ought to marry; and if I married, where was I likely to be more happy as a husband and a father, than in America, engaged in tilling the ground? I fancied myself in America engaged in tilling the ground, assisted by an enormous progeny—well, why not marry and go and till the ground in America? I was young, and youth was the time to marry in and to labour in; I had the use of all my faculties; my eyes, it is true, were rather dull from early study, but I could see tolerably well with them and they were not bleared. I felt my arms and thighs and teeth—they were strong and sound enough; so now was the time to labour, to marry, eat strong flesh, and beget strong children—the power of doing all this would pass away with youth, which was terribly transitory. I bethought me that a time would come when my eyes would be bleared and perhaps sightless; my arms and thighs strengthless and sapless; when my teeth would shake in my jaws, even supposing they did not drop out. No going a-wooing then, no labouring, no eating strong flesh and begetting lusty children then; and I bethought me how, when all this should be, I should bewail the days of my youth as misspent, provided I had not in them founded for myself a home, and begotten strong children to take care of me in the days when I could not take care of myself; and thinking of these things I became sadder and sadder, and stared vacantly upon the fire until my eyes closed in a doze."

It is significant that upon his return from the dream that followed this reverie, the would-be colonist blew upon the embers and filled and heated the kettle, that he might be able to welcome Isopel with a cup of the beverage that she loved. It was the newly awakened Benedick brushing his hat in the morning; but unhappily his conversion was not so complete as Benedick's. Love-making and Armenian do not go together, and in the colloquy that ensued, Belle could not feel assured that the man who proposed to conjugate the verb "to love" in Armenian, was master of his intentions in plain English. It was even so. The man of tongues lacked speech wherewith to make manifest his passion; the vocabulary of the word-master was insufficient to convince the workhouse girl of one of the plainest meanings a man can well have. From the banter of the man of learning the queen of the dingle sought refuge in a precipitate flight. Almost simultaneously the word-master, albeit with reluctance, decided that it was high time to give over his "mocking and scoffing." When he returned with this resolve to the dingle, Isopel Berners had quitted it, never to return.

Yet ever and anon that splendid and pathetic figure will cross the sky line of his mental vision—and of ours. “Then the image of Isopel Berners came into my mind,” and the thought “how I had lost her for ever, and how happy I might have been with her in the New World.”

DWELLERS IN THE DINGLE,
AND SOME OTHERS.

MEN.

Lavengro, *the autobiographer, scholar and philologist* (Lavengro=*word-master*); *known among the road-faring folk as the Romany rye, or young squire turned gypsy*.

Jasper Petulengro, *a Romany kral or tribal chief, horse-dealer and blacksmith* (petulengro=*lord of the horseshoe*). "*The Gypsy*."

Fraser, *a popish emissary or propagandist, known as the* "*man in black*." "*The Priest*."

Tawno Chikno, *the little one, so called on account of his immense size*; *the* "*Antinous of the dusky people*;" *a great horseman and* Jasper's *brother-in-law*.

Sylvester, *another brother-in-law, an ill-conditioned fellow,* "*the Lazarus of the Romany tribe*."

Black *or* Blazing John Bosville (*Anselo Herne*), "*the flaming tinman*" *a* "*half-in-half*" *itinerant tinker and bruiser*.

Catchpole, *the landlord of a small inn, two miles from the Dingle, and not far from Willenhall in Staffordshire*.

Mr. Hunter, *a radical, who wears a snuff-coloured coat and frequents the inn above named*.

A postilion, whose headquarters are The Swan, Stafford.

WOMEN.

Isopel *or* Belle Berners, *the beauteous queen of the Dingle*.

GREY MOLL, *wife of* BOSVILLE, *the flying tinker*.

A niece of the landlord of the inn.

The three daughters of Mrs. Herne:—

PAKOMOVNA, (MRS.) PETULENGRO,

MIKAILIA, (MRS.) CHIKNO.

URSULA, *widow of* LAUNCELOT LOVELL, *who subsequently marries* SYLVESTER.

ANIMALS.

AMBROL (*in gypsy=a pear*), LAVENGRO'S *little gry or pony*.

TRAVELLER, *a donkey* (*gypsy, mailla*), *belonging to* ISOPEL BERNERS.

THE SCENE *is laid under the greenwood tree, in the height of an English summer*.

THE DINGLE *is a deep, wooded, and consequently somewhat gloomy, hollow in the middle of a very large, desolate field. The shelving sides of the hollow are overgrown with trees and bushes. A belt of sallows crowns the circular edge of the small crater. At the lowest part of the Dingle are discovered a stone and a fire of charcoal, from which spot a winding path ascends to "the plain." On either side of the fire is a small encampment. One consists of a small pony cart and a small hut-shaped tent, occupied by the word-master. On the other side is erected a kind of tent, consisting of large hoops covered over with tarpaulin, quite impenetrable to rain; hard by stands a small donkey-cart. This is "the tabernacle" of* ISOPEL BERNERS. *A short distance off, near a spring of clear water, is the encampment of the Romany chals and chies—the Petulengres and their small clan*.

THE PLACE *is about five miles from Willenhall in Staffordshire*.

THE TIME *is July* 1825.

CHAPTER I—THE SCHOLAR SAYS GOOD-BYE TO THE GYPSY, AND PITCHES HIS TENT IN THE DINGLE.

[In May 1825 our autobiographer, known among the gypsies as the word-master, decided to leave London, and travelled, partly on foot and partly by coach, to Amesbury; and then, after two days at Salisbury, struck northwards. A few days later, in a small beer-house, he met a tinker and his wife; the tinker was greatly depressed, having recently been intimidated by a rival, one Bosville, "the flaming tinman," and forced by threats to quit the road. The word-master, who meditated passing the summer as an amateur vagrant, and had some £15 or £16 in his pocket, conceived the idea of buying the pony-cart, the implements and the beat of the tinker, one Jack Slingsby, whose face he remembered having seen some ten years before. "I want a home and work," he said to the tinker. "As for a home, I suppose I can contrive to make a home out of your tent and cart; and as for work, I must learn to be a tinker; it would not be hard for one of my trade to be a tinker: what better can I do?" "What about the naming tinman?" said the tinker. "Oh, don't be afraid on my account," said the word-master: "if I were to meet him, I could easily manage him one way or the other: I know all kinds of strange words and names, and, as I told you before, I sometimes hit people when they put me out."

He accordingly purchases Slingsby's property, and further invests in a waggoner's frock. To the pony he gives the name of Ambrol, which signifies in gypsy a pear. He spends a first night under the hedge in a drizzling rain, and then spends two or three days in endeavouring to teach himself the mysteries of his new trade. While living in this solitary way he is detected by Mrs. Herne, an old gypsy woman, "one of the hairy ones," as she terms herself, who carried "a good deal of devil's tinder" about with her, and had a bitter grudge against the word-master. She hated him for having wormed himself, as she fancied, into the confidence of the gypsies and learned their language. She regarded him further, as the cause of differences between herself and her sons-in-law—as an apple of discord in the Romany camp. She employed her grandchild, Leonora, to open

relations in a friendly way with Lavengro, and then to persuade him to eat of a "drabbed" of poisoned cake. Lavengro was grievously sick, but was saved in the nick of time by the appearance upon the scene of a Welsh preacher, Peter Williams, and his wife—two good souls who wandered over all Wales and the greater part of England, comforting the hearts of the people with their doctrine, and doing all the good they could. They never slept beneath a roof, unless the weather was very severe. The preacher had a heavy burden upon his mind, to wit, "the sin against the Holy Ghost," committed when he was but a lad. Lavengro journeys for several days with the preacher and his wife, assuring the former that in common with most other boys he himself, when of tender years, had committed twenty such sins and felt no uneasiness about them. The young man's conversation had the effect of greatly lightening the despair of the old preacher. The latter begged the word-master to accompany him into Wales. On the border, however, Lavengro encountered a gypsy pal of his youthful days, Jasper Petulengro, and turned back with him. Mr. Petulengro informs him of the end of his old enemy, Mrs. Herne. Baffled in her designs against the stranger, the old woman had hanged herself.

"You observe, brother," said Petulengro, springing from his horse, "there is a point at present between us. There can be no doubt that you are the cause of Mrs. Herne's death—innocently, you will say, but still the cause. Now I shouldn't like it to be known that I went up and down the country with a pal who was the cause of my mother-in-law's death: that is to say, unless he gave me satisfaction." So they fell to with their naked fists on a broad strip of grass in the shade under some lofty trees. In half an hour's time Lavengro's face was covered with blood, whereupon Mr. Petulengro exclaimed, "Put your hands down, brother: I'm satisfied; blood has been shed, which is all that can be expected for an old woman who carried so much brimstone about with her as Mrs. Herne."]

So we resumed our route, Mr. Petulengro sitting sideways on his horse, and I driving my little pony-cart; and when we had proceeded about three miles, we came to a small public-house, which bore the sign of the "Silent Woman," where we stopped to refresh our cattle and ourselves; and as we sat over our bread and ale, it came to pass that Mr. Petulengro asked me various questions, and amongst others, how I intended to dispose of myself. I told him that I did not know; whereupon, with considerable frankness, he invited me to his camp, and told me that if I chose to settle down amongst them, and become a Rommany chal, {61} I should have his wife's sister, Ursula, who was still unmarried, and occasionally

talked of me.

I declined his offer, assigning as a reason the recent death of Mrs. Herne, of which I was the cause, although innocent. "A pretty life I should lead with those two," said I, "when they came to know it." "Pooh," said Mr. Petulengro, "they will never know it. I shan't blab, and as for Leonora, that girl has a head on her shoulder's." "Unlike the woman in the sign," said I, "whose head is cut off. You speak nonsense, Mr. Petulengro: as long as a woman has a head on her shoulders she'll talk,—but, leaving women out of the case, it is impossible to keep anything a secret; an old master of mine told me so long ago. I have moreover another reason for declining your offer. I am at present not disposed for society. I am become fond of solitude. I wish I could find some quiet place to which I could retire to hold communion with my own thoughts, and practise, if I thought fit, either of my trades." "What trades?" said Mr. Petulengro. "Why, the one which I have lately been engaged in, or my original one, which I confess I should like better, that of a kaulomescro." {62} "Ah, I have frequently heard you talk of making horseshoes," said Mr. Petulengro. "I, however, never saw you make one, and no one else that I am aware, I don't believe. Come, brother, don't be angry,—it's quite possible that you may have done things which neither I nor any one else has seen you do, and that such things may some day or other come to light, as you say nothing can be kept secret. Be that, however, as it may, pay the reckoning, and let us be going. I think I can advise you to just such a kind of place as you seem to want."

"And how do you know that I have got wherewithal to pay the reckoning?" I demanded. "Brother," said Mr. Petulengro, "I was just now looking in your face, which exhibited the very look of a person conscious of the possession of property; there was nothing hungry or sneaking in it. Pay the reckoning, brother."

And when we were once more upon the road Mr. Petulengro began to talk of the place which he conceived would serve me as a retreat under present circumstances. "I tell you frankly, brother, that it is a queer kind of place, and I am not very fond of pitching my tent in it, it is so surprisingly dreary. It is a deep dingle in the midst of a large field, on an estate about which there has been a lawsuit for some years past. I daresay you will be quiet enough, for the nearest town is five miles distant, and there are only a few huts and hedge public-houses in the neighbourhood. Brother, I am fond of solitude myself, but not that kind of solitude: I like a quiet heath, where I can pitch my house, but I always like to have a gay stirring place not far off, where the women can pen dukkerin, {63a}

and I myself can sell or buy a horse, if needful—such a place as the Chong Gav. {63b} I never feel so merry as when there, brother, or on the heath above it, where I taught you Rommany."

Shortly after this discourse we reached a milestone, and a few yards from the milestone, on the left hand, was a cross-road. Thereupon Mr. Petulengro said, "Brother, my path lies to the left; if you choose to go with me to my camp, good; if not, Chal Devlehi." {63c} But I again refused Mr. Petulengro's invitation, and, shaking him by the hand, proceeded forward alone, and about ten miles farther on I reached the town of which he had spoken, and following certain directions which he had given, discovered, though not without some difficulty, the dingle which he had mentioned. It was a deep hollow in the midst of a wide field, the shelving sides were overgrown with trees and bushes, a belt of sallows surrounded it on the top, a steep winding path led down into the depths, practicable, however, for a light cart, like mine; at the bottom was an open space, and there I pitched my tent, and there I contrived to put up my forge, "I will here ply the trade of kaulomescro," {64} said I.

CHAPTER II—THE SHOEING OF AMBROL.

It has always struck me that there is something highly poetical about a forge. I am not singular in this opinion: various individuals have assured me that they never pass by one, even in the midst of a crowded town, without experiencing sensations which they can scarcely define, but which are highly pleasurable. I have a decided penchant for forges, especially rural ones placed in some quaint quiet spot—a dingle, for example, which is a poetical place, or at a meeting of four roads, which is still more so; for how many a superstition—and superstition is the soul of poetry—is connected with these cross roads! I love to light upon such a one, especially after nightfall, as everything about a forge tells to most advantage at night; the hammer sounds more solemnly in the stillness, the glowing particles scattered by the stroke sparkle with more effect in the darkness, whilst the sooty visage of the sastramescro, {65a} half in shadow, and half illumined by the red and partial blaze of the forge, looks more mysterious and strange. On such occasions I draw in my horse's rein, and, seated in the saddle, endeavour to associate with the picture before me—in itself a picture of romance—whatever of the wild and wonderful I have read of in books, or have seen with mine own eyes in connection with forges.

I believe the life of any blacksmith, especially a rural one, would afford materials for a highly poetical history. I do not speak unadvisedly, having the honour to be free of the forge, and therefore fully competent to give an opinion as to what might be made out of the forge by some dextrous hand. Certainly, the strangest and most entertaining life ever written is that of a blacksmith of the olden north, a certain Volundr, or Velint, {65b} who lived in woods and thickets, made keen swords,—so keen, indeed, that if placed by a running stream, they would fairly divide an object, however slight, which was borne against them by the water—and who eventually married a king's daughter, by whom he had a son, who was as bold a knight as his father was a cunning blacksmith. I never see a forge at night, when seated on the back of my horse at the bottom of a dark lane, but I somehow or other associate it with the exploits of this extraordinary fellow, with many other extraordinary things, amongst which, as I have hinted

before, are particular passages of my own life, one or two of which I shall perhaps relate to the reader.

I never associate Vulcan and his Cyclops with the idea of a forge. These gentry would be the very last people in the world to flit across my mind whilst gazing at the forge from the bottom of the dark lane. The truth is, they are highly unpoetical fellows, as well they may be, connected as they are with Grecian mythology. At the very mention of their names the forge burns dull and dim, as if snowballs had been suddenly flung into it; the only remedy is to ply the bellows, an operation which I now hasten to perform.

I am in the dingle making a horseshoe. Having no other horses on whose hoofs I could exercise my art, I made my first essay on those of my own horse, if that could be called horse which horse was none, being only a pony. Perhaps if I had sought all England I should scarcely have found an animal more in need of the kind offices of the smith. On three of his feet there were no shoes at all, and on the fourth only a remnant of one, on which account his hoofs were sadly broken and lacerated by his late journeys over the hard and flinty roads. "You belonged to a tinker before," said I, addressing the animal, "but now you belong to a smith. It is said that the household of the shoemaker invariably go worse shod than that of any other craft. That may be the case of those who make shoes of leather, but it shan't be said of the household of him who makes shoes of iron; at any rate, it shan't be said of mine. I tell you what, my gry, {67a} whilst you continue with me, you shall both be better shod, and better fed, than you were with your late master."

I am in the dingle making a petul; {67b} and I must here observe, that whilst I am making a horseshoe, the reader need not be surprised if I speak occasionally in the language of the lord of the horseshoe—Mr. Petulengro. I have for some time past been plying the peshota, or bellows, endeavouring to raise up the yag, or fire, in my primitive forge. The angar, or coals, are now burning fiercely, casting forth sparks and long vagescoe chipes, or tongues of flame; a small bar of sastra, or iron, is lying in the fire, to the length of ten or twelve inches, and so far it is hot, very hot, exceeding hot, brother. And now you see me prala, snatch the bar of iron, and place the heated end of it upon the covantza, or anvil, and forthwith I commence cooring {67c} the sastra as hard as if I had been just engaged by a master at the rate of dui caulor, or two shillings a day, brother; and when I have beaten the iron till it is nearly cool, and my arm tired, I place it again in the angar, and begin again to rouse the fire with the pudomengro, which signifies the blowing thing, and is another and more common word for bellows,

and whilst thus employed I sing a gypsy song, the sound of which is wonderfully in unison with the hoarse moaning of the pudamengro, and ere the song is finished, the iron is again hot and malleable. Behold, I place it once more on the covantza, and recommence hammering; and now I am somewhat at fault: I am in want of assistance; I want you, brother, or some one else, to take the bar out of my hand and support it upon the covantza, whilst I, applying a chinomescro, or kind of chisel, to the heated iron, cut off with a lusty stroke or two of the shukaro baro, or big hammer, as much as is required for the petul. But having no one to help me, I go on hammering till I have fairly knocked off as much as I want, and then I place the piece in the fire, and again apply the bellows, and take up the song where I left it off; and when I have finished the song, I take out the iron, but this time with my plaistra, or pincers, and then I recommence hammering, turning the iron round and round with my pincers: and now I bend the iron, and lo, and behold, it has assumed something the outline of a petul.

I am not going to enter into farther details with respect to the process—it was rather a wearisome one. I had to contend with various disadvantages: my forge was a rude one, my tools might have been better; I was in want of one or two highly necessary implements, but, above all, manual dexterity. Though free of the forge, I had not practised the albeytarian art for very many years, never since—but stay, it is not my intention to tell the reader, at least in this place, how and when I became a blacksmith. There was one thing, however, which stood me in good stead in my labour, the same thing which through life has ever been of incalculable utility to me, and has not unfrequently supplied the place of friends, money, and many other things of almost equal importance—iron perseverance, without which all the advantages of time and circumstances are of very little avail in any undertaking. I was determined to make a horseshoe, and a good one, in spite of every obstacle—ay, in spite o' dukkerin. At the end of four days, during which I had fashioned and re-fashioned the thing at least fifty times, I had made a petul such as no master of the craft need have been ashamed of; with the second shoe I had less difficulty, and, by the time I had made the fourth, I would have scorned to take off my hat to the best smith in Cheshire.

But I had not yet shod my little gry; {69a} this I proceeded now to do. After having first well pared the hoofs with my churi, {69b} I applied each petul hot, glowing hot to the pindro. {69c} Oh, how the hoofs hissed; and, oh, the pleasant pungent odour which diffused itself through the dingle, an odour good for an ailing spirit!

I shoed the little horse bravely—merely pricked him once, slightly with a cafi,

{69d} for doing which, I remember, he kicked me down; I was not disconcerted, however, but, getting up, promised to be more cautious in future; and having finished the operation, I filed the hoof well with the rin baro; {69e} then dismissed him to graze amongst the trees, and, putting my smaller tools into the muchtar, {69f} I sat down on my stone, and, supporting my arm upon my knee, leaned my head upon my hand. Heaviness had come over me.

CHAPTER III—THE DARK HOUR COMES UPON LAVENGRO AND HIS SOUL IS HEAVY WITHIN HIM.

Heaviness had suddenly come over me, heaviness of heart, and of body also. I had accomplished the task which I had imposed upon myself, and now that nothing more remained to do, my energies suddenly deserted me, and I felt without strength and without hope. Several causes, perhaps, co-operated to bring about the state in which I then felt myself. It is not improbable that my energies had been overstrained during the work, the progress of which I have attempted to describe; and everyone is aware that the results of overstrained energies are feebleness and lassitude—want of nourishment might likewise have something to do with it. During my sojourn in the dingle, my food had been of the simplest and most unsatisfying description, by no means calculated to support the exertion which the labour I had been engaged upon required; it had consisted of coarse oaten cakes and hard cheese, and for beverage I had been indebted to a neighbouring pit, in which, in the heat of the day, I frequently saw, not golden or silver fish, but frogs and eftes swimming about. I am, however, inclined to believe that Mrs. Herne's cake had quite as much to do with the matter as insufficient nourishment. I had never entirely recovered from the effects of its poison, but had occasionally, especially at night, been visited by a grinding pain in the stomach, and my whole body had been suffused with cold sweat; and indeed these memorials of the drow {71} have never entirely disappeared—even at the present time they display themselves in my system, especially after much fatigue of body and excitement of mind. So there I sat in the dingle upon my stone, nerveless and hopeless, by whatever cause or causes that state had been produced—there I sat with my head leaning upon my hand, and so I continued a long, long time. At last I lifted my head from my hand, and began to cast anxious, unquiet looks about the dingle—the entire hollow was now enveloped in deep shade—I cast my eyes up; there was a golden gleam on the tops of the trees which grew towards the upper parts of the dingle; but lower down, all was gloom and twilight—yet, when I first sat down on my stone, the

sun was right above the dingle, illuminating all its depths by the rays which it cast perpendicularly down—so I must have sat a long, long time upon my stone. And now, once more, I rested my head upon my hand, but almost instantly lifted it again in a kind of fear, and began looking at the objects before me—the forge, the tools, the branches of the trees, endeavouring to follow their rows, till they were lost in the darkness of the dingle. And now I found my right hand grasping convulsively three forefingers of the left, first collectively, and then successively, wringing them till the joints cracked; then I became quiet, but not for long.

Suddenly I started up, and could scarcely repress the shriek which was rising to my lips. Was it possible? Yes, all too certain: the evil one was upon me; the inscrutable horror which I had felt in my boyhood had once more taken possession of me. I had thought that it had forsaken me; that it would never visit me again; that I had outgrown it; that I might almost bid defiance to it; and I had even begun to think of it without horror, as we are in the habit of doing of horrors of which we conceive we run no danger; and lo! when least thought of, it had seized me again. Every moment I felt it gathering force, and making me more wholly its own. What should I do?—resist, of course; and I did resist. I grasped, I tore, and strove to fling it from me; but of what avail were my efforts? I could only have got rid of it by getting rid of myself: it was a part of myself, or rather it was all myself. I rushed amongst the trees, and struck at them with my bare fists, and dashed my head against them, but I felt no pain. How could I feel pain with that horror upon me! and then I flung myself on the ground, gnawed the earth, and swallowed it; and then I looked round: it was almost total darkness in the dingle, and the darkness added to my horror. I could no longer stay there; up I rose from the ground, and attempted to escape; at the bottom of the winding path which led up the acclivity I fell over something which was lying on the ground; the something moved, and gave a kind of whine. It was my little horse, which had made that place its lair—my little horse, my only companion and friend, in that now awful solitude. I reached the mouth of the dingle; the sun was just sinking in the far west, behind me; the fields were flooded with his last gleams. How beautiful everything looked in the last gleams of the sun! I felt relieved for a moment; I was no longer in the horrid dingle; in another minute the sun was gone, and a big cloud occupied the place where he had been; in a little time it was almost as dark as it had previously been in the open part of the dingle. My horror increased; what was I to do!—it was of no use fighting against the horror—that I saw; the more I fought against it, the stronger it became. What should I do? say my prayers? Ah! why not? So I knelt down under the hedge, and said, “Our Father”; but that was of no use; and

now I could no longer repress cries; the horror was too great to be borne. What should I do: run to the nearest town or village, and request the assistance of my fellow-men? No! that I was ashamed to do; notwithstanding the horror was upon me, I was ashamed to do that. I knew they would consider me a maniac if I went screaming amongst them; and I did not wish to be considered a maniac. Moreover, I knew that I was not a maniac for I possessed all my reasoning powers, only the horror was upon me—the screaming horror! But how were indifferent people to distinguish between madness and this screaming horror? So I thought and reasoned; and at last I determined not to go amongst my fellow-men, whatever the result might be. I went to the mouth of the dingle, and there, placing myself on my knees, I again said the Lord's Prayer; but it was of no use; praying seemed to have no effect over the horror; the unutterable fear appeared rather to increase than diminish; and I again uttered wild cries, so loud that I was apprehensive they would be heard by some chance passenger on the neighbouring road; I, therefore, went deeper into the dingle; I sat down with my back against a thorn bush; the thorns entered my flesh; and when I felt them, I pressed harder against the bush; I thought the pain of the flesh might in some degree counteract the mental agony; presently I felt them no longer; the power of the mental horror was so great that it was impossible, with that upon me, to feel any pain from the thorns. I continued in this posture a long time, undergoing what I cannot describe, and would not attempt if I were able. Several times I was on the point of starting up and rushing anywhere; but I restrained myself, for I knew I could not escape from myself, so why should I not remain in the dingle? So I thought and said to myself, for my reasoning powers were still uninjured. At last it appeared to me that the horror was not so strong, not quite so strong upon me. Was it possible that it was relaxing its grasp, releasing its prey? O what a mercy! but it could not be—and yet I looked up to heaven, and clasped my hands, and said, "Our Father." I said no more; I was too agitated; and now I was almost sure that the horror had done its worst.

After a little time I arose, and staggered down yet farther into the dingle. I again found my little horse on the same spot as before. I put my hand to his mouth; he licked my hand. I flung myself down by him and put my arms round his neck; the creature whinnied, and appeared to sympathize with me; what a comfort to have any one, even a dumb brute, to sympathize with me at such a moment! I clung to my little horse, as if for safety and protection. I laid my head on his neck, and felt almost calm; presently the fear returned, but not so wild as before; it subsided, came again, again subsided; then drowsiness came over me, and at last I fell asleep, my head supported on the neck of the little horse. I awoke; it

was dark, dark night—not a star was to be seen—but I felt no fear, the horror had left me. I arose from the side of the little horse, and went into my tent, lay down, and again went to sleep.

I awoke in the morning weak and sore, and shuddering at the remembrance of what I had gone through on the preceding day. The sun was shining brightly, but it had not yet risen high enough to show its head above the trees which fenced the eastern side of the dingle, on which account the dingle was wet and dank, from the dews of the night. I kindled my fire, and, after sitting by it for some time to warm my frame, I took some of the coarse food which I have already mentioned; notwithstanding my late struggle, and the coarseness of the fare, I ate with appetite. My provisions had by this time been very much diminished, and I saw that it would be speedily necessary, in the event of my continuing to reside in the dingle, to lay in a fresh store. After my meal I went to the pit, and filled a can with water, which I brought to the dingle, and then again sat down on my stone. I considered what I should next do: it was necessary to do something, or my life in this solitude would be unsupportable. What should I do? rouse up my forge and fashion a horseshoe; but I wanted nerve and heart for such an employment; moreover, I had no motive for fatiguing myself in this manner; my own horse was shod, no other was at hand, and it is hard to work for the sake of working. What should I do? read? Yes, but I had no other book than the Bible which the Welsh Methodist had given me: well, why not read the Bible? I was once fond of reading the Bible; ay, but those days were long gone by. However, I did not see what else I could do on the present occasion—so I determined to read the Bible—it was in Welsh; at any rate it might amuse me, so I took the Bible out of the sack, in which it was lying in the cart, and began to read at the place where I chanced to open it. I opened it at the part where the history of Saul commences. At first I read with indifference, but after some time my attention was riveted. And no wonder: I had come to the visitations of Saul, those dark moments of his, when he did and said such unaccountable things; it almost appeared to me that I was reading of myself; I, too, had my visitations, dark as ever his were. O, how I sympathized with Saul, the tall dark man! I had read his life before, but it had made no impression on me; it had never occurred to me that I was like him, but I now sympathized with Saul, for my own dark hour was but recently passed, and, perhaps, would soon return again; the dark hour came frequently on Saul.

Time wore away; I finished the book of Saul, and, closing the volume, returned it to its place. I then returned to my seat on the stone, and thought of what I had

read, and what I had lately undergone. All at once I thought I felt well-known sensations—a cramping of the breast, and a tingling of the soles of the feet—they were what I had felt on the preceding day; they were the forerunners of the fear. I sat motionless on my stone; the sensations passed away, and the fear came not. Darkness was now coming again over the earth; the dingle was again in deep shade. I roused the fire with the breath of the bellows, and sat looking at the cheerful glow; it was cheering and comforting. My little horse came now and lay down on the ground beside the forge; I was not quite deserted. I again ate some of the coarse food, and drank plentifully of the water which I had fetched in the morning. I then put fresh fuel on the fire, and sat for a long time looking on the blaze; I then went into my tent.

I awoke, on my own calculation, about midnight—it was pitch dark, and there was much fear upon me.

CHAPTER IV.—A CLASSICAL ENCOUNTER—LONG MELFORD TO THE RESCUE.

Two mornings after the period to which I have brought the reader in the preceding chapter, I sat by my fire at the bottom of the dingle. I had just breakfasted, and had finished the last morsel of food which I had brought with me to that solitude.

“What shall I now do?” said I to myself: “shall I continue here, or decamp? This is a sad lonely spot—perhaps I had better quit it; but whither should I go? the wide world is before me, but what can I do therein? I have been in the world already without much success. No, I had better remain here; the place is lonely, it is true, but here I am free and independent, and can do what I please; but I can’t remain here without food. Well, I will find my way to the nearest town, lay in a fresh supply of provision, and come back, turning my back upon the world, which has turned its back upon me. I don’t see why I should not write a little sometimes; I have pens and an ink-horn, and for a writing-desk I can place the Bible on my knee. I shouldn’t wonder if I could write a capital satire on the world on the back of that Bible; but first of all I must think of supplying myself with food.”

I rose up from the stone on which I was seated, determining to go to the nearest town, with my little horse and cart and procure what I wanted. The nearest town, according to my best calculation, lay about five miles distant; I had no doubt, however, that by using ordinary diligence, I should be back before evening. In order to go lighter, I determined to leave my tent standing as it was, and all the things which I had purchased of the tinker, just as they were. “I need not be apprehensive on their account,” said I to myself; “nobody will come here to meddle with them—the great recommendation of this place is its perfect solitude—I dare say that I could live here six months without seeing a single human visage. I will now harness my little gry and be off to the town.”

At a whistle which I gave, the little gry, which was feeding on the bank near the uppermost part of the dingle, came running to me, for by this time he had

become so accustomed to me that he would obey my call for all the world as if he had been one of the canine species. "Now," said I to him, "we are going to the town to buy bread for myself, and oats for you—I am in a hurry to be back; therefore, I pray you to do your best, and to draw me and the cart to the town with all possible speed, and to bring us back; if you do your best, I promise you oats on your return. You know the meaning of oats, Ambrol?"

Ambrol whinnied as if to let me know that he understood me perfectly well, as indeed he well might, as I had never once fed him during the time he had been in my possession without saying the word in question to him. Now, Ambrol, in the Gypsy tongue, signifieth a pear.

So I caparisoned Ambrol, and then, going to the cart, removed two or three things from out it into the tent; I then lifted up the shafts, and was just going to call to the pony to come and be fastened to them, when I thought I heard a noise.

I stood stock still, supporting the shaft of the little cart in my hand, and bending the right side of my face slightly towards the ground; but I could hear nothing. The noise which I thought I had heard was not one of those sounds which I was accustomed to hear in that solitude—the note of a bird, or the rustling of a bough; it was—there I heard it again—a sound very much resembling the grating of a wheel amongst gravel. Could it proceed from the road? Oh no, the road was too far distant for me to hear the noise of anything moving along it. Again I listened, and now I distinctly heard the sound of wheels, which seemed to be approaching the dingle; nearer and nearer they drew, and presently the sound of wheels was blended with the murmur of voices. Anon I heard a boisterous shout, which seemed to proceed from the entrance of the dingle. "Here are folks at hand," said I, letting the shaft of the cart fall to the ground: "is it possible that they can be coming here?"

My doubts on that point, if I entertained any, were soon dispelled: the wheels, which had ceased moving for a moment or two, were once again in motion, and were now evidently moving down the winding path which led to my retreat. Leaving my cart, I came forward and placed myself near the entrance of the open space, with my eyes fixed on the path down which my unexpected and I may say unwelcome visitors were coming. Presently I heard a stamping or sliding, as if of a horse in some difficulty; and then a loud curse, and the next moment appeared a man and a horse and cart; the former holding the head of the horse up to prevent him from falling, of which he was in danger, owing to the precipitous nature of the path. Whilst thus occupied, the head of the man was

averted from me. When, however, he had reached the bottom of the descent, he turned his head, and perceiving me, as I stood bareheaded, without either coat or waistcoat, about two yards from him, he gave a sudden start, so violent that the backward motion of his hand had nearly flung the horse upon his haunches.

"Why don't you move forward?" said a voice from behind, apparently that of a female; "you are stopping up the way, and we shall be all down upon one another;" and I saw the head of another horse overtopping the back of the cart.

"Why don't you move forward, Jack?" said another voice, also of a female, yet higher up the path.

The man stirred not, but remained staring at me in the posture which he had assumed on first perceiving me, his body very much drawn back, his left foot far in advance of his right, and with his right hand still grasping the halter of the horse, which gave way more and more, till it was clean down on its haunches.

"What's the matter?" said the voice which I had last heard.

"Get back with you, Belle, Moll," said the man, still staring at me: "here's something not over-canny or comfortable here."

"What is it?" said the same voice; "let me pass, Moll, and I'll soon clear the way," and I heard a kind of rushing down the path.

"You need not be afraid," said I, addressing myself to the man,—"I mean you no harm; I am a wanderer like yourself—-come here to seek for shelter—you need not be afraid; I am a Rome chabo {82} by matriculation—one of the right sort, and no mistake. Good day to ye, brother; I bids ye welcome."

The man eyed me suspiciously for a moment—then, turning to his horse with a loud curse, he pulled him up from his haunches, and led him and the cart farther down to one side of the dingle, muttering as he passed me, "Afraid? Hm!"

I do not remember ever to have seen a more ruffianly-looking fellow: he was about six feet high, with an immensely athletic frame; his face was black and bluff, and sported an immense pair of whiskers, but with here and there a grey hair, for his age could not be much under fifty. He wore a faded blue frock coat, corduroys, and highlows—on his black head was a kind of red nightcap, round his bull neck a Barcelona handkerchief—I did not like the look of the man at all.

"Afraid," growled the fellow, proceeding to unharness his horse; "that was the

word, I think."

But other figures were now already upon the scene. Dashing past the other horse and cart, which by this time had reached the bottom of the pass, appeared an exceedingly tall woman, or rather girl, for she could scarcely have been above eighteen; she was dressed in a tight bodice, and a blue stuff gown; hat, bonnet or cap she had none, and her hair, which was flaxen, hung down on her shoulders unconfined; her complexion was fair, and her features handsome, with a determined but open expression. She was followed by another female, about forty, stout and vulgar-looking, at whom I scarcely glanced, my whole attention being absorbed by the tall girl.

"What's the matter, Jack?" said the latter, looking at the man.

"Only afraid, that's all," said the man, still proceeding with his work.

"Afraid at what?—at that lad? Why, he looks like a ghost—I would engage to thrash him with one hand."

"You might beat me with no hands at all," said I, "fair damsel, only by looking at me: I never saw such a face and figure, both regal—why, you look like Ingeborg, Queen of Norway; she had twelve brothers, you know, and could lick them all, though they were heroes—

"'On Dovrefeld in Norway,
Were once together seen,
The twelve heroic brothers
Of Ingeborg the queen.'"

"None of your chaffing, young fellow," said the tall girl, "or I will give you what shall make you wipe your face; be civil, or you will rue it."

"Well, perhaps I was a peg too high," said I: "I ask your pardon—here's something a bit lower—

"'As I was jawing to the gav yeck divvus {84a}
I met on the drom miro Rommany chi—'" {84b}

"None of your Rommany chies, young fellow," said the tall girl, looking more menacingly than before, and clenching her fist; "you had better be civil. I am none of your chies; and, though I keep company with gypsies or, to speak more

proper, half and halfs, I would have you to know that I come of Christian blood and parents, and was born in the great house of Long Melford."

"I have no doubt," said I, "that it was a great house; judging from your size, I shouldn't wonder if you were born in a church."

"Stay, Belle," said the man, putting himself before the young virago, who was about to rush upon me, "my turn is first." Then, advancing to me in a menacing attitude, he said with a look of deep malignity, "'Afraid' was the word, wasn't it?"

"It was," said I, "but I think I wronged you; I should have said, aghast—you exhibited every symptom of one labouring under uncontrollable fear."

The fellow stared at me with a look of stupid ferocity, and appeared to be hesitating whether to strike or not: ere he could make up his mind, the tall girl stepped forward, crying, "He's chaffing; let me at him!" and, before I could put myself on my guard, she struck me a blow on the face which had nearly brought me to the ground.

"Enough," said I, putting my hand to my cheek; "you have now performed your promise, and made me wipe my face: now be pacified, and tell me fairly the ground of this quarrel."

"Grounds!" said the fellow; "didn't you say I was afraid? and if you hadn't, who gave you leave to camp on my ground?"

"Is it your ground?" said I.

"A pretty question," said the fellow; "as if all the world didn't know that. Do you know who I am?"

"I guess I do," said I; "unless I am much mistaken, you are he whom folks call the 'Flaming Tinman.' To tell you the truth, I'm glad we have met, for I wished to see you. These are your two wives, I suppose; I greet them. There's no harm done—there's room enough here for all of us—we shall soon be good friends, I dare say; and when we are a little better acquainted, I'll tell you my history."

"Well, if that doesn't beat all!" said the fellow.

"I don't think he's chaffing now," said the girl, whose anger seemed to have subsided on a sudden; "the young man speaks civil enough."

“Civil!” said the fellow, with an oath; “but that’s just like you: with you it is a blow, and all over. Civil! I suppose you would have him stay here, and get into all my secrets, and hear all I may have to say to my two morts.”

“Two morts,” {86} said the girl, kindling up—“where are they? Speak for one, and no more. I am no mort of yours, whatever some one else may be. I tell you one thing, Black John, or Anselo, for t’other an’t your name, the same thing I told the young man here, be civil, or you will rue it.”

The fellow looked at the girl furiously, but his glance soon quailed before hers; he withdrew his eyes, and cast them on my little horse, which was feeding amongst the trees. “What’s this?” said he, rushing forward and seizing the animal. “Why, as I am alive, this is the horse of that mumping villain Slingsby.”

“It’s his no longer; I bought it and paid for it.”

“It’s mine now,” said the fellow; “I swore I would seize it the next time I found it on my beat—ay, and beat the master too.”

“I am not Slingsby.”

“All’s one for that.”

“You don’t say you will beat me?”

“Afraid was the word.”

“I’m sick and feeble.”

“Hold up your fists.”

“Won’t the horse satisfy you?”

“Horse nor bellows either.”

“No mercy, then.”

“Here’s at you.”

“Mind your eyes, Jack. There, you’ve got it. I thought so,” shouted the girl, as the fellow staggered back from a sharp blow in the eye. “I thought he was chaffing at you all along.”

“Never mind, Anselo. You know what to do—go in,” said the vulgar woman,

who had hitherto not spoken a word, but who now came forward with all the look of a fury; "go in, apopli; {87} you'll smash ten like he."

The Flaming Tinman took her advice, and came in bent on smashing, but stopped short on receiving a left-handed blow on the nose.

"You'll never beat the Flaming Tinman in that way," said the girl, looking at me doubtfully.

And so I began to think myself, when, in the twinkling of an eye, the Flaming Tinman disengaged himself of his frock-coat, and, dashing off his red nightcap, came rushing in more desperately than ever. To a flush hit which he received in the mouth he paid as little attention as a wild bull would have done; in a moment his arms were around me, and in another, he had hurled me down, falling heavily upon me. The fellow's strength appeared to be tremendous.

"Pay him off now," said the vulgar woman. The Flaming Tinman made no reply, but planting his knee on my breast, seized my throat with two huge horny hands. I gave myself up for dead, and probably should have been so in another minute but for the tall girl, who caught hold of the handkerchief which the fellow wore round his neck with a grasp nearly as powerful as that with which he pressed my throat.

"Do you call that fair play?" said she.

"Hands off, Belle," said the other woman; "do you call it fair play to interfere? hands off, or I'll be down upon you myself."

But Belle paid no heed to the injunction, and tugged so hard at the handkerchief, that the Flaming Tinman was nearly throttled; suddenly relinquishing his hold of me, he started on his feet, and aimed a blow at my fair preserver, who avoided it, but said coolly:—

"Finish t'other business first, and then I'm your woman whenever you like; but finish it fairly—no foul play when I'm by—I'll be the boy's second, and Moll can pick you up when he happens to knock you down."

The battle during the next ten minutes raged with considerable fury, but it so happened that during this time I was never able to knock the Flaming Tinman down, but on the contrary received six knock-down blows myself. "I can never stand this," said I, as I sat on the knee of Belle: "I am afraid I must give in; the Flaming Tinman hits very hard," and I spat out a mouthful of blood.

“Sure enough you’ll never beat the Flaming Tinman in the way you fight—it’s of no use flipping at the Flaming Tinman with your left hand: why don’t you use your right?”

“Because I’m not handy with it,” said I; and then getting up, I once more confronted the Flaming Tinman, and struck him six blows for his one, but they were all left-handed blows, and the blow which the Flaming Tinman gave me knocked me off my legs.

“Now, will you use Long Melford?” said Belle, picking me up.

“I don’t know what you mean by Long Melford,” said I, gasping for breath.

“Why, this long right of yours,” said Belle, feeling my right arm—“if you do, I shouldn’t wonder if you yet stand a chance.”

And now the Flaming Tinman was once more ready, much more ready than myself. I, however, rose from my second’s knee as well as my weakness would permit me; on he came striking left and right, appearing almost as fresh as to wind and spirit as when he first commenced the combat, though his eyes were considerably swelled, and his nether lip was cut in two; on he came, striking left and right, and I did not like his blows at all, or even the wind of them, which was anything but agreeable, and I gave way before him. At last he aimed a blow which, had it taken full effect, would doubtless have ended the battle, but, owing to his slipping, the fist only grazed my left shoulder, and came with terrific force against a tree, close to which I had been driven; before the Tinman could recover himself, I collected all my strength, and struck him beneath the ear, and then fell to the ground completely exhausted, and it so happened that the blow which I struck the Tinker beneath the ear was a right-handed blow.

“Hurrah for Long Melford!” I heard Belle exclaim; “there is nothing like Long Melford for shortness all the world over.”

At these words, I turned round my head as I lay, and perceived the Flaming Tinman stretched upon the ground apparently senseless. “He is dead,” said the vulgar woman, as she vainly endeavoured to raise him up; “he is dead; the best man in all the north country, killed in this fashion, by a boy.” Alarmed at these words, I made shift to get on my feet; and, with the assistance of the woman, placed my fallen adversary in a sitting posture. I put my hand to his heart, and felt a slight pulsation. “He’s not dead,” said I, “only stunned; if he were let blood, he would recover presently.” I produced a penknife which I had in my

pocket, and, baring the arm of the Tinman, was about to make the necessary incision, when the woman gave me a violent blow, and, pushing me aside, exclaimed, "I'll tear the eyes out of your head, if you offer to touch him. Do you want to complete your work, and murder him outright, now he's asleep? you have had enough of his blood already." "You are mad," said I; "I only seek to do him service. Well, if you won't let him be blooded, fetch some water and fling it into his face; you know where the pit is."

"A pretty manœuvre," said the woman: "leave my mard {90a} in the hands of you and that limmer, {90b} who has never been true to us: I should find him strangled or his throat cut when I came back." "Do you go," said I to the tall girl, "take the can and fetch some water from the pit." "You had better go yourself," said the girl, wiping a tear as she looked on the yet senseless form of the tinker; "you had better go yourself, if you think water will do him good." I had by this time somewhat recovered my exhausted powers, and, taking the can, I bent my steps as fast as I could to the pit; arriving there, I lay down on the brink, took a long draught, and then plunged my head into the water; after which I filled the can, and bent my way back to the dingle. Before I could reach the path which led down into its depths, I had to pass some way along its side; I had arrived at a part immediately over the scene of the last encounter, where the bank, overgrown with trees, sloped precipitously down. Here I heard a loud sound of voices in the dingle; I stopped, and laying hold of a tree, leaned over the bank and listened. The two women appeared to be in hot dispute in the dingle. "It was all owing to you, you limmer," said the vulgar woman to the other; "had you not interfered, the old man would soon have settled the boy."

"I'm for fair play and Long Melford," said the other. "If yow old man, as you call him, could have settled the boy fairly, he might, for all I should have cared, but no foul work for me; and as for sticking the boy with our gulleys {91} when he comes back, as you proposed, I am not so fond of your old man or you that I should oblige you in it, to my soul's destruction." "Hold your tongue, or I'll . . ."; I listened no farther, but hastened as fast as I could to the dingle. My adversary had just begun to show signs of animation; the vulgar woman was still supporting him, and occasionally cast glances of anger at the tall girl, who was walking slowly up and down. I lost no time in dashing the greater part of the water into the Tinman's face, whereupon he sneezed, moved his hands, and presently looked round him. At first his looks were dull and heavy, and without any intelligence at all; he soon, however, began to recollect himself, and to be conscious of his situation; he cast a scowling glance at me, then one of the

deepest malignity at the tall girl, who was still walking about without taking much notice of what was going forward. At last he looked at his right hand, which had evidently suffered from the blow against the tree, and a half-stifled curse escaped his lips. The vulgar woman now said something to him in a low tone, whereupon he looked at her for a moment, and then got upon his legs. Again the vulgar woman said something to him; her looks were furious, and she appeared to be urging him on to attempt something. I observed that she had a clasped knife in her hand. The fellow remained standing for some time, as if hesitating what to do; at last he looked at his hand, and, shaking his head, said something to the woman which I did not understand. The tall girl, however, appeared to overhear him, and, probably repeating his words, said, "No, it won't do: you are right there; and now hear what I have to say,—let bygones be bygones, and let us all shake hands, and camp here, as the young man was saying just now." The man looked at her, and then, without any reply, went to his horse, which was lying down among the trees, and kicking it up, led it to the cart, to which he forthwith began to harness it. The other cart and horse had remained standing motionless during the whole affair which I have been recounting, at the bottom of the pass. The woman now took the horse by the head, and leading it with the cart into the open part of the dingle, turned both round, and then led them back, till the horse and cart had mounted a little way up the ascent; she then stood still and appeared to be expecting the man. During this proceeding Belle had stood looking on without saying anything; at last, perceiving that the man had harnessed his horse to the other cart, and that both he and the woman were about to take their departure, she said, "You are not going, are you?" Receiving no answer, she continued: "I tell you what, both of you, Black John, and you Moll, his mort, this is not treating me over civilly,—however, I am ready to put up with it, and to go with you if you like, for I bear no malice. I'm sorry for what has happened, but you have only yourselves to thank for it. Now, shall I go with you? only tell me." The man made no manner of reply, but flogged his horse. The woman, however, whose passions were probably under less control, replied, with a screeching tone, "Stay where you are, you jade, and may the curse of Judas cling to you,—stay with the bit of a mullo {93a} whom you helped, and my only hope is that he may gulley {93b} you before he comes to be—Have you with us, indeed! after what's past, no, nor nothing belonging to you. Fetch down your mailla {94a} go-cart and live here with your chabo." {94b} She then whipped on the horse, and ascended the pass, followed by the man. The carts were light, and they were not long in ascending the winding path. I followed, to see that they took their departure. Arriving at the top, I found near the entrance a small donkey-cart, which I concluded

belonged to the girl. The tinker and his mort were already at some distance; I stood looking after them for a little time, then taking the donkey by the reins I led it with the cart to the bottom of the dingle. Arrived there, I found Belle seated on the stone by the fireplace. Her hair was all dishevelled, and she was in tears.

“They were bad people,” said she, “and I did not like them, but they were my only acquaintance in the wide world.”

CHAPTER V.—ISOPEL BERNERS: A TALL GIRL OF EIGHTEEN, AND HER STORY.

In the evening of that same day the tall girl and I sat at tea by the fire, at the bottom of the dingle; the girl on a small stool, and myself, as usual, upon my stone.

The water which served for the tea had been taken from a spring of pellucid water in the neighbourhood, which I had not had the good fortune to discover, though it was well known to my companion, and to the wandering people who frequented the dingle.

“This tea is very good,” said I, “but I cannot enjoy it as much as if I were well: I feel very sadly.”

“How else should you feel,” said the girl, “after fighting with the Flaming Tinman? All I wonder is that you can feel at all! As for the tea, it ought to be good, seeing that it cost me ten shillings a pound.”

“That’s a great deal for a person in your station to pay.”

“In my station! I’d have you to know, young man—however, I haven’t the heart to quarrel with you, you look so ill; and after all, it is a good sum to pay for one who travels the roads; but if I must have tea, I like to have the best; and tea I must have, for I am used to it, though I can’t help thinking that it sometimes fills my head with strange fancies—what some folks call vapours, making me weep and cry!”

“Dear me,” said I, “I should never have thought that one of your size and fierceness would weep and cry!”

“My size and fierceness! I tell you what, young man, you are not over civil, this evening; but you are ill, as I said before, and I shan’t take much notice of your language, at least for the present; as for my size, I am not so much bigger than yourself; and as for being fierce, you should be the last one to fling that at me. It

is well for you that I can be fierce sometimes. If I hadn’t taken your part against Blazing Bosville, you wouldn’t be now taking tea with me.”

“It is true that you struck me in the face first; but we’ll let that pass. So that man’s name is Bosville; what’s your own?”

“Isopel Berners.”

“How did you get that name?”

“I say, young man, you seem fond of asking questions! will you have another cup of tea?”

“I was just going to ask for another.”

“Well, then, here it is, and much good may it do you; as for my name, I got it from my mother.”

“Your mother’s name, then, was Isopel?”

“Isopel Berners.”

“But had you never a father?”

“Yes, I had a father,” said the girl, sighing, “but I don’t bear his name.”

“It is the fashion, then, in your country for children to bear their mother’s name?”

“If you ask such questions, young man, I shall be angry with you. I have told you my name, and whether my father’s or mother’s, I am not ashamed of it.”

“It is a noble name.”

“There you are right, young man. The chaplain in the great house, where I was born, told me it was a noble name; it was odd enough, he said, that the only three noble names in the country were to be found in the great house; mine was one; the other two were Devereux and Bohun.”

“What do you mean by the great house?”

“The workhouse.”

“Is it possible that you were born there?”

"Yes, young man; and as you now speak softly and kindly, I will tell you my whole tale. My father was an officer of the sea, and was killed at sea as he was coming home to marry my mother, Isopel Berners. He had been acquainted with her, and had left her; but after a few months he wrote her a letter, to say that he had no rest, and that he repented, and that as soon as his ship came to port he would do her all the reparation in his power. Well, young man, the very day before they reached port they met the enemy, and there was a fight, and my father was killed, after he had struck down six of the enemy's crew on their own deck; for my father was a big man, as I have heard, and knew tolerably well how to use his hands. And when my mother heard the news, she became half distracted, and ran away into the fields and forests, totally neglecting her business, for she was a small milliner; and so she ran demented about the meads and forests for a long time, now sitting under a tree, and now by the side of a river—at last she flung herself into some water, and would have been drowned, had not some one been at hand and rescued her, whereupon she was conveyed to the great house, lest she should attempt to do herself further mischief, for she had neither friends nor parents—and there she died three months after, having first brought me into the world. She was a sweet, pretty creature, I'm told, but hardly fit for this world, being neither large, nor fierce, nor able to take her own part. So I was born and bred in the great house, where I learnt to read and sew, to fear God, and to take my own part. When I was fourteen I was put out to service to a small farmer and his wife, with whom, however, I did not stay long, for I was half starved, and otherwise ill-treated, especially by my mistress, who one day attempted to knock me down with a besom, I knocked her down with my fist, and went back to the great house."

"And how did they receive you in the great house?"

"Not very kindly, young man—on the contrary, I was put into a dark room, where I was kept a fortnight on bread and water; I did not much care, however, being glad to have got back to the great house at any rate, the place where I was born, and where my poor mother died; and in the great house I continued two years longer, reading and sewing, fearing God, and taking my own part when necessary. At the end of the two years I was again put out to service, but this time to a rich farmer and his wife, with whom, however, I did not live long,—less time, I believe, than with the poor ones, being obliged to leave for—"

"Knocking your mistress down?"

"No, young man, knocking my master down, who conducted himself improperly

towards me. This time I did not go back to the great house, having a misgiving that they would not receive me; so I turned my back to the great house where I was born, and where my poor mother died, and wandered for several days, I know not whither, supporting myself on a few halfpence, which I chanced to have in my pocket. It happened one day, as I sat under a hedge crying, having spent my last farthing, that a comfortable-looking elderly woman came up in a cart, and seeing the state in which I was, she stopped and asked what was the matter with me. I told her some part of my story, whereupon she said, 'Cheer up, my dear: if you like, you shall go with me, and wait upon me.' Of course I wanted little persuasion, so I got into the cart and went with her. She took me to London and various other places, and I soon found that she was a travelling woman, who went about the country with silks and linen. I was of great use to her, more especially in those places where we met evil company. Once, as we were coming from Dover, we were met by two sailors, who stopped our cart, and would have robbed and stripped us. 'Let me get down,' said I; so I got down, and fought with them both, till they turned round and ran away. Two years I lived with the old gentlewoman, who was very kind to me, almost as kind as a mother; at last she fell sick at a place in Lincolnshire, and after a few days died, leaving me her cart and stock in trade, praying me only to see her decently buried, which I did, giving her a funeral fit for a gentlewoman. After which I travelled the country melancholy enough for want of company, but so far fortunate, that I could take my own part when anybody was uncivil to me. At last, passing through the valley of Todmorden, I formed the acquaintance of Blazing Bosville and his wife, with whom I occasionally took journeys for company's sake, for it is melancholy to travel about alone, even when one can take one's own part. I soon found they were evil people; but, upon the whole, they treated me civilly, and I sometimes lent them a little money, so that we got on tolerably well together. He and I, it is true, had once a dispute, and nearly came to blows; for once, when we were alone, he wanted me to marry him, promising, if I would, to turn off Grey Moll, or if I liked it better, to make her wait upon me as a maid-servant. I never liked him much, but from that hour less than ever. Of the two, I believe Grey Moll to be the best, for she is at any rate true and faithful to him, and I like truth and constancy, don't you, young man?"

"Yes," said I, "they are very nice things. I feel very strangely."

"How do you feel, young man?"

"Very much afraid."

"Afraid, at what? At the Flaming Tinman? Don't be afraid of him. He won't come back, and if he did, he shouldn't touch you in this state: I'd fight him for you. But he won't come back, so you needn't be afraid of him."

"I'm not afraid of the Flaming Tinman."

"What, then, are you afraid of?"

"The evil one?"

"The evil one?" said the girl: "where is he?"

"Coming upon me."

"Never heed," said the girl: "I'll stand by you."

CHAPTER VI.—A FOAMING DRAUGHT—THE MAGIC OF ALE.

The kitchen of the public-house was a large one, and many people were drinking in it; there was a confused hubbub of voices.

I sat down on a bench behind a deal table, of which there were three or four in the kitchen; presently a bulky man, in a green coat, of the Newmarket cut, and without a hat, entered, and observing me, came up, and in rather a gruff tone cried, "Want anything, young fellow?"

"Bring me a jug of ale," said I; "if you are the master, as I suppose you are, by that same coat of yours, and your having no hat on your head."

"Don't be saucy, young fellow," said the landlord, for such he was, "don't be saucy, or—" Whatever he intended to say, he left unsaid, for fixing his eyes upon one of my hands, which I had placed by chance upon the table, he became suddenly still.

This was my left hand, which was raw and swollen, from the blows dealt on a certain hard skull in a recent combat. "What do you mean by staring at my hand so?" said I, withdrawing it from the table.

"No offence, young man, no offence," said the landlord in a quite altered tone; "but the sight of your hand—." Then observing that our conversation began to attract the notice of the guests in the kitchen, he interrupted himself saying in an undertone, "But mum's the word for the present; I will go and fetch the ale."

In about a minute he returned, with a jug of ale foaming high. "Here's your health," said he, blowing off the foam and drinking; but perceiving that I looked rather dissatisfied, he murmured, "All's right—I glory in you; but mum's the word." Then placing the jug on the table, he gave me a confidential nod, and swaggered out of the room.

What can the silly impertinent fellow mean? thought I; but the ale was now

before me, and I hastened to drink, for my weakness was great, and my mind was full of dark thoughts, the remains of the indescribable horror of the preceding night. It may kill me, thought I, as I drank deep; but who cares? anything is better than what I have suffered. I drank deep, and then leaned back against the wall; it appeared as if a vapour was stealing up into my brain, gentle and benign, soothing and stilling the horror and the fear; higher and higher it mounted, and I felt nearly overcome; but the sensation was delicious, compared with that I had lately experienced, and now I felt myself nodding; and, bending down, I laid my head on the table on my folded hands.

And in that attitude I remained some time, perfectly unconscious. At length, by degrees, perception returned, and I lifted up my head. I felt somewhat dizzy and bewildered, but the dark shadow had withdrawn itself from me. And now, once more, I drank of the jug; this second draught did not produce an overpowering effect upon me—it revived and strengthened me—I felt a new man.

I looked around me: the kitchen had been deserted by the greater part of the guests; besides myself, only four remained; these were seated at the farther end. One was haranguing fiercely and eagerly; he was abusing England, and praising America. At last he exclaimed, “So when I gets to New York, I will toss up my hat, and damn the King.”

That man must be a radical, thought I.

CHAPTER VII.—A DISCIPLE OF WILLIAM COBBETT—THE SCHOLAR ENCOUNTERS THE PRIEST.

The individual whom I supposed to be a radical, after a short pause, again uplifted his voice; he was rather a strong-built fellow of about thirty, with an ill-favoured countenance, a white hat on his head, a snuff-coloured coat on his back, and, when he was not speaking, a pipe in his mouth. "Who would live in such a country as England?" he shouted.

"There is no country like America," said his nearest neighbour, a man also in a white hat, and of a very ill-favoured countenance,—"there is no country like America," said he, withdrawing a pipe from his mouth. "I think I shall"—and here he took a draught from a jug, the contents of which he appeared to have in common with the other—"go to America one of these days myself."

"Poor old England is not such a bad country, after all," said a third, a simple-looking man in a labouring dress, who sat smoking a pipe without anything before him. "If there was but a little more work to be got I should have nothing to say against her. I hope, however—"

"You hope? who cares what you hope?" interrupted the first, in a savage tone; "you are one of those sneaking hounds who are satisfied with dog's wages, a bit of bread and a kick. Work, indeed! who, with the spirit of a man, would work for a country where there is neither liberty of speech nor of action, a land full of beggarly aristocracy, hungry borough-mongers, insolent parsons, and 'their --- wives and daughters,' as William Cobbett says, in his 'Register'?"

"Ah, the Church of England has been a source of incalculable mischief to these realms," said another.

The person who uttered these words sat rather aloof from the rest; he was dressed in a long black surtout. I could not see much of his face, partly owing to his keeping it very much directed to the ground, and partly owing to a large

slouched hat which he wore; I observed, however, that his hair was of a reddish tinge. On the table near him was a glass and spoon.

"You are quite right," said the first, alluding to what this last had said: "the Church of England has done incalculable mischief here. I value no religion three halfpence, for I believe in none; but the one that I hate most is the Church of England; so when I get to New York, after I have shown the fine fellows on the quay a spice of me, by --- the King, I'll toss up my hat again, and --- the Church of England too."

"And suppose the people of New York should clap you in the stocks?" said I.

These words drew upon me the attention of the whole four. The radical and his companion stared at me ferociously; the man in black gave me a peculiar glance from under his slouched hat; the simple-looking man in the labouring dress laughed.

"What are you laughing at, you fool?" said the radical, turning and looking at the other, who appeared to be afraid of him, "hold your noise; and a pretty fellow, you," said he, looking at me, "to come here, and speak against the great American nation."

"I speak against the great American nation?" said I: "I rather paid them a compliment."

"By supposing they would put me in the stocks? Well, I call it abusing them, to suppose they would do any such thing. Stocks, indeed!—there are no stocks in all the land. Put me in the stocks? why, the President will come down to the quay, and ask me to dinner, as soon as he hears what I have said about the King and the Church."

"I shouldn't wonder," said I, "if you go to America, you will say of the President and country what now you say of the King and Church, and cry out for somebody to sent you back to England."

The radical dashed his pipe to pieces against the table. "I tell you what, young fellow, you are a spy of the aristocracy, sent here to kick up a disturbance."

"Kicking up a disturbance," said I, "is rather inconsistent with the office of spy. If I were a spy, I should hold my head down, and say nothing."

The man in black {106} partially raised his head, and gave me another peculiar

glance.

“Well, if you ar’n’t sent to spy, you are sent to bully, to prevent people speaking, and to run down the great American nation; but you sha’n’t bully me. I say, down with the aristocracy, the beggarly aristocracy! Come, what have you to say to that?”

“Nothing,” said I.

“Nothing!” repeated the radical.

“No,” said I: “down with them as soon as you can.”

“As soon as I can! I wish I could. But I can down with a bully of theirs. Come, will you fight for them?”

“No,” said I.

“You won’t?”

“No,” said I; “though from what I have seen of them I should say they are tolerably able to fight for themselves.”

“You won’t fight for them,” said the radical, triumphantly; “I thought so; all bullies, especially those of the aristocracy, are cowards. Here, landlord,” said he, raising his voice, and striking against the table with the jug, “some more ale—he won’t fight for his friends.”

“A white feather,” said his companion.

“He! he!” tittered the man in black.

“Landlord, landlord,” shouted the radical, striking the table with the jug louder than before.

“Who called?” said the landlord, coming in at last.

“Fill this jug again,” said the other, “and be quick about it.”

“Does any one else want anything?” said the landlord.

“Yes,” said the man in black; “you may bring me another glass of gin and water.”

“Cold?” said the landlord.

“Yes,” said the man in black, “with a lump of sugar in it.”

“Gin and water cold, with a lump of sugar in it,” {107} said I, and struck the table with my fist.

“Take some?” said the landlord inquiringly.

“No,” said I, “only something came into my head.”

“He’s mad,” said the man in black.

“Not he,” said the radical. “He’s only shamming; he knows his master is here, and therefore has recourse to these manœuvres, but it won’t do. Come, landlord, what are you staring at? Why don’t you obey your orders? Keeping your customers waiting in this manner is not the way to increase your business.”

The landlord looked at the radical, and then at me. At last taking the jug and glass, he left the apartment, and presently returned with each filled with its respective liquor. He placed the jug with the beer before the radical, and the glass with the gin and water before the man in black, and then, with a wink to me, he sauntered out.

“Here is your health, sir,” said the man of the snuff-coloured coat, addressing himself to the man in black. “I honour you for what you said about the Church of England. Every one who speaks against the Church of England has my warm heart. Down with it, I say, and may the stones of it be used for mending the roads, as my friend William says in his Register.”

The man in black, with a courteous nod of his head, drank to the man in the snuff-coloured coat. “With respect to the steeples,” said he, “I am not altogether of your opinion: they might be turned to better account than to serve to mend the roads; they might still be used as places of worship, but not for the worship of the Church of England. I have no fault to find with the steeples, it is the Church itself which I am compelled to arraign; but it will not stand long, the respectable part of its ministers are already leaving it. It is a bad Church, a persecuting Church.”

“Whom does it persecute?” said I. The man in black glanced at me slightly, and then replied slowly, “The Catholics.”

“And do those whom you call Catholics never persecute?” said I.

"Never," said the man in black.

"Did you ever read 'Fox's Book of Martyrs?'" said I.

"He! he!" tittered the man in black, "there is not a word of truth in 'Fox's Book of Martyrs.'"

"Ten times more than in the 'Flos Sanctorum,'" said I.

The man in black looked at me, but made no answer.

"And what say you to the Massacre of the Albigenses and the Vaudois, 'whose bones lie scattered on the cold Alp,' or the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes?"

The man in black made no answer.

"Go to," said I, "it is because the Church of England is not a persecuting Church, that those whom you call the respectable part are leaving her; it is because they can't do with the poor Dissenters what Simon de Montfort did with the Albigenses, and the cruel Piedmontese with the Vaudois, that they turn to bloody Rome; the Pope will no doubt welcome them, for the Pope, do you see, being very much in want, will welcome—"

"Hollo!" said the radical, interfering, "what are you saying about the Pope? I say hurrah for the Pope: I value no religion three halfpence, as I said before, but if I were to adopt any, it should be the Popish, as it's called, because I conceive the Popish to be the grand enemy of the Church of England, of the beggarly aristocracy, and the borough-monger system, so I won't hear the Pope abused while I am by. Come, don't look fierce. You won't fight, you know, I have proved it; but I will give you another chance: I will fight for the Pope—will you fight against him?"

"O dear me, yes," said I, getting up and stepping forward. "I am a quiet, peaceable young man, and, being so, am always ready to fight against the Pope—the enemy of all peace and quiet—to refuse fighting for the aristocracy is a widely different thing from refusing to fight against the Pope—so come on, if you are disposed to fight for him. To the Pope broken bells, to Saint James broken shells. No Popish vile oppression, but the Protestant succession. Confusion to the Groyne, hurrah for the Boyne, for the army at Clonmel, and the Protestant young gentlemen who live there as well."

"An Orangeman," said the man in black.

“Not a Platitude,” said I.

The man in black gave a slight start. {110}

“Amongst that family,” said I, “no doubt something may be done, but amongst the Methodist preachers I should conceive that the success would not be great.”

The man in black sat quite still.

“Especially amongst those who have wives,” I added.

The man in black stretched his hand towards his gin and water.

“However,” said I, “we shall see what the grand movement will bring about, and the results of the lessons in elocution.”

The man in black lifted the glass up to his mouth, and in doing so, let the spoon fall.

“But what has this to do with the main question?” said I: “I am waiting here to fight against the Pope.”

“Come, Hunter,” said the companion of the man in the snuff-coloured coat, “get up, and fight for the Pope.”

“I don’t care for the young fellow,” said the man in the snuff-coloured coat.

“I know you don’t,” said the other; “so get up, and serve him out.”

“I could serve out three like him,” said the man in the snuff-coloured coat.

“So much the better for you,” said the other—“the present work will be all the easier for you; get up, and serve him out at once.”

The man in the snuff-coloured coat did not stir.

“Who shows the white feather now?” said the simple-looking man.

“He! he! he!” tittered the man in black.

“Who told you to interfere?” said the radical, turning ferociously towards the simple-looking man; “say another word, and I’ll—And you!” said he, addressing himself to the man in black, “a pretty fellow you to turn against me, after I had taken your part. I tell you what, you may fight for yourself. I’ll see you and your Pope in the pit of Eldon before I fight for either of you, so make the most of

it."

"Then you won't fight?" said I.

"Not for the Pope," said the radical; "I'll see the Pope—"

"Dear me!" said I, "not fight for the Pope, whose religion you would turn to, if you were inclined for any? I see how it is; you are not fond of fighting. But I'll give you another chance. You were abusing the Church of England just now. I'll fight for it—will you fight against it?"

"Come, Hunter," said the other, "get up, and fight against the Church of England."

"I have no particular quarrel against the Church of England," said the man in the snuff-coloured coat; "my quarrel is with the aristocracy. If I said anything against the Church, it is merely for a bit of corollary, as Master William Cobbett would say; the quarrel with the Church belongs to this fellow in black, so let him carry it on. However," he continued suddenly, "I won't slink from the matter either; it shall never be said by the fine fellows on the quay of New York, that I wouldn't fight against the Church of England. So down with the beggarly aristocracy, the Church, and the Pope, to the bottom of the pit of Eldon, and may the Pope fall first, and the others upon him."

Thereupon, dashing his hat on the table, he placed himself in an attitude of offence, and rushed forward. He was, as I have said before, a powerful fellow, and might have proved a dangerous antagonist, more especially to myself, who, after my recent encounter with the Flaming Tinman, and my wrestlings with the evil one, was in anything but fighting order. Any collision, however, was prevented by the landlord, who, suddenly appearing, thrust himself between us. "There shall be no fighting here," said he: "no one shall fight in this house, except it be with myself; so if you two have anything to say to each other, you had better go into the field behind the house. But you fool," said he, pushing Hunter violently on the breast, "do you know whom you are going to tackle with?—this is the young chap that beat Blazing Bosville, only as late as yesterday, in Mumpers Dingle. Grey Moll told me all about it last night, when she came for some brandy for her husband, who, she said, had been half killed; and she described the young man to me so closely, that I knew him at once, that is, as soon as I saw how his left hand was bruised, for she told me he was a left-hand hitter. Ar'n't it all true, young man? Ar'n't you he that beat Flaming Bosville in Mumpers Dingle?" "I never beat Flaming Bosville," said I: "he beat

himself. Had he not struck his hand against a tree, I shouldn't be here at the present moment." "Hear! hear!" said the landlord, "now that's just as it should be; I like a modest man, for, as the parson says, nothing sits better upon the young man than modesty. I remember, when I was young, fighting with Tom of Hopton, the best man that ever pulled off coat in England. I remember, too, that I won the battle; for I happened to hit Tom of Hopton in the mark, as he was coming in, so that he lost his wind, and falling squelch on the ground, do ye see, he lost the battle; though I am free to confess that he was a better man than myself—indeed, the best man that ever fought in England. Yet still I won the battle, as every customer of mine, and everybody within twelve miles round, has heard over and over again. Now, Mr. Hunter, I have one thing to say; if you choose to go into the field behind the house, and fight the young man, you can. I'll back him for ten pounds; but no fighting in my kitchen—because why? I keeps a decent kind of an establishment."

"I have no wish to fight the young man," said Hunter; "more especially as he has nothing to say for the aristocracy. If he chose to fight for them, indeed—but he won't, I know; for I see he's a decent, respectable young man; and, after all, fighting is a blackguard way of settling a dispute, so I have no wish to fight. However, there is one thing I'll do," said he, uplifting his fist; "I'll fight this fellow in black here for half a crown, or for nothing, if he pleases; it was he that got up the last dispute between me and the young man, with his Pope and his nonsense; so I will fight him for anything he pleases, and perhaps the young man will be my second; whilst you—"

"Come, Doctor," said the landlord, "or whatsoever you be, will you go into the field with Hunter? I'll second you, only you must back yourself. I'll lay five pounds on Hunter, if you are inclined to back yourself; and will help you to win it as far, do you see, as a second can; because why? I always likes to do the fair thing."

"Oh! I have no wish to fight," said the man in black, hastily; "fighting is not my trade. If I have given any offence, I beg anybody's pardon."

"Landlord," said I, "what have I to pay?"

"Nothing at all," said the landlord; "glad to see you. This is the first time that you have been at my house, and I never charge new customers, at least customers such as you, anything for the first draught. You'll come again, I daresay; shall always be glad to see you. I won't take it," said he, as I put

sixpence on the table; "I won't take it."

"Yes, you shall," said I; "but not in payment for anything I have had myself: it shall serve to pay for a jug of ale for that gentleman," said I, pointing to the simple-looking individual; "he is smoking a poor pipe, I do not mean to say that a pipe is a bad thing; but a pipe without ale, do you see—"

"Bravo!" said the landlord, "that's just the conduct I like."

"Bravo!" said Hunter. "I shall be happy to drink with the young man whenever I meet him at New York, where, do you see, things are better managed than here."

"If I have given offence to anybody," said the man in black, "I repeat that I ask pardon,—more especially to the young gentleman, who was perfectly right to stand up for his religion, just as I—not that I am of any particular religion, no more than this honest gentleman here," bowing to Hunter; "but I happen to know something of the Catholics—several excellent friends of mine are Catholics—and of a surety the Catholic religion is an ancient religion, and a widely-extended religion, though it certainly is not a universal religion, but it has of late made considerable progress, even amongst those nations who have been particularly opposed to it—amongst the Prussians and the Dutch, for example, to say nothing of the English; and then, in the East, amongst the Persians, amongst the Armenians."

"The Armenians," said I; "O dear me, the Armenians—"

"Have you anything to say about those people, sir?" said the man in black, lifting up his glass to his mouth.

"I have nothing further to say," said I, "than that the roots of Ararat are occasionally found to be deeper than those of Rome." {117}

"There's half a crown broke," said the landlord, as the man in black let fall the glass, which was broken to pieces on the floor. "You will pay me the damage, friend, before you leave this kitchen. I like to see people drink freely in my kitchen, but not too freely, and I hate breakages: because why? I keeps a decent kind of an establishment."

CHAPTER VIII.—FIRST LESSONS IN ARMENIAN.

The public-house where the scenes which I have attempted to describe in the preceding chapters took place, was at the distance of about two miles from the dingle. The sun was sinking in the west by the time I returned to the latter spot. I found Belle seated by a fire, over which her kettle was suspended. During my absence she had prepared herself a kind of tent, consisting of large hoops covered over with tarpaulin, quite impenetrable to rain, however violent. "I am glad you are returned," said she, as soon as she perceived me; "I began to be anxious about you. Did you take my advice?"

"Yes," said I; "I went to the public-house and drank ale as you advised me; it cheered, strengthened, and drove away the horror from my mind—I am much beholden to you."

"I knew it would do you good," said Belle; "I remembered that when the poor women in the great house were afflicted with hysterics and fearful imaginings, the surgeon, who was a good, kind man, used to say, 'Ale, give them ale, and let it be strong.'"

"He was no advocate for tea, then?" {118} said I.

"He had no objection to tea; but he used to say, 'Everything in its season.' Shall we take ours now?—I have waited for you."

"I have no objection," said I; "I feel rather heated, and at present should prefer tea to ale—'Everything in its season,' as the surgeon said."

Thereupon Belle prepared tea, and, as we were taking it, she said, "What did you see and hear at the public-house?"

"Really," said I, "you appear to have your full portion of curiosity: what matters it to you what I saw and heard at the public-house?"

"It matters very little to me," said Belle; "I merely inquired of you, for the sake of a little conversation. You were silent, and it is uncomfortable for two people to sit together without opening their lips—at least, I think so."

"One only feels uncomfortable," said I, "in being silent, when one happens to be thinking of the individual with whom one is in company. To tell you the truth, I was not thinking of my companion, but of certain company with whom I had been at the public-house."

"Really, young man," said Belle, "you are not over complimentary; but who may this wonderful company have been—some young—?" and here Belle stopped.

"No," said I, "there was no young person—if person you were going to say. There was a big portly landlord, whom I dare say you have seen; a noisy, savage radical, who wanted at first to fasten upon me a quarrel about America, but who subsequently drew in his horns; then there was a strange fellow, a prowling priest, I believe, whom I have frequently heard of, who at first seemed disposed to side with the radical against me, and afterwards with me against the radical. There, you know my company, and what took place."

"Was there no one else?" said Belle.

"You are mighty curious," said I. "No, none else, except a poor simple mechanic, and some common company, who soon went away."

Belle looked at me for a moment, and then appeared to be lost in thought. "America," said she musingly—"America!"

"What of America?" said I.

"I have heard that it is a mighty country."

"I dare say it is," said I; "I have heard my father say that the Americans are first-rate marksmen."

"I heard nothing about that," said Belle; "what I heard was, that it is a great and goodly land, where people can walk about without jostling, and where the industrious can always find bread; I have frequently thought of going thither."

"Well," I said, "the radical in the public-house will perhaps be glad of your company thither; he is as great an admirer of America as yourself, though I believe on different grounds."

“I shall go by myself,” said Belle, “unless—unless that should happen which is not likely. I am not fond of radicals no more than I am of scoffers and mockers.”

“Do you mean to say that I am a scoffer and mocker?”

“I don’t wish to say you are,” said Belle; “but some of your words sound strangely like scoffing and mocking. I have now one thing to beg, which is, that if you have anything to say against America, you would speak it out boldly.”

“What should I have to say against America? I never was there.”

“Many people speak against America who never were there.”

“Many people speak in praise of America who never were there; but with respect to myself, I have not spoken for or against America.”

“If you liked America you would speak in its praise.”

“By the same rule, if I disliked America I should speak against it.”

“I can’t speak with you,” said Belle; “but I see you dislike the country.”

“The country!”

“Well, the people—don’t you?”

“I do.”

“Why do you dislike them?”

“Why, I have heard my father say that the American marksmen, led on by a chap of the name of Washington, sent the English to the right-about in double-quick time.”

“And that is your reason for disliking the Americans?”

“Yes,” said I, “that is my reason for disliking them.”

“Will you take another cup of tea?” said Belle.

I took another cup; we were again silent. “It is rather uncomfortable,” said I, at last, “for people to sit together without having anything to say.”

“Were you thinking of your company?” said Belle.

“What company?” said I.

“The present company.”

“The present company! Oh, ah!—I remember that I said one only feels uncomfortable in being silent with a companion, when one happens to be thinking of the companion. Well, I had been thinking of you the last two or three minutes, and had just come to the conclusion, that to prevent us both feeling occasionally uncomfortably towards each other, having nothing to say, it would be as well to have a standing subject, on which to employ our tongues. Belle, I have determined to give you lessons in Armenian.”

“What is Armenian?”

“Did you ever hear of Ararat?”

“Yes, that was the place where the ark rested; I have heard the chaplain in the great house talk of it; besides, I have read of it in the Bible.”

“Well, Armenian is the speech of people of that place, and I should like to teach it you.”

“To prevent—”

“Ay, ay, to prevent our occasionally feeling uncomfortable together. Your acquiring it besides might prove of ulterior advantage to us both: for example, suppose you and I were in promiscuous company, at Court, for example, and you had something to communicate to me which you did not wish any one else to be acquainted with, how safely you might communicate it to me in Armenian!”

“Would not the language of the roads do as well?” said Belle.

“In some places it would,” said I, “but not at Court, owing to its resemblance to thieves’ slang. There is Hebrew, again, which I was thinking of teaching you, till the idea of being presented at Court made me abandon it, from the probability of our being understood, in the event of our speaking it, by at least half a dozen people in our vicinity. There is Latin, it is true, or Greek, which we might speak aloud at Court with perfect confidence of safety; but upon the whole I should prefer teaching you Armenian, not because it would be a safer language to hold communication with at Court, but because, not being very well grounded in it myself, I am apprehensive that its words and forms may escape from my recollection, unless I have sometimes occasion to call them forth.”

"I am afraid we shall have to part company before I have learnt it," said Belle; "in the mean time, if I wish to say anything to you in private, somebody being by, shall I speak in the language of the roads?"

"If no roadster is nigh, you may," said I, "and I will do my best to understand you. Belle, I will now give you a lesson in Armenian."

"I suppose you mean no harm," said Belle.

"Not in the least; I merely propose the thing to prevent our occasionally feeling uncomfortable together. Let us begin."

"Stop till I have removed the tea-things," said Belle; and, getting up, she removed them to her own encampment.

"I am ready," said Belle, returning, and taking her former seat, "to join with you in anything which will serve to pass away the time agreeably, provided there is no harm in it."

"Belle," said I, "I have determined to commence the course of Armenian lessons by teaching you the numerals; but, before I do that, it will be as well to tell you that the Armenian language is called Haik."

"I am sure that word will hang upon my memory," said Belle.

"Why hang upon it?"

"Because the old women in the great house used to call so the chimney-hook, on which they hung the kettle; in like manner, on the hake of my memory I will hang your hake."

"Good!" said I, "you will make an apt scholar; but, mind, that I did not say hake, but haik; the words are, however, very much alike; and, as you observe, upon your hake you may hang my haik. We will now proceed to the numerals."

"What are numerals?" said Belle.

"Numbers. I will say the Haikan numbers up to ten. There, have you heard them?"

"Yes."

"Well, try and repeat them."

"I only remember number one," said Belle, "and that because it is me."

"I will repeat them again," said I, "and pay great attention. Now, try again."

"Me, jergo, earache."

"I neither said jergo, nor earache. I said yergou and yerek. Belle, I am afraid I shall have some difficulty with you as a scholar."

Belle made no answer. Her eyes were turned in the direction of the winding path, which led from the bottom of the hollow where we were seated, to the plain above "Gorgio shunella," {125a} she said, at length, in a low voice.

"Pure Rommany," said I; "where?" I added, in a whisper.

"Dovey odoy," {125b} said Belle, nodding with her head towards the path.

"I will soon see who it is," said I; and starting up, I rushed towards the pathway, intending to lay violent hands on any one I might find lurking in its windings. Before, however, I had reached its commencement, a man, somewhat above the middle height, advanced from it into the dingle, in whom I recognised the man in black, whom I had seen in the public-house.

CHAPTER IX.—LAVENGRO RECEIVES A VISIT OF CEREMONY FROM THE MAN IN BLACK.

The man in black and myself stood opposite to each other for a minute or two in silence; I will not say that we confronted each other that time, for the man in black, after a furtive glance, did not look me in the face, but kept his eyes fixed, apparently on the leaves of a bunch of ground nuts which were growing at my feet. At length, looking round the dingle, he exclaimed, "Buona Sera, I hope I don't intrude."

"You have as much right here," said I, "as I or my companion; but you had no right to stand listening to our conversation."

"I was not listening," said the man: "I was hesitating whether to advance or retire; and if I heard some of your conversation the fault was not mine."

"I do not see why you should have hesitated if your intentions were good," said I.

"I think the kind of place in which I found myself might excuse some hesitation," said the man in black, looking around; "moreover, from what I have seen of your demeanour at the public-house, I was rather apprehensive that the reception I might experience at your hands might be more rough than agreeable."

"And what may have been your motive for coming to this place?" said I.

"Per far visita à sua signoria, ecco il motivo."

"Why do you speak to me in that gibberish," said I; "do you think I understand it?"

"It is not Armenian," said the man in black; "but it might serve in a place like this, for the breathing of a little secret communication, were any common roadster near at hand. It would not do at Court, it is true, being the language of

singing women, and the like; but we are not at Court—when we are, I can perhaps summon up a little indifferent Latin, if I have anything private to communicate to the learned Professor."

And at the conclusion of this speech the man in black lifted up his head, and, for some moments, looked me in the face. The muscles of his own seemed to be slightly convulsed, and his mouth opened in a singular manner.

"I see," said I, "that for some time you were standing near me and my companion, in the mean act of listening."

"Not at all," said the man in black: "I heard from the steep bank above, that to which I have now alluded, whilst I was puzzling myself to find the path which leads to your retreat. I made, indeed, nearly the compass of the whole thicket before I found it."

"And how did you know that I was here?" I demanded.

"The landlord of the public-house, with whom I had some conversation concerning you, informed me that he had no doubt I should find you in this place, to which he gave me instructions not very clear. But now I am here, I crave permission to remain a little time, in order that I may hold some communion with you."

"Well," said I, "since you are come, you are welcome; please step this way."

Thereupon I conducted the man in black to the fireplace, where Belle was standing, who had risen from her stool on my springing up to go in quest of the stranger. The man in black looked at her with evident curiosity, then making her rather a graceful bow, "Lovely virgin," said he, stretching out his hand, "allow me to salute your fingers."

"I am not in the habit of shaking hands with strangers," said Belle.

"I did not presume to request to shake hands with you," said the man in black; "I merely wished to be permitted to salute with my lips the extremity of your two forefingers."

"I never permit anything of the kind," said Belle; "I do not approve of such unmanly ways: they are only befitting those who lurk in corners or behind trees, listening to the conversation of people who would fain be private."

"Do you take me for a listener, then?" said the man in black.

"Ay, indeed I do," said Belle; "the young man may receive your excuses, and put confidence in them if he please, but for my part I neither admit them, nor believe them;" and thereupon flinging her long hair back, which was hanging over her cheeks, she seated herself on her stool.

"Come, Belle," said I, "I have bidden the gentleman welcome; I beseech you, therefore, to make him welcome. He is a stranger, where we are at home; therefore, even did we wish him away, we are bound to treat him kindly."

"That's not English doctrine," said the man in black.

"I thought the English prided themselves on their hospitality," said I.

"They do so," said the man in black; "they are proud of showing hospitality to people above them, that is to those who do not want it, but of the hospitality which you were now describing, and which is Arabian, they know nothing. No Englishman will tolerate another in his house, from whom he does not expect advantage of some kind, and to those from whom he does, he can be civil enough. An Englishman thinks that, because he is in his own house, he has a right to be boorish and brutal to any one who is disagreeable to him, as all those are who are really in want of assistance. Should a hunted fugitive rush into an Englishman's house, beseeching protection, and appealing to the master's feelings of hospitality, the Englishman would knock him down in the passage."

"You are too general," said I, "in your strictures; Lord [Aberdeen], the unpopular Tory minister, was once chased through the streets of London by a mob, and, being in danger of his life, took shelter in the shop of a Whig linendraper, declaring his own unpopular name, and appealing to the linendraper's feelings of hospitality; whereupon the linendraper, utterly forgetful of all party rancour, nobly responded to the appeal, and telling his wife to conduct his lordship upstairs, jumped over the counter, with his ell in his hand, and placing himself with half a dozen of his assistants at the door of his boutique, manfully confronted the mob, telling them that he would allow himself to be torn to a thousand pieces, ere he would permit them to injure a hair of his lordship's head: what do you think of that!"

"He! he! he!" tittered the man in black.

"Well," said I, "I am afraid your own practice is not very different from that

which you have been just now describing: you sided with the radical in the public-house against me, as long as you thought him the most powerful, and then turned against him when you saw he was cowed. What have you to say to that?"

"O! when one is in Rome, I mean England, one must do as they do in England; I was merely conforming to the custom of the country, he! he! but I beg your pardon here, as I did in the public-house I made a mistake."

"Well," said I, "we will drop the matter; but pray seat yourself on that stone, and I will sit down on the grass near you."

The man in black, after proffering two or three excuses for occupying what he supposed to be my seat, sat down upon the stone, and I squatted down gypsy fashion, just opposite to him, Belle sitting on her stool at a slight distance on my right.

After a time I addressed him thus. "Am I to reckon this a mere visit of ceremony? Should it prove so, it will be, I believe, the first visit of the kind ever paid me."

"Will you permit me to ask," said the man in black,—"the weather is very warm," said he, interrupting himself, and taking off his hat.

I now observed that he was partly bald, his red hair having died away from the fore part of his crown; his forehead was high, his eyebrows scanty, his eyes, grey and sly, with a downward tendency, his nose was slightly aquiline, his mouth rather large—a kind of sneering smile played continually on his lips, his complexion was somewhat rubicund.

"A bad countenance," said Belle, in the language of the roads, observing that my eyes were fixed on his face.

"Does not my countenance please you, fair damsel?" said the man in black, resuming his hat and speaking in a peculiarly gentle voice.

"How," said I, "do you understand the language of the roads?"

"As little as I do Armenian," said the man in black; "but I understand look and tone."

"So do I, perhaps," retorted Belle; "and, to tell you the truth, I like your tone as little as your face."

"For shame!" said I; "have you forgot what I was saying just now about the duties of hospitality? You have not yet answered my question," said I, addressing myself to the man, "with respect to your visit."

"Will you permit me to ask who you are?"

"Do you see the place where I live?" said I.

"I do," said the man in black, looking around.

"Do you know the name of this place?"

"I was told it was Mumpers' or Gypsies' Dingle," said the man in black.

"Good," said I; "and this forge and tent, what do they look like?"

"Like the forge and tent of a wandering Zigan; I have seen the like in Italy."

"Good," said I; "they belong to me."

"Are you, then, a Gypsy?" said the man in black.

"What else should I be?"

"But you seem to have been acquainted with various individuals with whom I have likewise had acquaintance; and you have even alluded to matters, and even words, which have passed between me and them."

"Do you know how Gypsies live!" said I.

"By hammering old iron, I believe, and telling fortunes."

"Well," said I, "there's my forge, and yonder is some iron, though not old, and by your own confession I am a soothsayer."

"But how did you come by your knowledge?"

"Oh," said I, "if you want me to reveal the secrets of my trade, I have, of course, nothing further to say. Go to the scarlet dyer, and ask him how he dyes cloth."

"Why scarlet?" said the man in black. "Is it because Gypsies blush like scarlet?"

"Gypsies never blush," said I; "but Gypsies' cloaks are scarlet."

"I should almost take you for a Gypsy," said the man in black, "but for—"

“For what?” said I.

“But for that same lesson in Armenian, and your general knowledge of languages; as for your manners and appearance I will say nothing,” said the man in black, with a titter.

“And why should not a Gypsy possess a knowledge of languages?” said I.

“Because the Gypsy race is perfectly illiterate,” said the man in black; “they are possessed, it is true, of a knavish acuteness, and are particularly noted for giving subtle and evasive answers—and in your answers, I confess, you remind me of them; but that one of the race should acquire a learned language like the Armenian, and have a general knowledge of literature, is a thing che io non credo afatto.”

“What do you take me for?” said I.

“Why,” said the man in black, “I should consider you to be a philologist, who, for some purpose, has taken up a Gypsy life; but I confess to you that your way of answering questions is far too acute for a philologist.”

“And why should not a philologist be able to answer questions acutely?” said I.

“Because the philological race is the most stupid under Heaven,” said the man in black; “they are possessed, it is true, of a certain faculty for picking up words, and a memory for retaining them; but that any one of the sect should be able to give a rational answer, to say nothing of an acute one, on any subject—even though the subject were philology—is a thing of which I have no idea.”

“But you found me giving a lesson in Armenian to this handmaid?”

“I believe I did,” said the man in black.

“And you heard me give what you are disposed to call acute answers to the questions you asked me?”

“I believe I did,” said the man in black.

“And would any one but a philologist think of giving a lesson in Armenian to a handmaid in a dingle?”

“I should think not,” said the man in black.

“Well, then, don’t you see that it is possible for a philologist to give not only a

rational, but an acute answer?"

"I really don't know," said the man in black.

"What's the matter with you?" said I.

"Merely puzzled," said the man in black.

"Puzzled?"

"Yes."

"Really puzzled?"

"Yes."

"Remain so."

"Well," said the man in black, rising, "puzzled or not, I will no longer trespass upon your and this young lady's retirement; only allow me, before I go, to apologise for my intrusion."

"No apology is necessary," said I; "will you please to take anything before you go? I think this young lady, at my request, will contrive to make you a cup of tea."

"Tea!" said the man in black—"he! he! I don't drink tea; I don't like it,—if, indeed, you had—" and here he stopped.

"There's nothing like gin and water, is there?" said I, "but I am sorry to say I have none."

"Gin and water," said the man in black—"how do you know that I am fond of gin and water?"

"Did I not see you drinking some at the public-house?"

"You did," said the man in black, "and I remember, that when I called for some, you repeated my words. Permit me to ask, Is gin and water an unusual drink in England?"

"It is not usually drunk cold, and with a lump of sugar," said I.

"And did you know who I was by my calling for it so?"

“Gypsies have various ways of obtaining information,” said I.

“With all your knowledge,” said the man in black, “you do not appear to have known that I was coming to visit you?”

“Gypsies do not pretend to know anything which relates to themselves,” said I; “but I advise you, if you ever come again, to come openly.”

“Have I your permission to come again?” said the man in black.

“Come when you please; this dingle is as free for you as me.”

“I will visit you again,” said the man in black—“till then addio.”

“Belle,” said I, after the man in black had departed, “we did not treat that man very hospitably; he left us without having eaten or drunk at our expense.”

“You offered him some tea,” said Belle, “which, as it is mine, I should have grudged him, for I like him not.”

“Our liking or disliking him had nothing to do with the matter; he was our visitor, and ought not to have been permitted to depart dry; living as we do in this desert, we ought always to be prepared to administer to the wants of our visitors. Belle, do you know where to procure any good Hollands?”

“I think I do,” said Belle, “but—”

“I will have no ‘buts.’ Belle, I expect that with as little delay as possible you procure, at my expense, the best Hollands you can find.”

CHAPTER X.—HOW ISOPEL BERNERS AND THE WORD-MASTER PASSED THEIR TIME IN THE DINGLE.

Time passed on, and Belle and I lived in the dingle; when I say lived, the reader must not imagine that we were always there. She went out upon her pursuits, and I went out where inclination led me; but my excursions were very short ones, and hers occasionally occupied whole days and nights. If I am asked how we passed the time when we were together in the dingle, I would answer that we passed the time very tolerably, all things considered; we conversed together, and when tired of conversing I would sometimes give Belle a lesson in Armenian; her progress was not particularly brilliant, but upon the whole satisfactory; in about a fortnight she had hung up one hundred Haikan numerals upon the hake of her memory. I found her conversation highly entertaining; she had seen much of England and Wales, and had been acquainted with some of the most remarkable characters who travelled the roads at that period; and let me be permitted to say that many remarkable characters have travelled the roads of England, of whom fame has never said a word. I loved to hear her anecdotes of these people; some of whom I found had occasionally attempted to lay violent hands either upon her person or effects, and had invariably been humbled by her without the assistance of either justice or constable. I could clearly see, however, that she was rather tired of England, and wished for a change of scene; she was particularly fond of talking of America, to which country her aspirations chiefly tended. She had heard much of America, which had excited her imagination; for at that time America was much talked of, on roads and in homesteads, at least so said Belle, who had good opportunities of knowing, and most people allowed that it was a good country for adventurous English. The people who chiefly spoke against it, as she informed me, were soldiers disbanded upon pensions, the sextons of village churches, and excisemen. Belle had a craving desire to visit that country, and to wander with cart and little animal amongst its forests; when I would occasionally object, that she would be exposed to danger from strange and perverse customers, she said that she had not

wandered the roads of England so long and alone, to be afraid of anything which might befal in America; and that she hoped with God's favour, to be able to take her own part, and to give to perverse customers as good as they might bring. She had a dauntless heart that same Belle: such was the staple of Belle's conversation. As for mine, I would endeavour to entertain her with strange dreams of adventure, in which I figured in opaque forests, strangling wild beasts, or discovering and plundering the hoards of dragons; and sometimes I would narrate to her other things far more genuine—how I had tamed savage mares, wrestled with Satan, and had dealings with ferocious publishers. Belle had a kind heart, and would weep at the accounts I gave her of my early wrestlings with the dark Monarch. She would sigh, too, as I recounted the many slights and degradations I had received at the hands of ferocious publishers. But she had the curiosity of a woman; and once, when I talked to her of the triumphs which I had achieved over unbroken mares, she lifted up her head and questioned me as to the secret of the virtue which I possessed over the aforesaid animals: whereupon I sternly reprimanded, and forthwith commanded her to repeat the Armenian numerals; and, on her demurring, I made use of words, to escape which she was glad to comply, saying the Armenian numerals from one to a hundred, which numerals, as a punishment for her curiosity, I made her repeat three times, loading her with the bitterest reproaches whenever she committed the slightest error, either in accent or pronunciation, which reproaches she appeared to bear with the greatest patience. And now I have given a fair account of the manner in which Isopel Berners and myself passed our time in the dingle.

CHAPTER XI.—ALE, GIVE THEM ALE, AND LET IT BE STRONG—A MAIN OF COCKS—LAVENGRO CONSOLES THE LANDLORD, WHO PROPOUNDS A NOVEL PLAN FOR THE LIQUIDATION OF DEBTS.

Amongst other excursions, I went several times to the public-house, to which I introduced the reader in a former chapter. I had experienced such beneficial effects from the ale I had drunk on that occasion, that I had wished to put its virtue to a frequent test; nor did the ale on subsequent trials belie the good opinion which I had at first formed of it. After each visit which I made to the public-house, I found my frame stronger and my mind more cheerful than they had previously been. The landlord appeared at all times glad to see me, and insisted that I should sit within the bar, where, leaving his other guests to be attended to by a niece of his who officiated as his housekeeper, he would sit beside me and talk of matters concerning "the ring," indulging himself with a cigar and a glass of sherry, which he told me was his favourite wine, whilst I drank my ale. "I loves the conversation of all you coves of the ring," said he once, "which is natural, seeing as how I have fought in a ring myself. Ah, there is nothing like the ring; I wish I was not rather too old to go again into it. I often think I should like to have another rally—one more rally, and then—But there's a time for all things—youth will be served, every dog has his day, and mine has been a fine one—let me be content. After beating Tom of Hopton, there was not much more to be done in the way of reputation; I have long sat in my bar the wonder and glory of this here neighbourhood. I'm content, as far as reputation goes; I only wish money would come in a little faster; however, the next main of cocks will bring me in something handsome—comes off next Wednesday at ---have ventured ten five-pound notes—shouldn't say ventured either—run no risk at all, because why? I knows my birds." About ten days after this harangue, I called again, at about three o'clock one afternoon. The landlord was seated on a bench by a table in the common room, which was entirely empty; he was neither

smoking nor drinking, but sat with his arms folded, and his head hanging down over his breast. At the sound of my step he looked up. "Ah," said he, "I am glad you are come: I was just thinking about you." "Thank you," said I; "it was very kind of you, especially at a time like this, when your mind must be full of your good fortune. Allow me to congratulate you on the sums of money you won by the main of cocks at ---. I hope you brought it all safe home." "Safe home," said the landlord; "I brought myself safe home, and that was all; came home without a shilling, regularly done, cleaned out." "I am sorry for that," said I; "but after you had won the money, you ought to have been satisfied, and not risked it again. How did you lose it? I hope not by the pea and thimble." "Pea and thimble," said the landlord—"not I; those confounded cocks left me nothing to lose by the pea and thimble." "Dear me," said I; "I thought that you knew your birds." "Well, so I did," said the landlord, "I knew the birds to be good birds, and so they proved, and would have won if better birds had not been brought against them, of which I knew nothing, and so do you see I am done, regularly done." "Well," said I, "don't be cast down; there is one thing of which the cocks by their misfortune cannot deprive you—your reputation; make the most of that, give up cock-fighting, and be content with the custom of your house, of which you will always have plenty, as long as you are the wonder and glory of the neighbourhood."

The landlord struck the table before him violently with his fist. "Confound my reputation!" said he. "No reputation that I have will be satisfaction to my brewer for the seventy pounds I owe him. Reputation won't pass for the current coin of this here realm; and let me tell you, that if it a'n't backed by some of it, it a'n't a bit better than rotten cabbage, as I have found. Only three weeks since I was, as I told you, the wonder and glory of the neighbourhood; and people used to come and look at me, and worship me; but as soon as it began to be whispered about that I owed money to the brewer, they presently left off all that kind of thing; and now, during the last three days, since the tale of my misfortune with the cocks has got wind, almost everybody has left off coming to the house, and the few who does, merely comes to insult and flout me. It was only last night that fellow, Hunter, called me an old fool in my own kitchen here. He wouldn't have called me a fool a fortnight ago—'twas I called him fool then, and last night he called me old fool; what do you think of that? the man that beat Tom of Hopton to be called not only a fool, but an old fool; and I hadn't heart, with one blow of this here fist into his face, to send his head ringing against the wall; for when a man's pocket is low, do you see, his heart a'n't much higher. But it is no use talking, something must be done. I was thinking of you just as you came in, for

you are just the person that can help me."

"If you mean," said I, "to ask me to lend you the money which you want, it will be to no purpose, as I have very little of my own, just enough for my own occasions; it is true, if you desired it, I would be your intercessor with the person to whom you owe the money, though I should hardly imagine that anything I could say—" "You are right there," said the landlord; "much the brewer would care for anything you could say on my behalf—your going would be the very way to do me up entirely. A pretty opinion he would have of the state of my affairs if I were to send him such a 'cessor as you; and as for your lending me money, don't think I was ever fool enough to suppose either that you had any, or if you had that you would be fool enough to lend me any. No, no, the coves of the ring knows better; I have been in the ring myself, and knows what fighting a cove is, and though I was fool enough to back those birds, I was never quite fool enough to lend anybody money. What I am about to propose is something very different from going to my landlord, or lending any capital; something which, though it will put money into my pocket, will likewise put something handsome into your own. I want to get up a fight in this here neighbourhood, which would be sure to bring plenty of people to my house, for a week before and after it takes place; and as people can't come without drinking, I think I could, during one fortnight, get off for the brewer all the sour and unsaleable liquids he now has, which people wouldn't drink at any other time, and by that means, do you see, liquidate my debt; then, by means of betting, making first all right, do you see, I have no doubt that I could put something handsome into my pocket and yours, for I should wish you to be the fighting man, as I think I can depend upon you." "You really must excuse me," said I, "I have no wish to figure as a pugilist, besides there is such a difference in our ages; you may be the stronger man of the two, and perhaps the hardest hitter, but I am in much better condition, am more active on my legs, so that I am almost sure I should have the advantage, for, as you very properly observed, 'Youth will be served.'" "Oh, I didn't mean to fight," said the landlord. "I think I could beat you if I were to train a little; but in the fight I propose I looks more to the main chance than anything else. I question whether half so many people could be brought together if you were to fight with me as the person I have in view, or whether there would be half such opportunities for betting; for I am a man, do you see; the person I wants you to fight with is not a man, but the young woman you keeps company with."

"The young woman I keep company with," said I; "pray what do you mean?"

"We will go into the bar, and have something," said the landlord, getting up.

"My niece is out, and there is no one in the house, so we can talk the matter over quietly." Thereupon I followed him into the bar, where, having drawn me a jug of ale, helped himself as usual to a glass of sherry, and lighted a cigar, he proceeded to explain himself further. "What I wants is to get up a fight between a man and a woman; there never has yet been such a thing in the ring, and the mere noise of the matter would bring thousands of people together, quite enough to drink out, for the thing should be close to my house, all the brewer's stock of liquids, both good and bad." "But," said I, "you were the other day boasting of the respectability of your house; do you think that a fight between a man and a woman close to your establishment would add to its respectability?" "Confound the respectability of my house," said the landlord, "will the respectability of my house pay the brewer, or keep the roof over my head? No, no! when respectability won't keep a man, do you see, the best thing is to let it go and wander. Only let me have my own way, and both the brewer, myself, and every one of us, will be satisfied. And then the betting —what a deal we may make by the betting—and that we shall have all to ourselves, you, I, and the young woman; the brewer will have no hand in that. I can manage to raise ten pounds, and if by flashing that about, I don't manage to make a hundred, call me a horse." "But, suppose," said I, "the party should lose, on whom you sport your money, even as the birds did?" "We must first make all right," said the landlord, "as I told you before; the birds were irrational beings, and therefore couldn't come to an understanding with the others, as you and the young woman can. The birds fought fair; but I intend you and the young woman should fight cross." "What do you mean by cross?" said I. "Come, come," said the landlord, "don't attempt to gammon me; you in the ring, and pretend not to know what fighting cross is! That won't do, my fine fellow; but as no one is near us, I will speak out. I intend that you and the young woman should understand one another and agree beforehand which should be beat; and if you take my advice you will determine between you that the young woman shall be beat, as I am sure that the odds will run high upon her, her character as a fist-woman being spread far and wide, so that all the flats who think it will be all right, will back her, as I myself would, if I thought it would be a fair thing." "Then," said I, "you would not have us fight fair?" "By no means," said the landlord, "because why? I conceives that a cross is a certainty to those who are in it, whereas by the fair thing one may lose all he has." "But," said I, "you said the other day that you liked the fair thing." "That was by way of gammon," said the landlord, "just, do you see, as a Parliament cove might say, speechifying from a barrel to a set of flats, whom he means to sell. Come, what do you think of the plan?" "It's a very ingenious one," said I. "A'n't it?" said the landlord. "The folks in this

neighbourhood are beginning to call me old fool, but if they don't call me something else, when they sees me friends with the brewer, and money in my pocket, my name is not Catchpole. Come, drink your ale, and go home to the young gentlewoman."

"I am going," said I, rising from my seat, after finishing the remainder of the ale.

"Do you think she'll have any objection?" said the landlord.

"To do what?" said I.

"Why, to fight cross."

"Yes, I do," said I.

"But you will do your best to persuade her?"

"No, I will not," said I.

"Are you fool enough to wish to fight fair?"

"No," said I, "I am wise enough to wish not to fight at all."

"And how's my brewer to be paid?" said the landlord.

"I really don't know," said I.

"I'll change my religion," said the landlord.

CHAPTER XII.—ANOTHER VISIT FROM THE MAN IN BLACK: HIS ESTIMATE OF MEZZOFANTE.

One evening Belle and myself received another visit from the man in black. After a little conversation of not much importance, I asked him whether he would not take some refreshment, assuring him that I was now in possession of some very excellent Hollands which, with a glass, a jug of water, and a lump of sugar, were heartily at his service; he accepted my offer, and Belle going with a jug to the spring, from which she was in the habit of procuring water for tea, speedily returned with it full of the clear, delicious water of which I have already spoken. Having placed the jug by the side of the man in black, she brought him a glass and spoon, and a teacup, the latter containing various lumps of snowy-white sugar: in the meantime I had produced a bottle of the stronger liquid. The man in black helped himself to some water, and likewise to some Hollands, the proportion of water being about two-thirds; then adding a lump of sugar, he stirred the whole up, tasted it, and said that it was good.

"This is one of the good things of life," he added, after a short pause.

"What are the others?" I demanded.

"There is Malvoisia sack," said the man in black, "and partridge, and beccafico."

"And what do you say to high mass?" said I.

"High mass!" said the man in black; "however," he continued, after a pause, "I will be frank with you; I came to be so; I may have heard high mass on a time, and said it too; but as for any predilection for it, I assure you I have no more than for a long High Church sermon."

"You speak à la Margutte?" said I.

"Margutte!" said the man in black, musingly. "Margutte?"

"You have read Pulci, I suppose?" said I.

"Yes, yes," said the man in black, laughing; "I remember."

"He might be rendered into English," said I, "something in this style:—

"'To which Margutte answered with a sneer,
I like the blue no better than the black,
My faith consists alone in savoury cheer,
In roasted capons, and in potent sack;
But, above all, in famous gin and clear,
Which often lays the Briton on his back,
With lump of sugar, and with lymph from well,
I drink it, and defy the fiends of hell.'"

"He! he! he!" said the man in black; "that is more than Mezzofante could have done for a stanza of Byron."

"A clever man," said I.

"Who?" said the man in black.

"Mezzofante di Bologna."

"He! he! he!" said the man in black; "now I know that you are not a Gypsy, at least a soothsayer; no soothsayer would have said that—"

"Why," said I, "does he not understand five-and-twenty tongues?"

"O yes," said the man in black; "and five-and-twenty added to them; but—he! he! it was principally from him who is certainly the Prince of Philologists that I formed my opinion of the sect."

"You ought to speak of him with more respect," said I; "I have heard say that he has done good service to your see."

"O yes," said the man in black; "he has done good service to our see, that is, in his way; when the neophytes of the propaganda are to be examined in the several tongues in which they are destined to preach, he is appointed to question them, the questions being first written down for him, or else, he! he! he! Of course you know Napoleon's estimate of Mezzofante; he sent for the linguist from motives of curiosity, and after some discourse with him, told him that he might depart;

then turning to some of his generals, he observed, ‘Nous avons eu ici un exemple qu’un homme peut avoir beaucoup de paroles avec bien peu d’esprit.’”

“You are ungrateful to him,” said I; “well, perhaps, when he is dead and gone you will do him justice.”

“True,” said the man in black; “when he is dead and gone, we intend to erect him a statue of wood, on the left-hand side of the door of the Vatican library.”

“Of wood?” said I.

“He was the son of a carpenter, you know,” said the man in black; “the figure will be of wood for no other reason, I assure you; he! he!”

“You should place another statue on the right.”

“Perhaps we shall,” said the man in black; “but we know of no one amongst the philologists of Italy, nor, indeed, of the other countries, inhabited by the faithful worthy, to sit parallel in effigy with our illustrissimo; when, indeed, we have conquered those regions of the perfidious by bringing the inhabitants thereof to the true faith, I have no doubt that we shall be able to select one worthy to bear him company, one whose statue shall be placed on the right hand of the library, in testimony of our joy at his conversion; for, as you know, ‘There is more joy,’ etc.”

“Wood?” said I.

“I hope not,” said the man in black; “no, if I be consulted as to the material for the statue, I should strongly recommend bronze.”

And when the man in black had said this, he emptied his second tumbler of its contents, and prepared himself another.

CHAPTER XIII.—THE MAN IN BLACK DISCUSSES THE FOIBLES OF THE ENGLISH—HIS SCHEMES FOR WINNING OVER THE ARISTOCRACY, THE MIDDLE CLASS, AND THE RABBLE—HORSEFLESH AND BITTER ALE.

"So you hope to bring these regions again beneath the banner of the Roman see?" said I; after the man in black had prepared the beverage, and tasted it.

"Hope," said the man in black; "how can we fail? Is not the Church of these regions going to lose its prerogative?"

"Its prerogative?"

"Yes; those who should be the guardians of the religion of England are about to grant Papists emancipation and to remove the disabilities from Dissenters, which will allow the Holy Father to play his own game in England."

On my inquiring how the Holy Father intended to play his game, the man in black gave me to understand that he intended for the present to cover the land with temples, in which the religion of Protestants would be continually scoffed at and reviled.

On my observing that such behaviour would savour strongly of ingratitude, the man in black gave me to understand that if I entertained the idea that the See of Rome was ever influenced in its actions by any feeling of gratitude I was much mistaken, assuring me that if the See of Rome in any encounter should chance to be disarmed, and its adversary, from a feeling of magnanimity, should restore the sword which had been knocked out of its hand, the See of Rome always endeavoured on the first opportunity to plunge the said sword into its adversary's bosom,—conduct which the man in black seemed to think was very wise, and which he assured me had already enabled it to get rid of a great many troublesome adversaries, and would, he had no doubt, enable it to get rid of a

great many more.

On my attempting to argue against the propriety of such behaviour, the man in black cut the matter short, by saying, that if one party was a fool he saw no reason why the other should imitate it in its folly.

After musing a little while I told him that emancipation had not yet passed through the legislature, and that perhaps it never would, reminding him that there was often many a slip between the cup and the lip; to which observation the man in black agreed, assuring me, however, that there was no doubt that emancipation would be carried, inasmuch as there was a very loud cry at present in the land; a cry of "tolerance," which had almost frightened the Government out of its wits; who, to get rid of the cry, was going to grant all that was asked in the way of toleration, instead of telling the people to "Hold their nonsense," and cutting them down, provided they continued bawling longer.

I questioned the man in black with respect to the origin of this cry; but he said to trace it to its origin would require a long history; that, at any rate, such a cry was in existence, the chief raisers of it being certain of the nobility, called Whigs, who hoped by means of it to get into power, and to turn out certain ancient adversaries of theirs called Tories, who were for letting things remain *in statu quo*; that these Whigs were backed by a party amongst the people called Radicals, a specimen of whom I had seen in the public-house; a set of fellows who were always in the habit of bawling against those in place; "and so," he added, "by means of these parties, and the hubbub which the Papists and other smaller sects are making, a general emancipation will be carried, and the Church of England humbled, which is the principal thing which the See of Rome cares for." {153}

On my telling the man in black that I believed that even among the high dignitaries of the English Church there were many who wished to grant perfect freedom to religions of all descriptions, he said: "He was aware that such was the fact, and that such a wish was anything but wise, inasmuch as if they had any regard for the religion they professed, they ought to stand by it through thick and thin, proclaiming it to be the only true one, and denouncing all others, in an alliterative style, as dangerous and damnable; whereas, by their present conduct, they are bringing their religion into contempt with the people at large, who would never continue long attached to a Church, the ministers of which did not stand up for it, and likewise cause their own brethren, who had a clearer notion of things, to be ashamed of belonging to it. I speak advisedly," said he, in

continuation; “there is one Platitude.”

“And I hope there is only one,” said I; “you surely would not adduce the likes and dislikes of that poor silly fellow as the criterions of the opinions of any party?”

“You know him,” said the man in black; “nay, I heard you mention him in the public-house; the fellow is not very wise, I admit, but he has sense enough to know, that unless a Church can make people hold their tongues when it thinks fit, it is scarcely deserving the name of a Church; no, I think that the fellow is not such a very bad stick, and that upon the whole he is, or rather was, an advantageous specimen of the High Church English clergy, who, for the most part, so far from troubling their heads about persecuting people, only think of securing tithes, eating their heavy dinners, puffing out their cheeks with importance on country justice benches, and occasionally exhibiting their conceited wives, hoyden daughters, and gawky sons at country balls, whereas Platitude—”

“Stop,” said I; “you said in the public-house that the Church of England was a persecuting Church, and here in the dingle you have confessed that one section of it is willing to grant perfect freedom to the exercise of all religions, and the other only thinks of leading an easy life.”

“Saying a thing in the public-house is a widely different thing from saying it in the dingle,” said the man in black; “had the Church of England been a persecuting Church, it would not stand in the position in which it stands at present; it might, with its opportunities, have spread itself over the greater part of the world. I was about to observe, that instead of practising the indolent habits of his High Church brethren, Platitude would be working for his money, preaching the proper use of fire and faggot, or rather of the halter and the whipping-post, encouraging mobs to attack the houses of Dissenters, employing spies to collect the scandal of neighbourhoods, in order that he might use it for sacerdotal purposes, and, in fact, endeavouring to turn an English parish into something like a Jesuit benefice in the south of France.’

“He tried that game,” said I, “and the parish said—‘Pooh, pooh,’ and, for the most part, went over to the Dissenters.”

“Very true,” said the man in black, taking a sip at his glass, “but why were the Dissenters allowed to preach? why were they not beaten on the lips till they spat out blood, with a dislodged tooth or two? Why, but because the authority of the

Church of England has, by its own fault, become so circumscribed that Mr. Platitude was not able to send a host of beadles and sbirri to their chapel to bring them to reason, on which account Mr. Platitude is very properly ashamed of his Church, and is thinking of uniting himself with one which possesses more vigour and authority."

"It may have vigour and authority," said I, "in foreign lands, but in these kingdoms the day for practising its atrocities is gone by. It is at present almost below contempt, and is obliged to sue for grace *in formâ pauperis*."

"Very true," said the man in black, "but let it once obtain emancipation, and it will cast its slough, put on its fine clothes, and make converts by thousands. 'What a fine Church,' they'll say; 'with what authority it speaks—no doubts, no hesitation, no sticking at trifles.' What a contrast to the sleepy English Church! they'll go over to it by millions, till it preponderates here over every other, when it will of course be voted the dominant one; and then—and then—" and here the man in black drank a considerable quantity of gin and water.

"What then?" said I.

"What then?" said the man in black, "why, she will be true to herself. Let Dissenters, whether they be Church of England, as perhaps they may still call themselves, Methodist, or Presbyterian, presume to grumble, and there shall be bruising of lips in pulpits, tying up to whipping-posts, cutting off ears and noses—he! he! the farce of King Log has been acted long enough; the time for Queen Stork's tragedy is drawing nigh;" and the man in black sipped his gin and water in a very exulting manner.

"And this is the Church which, according to your assertion in the public-house, never persecutes?"

"I have already given you an answer," said the man in black, "with respect to the matter of the public-house; it is one of the happy privileges of those who belong to my Church to deny in the public-house what they admit in the dingle; {156} we have high warranty for such double speaking. Did not the foundation-stone of our Church, St. Peter, deny in the public house what he had previously professed in the valley?"

"And do you think," said I, "that the people of England, who have shown aversion to anything in the shape of intolerance, will permit such barbarities as you have described?"

“Let them become Papists,” said the man in black; “only let the majority become Papists, and you will see.”

“They will never become so,” said I; “the good sense of the people of England will never permit them to commit such an absurdity.”

“The good sense of the people of England?” said the man in black, filling himself another glass.

“Yes,” said I; “the good sense of not only the upper, but the middle and lower classes.”

“And of what description of people are the upper class?” said the man in black, putting a lump of sugar into his gin and water.

“Very fine people,” said I, “monstrously fine people; so, at least, they are generally believed to be.”

“He! he!” said the man in black; “only those think them so who don’t know them. The male part of the upper class are in youth a set of heartless profligates; in old age, a parcel of poor, shaking, nervous paillards. The female part, worthy to be the sisters and wives of such wretches, unmarried, full of cold vice, kept under by vanity and ambition, but which, after marriage, they seek not to restrain; in old age, abandoned to vapours and horrors, do you think that such beings will afford any obstacle to the progress of the Church in these regions, as soon as her movements are unfettered?”

“I cannot give an opinion; I know nothing of them, except from a distance. But what think you of the middle classes?”

“Their chief characteristic,” said the man in black, “is a rage for grandeur and gentility; and that same rage makes us quite sure of them in the long run. Every thing that’s lofty meets their unqualified approbation; whilst everything humble, or, as they call it, ‘low,’ is scouted by them. They begin to have a vague idea that the religion which they have hitherto professed is low; at any rate that it is not the religion of the mighty ones of the earth, of the great kings and emperors whose shoes they have a vast inclination to kiss, nor was used by the grand personages of whom they have read in their novels and romances, their Ivanhoes, their Marmions, and their Ladies of the Lake.”

“Do you think that the writings of Scott have had any influence in modifying their religious opinions?”

“Most certainly I do,” said the man in black. “The writings of that man have made them greater fools than they were before. All their conversation now is about gallant knights, princesses, and cavaliers, with which his pages are stuffed—all of whom were Papists, or very high Church, which is nearly the same thing; and they are beginning to think that the religion of such nice sweet-scented gentry must be something very superfine. Why, I know at Birmingham the daughter of an ironmonger, who screeches to the piano the Lady of the Lake’s hymn to the Virgin Mary, always weeps when Mary Queen of Scots is mentioned, and fasts on the anniversary of the death of that very wise martyr, Charles the First. Why, I would engage to convert such an idiot to popery in a week, were it worth my trouble. O Cavaliere Gualtiero, avete fatto molto in favore della Santa Sede!”

“If he has,” said I, “he has done it unwittingly; I never heard before that he was a favourer of the popish delusion.”

“Only in theory,” said the man in black. “Trust any of the clan MacSycophant for interfering openly and boldly in favour of any cause on which the sun does not shine benignantly. Popery is at present, as you say, suing for grace in these regions *in formâ pauperis*; but let royalty once take it up, let old gouty George once patronize it, and I would consent to drink puddle-water, if the very next time the canny Scot was admitted to the royal symposium he did not say, ‘By my faith, yere Majesty, I have always thought, at the bottom of my heart, that popery, as ill scrapit tongues ca’ it, was a very grand religion; I shall be proud to follow your Majesty’s example in adopting it.’”

“I doubt not,” said I, “that both gouty George and his devoted servant will be mouldering in their tombs long before Royalty in England thinks about adopting popery.”

“We can wait,” said the man in black; “in these days of rampant gentility, there will be no want of Kings nor of Scots about them.”

“But not Walters,” said I. {159}

“Our work has been already tolerably well done by one,” said the man in black; “but if we wanted literature we should never lack in these regions hosts of literary men of some kind or other to eulogise us, provided our religion were in the fashion, and our popish nobles choose, and they always do our bidding, to admit the canaille to their tables, their kitchen tables. As for literature in general,” said he, “the Santa Sede is not particularly partial to it, it may be

employed both ways. In Italy, in particular, it has discovered that literary men are not always disposed to be lick-spittles."

"For example, Dante," said I.

"Yes," said the man in black. "A dangerous personage; that poem of his cuts both ways; and then there was Pulci, that Morgante of his cuts both ways, or rather one way, and that sheer against us; and then there was Aretino, who dealt so hard with the poveri frati; all writers, at least Italian ones, are not lick spittles. And then in Spain,—'tis true, Lope de Vega and Calderon were most inordinate lick-spittles; the 'Principe Constante' of the last is a curiosity in its way; and then the 'Mary Stuart' of Lope; I think I shall recommend the perusal of that work to the Birmingham ironmonger's daughter; she has been lately thinking of adding 'a slight knowledge of the magneeficent language of the Peninsula' to the rest of her accomplishments, he! he! he! but then there was Cervantes, starving, but straight; he deals us some hard knocks in that second part of his Quixote; then there were some of the writers of the picaresque novels. No; all literary men are not lick-spittles, whether in Italy or Spain, or, indeed, upon the Continent; it is only in England that all—"

"Come," said I, "mind what you are about to say of English literary men."

"Why should I mind?" said the man in black, "there are no literary men here. I have heard of literary men living in garrets, but not in dingles, whatever philologists may do; I may, therefore, speak out freely. It is only in England that literary men are invariably lick-spittles; on which account, perhaps, they are so despised, even by those who benefit by their dirty services. Look at your fashionable novel writers, he! he! and above all at your newspaper editors, ho! ho!"

"You will, of course, except the editors of the --- from your censure of the last class?" said I.

"Them!" said the man in black; "why, they might serve as models in the dirty trade to all the rest who practise it. See how they bepraise their patrons, the grand Whig nobility, who hope, by raising the cry of liberalism, and by putting themselves at the head of the populace, to come into power shortly. I don't wish to be hard, at present, upon those Whigs," he continued, "for they are playing our game; but a time will come when, not wanting them, we will kick them to a considerable distance: and then, when toleration is no longer the cry, and the Whigs are no longer backed by the populace, see whether the editors of the ---

will stand by them; they will prove themselves as expert lick-spittles of despotism as of liberalism. Don't think they will always bespatter the Tories and Austria."

"Well," said I, "I am sorry to find that you entertain so low an opinion of the spirit of English literary men; we will now return, if you please, to the subject of the middle classes; I think your strictures upon them in general are rather too sweeping—they are not altogether the foolish people you have described. Look, for example, at that very powerful and numerous body the Dissenters, the descendants of those sturdy Patriots who hurled Charles the Simple from his throne."

"There are some sturdy fellows amongst them, I do not deny," said the man in black, "especially amongst the preachers, clever withal—two or three of that class nearly drove Mr. Platitude mad, as perhaps you are aware, but they are not very numerous; and the old sturdy sort of preachers are fast dropping off, and, as we observe with pleasure, are generally succeeded by frothy coxcombs, whom it would not be very difficult to gain over. But what we most rely upon as an instrument to bring the Dissenters over to us is the mania for gentility, which amongst them has of late become as great, and more ridiculous, than amongst the middle classes belonging to the Church of England. All the plain and simple fashions of their forefathers they are either about to abandon, or have already done so. Look at the most part of their chapels, no longer modest brick edifices, situated in quiet and retired streets, but lunatic-looking erections, in what the simpletons call the modern Gothic taste, of Portland-stone, with a cross upon the top, and the site generally the most conspicuous that can be found; and look at the manner in which they educate their children, I mean those that are wealthy. They do not even wish them to be Dissenters, 'the sweet dears shall enjoy the advantages of good society, of which their parents were debarred.' So the girls are sent to tip-top boarding schools, where amongst other trash they read 'Rokeby,' and are taught to sing snatches from that high-flying ditty the 'Cavalier—'

'Would you match the base Skippon, and Massey, and Brown,
With the barons of England, who fight for the crown?'—

he! he! their own names. Whilst the lads are sent to those hot-beds of pride and folly—colleges, whence they return with a greater contempt for everything 'low,' and especially for their own pedigree, than they went with. I tell you, friend, the children of Dissenters, if not their parents, are going over to the

Church, as you call it, and the Church is going over to Rome."

"I do not see the justice of that latter assertion at all," said I; "some of the Dissenters' children may be coming over to the Church of England, and yet the Church of England be very far from going over to Rome."

"In the high road for it, I assure you," said the man in black, "part of it is going to abandon, the rest to lose their prerogative, and when a church no longer retains its prerogative, it speedily loses its own respect, and that of others."

"Well," said I, "if the higher classes have all the vices and follies which you represent, on which point I can say nothing, as I have never mixed with them; and even supposing the middle classes are the foolish beings you would fain make them, and which I do not believe them as a body to be, you would still find some resistance amongst the lower classes. I have a considerable respect for their good sense and independence of character; but pray let me hear your opinion of them."

"As for the lower classes," said the man in black, "I believe them to be the most brutal wretches in the world, the most addicted to foul feeding, foul language, and foul vices of every kind; wretches who have neither love for country, religion, nor anything save their own vile selves. You surely do not think that they would oppose a change of religion? why, there is not one of them but would hurrah for the Pope, or Mahomet, for the sake of a hearty gorge and a drunken bout, like those which they are treated with at election contests."

"Has your church any followers amongst them?" said I.

"Wherever there happens to be a Romish family of considerable possessions," said the man in black, "our church is sure to have followers of the lower class, who have come over in the hope of getting something in the shape of dole or donation. As, however, the Romish is not yet the dominant religion, and the clergy of the English establishment have some patronage to bestow, the churches are not quite deserted by the lower classes; yet were the Romish to become the established religion, they would, to a certainty, all go over to it; you can scarcely imagine what a self-interested set they are—for example, the landlord of that public-house in which I first met you, having lost a sum of money upon a cock-fight, and his affairs in consequence being in a bad condition, is on the eve of coming over to us, in the hope that two old Popish females of property, whom I confess, will advance him a sum of money to set him up again in the world."

“And what could have put such an idea into the poor fellow’s head?” said I.

“Oh! he and I have had some conversation upon the state of his affairs,” said the man in black; “I think he might make a rather useful convert in these parts, provided things take a certain turn, as they doubtless will. It is no bad thing to have a fighting fellow, who keeps a public-house, belonging to one’s religion. He has been occasionally employed as a bully at elections by the Tory party, and he may serve us in the same capacity. The fellow comes of a good stock; I heard him say that his father headed the High Church mob, who sacked and burnt Priestley’s house at Birmingham towards the end of the last century.”

“A disgraceful affair,” said I.

“What do you mean by a disgraceful affair?” said the man in black. “I assure you that nothing has occurred for the last fifty years which has given the High Church party so much credit in the eyes of Rome as that; we did not imagine that the fellows had so much energy. Had they followed up that affair, by twenty others of a similar kind, they would by this time have had everything in their own power; but they did not, and, as a necessary consequence, they are reduced to almost nothing.”

“I suppose,” said I, “that your church would have acted very differently in its place.”

“It has always done so,” said the man in black, coolly sipping. “Our church has always armed the brute-population against the genius and intellect of a country, provided that same intellect and genius were not willing to become its instruments and eulogists; and provided we once obtain a firm hold here again, we would not fail to do so. We would occasionally stuff the beastly rabble with horseflesh and bitter ale, and then halloo them on against all those who were obnoxious to us.”

“Horseflesh and bitter ale!” I replied.

“Yes,” said the man in black; “horseflesh and bitter ale, the favourite delicacies of their Saxon ancestors, who were always ready to do our bidding after a liberal allowance of such cheer. There is a tradition in our church, that before the rabble of Penda, at the instigation of Austin, attacked and massacred the presbyterian monks of Bangor, they had been allowed a good gorge of horseflesh and bitter ale. He! he! he!” continued the man in black, “what a fine spectacle to see such a mob, headed by a fellow like our friend, the landlord, sack the house

of another Priestley."

"Then you don't deny that we have had a Priestley," said I, "and admit the possibility of our having another? You were lately observing that all English literary men were sycophants?"

"Lick-spittles," said the man in black; "yes, I admit that you have had a Priestley, but he was a Dissenter of the old sort; you have had him, and perhaps may have another."

"Perhaps we may," said I. "But with respect to the lower classes, have you mixed much with them?"

"I have mixed with all classes," said the man in black, "and with the lower not less than the upper and middle, they are much as I have described them; and of the three, the lower are the worst. I never knew one of them that possessed the slightest principle . . .

"I ought to know something of the English people," he continued, after a moment's pause; "I have been many years amongst them labouring in the cause of the Church."

"Your See must have had great confidence in your powers, when it selected you to labour for it in these parts?" said I.

"They chose me," said the man in black, "principally because, being of British extraction and education, I could speak the English language and bear a glass of something strong. It is the opinion of my See, that it would hardly do to send a missionary into a country like this who is not well versed in English—a country where they think, so far from understanding any language besides his own, scarcely one individual in ten speaks his own intelligibly; or an ascetic person where, as they say, high and low, male and female, are, at some period of their lives, fond of a renovating glass, as it is styled, in other words, of tippling."

"Your See appears to entertain a very strange opinion of the English," said I.

"Not altogether an unjust one," said the man in black, lifting the glass to his mouth.

"Well," said I, "it is certainly very kind on its part to wish to bring back such a set of beings beneath its wing."

"Why, as to the kindness of my See," said the man in black, "I have not much to say; my See has generally in what it does a tolerably good motive; these heretics possess in plenty what my See has a great hankering for, and can turn to a good account—money!"

"The founder of the Christian religion cared nothing for money," said I.

"What have we to do with what the founder of the Christian religion cared for?" said the man in black; "how could our temples be built, and our priests supported without money? But you are unwise to reproach us with a desire of obtaining money; you forget that your own church, if the Church of England be your own church, as I suppose it is, from the willingness which you displayed in the public-house to fight for it, is equally avaricious; look at your greedy Bishops, and your corpulent Rectors! do they imitate Christ in his disregard for money? Go to! you might as well tell me that they imitate Christ in his meekness and humility."

"Well," said I, "whatever their faults may be, you can't say that they go to Rome for money."

The man in black made no direct answer, but appeared by the motion of his lips to be repeating something to himself.

"I see your glass is again empty," said I; "perhaps you will replenish it."

The man in black arose from his seat, adjusted his habiliments which were rather in disorder, and placed upon his head his hat, which he had laid aside, then, looking at me, who was still lying upon the ground, he said—"I might, perhaps, take another glass, though I believe I have had quite as much as I can well bear; but I do not wish to hear you utter anything more this evening after that last observation of yours—it is quite original; I will meditate upon it on my pillow this night after having said an ave and a pater—go to Rome for money!" He then made Belle a low bow, slightly motioned to me with his hand, as if bidding farewell, and then left the dingle with rather uneven steps.

"Go to Rome for money," I heard him say as he ascended the winding path, "he! he! he! Go to Rome for money, ho! ho! ho!"

CHAPTER XIV.—LIFE IN THE DINGLE—ISOPEL IS INOCULATED WITH TONGUES—A THUNDERSTORM.

Nearly three days elapsed without anything of particular moment occurring. Belle drove the little cart containing her merchandise about the neighbourhood, returning to the dingle towards the evening. As for myself, I kept within my wooded retreat, working during the periods of her absence leisurely at my forge. Having observed that the quadruped which my companion drove was as much in need of shoes as my own had been some time previously, I had determined to provide it with a set, and during the aforesaid periods occupied myself in preparing them. As I was employed three mornings and afternoons about them, I am sure that the reader will agree that I worked leisurely, or rather lazily. On the third day Belle arrived somewhat later than usual; I was lying on my back at the bottom of the dingle, employed in tossing up the shoes, which I had produced, and catching them as they fell, some being always in the air mounting or descending, somewhat after the fashion of the waters of a fountain.

“Why have you been absent so long?” said I to Belle; “it must be long past four by the day.”

“I have been almost killed by the heat,” said Belle; “I was never out in a more sultry day—the poor donkey, too, could scarcely move along.”

“He shall have fresh shoes,” said I, continuing my exercise: “here they are, quite ready; to-morrow I will tack them on.”

“And why are you playing with them in that manner?” said Belle.

“Partly in triumph at having made them, and partly to show that I can do something besides making them; it is not every one, who, after having made a set of horse-shoes, can keep them going up and down in the air, without letting one fall.”

“One has now fallen on your chin,” said Belle.

“And another on my cheek,” said I, getting up; “it is time to discontinue the game, for the last shoe drew blood.”

Belle went to her own little encampment; and as for myself, after having flung the donkey’s shoes into my tent, I put some fresh wood on the fire, which was nearly out, and hung the kettle over it. I then issued forth from the dingle, and strolled round the wood that surrounded it; for a long time I was busied in meditation, looking at the ground, striking with my foot, half unconsciously, the tufts of grass and thistles that I met in my way. After some time, I lifted up my eyes to the sky, at first vacantly, and then with more attention, turning my head in all directions for a minute or two; after which I returned to the dingle. Isopel was seated near the fire, over which the kettle was now hung; she had changed her dress—no signs of the dust and fatigue of her late excursion remained; she had just added to the fire a small billet of wood, two or three of which I had left beside it; the fire cracked, and a sweet odour filled the dingle.

“I am fond of sitting by a wood fire,” said Belle, “when abroad, whether it be hot or cold; I love to see the flames dart out of the wood; but what kind is this, and where did you get it?”

“It is ash,” said I, “green ash. Somewhat less than a week ago, whilst I was wandering along the road by the side of a wood, I came to a place where some peasants were engaged in cutting up and clearing away a confused mass of fallen timber: a mighty-aged oak had given way the night before, and in its fall had shivered some smaller trees; the upper part of the oak, and the fragments of the rest, lay across the road. I purchased, for a trifle, a bundle or two, and the wood on the fire is part of it—ash, green ash.”

“That makes good the old rhyme,” said Belle, “which I have heard sung by the old women in the great house:—

‘Ash, when green,
Is fire for a queen.’”

“And on fairer form of queen, ash fire never shone,” said I, “than on thine, O beauteous queen of the dingle.”

“I am half disposed to be angry with you, young man,” said Belle.

"And why not entirely?" said I.

Belle made no reply.

"Shall I tell you?" I demanded. "You had no objection to the first part of the speech, but you did not like being called queen of the dingle. Well, if I had the power, I would make you queen of something better than the dingle—Queen of China. Come, let us have tea."

"Something less would content me," said Belle, sighing as she rose to prepare our evening meal.

So we took tea together, Belle and I.

"How delicious tea is after a hot summer's day, and a long walk!" said she.

"I daresay it is most refreshing then," said I; "but I have heard people say that they most enjoy it on a cold winter's night, when the kettle is hissing on the fire, and their children playing on the hearth."

Belle sighed. "Where does tea come from?" she presently demanded.

"From China," said I; "I just now mentioned it, and the mention of it put me in mind of tea."

"What kind of country is China?"

"I know very little about it; all I know is, that it is a very large country far to the East, but scarcely large enough to contain its inhabitants, who are so numerous, that though China does not cover one-ninth part of the world, its inhabitants amount to one-third of the population of the world."

"And do they talk as we do?"

"O no! I know nothing of their language; but I have heard that it is quite different from all others, and so difficult that none but the cleverest people amongst foreigners can master it, on which account, perhaps, only the French pretend to know anything about it."

"Are the French so very clever, then?" said Belle.

"They say there are no people like them, at least in Europe. But talking of Chinese reminds me that I have not for some time past given you a lesson in Armenian. The word for tea in Armenian is—by-the-bye, what is the Armenian

word for tea?”

“That’s your affair, not mine,” said Belle; “it seems hard that the master should ask the scholar.”

“Well,” said I, “whatever the word may be in Armenian, it is a noun; and as we have never yet declined an Armenian noun together, we may as well take this opportunity of declining one. Belle, there are ten declensions in Armenian!”

“What’s a declension?”

“The way of declining a noun.”

“Then, in the civilest way imaginable, I decline the noun. Is that a declension?”

“You should never play on words; to do so is low, vulgar, smelling of the pothouse, the workhouse. Belle, I insist on your declining an Armenian noun.”

“I have done so already,” said Belle.

“If you go on in this way,” said I, “I shall decline taking any more tea with you. Will you decline an Armenian noun?”

“I don’t like the language,” said Belle. “If you must teach me languages, why not teach me French or Chinese?”

“I know nothing of Chinese; and as for French, none but a Frenchman is clever enough to speak it—to say nothing of teaching; no, we will stick to Armenian, unless, indeed, you would prefer Welsh!”

“Welsh, I have heard, is vulgar,” said Belle; “so, if I must learn one of the two, I will prefer Armenian, which I never heard of till you mentioned it to me; though of the two, I really think Welsh sounds best.”

“The Armenian noun,” said I, “which I propose for your declension this night, is Dyèr, which signifieth Lord, or Master.”

“It soundeth very like tyrant,” said Belle.

“I care not what it sounds like,” said I; “it is the word I chose, though it is not of the first declension. Master, with all its variations, being the first noun, the sound of which I would have you learn from my lips. Come, let us begin—

“A master Dyer, Of a master, Dyèrn. Repeat—”

“The word sounds very strange to me,” said Belle. “However, to oblige you I will do my best;” and thereupon Belle declined master in Armenian.

“You have declined the noun very well,” said I; “that is in the singular number; we will now go to the plural.”

“What is the plural?” said Belle.

“That which implies more than one, for example, masters; you shall now go through masters in Armenian.”

“Never,” said Belle, “never; it is bad to have one master, but more I would never bear, whether in Armenian or English.”

“You do not understand,” said I; “I merely want you to decline masters in Armenian.”

“I do decline them; I will have nothing to do with them, nor with master either; I was wrong to—What sound is that?”

“I did not hear it, but I dare say it is thunder; in Armenian—”

“Never mind what it is in Armenian; but why do you think it is thunder?”

“Ere I returned from my stroll, I looked up into the heavens, and by their appearance I judged that a storm was nigh at hand.”

“And why did you not tell me so?”

“You never asked me about the state of the atmosphere, and I am not in the habit of giving my opinion to people on any subject, unless questioned. But, setting that aside, can you blame me for not troubling you with forebodings about storm and tempest, which might have prevented the pleasure you promised yourself in drinking tea, or perhaps a lesson in Armenian, though you pretend to dislike the latter?”

“My dislike is not pretended,” said Belle; “I hate the sound of it, but I love my tea, and it was kind of you not to wish to cast a cloud over my little pleasures; the thunder came quite time enough to interrupt it without being anticipated—there is another peal—I will clear away, and see that my tent is in a condition to resist the storm, and I think you had better bestir yourself.”

Isopel departed, and I remained seated on my stone, as nothing belonging to

myself required any particular attention. In about a quarter of an hour she returned, and seated herself upon her stool.

“How dark the place is become since I left you,” said she; “just as if night were just at hand.”

“Look up at the sky,” said I; “and you will not wonder; it is all of a deep olive. The wind is beginning to rise; hark how it moans among the branches; and see how their tops are bending—it brings dust on its wings—I felt some fall on my face; and what is this, a drop of rain?”

“We shall have plenty anon,” said Belle; “do you hear? it already begins to hiss upon the embers; that fire of ours will soon be extinguished.”

“It is not probable that we shall want it,” said I, “but we had better seek shelter: let us go into my tent.”

“Go in,” said Belle, “but you go in alone; as for me, I will seek my own.”

“You are right,” said I, “to be afraid of me; I have taught you to decline master in Armenian.”

“You almost tempt me,” said Belle, “to make you decline mistress in English.”

“To make matters short,” said I, “I decline a mistress.”

“What do you mean?” said Belle, angrily.

“I have merely done what you wished me,” said I, “and in your own style; there is no other way of declining anything in English, for in English there are no declensions.”

“The rain is increasing,” said Belle.

“It is so,” said I; “I shall go to my tent; you may come, if you please; I do assure you I am not afraid of you.”

“Nor I of you,” said Belle; “so I will come. Why should I be afraid? I can take my own part; that is—”

We went into the tent and sat down, and now the rain began to pour with vehemence. “I hope we shall not be flooded in this hollow,” said I to Belle.

“There is no fear of that,” said Belle; “the wandering people, amongst other

names, call it the dry hollow. I believe there is a passage somewhere or other by which the wet is carried off. There must be a cloud right above us, it is so dark. Oh! what a flash!"

"And what a peal!" said I; "that is what the Hebrews call Koul Adonai—the voice of the Lord. Are you afraid?"

"No," said Belle, "I rather like to hear it."

"You are right," said I, "I am fond of the sound of thunder myself. There is nothing like it: Koul Adonai behadar; the voice of the Lord is a glorious voice, as the prayer-book version hath it."

"There is something awful in it," said Belle; "and then the lightning, the whole dingle is now in a blaze."

"'The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve, and discovereth the thick bushes.' As you say, there is something awful in thunder."

"There are all kinds of noises above us," said Belle: "surely I heard the crashing of a tree?"

"'The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedar trees,'" said I, "but what you hear is caused by a convulsion of the air; during a thunderstorm there are occasionally all kinds of aërial noises. Ab Gwilym, who, next to King David, has best described a thunderstorm, speaks of these aërial noises in the following manner:—

'Astonied now I stand at strains,
As of ten thousand clanking chains;
And once, methought, that overthrown,
The welkin's oaks came whelming down;
Upon my head upstarts my hair:
Why hunt abroad the hounds of air?
What cursed hag is screeching high,
Whilst crash goes all her crockery?'

You would hardly believe, Belle, that though I offered at least ten thousand lines nearly as good as those to the booksellers in London, the simpletons were so blind to their interest as to refuse purchasing them."

"I don't wonder at it," said Belle, "especially if such dreadful expressions

frequently occur as that towards the end; surely that was the crash of a tree?"

"Ah!" said I, "there falls the cedar tree—I mean the sallow; one of the tall trees on the outside of the dingle has been snapped short."

"What a pity," said Belle, "that the fine old oak, which you saw the peasants cutting up, gave way the other night, when scarcely a breath of air was stirring: how much better to have fallen in a storm like this, the fiercest I remember."

"I don't think so," said I; "after braving a thousand tempests, it was meeter for it to fall of itself than to be vanquished at last. But to return to Ab Gwilym's poetry, he was above culling dainty words, and spoke boldly his mind on all subjects. Enraged with the thunder for parting him and Morfydd, he says, at the conclusion of his ode,

'My curse, O Thunder, cling to thee,
For parting my dear pearl and me!'"

"You and I shall part; that is, I shall go to my tent if you persist in repeating from him. The man must have been a savage. A poor wood-pigeon has fallen dead."

"Yes," said I, "there he lies just outside the tent; often have I listened to his note when alone in this wilderness. So you do not like Ab Gwilym; what say you to old Göthe:—

'Mist shrouds the night, and rack;
Hear, in the woods, what an awful crack!
Wildly the owls are flitting,
Hark to the pillars splitting
Of palaces verdant ever,
The branches quiver and sever,
The mighty stems are creaking,
The poor roots breaking and shrieking,
In wild mixt ruin down dashing,
O'er one another they're crashing;
Whilst 'midst the rocks so hoary,
Whirlwinds hurry and worry.
Hear'st not, sister—'

"Hark!" said Belle, "hark!"

“‘Hear’st not, sister, a chorus
Of voices?’”

“No,” said Belle, “but I hear a voice.”

CHAPTER XV.—FIRST AID TO A POSTCHAISE AND A POSTILLION—MORE HOSPITALITY.

I listened attentively, but I could hear nothing but the loud clashing of branches, the pattering of rain, and the muttered growl of thunder. I was about to tell Belle that she must have been mistaken, when I heard a shout, indistinct, it is true, owing to the noises aforesaid, from some part of the field above the dingle. "I will soon see what's the matter," said I to Belle, starting up. "I will go, too," said the girl. "Stay where you are," said I; "if I need you I will call;" and, without waiting for an answer, I hurried to the mouth of the dingle. I was about a few yards only from the top of the ascent, when I beheld a blaze of light, from whence I knew not; the next moment there was a loud crash, and I appeared involved in a cloud of sulphurous smoke. "Lord have mercy upon us," I heard a voice say, and methought I heard the plunging and struggling of horses. I had stopped short on hearing the crash, for I was half stunned; but I now hurried forward, and in a moment stood upon the plain. Here I was instantly aware of the cause of the crash and the smoke. One of those balls, generally called fire-balls, had fallen from the clouds, and was burning on the plain at a short distance; and the voice which I had heard, and the plunging, were as easily accounted for. Near the left-hand corner of the grove which surrounded the dingle, and about ten yards from the fire-ball, I perceived a chaise, with a postillion on the box, who was making efforts, apparently useless, to control his horses, which were kicking and plunging in the highest degree of excitement. I instantly ran towards the chaise, in order to offer what help was in my power. "Help me," said the poor fellow, as I drew nigh; but before I could reach the horses, they had turned rapidly round, one of the fore-wheels flew from its axle-tree, the chaise was overset, and the postillion flung violently from his seat upon the field. The horses now became more furious than before, kicking desperately, and endeavouring to disengage themselves from the fallen chaise. As I was hesitating whether to run to the assistance of the postillion, or endeavour to disengage the animals, I heard the voice of Belle exclaiming, "See to the horses, I will look after the man." She had, it seems, been alarmed by the crash which accompanied the fire-bolt, and had hurried up to learn the cause. I forthwith

seized the horses by the heads, and used all the means I possessed to soothe and pacify them, employing every gentle modulation of which my voice was capable. Belle, in the meantime, had raised up the man, who was much stunned by his fall; but presently recovering his recollection to a certain degree, he came limping to me holding his hand to his right thigh. "The first thing that must now be done," said I, "is to free these horses from the traces; can you undertake to do so?" "I think I can," said the man, looking at me somewhat stupidly. "I will help," said Belle, and without loss of time laid hold of one of the traces. The man, after a short pause, also set to work, and in a few minutes the horses were extricated. "Now," said I to the man, "what is next to be done?" "I don't know," said he; "indeed, I scarcely know anything; I have been so frightened by this horrible storm, and so shaken by my fall." "I think," said I, "that the storm is passing away, so cast your fears away too; and as for your fall, you must bear it as lightly as you can. I will tie the horses amongst those trees, and then we will all betake us to the hollow below." "And what's to become of my chaise?" said the postillion, looking ruefully on the fallen vehicle. "Let us leave the chaise for the present," said I; "we can be of no use to it." "I don't like to leave my chaise lying on the ground in this weather," said the man, "I love my chaise, and him whom it belongs to." "You are quite right to be fond of yourself," said I, "on which account I advise you to seek shelter from the rain as soon as possible." "I was not talking of myself," said the man, "but my master, to whom the chaise belongs." "I thought you called the chaise yours," said I. "That's my way of speaking," said the man; "but the chaise is my master's, and a better master does not live. Don't you think we could manage to raise up the chaise?" "And what is to become of the horses?" said I. "I love my horses well enough," said the man; "but they will take less harm than the chaise. We two can never lift up that chaise." "But we three can," said Belle; "at least, I think so; and I know where to find two poles which will assist us." "You had better go to the tent," said I, "you will be wet through." "I care not for a little wetting," said Belle; "moreover, I have more gowns than one—see you after the horses." Thereupon, I led the horses past the mouth of the dingle, to a place where a gap in the hedge afforded admission to the copse or plantation, on the southern side. Forcing them through the gap, I led them to a spot amidst the trees, which I deemed would afford them the most convenient place for standing; then, darting down into the dingle, I brought up a rope, and also the halter of my own nag, and with these fastened them each to a separate tree in the best manner I could. This done, I returned to the chaise and the postillion. In a minute or two Belle arrived with two poles, which, it seems, had long been lying, overgrown with brushwood, in a ditch or hollow behind the plantation. With these both she and I

set to work in endeavouring to raise the fallen chaise from the ground.

We experienced considerable difficulty in this undertaking; at length, with the assistance of the postillion, we saw our efforts crowned with success—the chaise was lifted up, and stood upright on three wheels.

"We may leave it here in safety," said I, "for it will hardly move away on three wheels, even supposing it could run by itself; I am afraid there is work here for a wheelwright, in which case I cannot assist you; if you were in need of a blacksmith it would be other wise." "I don't think either the wheel or the axle is hurt," said the postillion, who had been handling both; "it is only the linch-pin having dropped out that caused the wheel to fly off; if I could but find the linch-pin! though, perhaps, it fell out a mile away." "Very likely," said I; "but never mind the linch-pin, I can make you one, or something that will serve: but I can't stay here any longer, I am going to my place below with this young gentlewoman, and you had better follow us." "I am ready," said the man; and after lifting up the wheel and propping it against the chaise, he went with us, slightly limping, and with his hand pressed to his thigh.

As we were descending the narrow path, Belle leading the way, and myself the last of the party, the postillion suddenly stopped short, and looked about him. "Why do you stop?" said I. "I don't wish to offend you," said the man; "but this seems to be a strange place you are leading me into; I hope you and the young gentlewoman, as you call her, don't mean me any harm—you seemed in a great hurry to bring me here." "We wished to get you out of the rain," said I, "and ourselves too; that is, if we can, which I rather doubt, for the canvas of a tent is slight shelter in such a rain; but what harm should we wish to do you?" "You may think I have money," said the man, "and I have some, but only thirty shillings, and for a sum like that it would be hardly worth while to—" "Would it not?" said I; "thirty shillings, after all, are thirty shillings, and for what I know, half a dozen throats may have been cut in this place for that sum at the rate of five shillings each; moreover, there are horses, which would serve to establish this young gentlewoman and myself in housekeeping, provided we were thinking of such a thing." "Then I suppose I have fallen into pretty hands," said the man, putting himself in a posture of defence; "but I'll show no craven heart; and if you attempt to lay hands on me, I'll try to pay you in your own coin. I'm rather lamed in the leg, but I can still use my fists; so come on, both of you, man and woman, if woman this be, though she looks more like a grenadier."

"Let me hear no more of this nonsense," said Belle; "if you are afraid, you can

go back to your chaise—we only seek to do you a kindness."

"Why, he was just now talking about cutting throats," said the man. "You brought it on yourself," said Belle; "you suspected us, and he wished to pass a joke upon you; he would not hurt a hair of your head, were your coach laden with gold, nor would I." "Well," said the man, "I was wrong—here's my hand to both of you," shaking us by the hands; "I'll go with you where you please, but I thought this a strange lonesome place, though I ought not much to mind strange lonesome places, having been in plenty of such when I was a servant in Italy, without coming to any harm—come, let us move on, for 'tis a shame to keep you two in the rain."

So we descended the path which led into the depths of the dingle; at the bottom I conducted the postillion to my tent, which, though the rain dripped and trickled through it, afforded some shelter; there I bade him sit down on the log of wood, while I placed myself as usual on my stone. Belle in the meantime had repaired to her own place of abode. After a little time, I produced a bottle of the cordial of which I have previously had occasion to speak, and made my guest take a considerable draught. I then offered him some bread and cheese, which he accepted with thanks. In about an hour the rain had much abated. "What do you now propose to do?" said I. "I scarcely know," said the man; "I suppose I must endeavour to put on the wheel with your help." "How far are you from your home?" I demanded. "Upwards of thirty miles," said the man. "My master keeps an inn on the great north road, and from thence I started early this morning with a family which I conveyed across the country to a hall at some distance from here. On my return I was beset by the thunderstorm, which frightened the horses, who dragged the chaise off the road into the field above, and overset it as you saw. I had proposed to pass the night at an inn about twelve miles from here on my way back, though how I am to get there to-night I scarcely know, even if we can put on the wheel, for, to tell you the truth, I am shaken by my fall, and the smoulder and smoke of that fire-ball have rather bewildered my head; I am, moreover, not much acquainted with the way."

"The best thing you can do," said I, "is to pass the night here; I will presently light a fire, and endeavour to make you comfortable—in the morning we will see to your wheel." "Well," said the man, "I shall be glad to pass the night here, provided I do not intrude, but I must see to the horses." Thereupon I conducted the man to the place where the horses were tied. "The trees drip rather upon them," said the man, "and it will not do for them to remain here all night; they will be better out in the field picking the grass, but first of all they must have a

good feed of corn;" thereupon he went to his chaise, from which he presently brought two small bags, partly filled with corn—into them he inserted the mouths of the horses, tying them over their heads. "Here we will leave them for a time," said the man; "when I think they have had enough, I will come back, tie their fore-legs, and let them pick about."

CHAPTER XVI.—THE NEW-COMER TAKES KINDLY TO THE DINGLE AND ITS OCCUPANTS, ABOUT WHOM HE FORMS HIS OWN OPINIONS.

It might be about ten o'clock at night. Belle, the postillion, and myself, sat just within the tent, by a fire of charcoal which I had kindled in the chafing-pan. The man had removed the harness from his horses, and, after tethering their legs, had left them for the night in the field above, to regale themselves on what grass they could find. The rain had long since entirely ceased, and the moon and stars shone bright in the firmament, up to which, putting aside the canvas, I occasionally looked from the depths of the dingle. Large drops of water, however, falling now and then upon the tent from the neighbouring trees, would have served, could we have forgotten it, to remind us of the recent storm, and also a certain chilliness in the atmosphere, unusual to the season, proceeding from the moisture with which the ground was saturated; yet these circumstances only served to make our party enjoy the charcoal fire the more. There we sat bending over it: Belle, with her long beautiful hair streaming over her magnificent shoulders; the postillion smoking his pipe, in his shirtsleeves and waistcoat, having flung aside his great coat, which had sustained a thorough wetting; and I without my waggoner's slop, of which, it being in the same plight, I had also divested myself.

The new-comer was a well-made fellow of about thirty with an open and agreeable countenance. I found him very well informed for a man in his station, and with some pretensions to humour. After we had discoursed for some time on indifferent subjects, the postillion, who had exhausted his pipe, took it from his mouth, and, knocking out the ashes upon the ground, exclaimed: "I little thought, when I got up in the morning, that I should spend the night in such agreeable company, and after such a fright."

"Well," said I, "I am glad that your opinion of us has improved; it is not long since you seemed to hold us in rather a suspicious light."

"And no wonder," said the man, "seeing the place you were taking me to. I was not a little, but very much afraid of ye both; and so I continued for some time, though, not to show a craven heart, I pretended to be quite satisfied; but I see I was altogether mistaken about ye. I thought you vagrant Gypsy folks and trampers; but now—"

"Vagrant Gypsy folks and trampers," said I; "and what are we but people of that stamp?"

"Oh," said the postillion, "if you wish to be thought such, I am far too civil a person to contradict you, especially after your kindness to me, but—"

"But!" said I; "what do you mean by but? I would have you to know that I am proud of being a travelling blacksmith: look at these donkey-shoes, I finished them this day."

The postillion took the shoes and examined them. "So you made these shoes?" he cried at last.

"To be sure I did; do you doubt it?"

"Not in the least," said the man.

"Ah! ah!" said I, "I thought I should bring you back to your original opinion. I am, then, a vagrant Gypsy body, a tramper, a wandering blacksmith."

"Not a blacksmith, whatever else you may be," said the postillion, laughing.

"Then how do you account for my making those shoes?"

"By your not being a blacksmith," said the postillion; "no blacksmith would have made shoes in that manner. Besides, what did you mean just now by saying you had finished these shoes to-day? a real blacksmith would have flung off half-a-dozen sets of donkey shoes in one morning, but you, I will be sworn, have been hammering at these for days, and they do you credit, but why? because you are no blacksmith; no, friend, your shoes may do for this young gentlewoman's animal, but I shouldn't like to have my horses shod by you, unless at a great pinch indeed."

"Then," said I, "for what do you take me?"

"Why, for some runaway young gentleman," said the postillion. "No offence, I hope?"

"None at all; no one is offended at being taken or mistaken for a young gentleman, whether runaway or not; but from whence do you suppose I have run away?"

"Why, from college," said the man: "no offence?"

"None whatever; and what induced me to run away from college?"

"A love affair, I'll be sworn," said the postillion. "You had become acquainted with this young gentle woman, so she and you—"

"Mind how you get on, friend," said Belle, in a deep serious tone.

"Pray proceed," said I; "I dare say you mean no offence."

"None in the world," said the postillion; "all I was going to say was that you agreed to run away together, you from college and she from boarding-school. Well, there's nothing to be ashamed of in a matter like that, such things are done every day by young folks in high life."

"Are you offended?" said I to Belle.

Belle made no answer; but, placing her elbows on her knees, buried her face in her hands.

"So we ran away together?" said I.

"Ay, ay," said the postillion, "to Gretna Green, though I can't say that I drove ye, though I have driven many a pair."

"And from Gretna Green we came here?"

"I'll be bound you did," said the man, "till you could arrange matters at home."

"And the horse-shoes?" said I.

"The donkey-shoes you mean," answered the postillion; "why, I suppose you persuaded the blacksmith who married you to give you, before you left, a few lessons in his trade?"

"And we intend to stay here till we have arranged matters at home?"

"Ay, ay," said the postillion, "till the old people are pacified, and they send you letters directed to the next post town, to be left till called for, beginning with,

‘Dear children,’ and enclosing you each a cheque for one hundred pounds, when you will leave this place, and go home in a coach like gentlefolks, to visit your governors; I should like nothing better than to have the driving of you: and then there will be a grand meeting of the two families, and after a few reproaches, the old people will agree to do something handsome for the poor thoughtless things; so you will have a genteel house taken for you, and an annuity allowed you. You won’t get much the first year, five hundred at the most, in order that the old folks may let you feel that they are not altogether satisfied with you, and that you are yet entirely in their power; but the second, if you don’t get a cool thousand, may I catch cold, especially should young madam here present a son and heir for the old people to fondle, destined one day to become sole heir of the two illustrious houses, and then all the grand folks in the neighbourhood, who have, bless their prudent hearts! kept rather aloof from you till then, for fear you should want anything from them—I say, all the carriage people in the neighbourhood, when they see how swimmingly matters are going on, will come in shoals to visit you.”

“Really,” said I, “you are getting on swimmingly.”

“Oh,” said the postillion, “I was not a gentleman’s servant nine years without learning the ways of gentry, and being able to know gentry when I see them.”

“And what do you say to all this?” I demanded of Belle.

“Stop a moment,” interposed the postillion, “I have one more word to say, and when you are surrounded by your comforts, keeping your nice little barouche and pair, your coachman and livery servant, and visited by all the carriage people in the neighbourhood—to say nothing of the time when you come to the family estates on the death of the old people—I shouldn’t wonder if now and then you look back with longing and regret to the days when you lived in the damp dripping dingle, had no better equipage than a pony or donkey-cart, and saw no better company than a tramper or gypsy, except once, when a poor postillion was glad to seat himself at your charcoal fire.”

“Pray,” said I, “did you ever take lessons in elocution?”

“Not directly,” said the postillion, “but my old master, who was in Parliament, did, and so did his son, who was intended to be an orator. A great professor used to come and give them lessons, and I used to stand and listen, by which means I picked up a considerable quantity of what is called rhetoric. In what I last said, I was aiming at what I have heard him frequently endeavouring to teach my

governors as a thing indispensably necessary in all oratory, a graceful pere—pere—peregrination."

"Peroration, perhaps?"

"Just so," said the postillion; "and now I'm sure I am not mistaken about you; you have taken lessons yourself, at first hand, in the college vacations, and a promising pupil you were, I make no doubt. Well, your friends will be all the happier to get you back. Has your governor much borough interest?"

"I ask you once more," said I, addressing myself to Belle, "what you think of the history which this good man has made for us?"

"What should I think of it," said Belle, still keeping her face buried in her hands, "but that it is mere nonsense?"

"Nonsense!" said the postillion.

"Yes," said the girl, "and you know it."

"May my leg always ache, if I do," said the postillion, patting his leg with his hand; "will you persuade me that this young man has never been at college?"

"I have never been at college, but—"

"Ay, ay," said the postillion; "but—"

"I have been to the best schools in Britain, to say nothing of a celebrated one in Ireland."

"Well, then, it comes to the same thing," said the postillion; "or perhaps you know more than if you had been at college—and your governor?"

"My governor, as you call him," said I, "is dead."

"And his borough interest?"

"My father had no borough interest," said I; "had he possessed any, he would perhaps not have died as he did, honourably poor."

"No, no," said the postillion; "if he had had borough interest, he wouldn't have been poor nor honourable, though perhaps a right honourable. However, with your grand education and genteel manners, you made all right at last by persuading this noble young gentlewoman to run away from boarding-school

with you."

"I was never at a boarding-school," said Belle, "unless you call—"

"Ay, ay," said the postillion, "boarding-school is vulgar, I know: I beg your pardon, I ought to have called it academy, or by some other much finer name—you were in something much greater than a boarding-school."

"There you are right," said Belle, lifting up her head and looking the postillion full in the face by the light of the charcoal fire; "for I was bred in the workhouse."

"Wooh!" said the postillion.

"It is true that I am of good—"

"Ay, ay," said the postillion, "let us hear—"

"Of good blood," continued Belle; "my name is Berners, Isopel Berners, though my parents were unfortunate. Indeed, with respect to blood, I believe I am of better blood than the young man."

"There you are mistaken," said I; "by my father's side I am of Cornish blood, and by my mother's of brave French Protestant extraction. Now, with respect to the blood of my father—and to be descended well on the father's side is the principal thing—it is the best blood in the world, for the Cornish blood, as the proverb says—"

"I don't care what the proverb says," said Belle; "I say my blood is the best—my name is Berners, Isopel Berners—it was my mother's name, and is better, I am sure, than any you bear, whatever that may be; and though you say that the descent on the father's side is the principal thing—and I know why you say so," she added with some excitement—"I say that descent on the mother's side is of most account, because the mother—"

"Just come from Gretna Green, and already quarrelling," said the postillion.

"We do not come from Gretna Green," said Belle.

"Ah, I had forgot," said the postillion, "none but great people go to Gretna Green. Well, then, from church, and already quarrelling about family, just like two great people."

"We have never been to church," said Belle, "and, to prevent any more guessing on your part, it will be as well for me to tell you, friend, that I am nothing to the young man, and he, of course, nothing to me. I am a poor travelling girl, born in a workhouse: journeying on my occasions with certain companions, I came to this hollow, where my company quarrelled with the young man, who had settled down here, as he had a right to do, if he pleased; and not been able to drive him out, they went away after quarrelling with me, too, for not choosing to side with them; so I stayed here along with the young man, there being room for us both, and the place being as free to me as to him."

"And, in order that you may be no longer puzzled with respect to myself," said I, "I will give you a brief outline of my history. I am the son of honourable parents, who gave me a first-rate education, as far as literature and languages went, with which education I endeavoured, on the death of my father, to advance myself to wealth and reputation in the big city; but failing in the attempt, I conceived a disgust for the busy world, and determined to retire from it. After wandering about for some time, and meeting with various adventures, in one of which I contrived to obtain a pony, cart, and certain tools, used by smiths and tinkers, I came to this place, where I amused myself with making horse-shoes, or rather pony-shoes, having acquired the art of wielding the hammer and tongs from a strange kind of smith—not him of Gretna Green—whom I knew in my childhood. And here I lived, doing harm to no one, quite lonely and solitary, till one fine morning the premises were visited by this young gentlewoman and her companions. She did herself anything but justice when she said that her companions quarrelled with her because she would not side with them against me; they quarrelled with her, because she came most heroically to my assistance as I was on the point of being murdered; and she forgot to tell you, that after they had abandoned her she stood by me in the dark hour, comforting and cheering me, when unspeakable dread, to which I am occasionally subject, took possession of my mind. She says she is nothing to me, even as I am nothing to her. I am of course nothing to her, but she is mistaken in thinking she is nothing to me. I entertain the highest regard and admiration for her, being convinced that I might search the whole world in vain for a nature more heroic and devoted."

"And for my part," said Belle, with a sob, "a more quiet, agreeable partner in a place like this I would not wish to have; it is true he has strange ways, and frequently puts words into my mouth very difficult to utter; but—but—" and here she buried her face once more in her hands.

"Well," said the postillion, "I have been mistaken about you; that is, not

altogether, but in part. You are not rich folks, it seems, but you are not common people, and that I could have sworn. What I call a shame is, that some people I have known are not in your place and you in theirs,—you with their estates and borough interest, they in this dingle with these carts and animals; but there is no help for these things. Were I the great Mumbo Jumbo above, I would endeavour to manage matters better; but being a simple postillion, glad to earn three shillings a day, I can't be expected to do much . . . ."

[Here the postillion tells his story. After they have heard it, Lavengro, Isopel, and the narrator roll themselves in their several blankets and bid one another "Good night."]

CHAPTER XVII.—THE MAKING OF THE LINCH-PIN—THE SOUND SLEEPER—BREAKFAST—THE POSTILLION'S DEPARTURE.

I awoke at the first break of day, and, leaving the postillion fast asleep, stepped out of the tent. The dingle was dank and dripping. I lighted a fire of coals, and got my forge in readiness. I then ascended to the field, where the chaise was standing as we had left it on the previous evening. After looking at the cloud-stone near it, now cold, and split into three pieces, I set about prying narrowly into the condition of the wheel and axle-tree—the latter had sustained no damage of any consequence, and the wheel, as far as I was able to judge, was sound, being only slightly injured in the box. The only thing requisite to set the chaise in a travelling condition appeared to be a linch-pin, which I determined to make. Going to the companion wheel, I took out the linch-pin, which I carried down with me to the dingle, to serve me as a model.

I found Belle by this time dressed, and seated near the forge: with a slight nod to her like that which a person gives who happens to see an acquaintance when his mind is occupied with important business, I forthwith set about my work. Selecting a piece of iron which I thought would serve my purpose, I placed it in the fire, and plying the bellows in a furious manner, soon made it hot; then seizing it with the tongs, I laid it on my anvil, and began to beat it with my hammer, according to the rules of my art. The dingle resounded with my strokes. Belle sat still, and occasionally smiled, but suddenly started up and retreated towards her encampment, on a spark which I purposely sent in her direction alighting on her knee. I found the making of a linch-pin no easy matter; it was, however, less difficult than the fabrication of a pony-shoe; my work, indeed, was much facilitated by my having another pin to look at. In about three-quarters of an hour I had succeeded tolerably well, and had produced a linch-pin which I thought would serve. During all this time, notwithstanding the noise which I was making, the postillion never showed his face. His non-appearance at first alarmed me: I was afraid he might be dead, but, on looking into the tent, I found him still buried in the soundest sleep. "He must surely be

descended from one of the seven sleepers," said I, as I turned away and resumed my work. My work finished, I took a little oil, leather, and sand, and polished the pin as well as I could; then, summoning Belle, we both went to the chaise, where, with her assistance, I put on the wheel. The linch-pin which I had made fitted its place very well, and having replaced the other, I gazed at the chaise for some time with my heart full of that satisfaction which results from the consciousness of having achieved a great action; then, after looking at Belle in the hope of obtaining a compliment from her lips, which did not come, I returned to the dingle, without saying a word, followed by her. Belle set about making preparations for breakfast; and I, taking the kettle, went and filled it at the spring. Having hung it over the fire, I went to the tent in which the postillion was still sleeping, and called upon him to arise. He awoke with a start, and stared around him at first with the utmost surprise, not unmixed, I could observe, with a certain degree of fear. At last, looking in my face, he appeared to recollect himself. "I had quite forgot," said he, as he got up, "where I was, and all that happened yesterday. However, I remember now the whole affair, thunderstorm, thunder-bolt, frightened horses, and all your kindness. Come, I must see after my coach and horses; I hope we shall be able to repair the damage." "The damage is already quite repaired," said I, "as you will see, if you come to the field above." "You don't say so," said the postillion, coming out of the tent; "well, I am mightily beholden to you. Good morning, young gentlewoman," said he, addressing Belle, who, having finished her preparations, was seated near the fire. "Good morning, young man," said Belle: "I suppose you would be glad of some breakfast; however, you must wait a little, the kettle does not boil." "Come and look at your chaise," said I; "but tell me how it happened that the noise which I have been making did not awake you; for three-quarters of an hour at least I was hammering close at your ear." "I heard you all the time," said the postillion, "but your hammering made me sleep all the sounder; I am used to hear hammering in my morning sleep. There's a forge close by the room where I sleep when I'm at home, at my inn; for we have all kinds of conveniences at my inn—forge, carpenter's shop, and wheelwright's,—so that when I heard you hammering, I thought, no doubt, that it was the old noise, and that I was comfortable in my bed at my own inn." We now ascended to the field, where I showed the postillion his chaise. He looked at the pin attentively, rubbed his hands, and gave a loud laugh. "Is it not well done?" said I. "It will do till I get home," he replied. "And that is all you have to say?" I demanded. "And that's a good deal," said he, "considering who made it. But don't be offended," he added, "I shall prize it all the more for its being made by a gentleman, and no blacksmith; and so will my governor, when I show it to

him. I shan't let it remain where it is, but will keep it, as a remembrance of you, as long as I live." He then again rubbed his hands with great glee, and said, "I will now go and see after my horses, and then to breakfast, partner, if you please." Suddenly, however, looking at his hands, he said, "Before sitting down to breakfast, I am in the habit of washing my hands and face: I suppose you could not furnish me with a little soap and water." "As much water as you please," said I, "but if you want soap, I must go and trouble the young gentlewoman for some." "By no means," said the postillion, "water will do at a pinch." "Follow me," said I; and leading him to the pond of the frogs and newts, I said, "This is my ewer; you are welcome to part of it—the water is so soft that it is scarcely necessary to add soap to it;" then lying down on the bank, I plunged my head into the water, then scrubbed my hands and face, and afterwards wiped them with some long grass which grew on the margin of the pond. "Bravo," said the postillion, "I see you know how to make a shift;" he then followed my example, declared he never felt more refreshed in his life, and, giving a bound, said, "he would go and look after his horses."

We then went to look after the horses, which we found not much the worse for having spent the night in the open air. My companion again inserted their heads in the corn-bags, and, leaving the animals to discuss their corn, returned with me to the dingle, where we found the kettle boiling. We sat down, and Belle made tea and did the honours of the meal. The postillion was in high spirits, ate heartily, and, to Belle's evident satisfaction, declared that he had never drank better tea in his life, or indeed any half so good. Breakfast over, he said that he must now go and harness his horses, as it was high time for him to return to his inn. Belle gave him her hand and wished him farewell: the postillion shook her hand warmly, and was advancing close up to her—for what purpose I cannot say—whereupon Belle, withdrawing her hand, drew herself up with an air which caused the postillion to retreat a step or two with an exceedingly sheepish look. Recovering himself, however, he made a low bow, and proceeded up the path. I attended him, and helped to harness his horses and put them to the vehicle; he then shook me by the hand, and taking the reins and whip mounted to his seat; ere he drove away he thus addressed me: "If ever I forget your kindness and that of the young woman below, dash my buttons. If ever either of you should enter my inn you may depend upon a warm welcome, the best that can be set before you, and no expense to either, for I will give both of you the best of characters to the governor, who is the very best fellow upon all the road. As for your linch-pin, I trust it will serve till I get home, when I will take it out and keep it in remembrance of you all the days of my life;" then giving the horses a jerk with

his reins, he cracked his whip and drove off.

I returned to the dingle, Belle had removed the breakfast things, and was busy in her own encampment: nothing occurred, worthy of being related, for two hours, at the end of which time Belle departed on a short expedition, and I again found myself alone in the dingle.

CHAPTER XVIII.—THE MAN IN BLACK—THE EMPEROR OF GERMANY—NEPOTISM—DONNA OLYMPIA—OMNIPOTENCE—CAMILLO ASTALLI—THE FIVE PROPOSITIONS.

In the evening I received another visit from the man in black. I had been taking a stroll in the neighbourhood, and was sitting in the dingle in rather a listless manner, scarcely knowing how to employ myself; his coming, therefore, was by no means disagreeable to me. I produced the hollands and glass from my tent, where Isopel Berners had requested me to deposit them, and also some lump sugar, then taking the gotch I fetched water from the spring, and, sitting down, begged the man in black to help himself; he was not slow in complying with my desire, and prepared for himself a glass of hollands and water with a lump of sugar in it. After he had taken two or three sips with evident satisfaction, I, remembering his chuckling exclamation of "Go to Rome for money," when he last left the dingle, took the liberty, after a little conversation, of reminding him of it, whereupon, with a he! he! he! he replied, "Your idea was not quite so original as I supposed. After leaving you the other night I remembered having read of an emperor of Germany who conceived the idea of applying to Rome for money, and actually put it into practice.

"Urban the Eighth then occupied the papal chair, of the family of the Barberini, nicknamed the Mosche, or Flies, from the circumstance of bees being their armorial bearing. The Emperor having exhausted all his money in endeavouring to defend the church against Gustavus Adolphus, the great King of Sweden, who was bent on its destruction, applied in his necessity to the Pope for a loan of money. The Pope, however, and his relations, whose cellars were at that time full of the money of the church, which they had been plundering for years, refused to lend him a scudo; whereupon a pasquinade picture was stuck up at Rome, representing the church lying on a bed, gashed with dreadful wounds, and beset all over with flies, which were sucking her, whilst the Emperor of Germany was kneeling before her with a miserable face, requesting a little

money towards carrying on the war against the heretics, to which the poor church was made to say: 'How can I assist you, O my champion, do you not see that the flies have sucked me to the very bones?' Which story," said he, "shows that the idea of going to Rome for money was not quite so original as I imagined the other night, though utterly preposterous.

"This affair," said he, "occurred in what were called the days of nepotism. Certain popes, who wished to make themselves in some degree independent of the cardinals, surrounded themselves with their nephews, and the rest of their family, who sucked the church and Christendom as much as they could, none doing so more effectually than the relations of Urban the Eighth, at whose death, according to the book called the "Nipotismo di Roma," there were in the Barberini family two hundred and twenty-seven governments, abbeys, and high dignities; and so much hard cash in their possession that threescore and ten mules were scarcely sufficient to convey the plunder of one of them to Palestrina." He added, however, that it was probable that Christendom fared better whilst the popes were thus independent, as it was less sucked, whereas before and after that period, it was sucked by hundreds instead of tens, by the cardinals and all their relations, instead of by the pope and his nephews only.

Then, after drinking rather copiously of his hollands, he said that it was certainly no bad idea of the popes to surround themselves with nephews, on whom they bestowed great church dignities, as by so doing they were tolerably safe from poison, whereas a pope, if abandoned to the cardinals, might at any time be made away with by them, provided they thought that he lived too long, or that he seemed disposed to do anything which they disliked; adding, that Ganganelli would never have been poisoned provided he had had nephews about him to take care of his life, and to see that nothing unholy was put into his food, or a bustling stirring brother's wife like Donna Olympia. He then with a he! he! he! asked me if I had ever read the book called the "Nipotismo di Roma"; and on my replying in the negative, he told me that it was a very curious and entertaining book, which he occasionally looked at in an idle hour, and proceeded to relate to me anecdotes out of the "Nipotismo di Roma" about the successor of Urban, Innocent the Tenth, and Donna Olympia, showing how fond he was of her, and how she cooked his food, and kept the cardinals away from it, and how she and her creatures plundered Christendom, with the sanction of the Pope until Christendom, becoming enraged, insisted that he should put her away, which he did for a time, putting a nephew—one Camillo Astalli—in her place, in which, however, he did not continue long for the Pope, conceiving a pique against him,

banished him from his sight, and recalled Donna Olympia, who took care of his food, and plundered Christendom until Pope Innocent died.

I said that I only wondered that between pope and cardinals the whole system of Rome had not long fallen to the ground, and was told in reply, that its not having fallen was the strongest proof of its vital power, and the absolute necessity for the existence of the system. That the system, notwithstanding its occasional disorders, went on. Popes and cardinals might prey upon its bowels, and sell its interests, but the system survived. The cutting off of this or that member was not able to cause Rome any vital loss; for, as soon as she lost a member, the loss was supplied by her own inherent vitality; though her popes had been poisoned by cardinals, and her cardinals by popes; and though priests occasionally poisoned popes, cardinals, and each other, after all that had been, and might be, she had still, and would ever have, her priests, cardinals, and pope.

Finding the man in black so communicative and reasonable, I determined to make the best of my opportunity, and learn from him all I could with respect to the papal system, and told him that he would particularly oblige me by telling me who the Pope of Rome was; and received for answer, that he was an old man elected by a majority of cardinals to the papal chair; who, immediately after his election, became omnipotent and equal to God on earth. On my begging him not to talk such nonsense, and asking him how a person could be omnipotent who could not always preserve himself from poison, even when fenced round by nephews, or protected by a bustling woman, he, after taking a long sip of hollands and water, told me that I must not expect too much from omnipotence; for example, that as it would be unreasonable to expect that One above could annihilate the past—for instance, the Seven Years' War, or the French Revolution—though any one who believed in Him would acknowledge Him to be omnipotent, so would it be unreasonable for the faithful to expect that the Pope could always guard himself from poison. Then, after looking at me for a moment steadfastly, and taking another sip, he told me that popes had frequently done impossibilities; for example, Innocent the Tenth had created a nephew: for, not liking particularly any of his real nephews, he had created the said Camillo Astalli his nephew; asking me, with a he! he! "What but omnipotence could make a young man nephew to a person to whom he was not in the slightest degree related?" On my observing that of course no one believed that the young fellow was really the pope's nephew, though the pope might have adopted him as such, the man in black replied, "that the reality of the nephewship of Camillo Astalli had hitherto never become a point of faith; let, however, the present pope,

or any other pope, proclaim that it is necessary to believe in the reality of the nephewship of Camillo Astalli, and see whether the faithful would not believe in it. Who can doubt that," he added, "seeing that they believe in the reality of the five propositions of Jansenius? The Jesuits, wishing to ruin the Jansenists, induced a pope to declare that such and such damnable opinions, which they called five propositions, were to be found in a book written by Jansen, though in reality no such propositions were to be found there; whereupon the existence of these propositions became forthwith a point of faith to the faithful. Do you then think," he demanded, "that there is one of the faithful who would not swallow, if called upon, the nephewship of Camillo Astalli as easily as the five propositions of Jansenius?" "Surely, then," said I, "the faithful must be a pretty pack of simpletons!" Whereupon the man in black exclaimed, "What! a Protestant, and an infringer of the rights of faith! Here's a fellow, who would feel himself insulted if any one were to ask him how he could believe in the miraculous conception, calling people simpletons who swallow the five propositions of Jansenius, and are disposed, if called upon, to swallow the reality of the nephewship of Camillo Astalli."

I was about to speak, when I was interrupted by the arrival of Belle. After unharnessing her donkey, and adjusting her person a little, she came and sat down by us. In the meantime I had helped my companion to some more hollands and water, and had plunged with him into yet deeper discourse.

CHAPTER XIX.—NECESSITY OF RELIGION—THE GREAT INDIAN ONE—IMAGE WORSHIP—SHAKESPEARE—THE PAT ANSWER—KRISHNA—AMEN.

Having told the man in black that I should like to know all the truth with regard to the Pope and his system, he assured me he should be delighted to give me all the information in his power; that he had come to the dingle, not so much for the sake of the good cheer which I was in the habit of giving him, as in the hope of inducing me to enlist under the banners of Rome, and to fight in her cause; and that he had no doubt that, by speaking out frankly to me, he ran the best chance of winning me over.

He then proceeded to tell me that the experience of countless ages had proved the necessity of religion; the necessity, he would admit, was only for simpletons; but as nine-tenths of the dwellers upon this earth were simpletons, it would never do for sensible people to run counter to their folly, but, on the contrary, it was the wisest course to encourage them in it, always provided that, by so doing, sensible people could derive advantage; that the truly sensible people of this world were the priests, who, without caring a straw for religion for its own sake, made use of it as a cord by which to draw the simpletons after them; that there were many religions in this world, all of which had been turned to excellent account by the priesthood; but that the one the best adapted for the purposes of priestcraft was the popish, which, he said, was the oldest in the world and the best calculated to endure. On my inquiring what he meant by saying the popish religion was the oldest in the world, whereas there could be no doubt that the Greek and Roman religion had existed long before it, to say nothing of the old Indian religion still in existence and vigour; he said, with a nod, after taking a sip at his glass, that, between me and him, the popish religion, that of Greece and Rome, and the old Indian system were, in reality, one and the same.

“You told me that you intended to be frank,” said I; “but, however frank you

may be, I think you are rather wild."

"We priests of Rome," said the man in black, "even those amongst us who do not go much abroad, know a great deal about church matters, of which you heretics have very little idea. Those of our brethren of the Propaganda, on their return home from distant missions, not unfrequently tell us very strange things relating to our dear mother; for example, our first missionaries to the East were not slow in discovering and telling to their brethren that our religion and the great Indian one were identical, no more difference between them than between Ram and Rome. Priests, convents, beads, prayers, processions, fastings, penances, all the same, not forgetting anchorites and vermin, he! he! The pope they found under the title of the grand lama, a sucking child surrounded by an immense number of priests. Our good brethren, some two hundred years ago, had a hearty laugh, which their successors have often re-echoed; they said that helpless suckling and its priests put them so much in mind of their own old man, surrounded by his cardinals, he! he! Old age is second childhood."

"Did they find Christ?" said I.

"They found him too," said the man in black, "that is, they saw his image; he is considered in India as a pure kind of being, and on that account, perhaps, is kept there rather in the background, even as he is here."

"All this is very mysterious to me," said I.

"Very likely," said the man in black; "but of this I am tolerably sure, and so are most of those of Rome, that modern Rome had its religion from ancient Rome, which had its religion from the East."

"But how?" I demanded.

"It was brought about, I believe, by the wanderings of nations," said the man in black. "A brother of the Propaganda, a very learned man, once told me—I do not mean Mezzofante, who has not five ideas—this brother once told me that all we of the Old World, from Calcutta to Dublin, are of the same stock, and were originally of the same language, and—"

"All of one religion," I put in.

"All of one religion," said the mad in black; "and now follow different modifications of the same religion."

"We Christians are not image-worshippers," said I.

"You heretics are not, you mean," said the man in black; "but you will be put down, just as you have always been, though others may rise up after you; the true religion is image-worship; people may strive against it, but they will only work themselves to an oil; how did it fare with that Greek Emperor, the Iconoclast, what was his name, Leon the Isaurian? Did not his image-breaking cost him Italy, the fairest province of his empire, and did not ten fresh images start up at home for every one which he demolished? Oh! you little know the craving which the soul sometimes feels after a good bodily image."

"I have indeed no conception of it," said I; "I have an abhorrence of idolatry—the idea of bowing before a graven figure."

"The idea, indeed," said Belle, who had now joined us.

"Did you never bow before that of Shakespeare?" said the man in black, addressing himself to me, after a low bow to Belle.

"I don't remember that I ever did," said I, "but even suppose I did?"

"Suppose you did," said the man in black; "shame on you, Mr. Hater of Idolatry; why, the very supposition brings you to the ground; you must make figures of Shakespeare, must you? then why not of St. Antonio, or Ignacio, or of a greater personage still? I know what you are going to say," he cried, interrupting me as I was about to speak. "You don't make his image in order to pay it divine honours, but only to look at it, and think of Shakespeare; but this looking at a thing in order to think of a person is the very basis of idolatry. Shakespeare's works are not sufficient for you; no more are the Bible or the legend of Saint Antony or Saint Ignacio for us, that is for those of us who believe in them; I tell you, Zingaro, that no religion can exist long which rejects a good bodily image."

"Do you think," said I, "that Shakespeare's works would not exist without his image?"

"I believe," said the man in black, "that Shakespeare's image is looked at more than his works, and will be looked at, and perhaps adored, when they are forgotten. I am surprised that they have not been forgotten long ago; I am no admirer of them."

"But I can't imagine," said I, "how you will put aside the authority of Moses. If Moses strove against image-worship, should not his doing so be conclusive as to

the impropriety of the practice; what higher authority can you have than that of Moses?"

"The practice of the great majority of the human race," said the man in black, "and the recurrence to image-worship, where image-worship has been abolished. Do you know that Moses is considered by the church as no better than a heretic, and though, for particular reasons, it has been obliged to adopt his writings, the adoption was merely a sham one, as it never paid the slightest attention to them? No, no, the church was never led by Moses, nor by one mightier than he, whose doctrine it has equally nullified—I allude to Krishna in his second avatar; the church, it is true, governs in his name, but not unfrequently gives him the lie, if he happens to have said anything which it dislikes. Did you never hear the reply which Padre Paolo Segani made to the French Protestant Jean Anthoine Guerin, who had asked him whether it was easier for Christ to have been mistaken in his Gospel, than for the Pope to be mistaken in his decrees?"

"I never heard their names before," said I.

"The answer was pat," said the man in black, "though he who made it was confessedly the most ignorant fellow of the very ignorant order to which he belonged, the Augustine. 'Christ might err as a man,' said he, 'but the Pope can never err, being God.' The whole story is related in the Nipotismo."

"I wonder you should ever have troubled yourselves with Christ at all," said I.

"What was to be done?" said the man in black; "the power of that name suddenly came over Europe, like the power of a mighty wind; it was said to have come from Judæa, and from Judæa it probably came when it first began to agitate minds in these parts; but it seems to have been known in the remote East, more or less, for thousands of years previously. It filled people's minds with madness; it was followed by books which were never much regarded, as they contained little of insanity; but the name! what fury that breathed into people! the books were about peace and gentleness, but the name was the most horrible of war-cries—those who wished to uphold old names at first strove to oppose it, but their efforts were feeble, and they had no good war-cry; what was Mars as a war-cry compared with the name of. . . .? It was said that they persecuted terribly, but who said so? The Christians. The Christians could have given them a lesson in the art of persecution, and eventually did so. None but Christians have ever been good persecutors; well, the old religion succumbed, Christianity

prevailed, for the ferocious is sure to prevail over the gentle."

"I thought," said I, "you stated a little time ago that the Popish religion and the ancient Roman are the same?"

"In every point but that name, that Krishna and the fury and love of persecution which it inspired," said the man in black. "A hot blast came from the East, sounding Krishna; it absolutely maddened people's minds, and the people would call themselves his children; we will not belong to Jupiter any longer, we will belong to Krishna; and they did belong to Krishna, that is in name, but in nothing else; for who ever cared for Krishna in the Christian world, or who ever regarded the words attributed to Him, or put them in practice?"

"Why, we Protestants regard His words, and endeavour to practise what they enjoin as much as possible."

"But you reject his image," said the man in black; "better reject his words than his image: no religion can exist long which rejects a good bodily image. Why, the very negro barbarians of High Barbary could give you a lesson on that point; they have their fetish images, to which they look for help in their afflictions; they have likewise a high priest, whom they call—"

"Mumbo Jumbo," said I; "I know all about him already."

"How came you to know anything about him?" said the man in black, with a look of some surprise.

"Some of us poor Protestant tinkers," said I, "though we live in dingles, as also acquainted with a thing or two."

"I really believe you are," said the man in black, staring at me; "but, in connection with this Mumbo Jumbo, I could relate to you a comical story about a fellow, an English servant, I once met at Rome." {218}

"It would be quite unnecessary," said I; "I would much sooner hear you talk about Krishna, his words and image."

"Spoken like a true heretic," said the man in black; "one of the faithful would have placed his image before his words; for what are all the words in the world compared with a good bodily image?"

"I believe you occasionally quote his words?" said I.

“He! he!” said the man in black; “occasionally.”

“For example,” said I, “upon this rock I will found my church.”

“He! he!” said the man in black; “you must really become one of us.”

“Yet you must have had some difficulty in getting the rock to Rome?”

“None whatever,” said the man in black; “faith can remove mountains, to say nothing of rocks—ho! ho!”

“But I cannot imagine,” said I, “what advantage you could derive from perverting those words of Scripture in which the Saviour talks about eating his body.”

“I do not know, indeed, why we troubled our heads about the matter at all,” said the man in black; “but when you talk about perverting the meaning of the text, you speak ignorantly, Mr. Tinker; when he whom you call the Saviour gave his followers the sop, and bade them eat it, telling them it was his body, he delicately alluded to what it was incumbent upon them to do after his death, namely, to eat his body.”

“You do not mean to say that he intended they should actually eat his body?”

“Then you suppose ignorantly,” said the man in black; “eating the bodies of the dead was a heathenish custom, practised by the heirs and legatees of people who left property; and this custom is alluded to in the text.”

“But what has the New Testament to do with heathen customs,” said I, “except to destroy them?”

“More than you suppose,” said the man in black. “We priests of Rome, who have long lived at Rome, know much better what the New Testament is made of than the heretics and their theologians, not forgetting their Tinkers; though I confess some of the latter have occasionally surprised us—for example, Bunyan. The New Testament is crowded with allusions to heathen customs, and with words connected with pagan sorcery. Now, with respect to words, I would fain have you, who pretend to be a philologist, tell me the meaning of Amen?”

I made no answer.

“We, of Rome,” said the man in black, “know two or three things of which the heretics are quite ignorant; for example, there are those amongst us—those, too,

who do not pretend to be philologists—who know what amen is, and, moreover, how we got it. We got it from our ancestors, the priests of ancient Rome; and they got the word from their ancestors of the East, the priests of Buddh and Brahma."

"And what is the meaning of the word?" I demanded.

"Amen," said the man in black, "is a modification of the old Hindoo formula, Omani batsikhom, by the almost ceaseless repetition of which the Indians hope to be received finally to the rest or state of forgetfulness of Buddh or Brahma; a foolish practice you will say, but are you heretics much wiser, who are continually sticking amen to the end of your prayers, little knowing when you do so, that you are consigning yourselves to the repose of Buddh? Oh, what hearty laughs our missionaries have had when comparing the eternally sounding Eastern gibberish of Omani batsikhom, and the Ave Maria and Amen Jesus of our own idiotical devotees."

"I have nothing to say about the Ave Marias and Amens of your superstitious devotees," said I; "I daresay that they use them nonsensically enough, but in putting Amen to the end of a prayer, we merely intend to express, 'So let it be.'"

"It means nothing of the kind," said the man in black; "and the Hindoos might just as well put your national oath at the end of their prayers, as perhaps they will after a great many thousand years, when English is forgotten, and only a few words of it remembered by dim tradition without being understood. How strange if, after the lapse of four thousand years, the Hindoos should damn themselves to the blindness so dear to their present masters, even as their masters at present consign themselves to the forgetfulness so dear to the Hindoos; but my glass has been empty for a considerable time; perhaps Bellissima Biondina," said he, addressing Belle, "you will deign to replenish it?"

"I shall do no such thing," said Belle; "you have drank quite enough, and talked more than enough, and to tell you the truth I wish you would leave us alone."

"Shame on you, Belle," said I, "consider the obligations of hospitality."

"I am sick of that word," said Belle, "you are so frequently misusing it; were this place not Mumpers' Dingle, and consequently as free to the fellow as ourselves, I would lead him out of it."

"Pray be quiet, Belle," said I. "You had better help yourself," said I, addressing

myself to the man in black, “the lady is angry with you.”

“I am sorry for it,” said the man in black; “if she is angry with me, I am not so with her, and shall always be proud to wait upon her; in the meantime I will wait upon myself.”

CHAPTER XX.—THE PROPOSAL—THE SCOTCH NOVEL—LATITUDE—MIRACLES—PESTILENT HERETICS—OLD FRASER—WONDERFUL TEXT—NO ARMENIAN.

The man in black having helped himself to some more of his favourite beverage, and tasted it, I thus addressed him: "The evening is getting rather advanced, and I can see that this lady," pointing to Belle, "is anxious for her tea, which she prefers to take cosily and comfortably with me in the dingle. The place, it is true, is as free to you as to ourselves, nevertheless, as we are located here by necessity, whilst you merely come as a visitor, I must take the liberty of telling you that we shall be glad to be alone, as soon as you have said what you have to say, and have finished the glass of refreshment at present in your hand. I think you said some time ago that one of your motives for coming hither was to induce me to enlist under the banner of Rome. I wish to know whether that was really the case?"

"Decidedly so," said the man in black; "I come here principally in the hope of enlisting you in our regiment, in which I have no doubt you could do us excellent service."

"Would you enlist my companion as well?" I demanded.

"We should be only too proud to have her among us, whether she comes with you or alone," said the man in black, with a polite bow to Belle.

"Before we give you an answer," I replied, "I would fain know more about you; perhaps you will declare your name?"

"That I will never do," said the man in black; "no one in England knows it but myself, and I will not declare it, even in a dingle; as for the rest, *Sono un Prete Cattolica Appostolico*—that is all that many a one of us can say for himself, and it assuredly means a great deal."

“We will now proceed to business,” said I. “You must be aware that we English are generally considered a self-interested people.”

“And with considerable justice,” said the man in black, drinking. “Well, you are a person of acute perception, and I will presently make it evident to you that it would be to your interest to join with us. You are at present, evidently, in very needy circumstances, and are lost, not only to yourself, but the world; but should you enlist with us, I could find you an occupation not only agreeable, but one in which your talents would have free scope. I would introduce you in the various grand houses here in England, to which I have myself admission, as a surprising young gentleman of infinite learning, who by dint of study has discovered that the Roman is the only true faith. I tell you confidently that our popish females would make a saint, nay a God of you; they are fools enough for anything. There is one person in particular with whom I should wish to make you acquainted, in the hope that you would be able to help me to perform good service to the holy see. He is a gouty old fellow, of some learning, residing in an old hall, near the great western sea-port, and is one of the very few amongst the English Catholics possessing a grain of sense. I think you could help us to govern him, for he is not unfrequently disposed to be restive, asks us strange questions—occasionally threatens us with his crutch; and behaves so that we are often afraid that we shall lose him, or, rather, his property, which he has bequeathed to us, and which is enormous. I am sure that you could help us to deal with him; sometimes with your humour, sometimes with your learning, and perhaps occasionally with your fists.

“And in what manner would you provide for my companion?” said I.

“We would place her at once,” said the man in black, “in the house of two highly respectable Catholic ladies in this neighbourhood, where she would be treated with every care and consideration till her conversion should be accomplished in a regular manner; we would then remove her to a female monastic establishment, where, after undergoing a year’s probation, during which time she would be instructed in every elegant accomplishment, she should take the veil. Her advancement would speedily follow, for, with such a face and figure, she would make a capital lady abbess, especially in Italy, to which country she would probably be sent; ladies of her hair and complexion—to say nothing of her height—being a curiosity in the south. With a little care and management she could soon obtain a vast reputation for sanctity; and who knows but after her death she might become a glorified saint—he! he! Sister Maria Theresa, for that is the name I propose you should bear. Holy Mother Maria Theresa—glorified

and celestial saint, I have the honour of drinking to your health," and the man in black drank.

"Well, Belle," said I, "what have you to say to the gentleman's proposal?"

"That if he goes on in this way I will break his glass against his mouth."

"You have heard the lady's answer," said I.

"I have," said the man in black, "and shall not press the matter. I can't help, however, repeating that she would make a capital lady abbess; she would keep the nuns in order, I warrant her; no easy matter! Break the glass against my mouth—he! he! How she would send the holy utensils flying at the nuns' heads occasionally, and just the person to wring the nose of Satan should he venture to appear one night in her cell in the shape of a handsome black man. No offence, madam, no offence, pray retain your seat," said he, observing that Belle had started up; "I mean no offence. Well, if you will not consent to be an abbess, perhaps you will consent to follow this young Zingaro, and to co-operate with him and us. I am a priest, madam, and can join you both in an instant, *connubio stabili*, as I suppose the knot has not been tied already."

"Hold your mumping gibberish," said Belle, "and leave the dingle this moment, for though 'tis free to every one, you have no right to insult me in it."

"Pray be pacified," said I to Belle, getting up, and placing myself between her and the man in black, "he will presently leave, take my word for it—there, sit down again," said I, as I led her to her seat; then, resuming my own, I said to the man in black: "I advise you to leave the dingle as soon as possible."

"I should wish to have your answer to my proposal first," said he.

"Well, then, here you shall have it: I will not entertain your proposal; I detest your schemes: they are both wicked and foolish."

"Wicked," said the man in black, "have they not—he! he!—the furtherance of religion in view?"

"A religion," said I, "in which you yourself do not believe, and which you contemn."

"Whether I believe in it or not," said the man in black, "it is adapted for the generality of the human race; so I will forward it, and advise you to do the

same. It was nearly extirpated in these regions, but it is springing up again, owing to circumstances. Radicalism is a good friend to us; all the liberals laud up our system out of hatred to the Established Church, though our system is ten times less liberal than the Church of England. Some of them have really come over to us. I myself confess a baronet [Sir Charles Wolesley] who presided over the first radical meeting ever held in England—he was an atheist when he came over to us, in the hope of mortifying his own church—but he is now—ho! ho!—a real Catholic devotee—quite afraid of my threats; I made him frequently scourge himself before me. Well, Radicalism does us good service, especially amongst the lower classes, for Radicalism chiefly flourishes amongst them; for though a baronet or two may be found amongst the radicals, and perhaps as many lords—fellows who have been discarded by their own order for clownishness, or something they have done—it incontestably flourishes best among the lower orders. Then the love of what is foreign is a great friend to us; this love is chiefly confined to the middle and upper classes. {227} Some admire the French, and imitate them; others must needs be Spaniards, dress themselves up in a zamarra, stick a cigar in their mouths, and say, 'Carajo.' Others would pass for Germans; he! he! the idea of any one wishing to pass for a German! but what has done us more service than anything else in these regions—I mean amidst the middle classes—has been the novel, the Scotch novel. The good folks, since they have read the novels, have become Jacobites; and, because all the Jacobs were Papists, the good folks must become Papists also, or, at least, papistically inclined. The very Scotch Presbyterians, since they have read the novels, are become all but Papists; I speak advisedly, having lately been amongst them. There's a trumpery bit of a half papist sect, called the Scotch Episcopalian Church, which lay dormant and nearly forgotten for upwards of a hundred years, which has of late got wonderfully into fashion in Scotland, because, forsooth, some of the long-haired gentry of the novels were said to belong to it, such as Montrose and Dundee; and to this the Presbyterians are going over in throngs, traducing and vilifying their own forefathers, or denying them altogether, and calling themselves descendants of—ho! ho! ho!—Scottish Cavaliers!!! I have heard them myself repeating snatches of Jacobite ditties about 'Bonnie Dundee,' and—

"'Come, fill up my cup, and fill up my can,
And saddle my horse, and call up my man.'

There's stuff for you! Not that I object to the first part of the ditty, it is natural enough that a Scotchman should cry, 'Come, fill up my cup!' more especially if

he’s drinking at another person’s expense—all Scotchmen being fond of liquor at free cost: but ‘Saddle his horse!!!’—for what purpose I would ask? Where is the use of saddling a horse, unless you can ride him? and where was there ever a Scotchman who could ride?”

“Of course you have not a drop of Scotch blood in your veins,” said I, “otherwise you would never have uttered that last sentence.”

“Don’t be too sure of that,” said the man in black; “you know little of Popery if you imagine that it cannot extinguish love of country, even in a Scotchman. A thorough-going Papist—and who more thorough-going than myself—cares nothing for his country; and why should he? he belongs to a system, and not to a country.”

“One thing,” said I, “connected with you, I cannot understand; you call yourself a thorough-going Papist, yet are continually saying the most pungent things against Popery, and turning to unbounded ridicule those who show any inclination to embrace it.”

“Rome is a very sensible old body,” said the man in black, “and little cares what her children say, provided they do her bidding. She knows several things, and amongst others, that no servants work so hard and faithfully as those who curse their masters at every stroke they do. She was not fool enough to be angry with the Miquelets of Alba, who renounced her, and called her ‘puta’ all the time they were cutting the throats of the Netherlanders. Now, if she allowed her faithful soldiers the latitude of renouncing her, and calling her ‘puta’ in the market-place, think not she is so unreasonable as to object to her faithful priests occasionally calling her ‘puta’ in the dingle.”

“But,” said I, “suppose some one were to tell the world some of the disorderly things which her priests say in the dingle.”

“He would have the fate of Cassandra,” said the man in black; “no one would believe him—yes, the priests would: but they would make no sign of belief. They believe in the Alcoran des Cordeliers {230}—that is, those who have read it; but they make no sign.”

“A pretty system,” said I, “which extinguishes love of country and of everything noble, and brings the minds of its ministers to a parity with those of devils, who delight in nothing but mischief.”

“The system,” said the man in black, “is a grand one, with unbounded vitality. Compare it with your Protestantism, and you will see the difference. Popery is ever at work, whilst Protestantism is supine. A pretty church, indeed, the Protestant! Why, it can’t even work a miracle.”

“Can your church work miracles?” I demanded.

“That was the very question,” said the man in black, “which the ancient British clergy asked of Austin Monk, after they had been fools enough to acknowledge their own inability. ‘We don’t pretend to work miracles; do you?’ ‘Oh! dear me, yes,’ said Austin; ‘we find no difficulty in the matter. We can raise the dead, we can make the blind see; and to convince you I will give sight to the blind. Here is this blind Saxon, whom you cannot cure, but on whose eyes I will manifest my power, in order to show the difference between the true and the false church;’ and forthwith, with the assistance of a handkerchief and a little hot water, he opened the eyes of the barbarian. So we manage matters! A pretty church, that old British church, which could not work miracles—quite as helpless as the modern one. The fools! was birdlime so scarce a thing amongst them?—and were the properties of warm water so unknown to them, that they could not close a pair of eyes and open them?”

“It’s a pity,” said I, “that the British clergy, at that interview with Austin, did not bring forward a blind Welshman, and ask the monk to operate upon him.”

“Clearly,” said the man in black; “that’s what they ought to have done; but they were fools without a single resource.” Here he took a sip at his glass.

“But they did not believe in the miracle?” said I.

“And what did their not believing avail them?” said the man in black. “Austin remained master of the field, and they went away holding their heads down, and muttering to themselves. What a fine subject for a painting would be Austin’s opening the eyes of the Saxon barbarian, and the discomfiture of the British clergy! I wonder it has not been painted!—he! he!”

“I suppose your church still pet forms miracles occasionally?” said I.

“It does,” said the man in black. “The Rev. . . . has lately been performing miracles in Ireland, destroying devils that had got possession of people; he has been eminently successful. In two instances he not only destroyed the devils, but the lives of the people possessed—he! he! Oh! there is so much energy in

our system; we are always at work, whilst Protestantism is supine.”

“You must not imagine,” said I, “that all Protestants are supine; some of them appear to be filled with unbounded zeal. They deal, it is true, not in lying miracles, but they propagate God’s Word. I remember only a few months ago, having occasion for a Bible, going to an establishment, the object of which was to send Bibles all over the world. The supporters of that establishment could have no self-interested views; for I was supplied by them with a noble-sized Bible at a price so small as to preclude the idea that it could bring any profit to the vendors.”

The countenance of the man in black slightly fell. “I know the people to whom you allude,” said he; “indeed, unknown to them, I have frequently been to see them, and observed their ways. I tell you frankly that there is not a set of people in this kingdom who have caused our church so much trouble and uneasiness. I should rather say that they alone cause us any; for as for the rest, what with their drowsiness, their plethora, their folly, and their vanity, they are doing us anything but mischief. These fellows are a pestilent set of heretics, whom we would gladly see burnt; they are, with the most untiring perseverance, and in spite of divers minatory declarations of the holy father, scattering their books abroad through all Europe, and have caused many people in Catholic countries to think that hitherto their priesthood have endeavoured, as much as possible, to keep them blinded. There is one fellow amongst them for whom we entertain a particular aversion; a big, burly parson, with the face of a lion, the voice of a buffalo, and a fist like a sledge-hammer. The last time I was there, I observed that his eye was upon me, and I did not like the glance he gave me at all; I observed him clench his fist, and I took my departure as fast as I conveniently could. Whether he suspected who I was, I know not; but I did not like his look at all, and do not intend to go again.”

“Well then,” said I, “you confess that you have redoubtable enemies to your plans in these regions, and that even amongst the ecclesiastics there are some widely different from those of the plethoric and Platitude schools.”

“It is but too true,” said the man in black; “and if the rest of your church were like them we should quickly bid adieu to all hope of converting these regions, but we are thankful to be able to say that such folks are not numerous; there are, moreover, causes at work quite sufficient to undermine even their zeal. Their sons return at the vacations, from Oxford and Cambridge, puppies, full of the nonsense which they have imbibed from Platitude professors; and this nonsense

they retail at home, where it fails not to make some impression, whilst the daughters scream—I beg their pardons—warble about Scotland's Montrose, and Bonny Dundee, and all the Jacobs; so we have no doubt that their papa's zeal about the propagation of such a vulgar book as the Bible will in a very little time be terribly diminished. Old Rome will win, so you had better join her."

And the man in black drained the last drop in his glass.

"Never," said I, "will I become the slave of Rome."

"She will allow you latitude," said the man in black; "do but serve her, and she will allow you to call her 'puta' at a decent time and place, her popes occasionally call her 'puta.' A pope has been known to start from his bed at midnight and rush out into the corridor, and call out 'puta' three times in a voice which pierced the Vatican; that pope was . . ."

"Alexander the Sixth, I dare say," said I; "the greatest monster that ever existed, though the worthiest head which the popish system ever had—so his conscience was not always still. I thought it had been seared with a brand of iron."

"I did not allude to him, but to a much more modern pope," said the man in black; "it is true he brought the word, which is Spanish, from Spain, his native country, to Rome. He was very fond of calling the church by that name, and other popes have taken it up. She will allow you to call her by it if you belong to her."

"I shall call her so," said I, "without belonging to her, or asking her permission."

"She will allow you to treat her as such if you belong to her," said the man in black. "There is a chapel in Rome, where there is a wondrously fair statue—the son of a cardinal—I mean his nephew—once . . . Well, she did not cut off his head, but slightly boxed his cheek and bade him go."

"I have read all about that in 'Keysler's Travels,'" said I; "do you tell her that I would not touch her with a pair of tongs, unless to seize her nose."

"She is fond of lucre," said the man in black; "but does not grudge a faithful priest a little private perquisite," and he took out a very handsome gold repeater.

"Are you not afraid," said I, "to flash that watch before the eyes of a poor tinker in a dingle?"

"Not before the eyes of one like you," said the man in black.

"It is getting late," said I; "I care not for perquisites."

"So you will not join us?" said the man in black.

"You have had my answer," said I.

"If I belong to Rome," said the man in black, "why should not you?"

"I may be a poor tinker," said I; "but I may never have undergone what you have. You remember, perhaps, the fable of the fox who had lost his tail?"

The man in black winced, but almost immediately recovering himself, he said, "Well, we can do without you: we are sure of winning."

"It is not the part of wise people," said I, "to make sure of the battle before it is fought: there's the landlord of the public-house, who made sure that his cocks would win, yet the cocks lost the main, and the landlord is little better than a bankrupt."

"People very different from the landlord," said the man in black, "both in intellect and station, think we shall surely win; there are clever machinators among us who have no doubt of our success."

"Well," said I, "I will set the landlord aside, and will adduce one who was in every point a very different person from the landlord, both in understanding and station; he was very fond of laying schemes, and, indeed, many of them turned out successful. His last and darling one, however, miscarried, notwithstanding that by his calculations he had persuaded himself that there was no possibility of its failing—the person that I allude to was old Fraser . . ."

"Who?" said the man in black, giving a start, and letting his glass fall.

"Old Fraser, of Lovat," said I, "the prince of all conspirators and machinators; he made sure of placing the Pretender on the throne of these realms. 'I can bring into the field so many men,' said he; 'my son-in-law, Cluny, so many, and likewise my cousin, and my good friend;' then speaking of those on whom the government reckoned for support he would say, 'So-and-so is lukewarm; this person is ruled by his wife, who is with us; the clergy are anything but hostile to us; and as for the soldiers and sailors, half are disaffected to King George, and the rest cowards.' Yet when things came to a trial, this person whom he had

calculated upon to join the Pretender did not stir from his home, another joined the hostile ranks, the presumed cowards turned out heroes, and those whom he thought heroes ran away like lusty fellows at Culloden; in a word, he found himself utterly mistaken, and in nothing more than himself; he thought he was a hero, and proved himself nothing more than an old fox; he got up a hollow tree, didn't he, just like a fox?

"'L' opere sue non furon leonine, ma di volpe.'" {237}

The man in black sat silent for a considerable time, and at length answered, in rather a faltering voice, "I was not prepared for this; you have frequently surprised me by your knowledge of things which I should never have expected any person of your appearance to be acquainted with, but that you should be aware of my name is a circumstance utterly incomprehensible to me. I had imagined that no person in England was acquainted with it; indeed, I don't see how any person should be, I have revealed it to no one, not being particularly proud of it. Yes, I acknowledge that my name is Fraser, and that I am of the blood of that family or clan, of which the rector of our college once said that he was firmly of opinion that every individual member was either rogue or fool. I was born at Madrid, of pure, *oimè*, Fraser blood. My parents at an early age took me to [Rome], where they shortly died, not, however, before they had placed me in the service of a cardinal, with whom I continued some years, and who, when he had no further occasion for me, sent me to the college, in the left-hand cloister of which, as you enter, rest the bones of Sir John D[ereham]; there, in studying logic and humane letters, I lost whatever of humanity I had retained when discarded by the cardinal. Let me not, however, forget two points,—I am a Fraser, it is true, but not a Flannagan; I may bear the vilest name of Britain, but not of Ireland; I was bred up at the English house, and there is at [Rome] a house for the education of bog-trotters; I was not bred up at that; beneath the lowest gulf, there is one yet lower; whatever my blood may be, it is at least not Irish; whatever my education may have been, I was not bred at the Irish seminary—on those accounts I am thankful—yes, *per dio*! I am thankful. After some years at college—but why should I tell you my history, you know it already perfectly well, probably much better than myself. I am now a missionary priest labouring in heretic England, like Parsons and Garnet of old, save and except that, unlike them, I run no danger, for the times are changed. As I told you before, I shall cleave to Rome—I must; *no hay remedio*, as they say at Madrid, and I will do my best to further her holy plans—he! he!—but I confess I begin to doubt of their being successful here—you put me out; old Fraser, of Lovat! I have heard

my father talk of him; he had a gold-headed cane, with which he once knocked my grandfather down—he was an astute one, but as you say, mistaken, particularly in himself. I have read his life by Arbuthnot, {238a} it is in the library of our college. Farewell! I shall come no more to this dingle—to come would be of no utility; I shall go and labour elsewhere, though . . . how you came to know my name is a fact quite inexplicable—farewell! to you both."

He then arose; and without further salutation departed from the dingle, in which I never saw him again. {238b}

"How, in the name of wonder, came you to know that man's name?" said Belle, after he had been gone some time.

"I, Belle? I knew nothing of the fellow's name, I assure you."

"But you mentioned his name."

"If I did, it was merely casually, by way of illustration. I was saying how frequently cunning people were mistaken in their calculations, and I adduced the case of old Fraser, of Lovat, as one in point; I brought forward his name, because I was well-acquainted with his history, from having compiled and inserted it in a wonderful work, which I edited some months ago, entitled 'Newgate Lives and Trials,' but without the slightest idea that it was the name of him who was sitting with us; he, however, thought that I was aware of his name. Belle! Belle! for a long time I doubted the truth of Scripture, owing to certain conceited individuals, but now I begin to believe firmly; what wonderful texts are in Scripture, Belle! 'The wicked trembleth where—where . . .'"

"'They were afraid where no fear was; thou hast put them to confusion, because God hath despised them,'" said Belle; "I have frequently read it before the clergyman in the great house of Long Melford. But if you did not know the man's name, why let him go away supposing that you did?"

"Oh, if he was fool enough to make such a mistake, I was not going to undeceive him—no, no! Let the enemies of old England make the most of all their blunders and mistakes, they will have no help from me; but enough of the fellow, Belle, let us now have tea, and after that . . ."

"No Armenian," said Belle; "but I want to ask a question: pray are all people of that man's name either rogues or fools?"

"It is impossible for me to say, Belle, this person being the only one of the name

I have ever personally known. I suppose there are good and bad, clever and foolish, amongst them, as amongst all large bodies of people; however, after the tribe had been governed for upwards of thirty years by such a person as old Fraser, it were no wonder if the greater part had become either rogues or fools: he was a ruthless tyrant, Belle, over his own people, and by his cruelty and rapaciousness must either have stunned them into an apathy approaching to idiocy, or made them artful knaves in their own defence. The qualities of parents are generally transmitted to their descendants—the progeny of trained pointers are almost sure to point, even without being taught: if, therefore, all Frasers are either rogues or fools, as this person seems to insinuate, it is little to be wondered at, their parents or grandparents having been in the training-school of old Fraser! but enough of the old tyrant and his slaves. Belle, prepare tea this moment, or dread my anger. I have not a gold-headed cane like old Fraser of Lovat, but I have, what some people would dread much more, an Armenian rune-stick.”

CHAPTER XXI.—FRESH ARRIVALS—PITCHING THE TENT—CERTIFICATED WIFE—HIGH-FLYING NOTIONS.

On the following morning, as I was about to leave my tent, I heard the voice of Belle at the door, exclaiming, “Sleepest thou, or wakest thou?” “I was never more awake in my life,” said I, going out, “What is the matter?” “He of the horse-shoe,” said she, “Jasper, of whom I have heard you talk, is above there on the field with all his people; I went about a quarter of an hour ago to fill the kettle at the spring, and saw them arriving.” “It is well,” said I; “have you any objection to asking him and his wife to breakfast?” “You can do as you please,” said she; “I have cups enough, and have no objection to their company.” “We are the first occupiers of the ground,” said I, “and, being so, should consider ourselves in the light of hosts, and do our best to practise the duties of hospitality.” “How fond you are of using that word!” said Belle: “if you wish to invite the man and his wife, do so, without more ado; remember, however, that I have not cups enough, nor indeed tea enough, for the whole company.” Thereupon hurrying up the ascent, I presently found myself outside the dingle. It was as usual a brilliant morning, the dewy blades of the rye-grass which covered the plain sparkled brightly in the beams of the sun, which had probably been about two hours above the horizon. A rather numerous body of my ancient friends and allies occupied the ground in the vicinity of the mouth of the dingle. About five yards on the right I perceived Mr. Petulengro busily employed in erecting his tent; he held in his hand an iron bar, sharp at the bottom, with a kind of arm projecting from the top for the purpose of supporting a kettle or cauldron over the fire, and which is called in the Romanian language “Kekauviskoe saster.” With the sharp end of this Mr. Petulengro was making holes in the earth at about twenty inches’ distance from each other, into which he inserted certain long rods with a considerable bend towards the top, which constituted no less than the timbers of the tent, and the supporters of the canvas. Mrs. Petulengro and a female with a crutch in her hand, whom I recognised as Mrs. Chikno, sat near him on the ground, whilst two or three children, from six to ten years old,

who composed the young family of Mr. and Mrs. Petulengro, were playing about.

"Here we are, brother," said Mr. Petulengro, as he drove the sharp end of the bar into the ground; "here we are, and plenty of us—Bute dosta Romany chals." {242}

"I am glad to see you all," said I; "and particularly you, madam," said I, making a bow to Mrs. Petulengro; "and you also, madam," taking off my hat to Mrs. Chikno.

"Good day to you, sir," said Mrs. Petulengro; "you look as usual, charmingly, and speak so, too; you have not forgot your manners."

"It is not all gold that glitters," said Mrs. Chikno. "However, good-morrow to you, young rye."

"I do not see Tawno," said I, looking around; "where is he?"

"Where, indeed!" said Mrs. Chikno; "I don't know; he who countenances him in the roving line can best answer."

"He will be here anon," said Mr. Petulengro; "he has merely ridden down a by-road to show a farmer a two-year-old colt; she heard me give him directions, but she can't be satisfied."

"I can't indeed," said Mrs. Chikno.

"And why not, sister?"

"Because I place no confidence in your words, brother; as I said before, you countenances him."

"Well," said I, "I know nothing of your private concerns; I am come on an errand. Isopel Berners, down in the dell there, requests the pleasure of Mr. and Mrs. Petulengro's company at breakfast. She will be happy also to see you, madam," said I, addressing Mrs. Chikno.

"Is that young female your wife, young man?" said Mrs. Chikno.

"My wife?" said I.

"Yes, young man, your wife, your lawful certificated wife."

"No," said I, "she is not my wife."

"Then I will not visit with her," said Mrs. Chikno; "I countenance nothing in the roving line."

"What do you mean by the roving line?" I demanded.

"What do I mean by the roving line? Why, by it I mean such conduct as is no ttatcheno. {244a} When ryes and rawnies {244b} lives together in dingles, without being certificated, I calls such behaviour being tolerably deep in the roving line, everything savouring of which I am determined not to sanctify. I have suffered too much by my own certificated husband's outbreaks in that line to afford anything of the kind the slightest shadow of countenance."

"It is hard that people may not live in dingles together without being suspected of doing wrong," said I.

"So it is," said Mrs. Petulengro, interposing; "and, to tell you the truth, I am altogether surprised at the illiberality of my sister's remarks. I have often heard say, that is in good company—and I have kept good company in my time—that suspicion is king's evidence of a narrow and uncultivated mind; on which account I am suspicious of nobody, not even of my own husband, whom some people would think I have a right to be suspicious of, seeing that on his account I once refused a lord; but ask him whether I am suspicious of him, and whether I seek to keep him close tied to my apron-string; he will tell you nothing of the kind; but that, on the contrary, I always allows him an agreeable latitude, permitting him to go where he pleases, and to converse with any one to whose manner of speaking he may take a fancy. But I have had the advantage of keeping good company, and therefore . . ."

"Meklis," {244c} said Mrs. Chikno, "pray drop all that, sister; I believe I have kept as good company as yourself; and with respect to that offer with which you frequently fatigue those who keeps company with you, I believe, after all, it was something in the roving and uncertificated line."

"In whatever line it was," said Mrs. Petulengro, "the offer was a good one. The young duke—for he was not only a lord, but a duke too—offered to keep me a fine carriage, and to make me his second wife; for it is true that he had another who was old and stout, though mighty rich, and highly good-natured; so much so, indeed, that the young lord assured me that she would have no manner of objection to the arrangement; more especially if I would consent to live in the

same house with her, being fond of young and cheerful society. So you see . . .”

“Yes, yes,” said Mrs. Chikno, “I see, what I before thought, that it was altogether in the uncertificated line.”

“Meklis,” said Mrs. Petulengro, “I use your own word, madam, which is Romany; for my own part, I am not fond of using Romany words, unless I can hope to pass them off for French, which I cannot in the present company. I heartily wish that there was no such language, and do my best to keep it away from my children, lest the frequent use of it should altogether confirm them in low and vulgar habits. I have four children, madam, but . . .”

“I suppose by talking of your four children you wish to check me for having none,” said Mrs. Chikno, bursting into tears; “if I have no children, sister, it is no fault of mine, it is—but why do I call you sister,” said she angrily, “you are no sister of mine, you are a grasni, a regular mare—a pretty sister, indeed, ashamed of your own language. I remember well that by your high-flying notions you drove your own mother . . .”

“We will drop it,” said Mrs. Petulengro; “I do not wish to raise my voice, and to make myself ridiculous. Young gentleman,” said she, “pray present my compliments to Miss Isopel Berners, and inform her that I am very sorry that I cannot accept her polite invitation. I am just arrived, and have some slight domestic matters to see to, amongst others, to wash my children’s faces; but that in the course of the forenoon, when I have attended to what I have to do, and have dressed myself, I hope to do myself the honour of paying her a regular visit; you will tell her that with my compliments. With respect to my husband he can answer for himself, as I, not being of a jealous disposition, never interferes with his matters.”

“And tell Miss Berners,” said Mr. Petulengro, “that I shall be happy to wait upon her in company with my wife as soon as we are regularly settled; at present I have much on my hands, having not only to pitch my own tent, but this here jealous woman’s, whose husband is absent on my business.”

Thereupon I returned to the dingle, and without saying anything about Mrs. Chikno’s observations, communicated to Isopel the messages of Mr. and Mrs. Petulengro; Isopel made no other reply than by replacing in her coffer two additional cups and saucers, which, in expectation of company, she had placed upon the board. The kettle was by this time boiling. We sat down, and as we breakfasted, I gave Isopel Berners another lesson in the Armenian language.

CHAPTER XXII.—THE PROMISED VISIT—ROMAN FASHION—WIZARD AND WITCH—CATCHING AT WORDS—THE TWO FEMALES—DRESSING OF HAIR—THE NEW ROADS—BELLE'S ALTERED APPEARANCE—HERSELF AGAIN.

About mid-day Mr. and Mrs. Petulengro {247} came to the dingle to pay the promised visit. Belle, at the time of their arrival, was in her tent, but I was at the fireplace, engaged in hammering part of the outer-tire, or defence, which had come off from one of the wheels of my vehicle. On perceiving them I forthwith went to receive them. Mr. Petulengro was dressed in Roman fashion, with a somewhat smartly-cut sporting-coat, the buttons of which were half-crowns—and a waistcoat, scarlet and black, the buttons of which were spaded half-guineas; his breeches were of a stuff half velveteen, half corduroy, the cords exceedingly broad. He had leggings of buff cloth, furred at the bottom: and upon his feet were highlows. Under his left arm was a long black whalebone riding-whip, with a red lash, and an immense silver knob. Upon his head was a hat with a high peak, somewhat of the kind which the Spaniards call *calané*, so much in favour with the bravos of Seville and Madrid. Now when I have added that Mr. Petulengro had on a very fine white holland shirt, I think I have described his array. Mrs. Petulengro—I beg pardon for not having spoken of her first—was also arrayed very much in the Roman fashion. Her hair, which was exceedingly black and lustrous, fell in braids on either side of her head. In her ears were rings, with long drops of gold. Round her neck was a string of what seemed very much like very large pearls, somewhat tarnished, however, and apparently of considerable antiquity. "Here we are, brother," said Mr. Petulengro, "here we are, come to see you—wizard and witch, witch and wizard:—

"'There's a chovahanee, and a chovahano, {249a}

The nav se len is Petulengro.'"

"Hold your tongue, sir," said Mrs. Petulengro; "you make me ashamed of you with your vulgar ditties. We are come a-visiting now, and everything low should be left behind."

"True," said Mr. Petulengro; "why bring what's low to the dingle, which is low enough already?"

"What, are you a catcher at words?" said I. "I thought that catching at words had been confined to the pothouse farmers and village witty bodies."

"All fools," said Mrs. Petulengro, "catch at words, and very naturally, as by so doing they hope to prevent the possibility of rational conversation. Catching at words confined to pothouse farmers and village witty bodies! No, nor to Jasper Petulengro. Listen for an hour or two to the discourse of a set they call newspaper editors, and if you don't go out and eat grass, as a dog does when he is sick, I am no female woman. The young lord whose hand I refused when I took up with wise Jasper once brought two of them to my mother's tan, {249b} when hankering after my company; they did nothing but carp at each other's words, and a pretty hand they made of it. Ill-favoured dogs they were, and their attempt at what they called wit almost as unfortunate as their countenances."

"Well," said I, "madam, we will drop all catchings and carpings for the present. Pray take your seat on this stool, whilst I go and announce to Miss Isopel Berners your arrival."

Thereupon I went to Belle's habitation, and informed her that Mr. and Mrs. Petulengro had paid us a visit of ceremony, and were awaiting her at the fireplace. "Pray go and tell them that I am busy," said Belle, who was engaged with her needle. "I do not feel disposed to take part in any such nonsense." "I shall do no such thing," said I, "and I insist upon your coming forthwith, and showing proper courtesy to your visitors. If you do not their feelings will be hurt, and you are aware that I cannot bear that people's feelings should be outraged. Come this moment, or . . ." "Or what?" said Belle, half smiling. "I was about to say something in Armenian," said I. "Well," said Belle, laying down her work, "I will come." "Stay," said I, "your hair is hanging about your ears, and your dress is in disorder; you had better stay a minute or two to prepare yourself to appear before your visitors, who have come in their very best attire." "No," said Belle, "I will make no alteration in my appearance; you told me to come this moment, and you shall be obeyed."

So Belle and I advanced towards our guests. As we drew nigh Mr. Petulengro took off his hat and made a profound obeisance to Belle, whilst Mrs. Petulengro rose from the stool and made a profound curtsey. Belle, who had flung her hair back over her shoulders, returned their salutations by bending her head, and after slightly glancing at Mr. Petulengro, fixed her large blue eyes full upon his wife. Both these females were very handsome—but how unlike! Belle fair, with blue eyes and flaxen hair; Mrs. Petulengro with olive complexion, eyes black, and hair dark—as dark as could be. Belle, in demeanour calm and proud; the gypsy graceful, but full of movement and agitation. And then how different were those two in stature! The head of the Romany rawnie scarcely ascended to the breast of Isopel Berners. I could see that Mrs. Petulengro gazed on Belle with unmixed admiration: so did her husband. "Well," said the latter, "one thing I will say, which is, that there is only one on earth worthy to stand up in front of this she, and that is the beauty of the world, as far as man flesh is concerned, Tawno Chikno; what a pity he did not come down!"

"Tawno Chikno," said Mrs. Petulengro, flaring up; "a pretty fellow he to stand up in front of this gentlewoman, a pity he didn't come, quotha? not at all, the fellow is a sneak, afraid of his wife. He stand up against this rawnie! why the look she has given me would knock the fellow down."

"It is easier to knock him down with a look than with a fist," said Mr. Petulengro; "that is, if the look comes from a woman: not that I am disposed to doubt that this female gentlewoman is able to knock him down either one way or the other. I have heard of her often enough, and have seen her once or twice, though not so near as now. Well, ma'am, my wife and I are come to pay our respects to you; we are both glad to find that you have left off keeping company with Flaming Bosville, and have taken up with my pal; he is not very handsome, but a better . . . ."

"I take up with your pal, as you call him; you had better mind what you say," said Isopel Berners; "I take up with nobody."

"I merely mean taking up your quarters with him," said Mr. Petulengro; "and I was only about to say a better fellow-lodger you cannot have, or a more instructive, especially if you have a desire to be inoculated with tongues, as he calls them. I wonder whether you and he have had any tongue-work already."

"Have you and your wife anything particular to say? If you have nothing but this kind of conversation I must leave you, as I am going to make a journey this

afternoon, and should be getting ready."

"You must excuse my husband, madam," said Mrs. Petulengro; "he is not overburdened with understanding, and has said but one word of sense since he has been here, which was that we came to pay our respects to you. We have dressed ourselves in our best Roman way, in order to do honour to you; perhaps you do not like it; if so, I am sorry. I have no French clothes, madam; if I had any, madam, I would have come in them in order to do you more honour."

"I like to see you much better as you are," said Belle; "people should keep to their own fashions, and yours is very pretty."

"I am glad you are pleased to think it so, madam; it has been admired in the great city, it created what they call a sensation, and some of the great ladies, the court ladies, imitated it, else I should not appear in it so often as I am accustomed; for I am not very fond of what is Roman, having an imagination that what is Roman is ungenteel; in fact, I once heard the wife of a rich citizen say that gypsies were vulgar creatures. I should have taken her saying very much to heart, but for her improper pronunciation; she could not pronounce her words, madam, which we gypsies, as they call us, usually can, so I thought she was no very high purchase. You are very beautiful, madam, though you are not dressed as I could wish to see you, and your hair is hanging down in sad confusion; allow me to assist you in arranging your hair, madam; I will dress it for you in our fashion; I would fain see how your hair would look in our poor gypsy fashion; pray allow me, madam?" and she took Belle by the hand.

"I really can do no such thing," said Belle, withdrawing her hand; "I thank you for coming to see me, but . . ."

"Do allow me to officiate upon your hair, madam," said Mrs. Petulengro; "I should esteem your allowing me a great mark of condescension. You are very beautiful, madam, and I think you doubly so, because you are so fair; I have a great esteem for persons with fair complexions and hair; I have a less regard for people with dark hair and complexions, madam."

"Then why did you turn off the lord, and take up with me?" said Mr. Petulengro; "that same lord was fair enough all about him."

"People do when they are young and silly what they sometimes repent of when they are of riper years and understandings. I sometimes think that had I not been something of a simpleton, I might at this time be a great court lady. Now,

madam," said she, again taking Belle by the hand, "do oblige me by allowing me to plait your hair a little?"

"I have really a good mind to be angry with you," said Belle, giving Mrs. Petulengro a peculiar glance.

"Do allow her to arrange your hair," said I, "she means no harm, and wishes to do you honour; do oblige her and me too, for I should like to see how your hair would look dressed in her fashion."

"You hear what the young rye says?" said Mrs. Petulengro. "I am sure you will oblige the young rye, if not myself. Many people would be willing to oblige the young rye, if he would but ask them; but he is not in the habit of asking favours. He has a nose of his own, which he keeps tolerably exalted; he does not think small-beer of himself, madam; and all the time I have been with him, I never heard him ask a favour before; therefore, madam, I am sure you will oblige him. My sister Ursula would be very willing to oblige him in many things, but he will not ask for anything, except for such a favour as a word, which is a poor favour after all. I don't mean for her word; perhaps he will some day ask you for your word. If so . . ."

"Why here you are, after railing at me for catching at words, catching at a word yourself," said Mr. Petulengro.

"Hold your tongue, sir," said Mrs. Petulengro. "Don't interrupt me in my discourse; if I caught at a word now, I am not in the habit of doing so. I am no conceited body; no newspaper Neddy; no pothouse witty person. I was about to say, madam, that if the young rye asks you at any time for your word, you will do as you deem convenient; but I am sure you will oblige him by allowing me to braid your hair."

"I shall not do it to oblige him," said Belle; "the young rye, as you call him, is nothing to me."

"Well, then, to oblige me," said Mrs. Petulengro; "do allow me to become your poor tire-woman."

"It is great nonsense," said Belle, reddening; "however, as you came to see me, and ask the matter as a particular favour to yourself . . ."

"Thank you, madam," said Mrs. Petulengro, leading Belle to the stool; "please to sit down here. Thank you; your hair is very beautiful, madam," she continued as

she proceeded to braid Belle's hair; "so is your countenance. Should you ever go to the great city, among the grand folks, you would make a sensation, madam. I have made one myself, who am dark; the chi she is kauley, which last word signifies black, which I am not, though rather dark. There's no colour like white, madam; it's so lasting, so genteel. Gentility will carry the day, madam, even with the young rye. He will ask words of the black lass, but beg the word of the fair."

In the meantime Mr. Petulengro and myself entered into conversation. "Any news stirring, Mr. Petulengro?" said I. "Have you heard anything of the great religious movements?"

"Plenty," said Mr. Petulengro; "all the religious people, more especially the Evangelicals—those that go about distributing tracts—are very angry about the fight between Gentleman Cooper and White-headed Bob, which they say ought not to have been permitted to take place; and then they are trying all they can to prevent the fight between the lion and the dogs, {256} which they say is a disgrace to a Christian country. Now, I can't say that I have any quarrel with the religious party and the Evangelicals; they are always civil to me and mine, and frequently give us tracts, as they call them, which neither I nor mine can read; but I cannot say that I approve of any movements, religious or not, which have in aim to put down all life and manly sport in this here country."

"Anything else?" said I.

"People are becoming vastly sharp," said Mr. Petulengro; "and I am told that all the old-fashioned, good-tempered constables are going to be set aside, and a paid body of men to be established, {257} who are not to permit a tramper or vagabond on the roads of England;—and talking of roads puts me in mind of a strange story I heard two nights ago, whilst drinking some beer at a public-house, in company with my cousin Sylvester. I had asked Tawno to go, but his wife would not let him. Just opposite me, smoking their pipes, were a couple of men, something like engineers, and they were talking of a wonderful invention which was to make a wonderful alteration in England; inasmuch as it would set aside all the old roads, which in a little time would be ploughed up, and sowed with corn, and cause all England to be laid down with iron roads, on which people would go thundering along in vehicles, pushed forward by fire and smoke. Now, brother, when I heard this, I did not feel very comfortable; for I thought to myself, what a queer place such a road would be to pitch one's tent upon, and how impossible it would be for one's cattle to find a bite of grass upon

it; and I thought likewise of the danger to which one's family would be exposed of being run over and severely scorched by these same flying, fiery vehicles; so I made bold to say that I hoped such an invention would never be countenanced, because it was likely to do a great deal of harm. Whereupon, one of the men, giving me a glance, said, without taking the pipe out of his mouth, that for his part he sincerely hoped that it would take effect; and if it did no other good than stopping the rambles of gypsies, and other like scamps, it ought to be encouraged. Well, brother, feeling myself insulted, I put my hand into my pocket, in order to pull out money, intending to challenge him to fight for a five-shilling stake, but merely found sixpence, having left all my other money at the tent; which sixpence was just sufficient to pay for the beer which Sylvester and myself were drinking, of whom I couldn't hope to borrow anything—'poor as Sylvester' being a by-word amongst us. So, not being able to back myself, I held my peace, and let the Gorgio have it all his own way, who, after turning up his nose at me, went on discoursing about the said invention, saying what a fund of profit it would be to those who knew how to make use of it, and should have the laying down of the new roads, and the shoeing of England with iron. And after he had said this, and much more of the same kind, which I cannot remember, he and his companion got up and walked away; and presently I and Sylvester got up and walked to our camp; and there I lay down in my tent by the side of my wife, where I had an ugly dream of having camped upon an iron road; my tent being overturned by a flying vehicle; my wife's leg injured; and all my affairs put into great confusion."

"Now, madam," said Mrs. Petulengro, "I have braided your hair in our fashion: you look very beautiful, madam; more beautiful, if possible, than before." Belle now rose, and came forward with her tire-woman. Mr. Petulengro was loud in his applause, but I said nothing, for I did not think Belle was improved in appearance by having submitted to the ministry of Mrs. Petulengro's hand. Nature never intended Belle to appear as a gypsy; she had made her too proud and serious. A more proper part for her was that of a heroine, a queenly heroine,—that of Theresa of Hungary, for example; or, better still, that of Brynhilda the Valkyrie, the beloved of Sigurd, the serpent-killer, who incurred the curse of Odin, because, in the tumult of spears, she sided with the young king, and doomed the old warrior to die, to whom Odin had promised victory.

Belle looked at me for a moment in silence; then turning to Mrs. Petulengro, she said, "You have had your will with me; are you satisfied?" "Quite so, madam," said Mrs. Petulengro, "and I hope you will be so too, as soon as you have looked

in the glass." "I have looked in one already," said Belle, "and the glass does not flatter." "You mean the face of the young rye," said Mrs. Petulengro; "never mind him, madam; the young rye, though he knows a thing or two, is not a university, nor a person of universal wisdom. I assure you that you never looked so well before; and I hope that, from this moment, you will wear your hair in this way." "And who is to braid it in this way?" said Belle, smiling. "I, madam," said Mrs. Petulengro, "I will braid it for you every morning, if you will but be persuaded to join us. Do so, madam, and I think, if you did, the young rye would do so too." "The young rye is nothing to me, nor I to him," said Belle; "we have stayed some time together; but our paths will soon be apart. Now, farewell, for I am about to take a journey." "And you will go out with your hair as I have braided it," said Mrs. Petulengro; "if you do, everybody will be in love with you." "No," said Belle, "hitherto I have allowed you to do what you please, but henceforth I shall have my own way. Come, come," said she, observing that the gypsy was about to speak, "we have had enough of nonsense; whenever I leave this hollow, it will be wearing my hair in my own fashion." "Come, wife," said Mr. Petulengro, "we will no longer intrude upon the rye and rawnie, there is such a thing as being troublesome." Thereupon Mr. Petulengro and his wife took their leave, with many salutations. "Then you are going?" said I, when Belle and I were left alone. "Yes," said Belle, "I am going on a journey; my affairs compel me." "But you will return again?" said I. "Yes," said Belle, "I shall return once more." "Once more," said I; "what do you mean by once more? The Petulengros will soon be gone, and will you abandon me in this place?" "You were alone here," said Belle, "before I came, and, I suppose, found it agreeable, or you would not have stayed in it." "Yes," said I, "that was before I knew you; but having lived with you here, I should be very loth to live here without you." "Indeed," said Belle, "I did not know that I was of so much consequence to you. Well, the day is wearing away—I must go and harness Traveller to the cart." "I will do that," said I, "or anything else you may wish me. Go and prepare yourself; I will see after Traveller and the cart." Belle departed to her tent, and I set about performing the task I had undertaken. In about half-an-hour Belle again made her appearance—she was dressed neatly and plainly. Her hair was no longer in the Roman fashion, in which Pakomovna had plaited it, but was secured by a comb; she held a bonnet in her hand. "Is there anything else I can do for you?" I demanded. "There are two or three bundles by my tent, which you can put into the cart," said Belle. I put the bundles into the cart, and then led Traveller and the cart up the winding path, to the mouth of the dingle, near which was Mr. Petulengro's encampment. Belle followed. At the top, I delivered the reins into her hands; we looked at each

other steadfastly for some time. Belle then departed and I returned to the dingle, where, seating myself on my stone, I remained for upwards of an hour in thought.

CHAPTER XXIII.—THE FESTIVAL—THE GYPSY SONG—PIRAMUS OF ROME—THE SCOTCHMAN—GYPSY NAMES.

On the following day there was much feasting amongst the Romany chals of Mr. Petulengro's party. Throughout the forenoon the Romany chies did scarcely anything but cook flesh, and the flesh which they cooked was swine's flesh. About two o'clock, the chals and chies dividing themselves into various parties, sat down and partook of the fare, which was partly roasted, partly sodden. I dined that day with Mr. Petulengro and his wife and family, Ursula, Mr. and Mrs. Chikno, and Sylvester and his two children. Sylvester, it will be as well to say, was a widower, and had consequently no one to cook his victuals for him, supposing he had any, which was not always the case, Sylvester's affairs being seldom in a prosperous state. He was noted for his bad success in trafficking, notwithstanding the many hints which he received from Jasper, under whose protection he had placed himself, even as Tawno Chikno had done, who himself, as the reader has heard on a former occasion, was anything but a wealthy subject, though he was at all times better off than Sylvester, the Lazarus of the Romany tribe.

All our party ate with a good appetite, except myself, who, feeling rather melancholy that day, had little desire to eat. I did not, like the others, partake of the pork, but got my dinner entirely off the body of a squirrel which had been shot the day before by a chal of the name of Piramus, who, besides being a good shot, was celebrated for his skill in playing on the fiddle. During the dinner a horn filled with ale passed frequently around, I drank of it more than once, and felt inspirited by the draughts. The repast concluded, Sylvester and his children departed to their tent, and Mr. Petulengro, Tawno, and myself getting up, went and lay down under a shady hedge, where Mr. Petulengro, lighting his pipe, began to smoke, and where Tawno presently fell asleep. I was about to fall asleep also, when I heard the sound of music and song. Piramus was playing on the fiddle, whilst Mrs. Chikno, who had a voice of her own, was singing in tones sharp enough, but of great power, a gypsy song:—

POISONING THE PORKER.

By Mrs. Chikno.

To mande shoon ye Romany chals
Who besh in the pus about the yag,
I’ll pen how we drab the baulo,
I’ll pen how we drab the baulo.

We jaws to the drab-engro ker,
Trin horsworth there of drab we lels,
And when to the swety back we wels
We pens we’ll drab the baulo,
We’ll have a drab at a baulo.

And then we kairs the drab opré,
And then we jaws to the farming ker
To mang a beti habben,
A beti poggado habben.

A rinkeno baulo there we dick,
And then we pens in Romano jib;
Wust lis odoi opré ye chick,
And the baulo he will lel lis,
The baulo he will lel lis.

Coliko, coliko saulo we
Apopli to the farming ker
Will wel and mang him mullo,
Will wel and mang his truppo.

And so we kairs, and so we kairs;
The baulo in the rarde mers;
We mang him on the saulo,
And rig to the tan the baulo.

And then we toves the wendror well
Till sore the wendror iuziou se,
Till kekkeno drab’s adrey lis
Till drab there’s kek adrey lis.

And then his truppo well we hatch,

Kin levinor at the kitchema,
And have a kosko habben,
A kosko Romano habben.

The boshom engro kils, he kils,
The tawnie juva gils, she gils
A puro Romano gillie,
Now shoon the Romano gillie.

Which song I had translated in the following manner, in my younger days, for a lady's album.

Listen to me ye Roman lads, who are seated in the straw about the fire, and I will tell how we poison the porker, I will tell how we poison the porker.

We go to the house of the poison monger (*i.e.* the apothecary), where we buy three pennies' worth of bane, and when we return to our people we say, we will poison the porker; we will try and poison the porker.

We then make up the poison, and then we take our way to the house of the farmer, as if to beg a bit of victuals, a little broken victuals.

We see a jolly porker, and then we say in Roman language, "Fling the bane yonder amongst the dirt, and the porker soon will find it, the porker soon will find it."

Early on the morrow, we will return to the farmhouse, and beg the dead porker, the body of the dead porker.

And so we do, even so we do; the porker dieth during the night; on the morrow we beg the porker, and carry to the tent the porker.

And then we wash the inside well, till all the inside is perfectly clean, till there's no bane within it, not a poison grain within it.

And then we roast the body well, send for ale to the ale-house, and have a merry banquet, a merry Roman banquet.

The fellow with the fiddle plays, he plays; the little lassie sings, she sings an ancient Roman ditty; now hear the Roman ditty.

SONG OF THE BROKEN CHASTITY. {265}

BY URSULA.

Penn’d the Romany chi ké laki dye
“Miry dearie dye mi shom cambri!”
“And savo kair’d tute cambri,
Miry dearie chi, miry Romany chi?”
“O miry dye a boro rye,
A bovalo rye, a gorgiko rye,
Sos kistur pré a pellengo grye,
’Twas yov sos kerdo man cambri.”
“Tu tawnie vassavie lubbeny,
Tu chal from miry tan abri;
Had a Romany chal kair’d tute cambri,
Then I had penn’d ke tute chie,
But tu shan a vassavie lubbeny
With gorgikie rat to be cambri.”

“There’s some kernel in those songs, brother,” said Mr Petulengro, when the songs and music were over.

“Yes,” said I, “they are certainly very remarkable songs. I say, Jasper, I hope you have not been drabbing baulor {266} lately.”

“And suppose we have, brother, what then?”

“Why, it is a very dangerous practice, to say nothing of the wickedness of it.”

“Necessity has no law, brother.”

“That is true,” said I, “I have always said so, but you are not necessitous, and should not drab baulor.”

“And who told you we had been drabbing baulor?”

“Why, you have had a banquet of pork, and after the banquet Mrs. Chikno sang a song about drabbing baulor, so I naturally thought you might have lately been engaged in such a thing”

“Brother, you occasionally utter a word or two of common sense. It was natural for you to suppose, after seeing that dinner of pork, and hearing that song, that we had been drabbing baulor; I will now tell you that we have not been doing so. What have you to say to that?”

"That I am very glad of it."

"Had you tasted that pork, brother, you would have found that it was sweet and tasty, which balluva that is drabbed can hardly be expected to be. We have no reason to drab baulor at present, we have money and credit; but necessity has no law. Our forefathers occasionally drabbed baulor, some of our people may still do such a thing, but only from compulsion."

"I see," said I; "and at your merry meetings you sing songs upon the compulsatory deeds of your people, alias their villainous actions; and, after all, what would the stirring poetry of any nation be, but for its compulsatory deeds? Look at the poetry of Scotland, the heroic part, founded almost entirely on the villainous deeds of the Scotch nation; cow-stealing, for example, which is very little better than drabbing baulor; whilst the softer part is mostly about the slips of its females among the broom, so that no upholder of Scotch poetry could censure Ursula's song as indelicate, even if he understood it. What do you think, Jasper?"

"I think, brother, as I before said, that occasionally you utter a word of common sense. You were talking of the Scotch, brother; what do you think of a Scotchman finding fault with Romany?"

"A Scotchman finding fault with Romany, Jasper! Oh dear, but you joke, the thing could never be."

"Yes, and at Piramus's fiddle; what do you think of a Scotchman turning up his nose at Piramus's fiddle?"

"A Scotchman turning up his nose at Piramus's fiddle! nonsense, Jasper."

"Do you know what I most dislike, brother?"

"I do not, unless it be the constable, Jasper."

"It is not the constable, it's a beggar on horseback, brother."

"What do you mean by a beggar on horseback?"

"Why, a scamp, brother, raised above his proper place, who takes every opportunity of giving himself fine airs. About a week ago, my people and myself camped on a green by a plantation in the neighbourhood of a great house. In the evening we were making merry, the girls were dancing, while

Piramus was playing on the fiddle a tune of his own composing, to which he has given his own name, Piramus of Rome, and which is much celebrated amongst our people, and from which I have been told that one of the grand gorgio composers, who once heard it, has taken several hints. So, as we were making merry, a great many grand people, lords and ladies, I believe, came from the great house and looked on, as the girls danced to the tune of Piramus of Rome, and seemed much pleased; and when the girls had left off dancing, and Piramus playing, the ladies wanted to have their fortunes told; so I bade Mikailia Chikno, who can tell a fortune when she pleases better than any one else, tell them a fortune, and she, being in a good mind, told them a fortune which pleased them very much. So, after they had heard their fortunes, one of them asked if any of our women could sing; and I told them several could, more particularly Leviathan—you know Leviathan, she is not here now, but some miles distant, she is our best singer, Ursula coming next. So the lady said she should like to hear Leviathan sing, whereupon Leviathan sang the Gudlo pesham, {269a} and Piramus played the tune of the same name, which, as you know, means the honeycomb, the song and the tune being well entitled to the name, being wonderfully sweet. Well, everybody present seemed mighty well pleased with the song and music, with the exception of one person, a carroty-haired Scotch body; how he came there I don't know, but there he was; and, coming forward, he began in Scotch as broad as a barn-door to find fault with the music and the song, saying that he had never heard viler stuff than either. Well, brother, out of consideration for the civil gentry with whom the fellow had come, I held my peace for a long time, and in order to get the subject changed, I said to Mikailia in Romany, you have told the ladies their fortunes, now tell the gentlemen theirs, quick quick,—pen lende dukkerin. {269b} Well, brother, the Scotchman, I suppose, thinking I was speaking ill of him, fell into a greater passion than before, and catching hold of the word dukkerin—'Dukkerin,' said he, 'what's dukkerin?' 'Dukkerin,' said I, 'is fortune, a man or woman's destiny; don't you like the word?' 'Word! d'ye ca' that a word? a bonnie word,' said he. 'Perhaps you'll tell us what it is in Scotch,' said I, 'in order that we may improve our language by a Scotch word; a pal of mine has told me that we have taken a great many words from foreign lingos.' 'Why, then, if that be the case, fellow, I will tell you; it is e'en "spaeing,"' said he, very seriously. 'Well, then,' said I, 'I'll keep my own word, which is much the prettiest—spaeing! spaeing! why, I should be ashamed to make use of the word, it sounds so much like a certain other word;' and then I made a face as if I were unwell. 'Perhaps it's Scotch also for that?' 'What do you mean by speaking in that guise to a gentleman?' said he, 'you insolent vagabond, without a name or a country.' 'There you are mistaken,'

said I, ‘my country is Egypt, but we ’Gyptians, like you Scotch, are rather fond of travelling; and as for name—my name is Jasper Petulengro, perhaps you have a better; what is it?’ ‘Sandy Macraw.’ At that, brother, the gentlemen burst into a roar of laughter, and all the ladies tittered.”

"You were rather severe on the Scotchman, Jasper."

"Not at all, brother, and suppose I were, he began first; I am the civilest man in the world, and never interfere with anybody who lets me and mine alone. He finds fault with Romany, forsooth! why, L---d A'mighty, what's Scotch? He doesn't like our songs; what are his own? I understand them as little as he mine; I have heard one or two of them, and pretty rubbish they seemed. But the best of the joke is the fellow's finding fault with Piramus's fiddle—a chap from the land of bagpipes finding fault with Piramus's fiddle! Why, I'll back that fiddle against all the bagpipes in Scotland, and Piramus against all the bagpipers; for though Piramus weighs but ten stone, he shall flog a Scotchman of twenty."

"Scotchmen are never so fat as that," said I, "unless, indeed, they have been a long time pensioners of England. I say, Jasper, what remarkable names your people have!"

"And what pretty names, brother; there's my own, for example, Jasper; then there's Ambrose and Sylvester; then there's Culvato, which signifies Claude; then there's Piramus, that's a nice name, brother."

"Then there's your wife's name, Pakomovna; then there's Ursula and Morella."

"Then, brother, there's Ercilla."

"Ercilla! the name of the great poet of Spain, how wonderful; then Leviathan."

"The name of a ship, brother; Leviathan was named after a ship, so don't make a wonder out of her. But there's Sanpriel and Synfye."

"Ay, and Clementina and Lavinia, Camillia and Lydia, Curlanda and Orlanda; wherever did they get those names?"

"Where did my wife get her necklace, brother?"

"She knows best, Jasper. I hope . . ."

"Come, no hoping! She got it from her grandmother, who died at the age of a hundred and three, and sleeps in Coggeshall churchyard. She got it from her mother, who also died very old, and could give no other account of it than that it had been in the family time out of mind."

"Whence could they have got it?"

"Why, perhaps where they got their names, brother. A gentleman, who had travelled much, once told me that he had seen the sister of it about the neck of an Indian queen."

"Some of your names, Jasper, appear to be church names; your own, for example, and Ambrose, and Sylvester; perhaps you got them from the Papists, in the times of Popery; but where did you get such a name as Piramus, a name of Grecian romance? Then some of them appear to be Slavonian; for example, Mikailia and Pakomovna. I don't know much of Slavonian; but . . ."

"What is Slavonian, brother?"

"The family name of certain nations, the principal of which is the Russian, and from which the word slave is originally derived. You have heard of the Russians, Jasper?"

"Yes, brother; and seen some. I saw their crallis at the time of the peace; he was not a bad-looking man for a Russian."

"By-the-bye, Jasper, I'm half inclined to think that crallis {272} is a Slavish word. I saw something like it in a lil called 'Voltaire's Life of Charles XII.' How you should have come by such names and words is to me incomprehensible."

"You seem posed, brother."

"I really know very little about you, Jasper."

"Very little indeed, brother. We know very little about ourselves; and you know nothing, save what we have told you; and we have now and then told you things about us which are not exactly true, simply to make a fool of you, brother. You will say that was wrong; perhaps it was. Well, Sunday will be here in a day or two, when we will go to church, where possibly we shall hear a sermon on the disastrous consequences of lying."

CHAPTER XXIV.—THE CHURCH—THE ARISTOCRATICAL PEW—DAYS OF YORE—THE CLERGYMAN—"IN WHAT WOULD A MAN BE PROFITED?"

When two days had passed, Sunday came; I breakfasted by myself in the solitary dingle; and then, having set things a little to rights, I ascended to Mr. Petulengro's encampment. I could hear church-bells ringing around in the distance, appearing to say, "Come to church, come to church," as clearly as it was possible for church-bells to say. I found Mr. Petulengro seated by the door of his tent, smoking his pipe, in rather an ungenteel undress. "Well, Jasper," said I, "are you ready to go to church? for if you are, I am ready to accompany you." "I am not ready, brother," said Mr. Petulengro, "nor is my wife; the church, too, to which we shall go is three miles off; so it is of no use to think of going there this morning, as the service would be three-quarters over before we got there; if, however, you are disposed to go in the afternoon, we are your people." Thereupon I returned to my dingle, where I passed several hours in conning the Welsh Bible, which the preacher, Peter Williams, {274} had given me.

At last I gave over reading, took a slight refreshment, and was about to emerge from the dingle, when I heard the voice of Mr. Petulengro calling me. I went up again to the encampment, where I found Mr. Petulengro, his wife, and Tawno Chikno, ready to proceed to church. Mr. and Mrs. Petulengro were dressed in Roman fashion, though not in the full-blown manner in which they had paid their visit to Isopel and myself. Tawno had on a clean white slop, with a nearly new black beaver, with very broad rims, and the nap exceedingly long. As for myself, I was dressed in much the same manner as that in which I departed from London, having on, in honour of the day, a shirt perfectly clean, having washed one on purpose for the occasion, with my own hands, the day before, in the pond of tepid water in which the newts and efts were in the habit of taking their pleasure. We proceeded for upwards of a mile, by footpaths through meadows and corn-fields; we crossed various stiles; at last, passing over one, we found

ourselves in a road, wending along which for a considerable distance, we at last came in sight of a church, the bells of which had been tolling distinctly in our ears for some time; before, however, we reached the churchyard the bells had ceased their melody. It was surrounded by lofty beech-trees of brilliant green foliage. We entered the gate, Mrs. Petulengro leading the way, and proceeded to a small door near the east end of the church. As we advanced, the sound of singing within the church rose upon our ears. Arrived at the small door, Mrs. Petulengro opened it and entered, followed by Tawno Chikno. I myself went last of all, following Mr. Petulengro, who, before I entered, turned round and, with a significant nod, advised me to take care how I behaved. The part of the church {275} which we had entered was the chancel; on one side stood a number of venerable old men—probably the neighbouring poor—and on the other a number of poor girls belonging to the village school, dressed in white gowns and straw bonnets, whom two elegant but simply dressed young women were superintending. Every voice seemed to be united in singing a certain anthem, which, notwithstanding it was written neither by Tate nor Brady, contains some of the sublimest words which were ever put together, not the worst of which are those which burst on our ears as we entered.

“Every eye shall now behold Him,
  Robed in dreadful majesty;
Those who set at nought and sold Him,
  Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,
    Deeply wailing,
  Shall the true Messiah see.”

Still following Mrs. Petulengro, we proceeded down the chancel and along the aisle; notwithstanding the singing, I could distinctly hear as we passed many a voice whispering, “Here come the gypsies! here come the gypsies!” I felt rather embarrassed, with a somewhat awkward doubt as to where we were to sit; none of the occupiers of the pews, who appeared to consist almost entirely of farmers, with their wives, sons, and daughters, opened a door to admit us. Mrs. Petulengro, however, appeared to feel not the least embarrassment, but tripped along the aisle with the greatest nonchalance. We passed under the pulpit, in which stood the clergyman in his white surplice, and reached the middle of the church, where we were confronted by the sexton, dressed in a long blue coat, and holding in his hand a wand. This functionary motioned towards the lower end of the church, where were certain benches, partly occupied by poor people and boys. Mrs. Petulengro, however, with a toss of her head, directed her course

to a magnificent pew, which was unoccupied, which she opened and entered, followed closely by Tawno Chikno, Mr. Petulengro, and myself. The sexton did not appear by any means to approve of the arrangement, and as I stood next the door laid his finger on my arm, as if to intimate that myself and companions must quit our aristocratical location. I said nothing, but directed my eyes to the clergyman, who uttered a short and expressive cough; the sexton looked at him for a moment, and then, bowing his head, closed the door—in a moment more the music ceased. I took up a prayer-book, on which was engraved an earl's coronet. The clergyman uttered, "I will arise, and go to my father." England's sublime liturgy had commenced.

Oh, what feelings came over me on finding myself again in an edifice devoted to the religion of my country! I had not been in such a place I cannot tell how long—certainly not for years; and now I had found my way there again, it appeared as if I had fallen asleep in the pew of the old church of pretty D[ereham]. I had occasionally done so when a child, and had suddenly woke up. Yes, surely I had been asleep and had woken up; but, no! alas, no! I had not been asleep—at least not in the old church—if I had been asleep I had been walking in my sleep, struggling, striving, learning, and unlearning in my sleep. Years had rolled away whilst I had been asleep—ripe fruit had fallen, green fruit had come on whilst I had been asleep—how circumstances had altered, and above all myself, whilst I had been asleep. No, I had not been asleep in the old church! I was in a pew it is true, but not the pew of black leather, in which I sometimes fell asleep in days of yore, but in a strange pew; and then my companions, they were no longer those of days of yore. I was no longer with my respectable father and mother, and my dear brother, but with the gypsy cral {277} and his wife, and the gigantic Tawno, the Antinous of the dusky people. And what was I myself? No longer an innocent child, but a moody man, bearing in my face, as I knew well, the marks of my strivings and strugglings, of what I had learned and unlearned; nevertheless, the general aspect of things brought to my mind what I had felt and seen of yore. There was difference enough it is true, but still there was a similarity—at least I thought so,—the church, the clergyman, and the clerk differing in many respects from those of pretty D . . ., put me strangely in mind of them; and then the words!—by-the-bye, was it not the magic of the words which brought the dear enchanting past so powerfully before the mind of Lavengro? for the words were the same sonorous words of high import which had first made an impression on his childish ear in the old church of pretty Dereham.

The liturgy was now over, during the reading of which my companions behaved in a most unexceptional manner, sitting down and rising up when other people sat down and rose, and holding in their hands prayer-books which they found in the pew, into which they stared intently, though I observed that, with the exception of Mrs. Petulengro, who knew how to read a little, they held the books by the top, and not the bottom, as is the usual way. The clergyman now ascended the pulpit, arrayed in his black gown. The congregation composed themselves to attention, as did also my companions, who fixed their eyes upon the clergyman with a certain strange immovable stare, which I believe to be peculiar to their race. The clergyman gave out his text, and began to preach. He was a tall, gentlemanly man, seemingly between fifty and sixty, with greyish hair; his features were very handsome, but with a somewhat melancholy cast: the tones of his voice were rich and noble, but also with somewhat of melancholy in them. The text which he gave out was the following one: “In what would a man be profited, provided he gained the whole world, and lost his own soul?”

And on this text the clergyman preached long and well: he did not read his sermon, but spoke it extempore; his doing so rather surprised and offended me at first; I was not used to such a style of preaching in a church devoted to the religion of my country. I compared it within my mind with the style of preaching used by the high-church rector in the old church of pretty D . . ., and I thought to myself it was very different, and being very different I did not like it, and I thought to myself how scandalised the people of D . . . would have been had they heard it, and I figured to myself how indignant the high-church clerk would have been had any clergyman got up in the church of D . . . and preached in such a manner. Did it not savour strongly of dissent, methodism, and similar low stuff? Surely it did; why, the Methodist I had heard preach on the heath above the old city, preached in the same manner—at least he preached extempore; ay, and something like the present clergyman, for the Methodist spoke very zealously and with great feeling, and so did the present clergyman; so I, of course, felt rather offended with the clergyman for speaking with zeal and feeling. However, long before the sermon was over I forgot the offence which I had taken, and listened to the sermon with much admiration, for the eloquence and powerful reasoning with which it abounded.

Oh, how eloquent he was, when he talked on the inestimable value of a man’s soul, which he said endured for ever, whilst his body, as every one knew, lasted at most for a very contemptible period of time; and how forcibly he reasoned on the folly of a man, who, for the sake of gaining the whole world—a thing, he

said, which provided he gained he could only possess for a part of the time, during which his perishable body existed—should lose his soul, that is, cause that precious deathless portion of him to suffer indescribable misery time without end.

There was one part of his sermon which struck me in a very particular manner: he said, “That there were some people who gained something in return for their souls; if they did not get the whole world, they got a part of it—lands, wealth, honour, or renown; mere trifles, he allowed, in comparison with the value of a man’s soul, which is destined either to enjoy delight, or suffer tribulation time without end; but which, in the eyes of the worldly, had a certain value, and which afforded a certain pleasure and satisfaction. But there were also others who lost their souls, and got nothing for them—neither lands, wealth, renown, nor consideration, who were poor outcasts, and despised by everybody. My friends,” he added, “if the man is a fool who barters his soul for the whole world, what a fool he must be who barters his soul for nothing!”

The eyes of the clergyman, as he uttered these words, wandered around the whole congregation; and when he had concluded them, the eyes of the whole congregation were turned upon my companions and myself.

CHAPTER XXV.—RETURN FROM CHURCH—THE CUCKOO AND GYPSY—SPIRITUAL DISCOURSE.

The service over, my companions and myself returned towards the encampment by the way we came. Some of the humble part of the congregation laughed and joked at us as we passed. Mr. Petulengro and his wife, however, returned their laughs and jokes with interest. As for Tawno and myself, we said nothing: Tawno, like most handsome fellows, having very little to say for himself at any time; and myself, though not handsome, not being particularly skilful at repartee. Some boys followed us for a considerable time, making all kinds of observations about gypsies; but as we walked at a great pace, we gradually left them behind, and at last lost sight of them. Mrs. Petulengro and Tawno Chikno walked together, even as they had come; whilst Mr. Petulengro and myself followed at a little distance.

“That was a very fine preacher we heard,” said I to Mr. Petulengro, after we had crossed the stile into the fields.

“Very fine, indeed, brother,” said Mr. Petulengro; “he is talked of, far and wide, for his sermons; folks say that there is scarcely another like him in the whole of England.”

“He looks rather melancholy, Jasper.”

“He lost his wife several years ago, who, they say, was one of the most beautiful women ever seen. They say that it was grief for her loss that made him come out mighty strong as a preacher; for, though he was a clergyman, he was never heard of in the pulpit before he lost his wife; since then the whole country has rung with the preaching of the clergyman of M . . ., as they call him. Those two nice young gentlewomen, whom you saw with the female childer, are his daughters.”

“You seem to know all about him, Jasper. Did you ever hear him preach before?”

"Never, brother; but he has frequently been to our tent, and his daughters too, and given us tracts; for he is one of the people they call Evangelicals, who give folks tracts which they cannot read."

"You should learn to read, Jasper."

"We have no time, brother."

"Are you not frequently idle?"

"Never, brother; when we are not engaged in our traffic, we are engaged in taking our relaxation: so we have no time to learn."

"You really should make an effort. If you were disposed to learn to read, I would endeavour to assist you. You would be all the better for knowing how to read."

"In what way, brother?"

"Why, you could read the Scriptures, and, by so doing, learn your duty towards your fellow-creatures."

"We know that already, brother; the constables and justices have contrived to knock that tolerably into our heads."

"Yet you frequently break the laws."

"So, I believe, do now and then those who know how to read, brother."

"Very true, Jasper; but you really ought to learn to read, as, by so doing, you might learn your duty towards yourselves: and your chief duty is to take care of your own souls; did not the preacher say, 'In what is a man profited, provided he gain the whole world'?"

"We have not much of the world, brother."

"Very little indeed, Jasper. Did you not observe how the eyes of the whole congregation were turned towards our pew when the preacher said, 'There are some people who lose their souls, and get nothing in exchange; who are outcast, despised, and miserable?' Now, was not what he said quite applicable to the gypsies?"

"We are not miserable, brother."

"Well, then, you ought to be, Jasper. Have you an inch of ground of your own? Are you of the least use? Are you not spoken ill of by everybody? What's a gypsy?"

"What's the bird noising yonder, brother?"

"The bird! Oh, that's the cuckoo tolling; but what has the cuckoo to do with the matter?"

"We'll see, brother; what's the cuckoo?"

"What is it? you know as much about it as myself, Jasper."

"Isn't it a kind of roguish, chaffing bird, brother?"

"I believe it is, Jasper."

"Nobody knows whence it comes, brother?"

"I believe not, Jasper."

"Very poor, brother, not a nest of its own?"

"So they say, Jasper."

"With every person's bad word, brother?"

"Yes, Jasper, every person is mocking it."

"Tolerably merry, brother?"

"Yes, tolerably merry, Jasper."

"Of no use at all, brother?"

"None whatever, Jasper."

"You would be glad to get rid of the cuckoos, brother?"

"Why, not exactly, Jasper; the cuckoo is a pleasant, funny bird, and its presence and voice give a great charm to the green trees and fields; no, I can't say I wish exactly to get rid of the cuckoo."

"Well, brother, what's a Romany chal?"

"You must answer that question yourself, Jasper."

“A roguish, chaffing fellow, a’n’t he, brother?”

“Ay, ay, Jasper.”

“Of no use at all, brother?”

“Just so, Jasper; I see . . .”

“Something very much like a cuckoo, brother?”

“I see what you are after, Jasper.”

“You would like to get rid of us, wouldn’t you?”

“Why, no, not exactly.”

“We are no ornament to the green lanes in spring and summer time, are we, brother? and the voices of our chies, with their cukkerin and dukkerin, don’t help to make them pleasant?”

“I see what you are at, Jasper.”

“You would wish to turn the cuckoos into barn-door fowls, wouldn’t you?”

“Can’t say I should, Jasper, whatever some people might wish.”

“And the chals and chies into radical weavers and factory wenches, hey, brother?”

“Can’t say that I should, Jasper. You are certainly a picturesque people, and in many respects an ornament both to town and country; painting and lil writing too are under great obligations to you. What pretty pictures are made out of your campings and groupings, and what pretty books have been written in which gypsies, or at least creatures intended to represent gypsies, have been the principal figures! I think if we were without you, we should begin to miss you.”

“Just as you would the cuckoos, if they were all converted into barn-door fowls. I tell you what, brother, frequently as I have sat under a hedge in spring or summer time, and heard the cuckoo, I have thought that we chals and cuckoos are alike in many respects, but especially in character. Everybody speaks ill of us both, and everybody is glad to see both of us again.”

“Yes, Jasper, but there is some difference between men and cuckoos; men have souls, Jasper!”

"And why not cuckoos, brother?"

"You should not talk so, Jasper; what you say is little short of blasphemy. How should a bird have a soul?"

"And how should a man?"

"Oh, we know very well that a man has a soul."

"How do you know it?"

"We know very well."

"Would you take your oath of it, brother—your bodily oath?"

"Why, I think I might, Jasper!"

"Did you ever see the soul, brother?"

"No, I never saw it."

"Then how could you swear to it? A pretty figure you would make in a court of justice, to swear to a thing which you never saw. Hold up your head, fellow. When and where did you see it? Now upon your oath, fellow, do you mean to say that this Roman stole the donkey's foal? Oh, there's no one for cross-questioning like Counsellor P . . . Our people when they are in a hobble always like to employ him, though he is somewhat dear. Now, brother, how can you get over the 'upon your oath, fellow, will you say that you have a soul?'"

"Well, we will take no oath on the subject; but you yourself believe in the soul. I have heard you say that you believe in dukkerin; now what is dukkerin {286} but the soul science?"

"When did I say that I believed in it?"

"Why, after that fight, when you pointed to the bloody mark in the cloud, whilst he you wot of was galloping in the barouche to the old town, amidst the rain-cataracts, the thunder, and flame of heaven."

"I have some kind of remembrance of it, brother."

"Then, again, I heard you say that the dook of Abershaw rode every night on horseback down the wooded hill."

"I say, brother, what a wonderful memory you have!"

"I wish I had not, Jasper, but I can't help it; it is my misfortune."

"Misfortune! well, perhaps it is; at any rate it is very ungenteel to have such a memory. I have heard my wife say that to show you have a long memory looks very vulgar; and that you can't give a greater proof of gentility than by forgetting a thing as soon as possible—more especially a promise, or an acquaintance when he happens to be shabby. Well, brother, I don't deny that I may have said that I believe in dukkerin, and in Abershaw's dook, which you say is his soul; but what I believe one moment, or say I believe, don't be certain that I shall believe the next, or say I do."

"Indeed, Jasper, I heard you say on a previous occasion, on quoting a piece of song, that when a man dies he is cast into the earth, and there's an end of him."

"I did, did I? Lor', what a memory you have, brother! But you are not sure that I hold that opinion now."

"Certainly not, Jasper. Indeed, after such a sermon as we have been hearing, I should be very shocked if you held such an opinion."

"However, brother, don't be sure I do not, however shocking such an opinion may be to you."

"What an incomprehensible people you are, Jasper."

"We are rather so, brother; indeed, we have posed wiser heads than yours before now."

"You seem to care for so little, and yet you rove about a distinct race."

"I say, brother!"

"Yes, Jasper."

"What do you think of our women?"

"They have certainly very singular names, Jasper."

"Names! Lavengro! But, brother, if you had been as fond of things as of names, you would never have been a pal of ours."

"What do you mean, Jasper?"

"A'n't they rum animals?"

"They have tongues of their own, Jasper."

"Did you ever feel their teeth and nails, brother?"

"Never, Jasper, save Mrs. Herne's. {288} I have always been very civil to them, so . . ."

"They let you alone. I say, brother, some part of the secret is in them."

"They seem rather flighty, Jasper."

"Ay, ay, brother!"

"Rather fond of loose discourse!"

"Rather so, brother."

"Can you always trust them, Jasper?"

"We never watch them, brother."

"Can they always trust you?"

"Not quite so well as we can them. However, we get on very well together, except Mikailia and her husband; but Mikailia is a cripple, and is married to the beauty of the world, so she may be expected to be jealous—though he would not part with her for a duchess, no more than I would part with my rawnie, nor any other chal with his."

"Ay, but would not the chi part with the chal for a duke, Jasper?"

"My Pakomovna gave up the duke for me, brother."

"But she occasionally talks of him, Jasper."

"Yes, brother, but Pakomovna was born on a common not far from the sign of the gammon."

"Gammon of bacon, I suppose."

"Yes, brother; but gammon likewise means . . ."

"I know it does, Jasper; it means fun, ridicule, jest; it is an ancient Norse word,

and is found in the Edda.”

“Lor’, brother! how learned in lils you are!”

“Many words of Norse are to be found in our vulgar sayings, Jasper; for example—in that particularly vulgar saying of ours, ‘Your mother is up,’ {289} there’s a noble Norse word; mother, there, meaning not the female who bore us, but rage and choler, as I discovered by reading the Sagas, Jasper.”

“Lor’, brother! how book-learned you be.”

“Indifferently so, Jasper. Then you think you might trust your wife with the duke?”

“I think I could, brother, or even with yourself.”

“Myself, Jasper! Oh, I never troubled my head about your wife; but I suppose there have been love affairs between gorgios {290} and Romany chies. Why, novels are stuffed with such matters; and then even one of your own songs says so—the song which Ursula was singing the other afternoon.”

“That is somewhat of an old song, brother, and is sung by the chies as a warning at our solemn festivals.”

“Well! but there’s your sister-in-law, Ursula, herself, Jasper.”

“Ursula, herself, brother?”

“You were talking of my having her, Jasper.”

“Well, brother, why didn’t you have her?”

“Would she have had me?”

“Of course, brother. You are so much of a Roman, and speak Romany so remarkably well.”

“Poor thing! she looks very innocent!”

“Remarkably so, brother! However, though not born on the same common with my wife, she knows a thing or two of Roman matters.”

“I should like to ask her a question or two, Jasper, in connection with that song.”

“You can do no better, brother. Here we are at the camp. After tea, take Ursula

under a hedge, and ask her a question or two in connection with that song.”

CHAPTER XXVI.—SUNDAY EVENING—URSULA—ACTION AT LAW—MERIDIANA MARRIED ALREADY.

I took tea that evening with Mr. and Mrs. Petulengro and Ursula, {291} outside of their tent. Tawno was not present, being engaged with his wife in his own tabernacle; Sylvester was there, however, lolling listlessly upon the ground. As I looked upon this man, I thought him one of the most disagreeable fellows I had ever seen. His features were ugly, and, moreover, as dark as pepper; and, besides being dark, his skin was dirty. As for his dress, it was torn and sordid. His chest was broad, and his arms seemed powerful; but, upon the whole, he looked a very caitiff. "I am sorry that man has lost his wife," thought I; "for I am sure he will never get another." What surprises me is, that he ever found a woman disposed to unite her lot with his!

After tea I got up and strolled about the field. My thoughts were upon Isopel Berners. I wondered where she was, and how long she would stay away. At length becoming tired and listless, I determined to return to the dingle, and resume the reading of the Bible at the place where I had left off. "What better could I do," methought, "on a Sunday evening?" I was then near the wood which surrounded the dingle, but at that side which was farthest from the encampment, which stood near the entrance. Suddenly, on turning round the southern corner of the copse, which surrounded the dingle, I perceived Ursula seated under a thorn-bush. I thought I never saw her look prettier than then, dressed as she was, in her Sunday's best.

"Good evening, Ursula," said I; "I little thought to have the pleasure of seeing you here."

"Nor would you, brother," said Ursula, "had not Jasper told me that you had been talking about me, and wanted to speak to me under a hedge; so hearing that, I watched your motions, and came here and sat down."

"I was thinking of going to my quarters in the dingle, to read the Bible, Ursula,

but . . .”

“Oh, pray then, go to your quarters, brother, and read the Miduveleskoe lil; {293} you can speak to me under a hedge some other time.”

“I think I will sit down with you, Ursula; for, after all, reading godly books in dingles at eve is rather sombre work. Yes, I think I will sit down with you;” and I sat down by her side.

“Well, brother, now you have sat down with me under the hedge, what have you to say to me?”

“Why, I hardly know, Ursula.”

“Not know, brother; a pretty fellow you to ask young women to come and sit with you under hedges, and, when they come, not know what to say to them.”

“Oh! ah! I remember; do you know, Ursula, that I take a great interest in you?”

“Thank ye, brother; kind of you, at any rate.”

“You must be exposed to a great many temptations, Ursula.”

“A great many indeed, brother. It is hard to see fine things, such as shawls, gold watches, and chains in the shops, behind the big glasses, and to know that they are not intended for one. Many’s the time I have been tempted to make a dash at them; but I bethought myself that by so doing I should cut my hands, besides being almost certain of being grabbed and sent across the gull’s bath to the foreign country.”

“Then you think gold and fine things temptations, Ursula?”

“Of course, brother, very great temptations; don’t you think them so?”

“Can’t say I do, Ursula.”

“Then more fool you, brother; but have the kindness to tell me what you would call a temptation?”

“Why, for example, the hope of honour and renown, Ursula.”

“The hope of honour and renown! very good, brother: but I tell you one thing, that unless you have money in your pocket, and good broadcloth on your back, you are not likely to obtain much honour and—what do you call it? amongst the

gorgios, to say nothing of the Romany chals."

"I should have thought, Ursula, that the Romany chals, roaming about the world as they do, free and independent, were above being led by such trifles."

"Then you know nothing of the gypsies, brother; no people on earth are fonder of those trifles, as you call them, than the Romany chals, or more disposed to respect those who have them."

"Then money and fine clothes would induce you to do anything, Ursula?"

"Ay, ay, brother, anything."

"To chore, {295a} Ursula?"

"Like enough, brother; gypsies have been transported before now for choring."

"To hokkawar?" {295b}

"Ay, ay; I was telling dukkerin only yesterday, brother."

"In fact, to break the law in everything?"

"Who knows, brother, who knows? as I said before, gold and fine clothes are great temptations."

"Well, Ursula, I am sorry for it, I should never have thought you so depraved."

"Indeed, brother."

"To think that I am seated by one who is willing to—to . . ."

"Go on, brother."

"To play the thief."

"Go on, brother."

"The liar."

"Go on, brother."

"The—the . . ."

"Go on, brother."

“The—the lubbeny.” {295c}

“The what, brother?” said Ursula, starting from her seat.

“Why, the lubbeny; don’t you . . .”

“I tell you what, brother,” said Ursula, looking somewhat pale, and speaking very low, “if I had only something in my hand, I would do you a mischief.”

“Why, what is the matter, Ursula?” said I; “how have I offended you?”

“How have you offended me? Why, didn’t you insinivate just now that I was ready to play the—the . . .”

“Go on, Ursula.”

“The—the . . . I’ll not say it; but I only wish I had something in my hand.”

“If I have offended, Ursula, I am very sorry for it; any offence I may have given you was from want of understanding you. Come, pray be seated, I have much to question you about—to talk to you about.”

“Seated, not I! It was only just now that you gave me to understand that you was ashamed to be seated by me, a thief, a liar.”

“Well, did you not almost give me to understand that you were both, Ursula?”

“I don’t much care being called a thief and a liar,” said Ursula; “a person may be a liar and a thief, and yet a very honest woman, but . . .”

“Well, Ursula.”

“I tell you what, brother, if you ever sinivate again that I could be the third thing, so help me duvel! {296} I’ll do you a mischief. By my God I will!”

“Well, Ursula, I assure you that I shall sinivate, as you call it, nothing of the kind about you. I have no doubt, from what you have said, that you are a very paragon of virtue—a perfect Lucretia; but . . .”

“My name is Ursula, brother, and not Lucretia: Lucretia is not of our family, but one of the Bucklands; she travels about Oxfordshire; yet I am as good as she any day.”

“Lucretia! how odd! Where could she have got that name? Well, I make no

doubt, Ursula, that you are quite as good as she, and she of her namesake of ancient Rome; but there is a mystery in this same virtue, Ursula, which I cannot fathom! how a thief and a liar should be able, or indeed willing, to preserve her virtue is what I don't understand. You confess that you are very fond of gold. Now, how is it that you don't barter your virtue for gold sometimes? I am a philosopher, Ursula, and like to know everything. You must be every now and then exposed to great temptation, Ursula: for you are of a beauty calculated to captivate all hearts. Come, sit down and tell me how you are enabled to resist such temptation as gold and fine clothes?"

"Well, brother," said Ursula, "as you say you mean no harm, I will sit down beside you, and enter into discourse with you; but I will uphold that you are the coolest hand that I ever came nigh, and say the coolest things."

And thereupon Ursula sat down by my side.

"Well, Ursula, we will, if you please, discourse on the subject of your temptations. I suppose that you travel very much about, and show yourself in all kinds of places?"

"In all kinds, brother; I travels, as you say, very much, attends fairs and races, and enters booths and public-houses, where I tells fortunes, and sometimes dances and sings."

"And do not people often address you in a very free manner?"

"Frequently, brother; and I give them tolerably free answers."

"Do people ever offer to make you presents? I mean presents of value, such as . . ."

"Silk handkerchiefs, shawls, and trinkets; very frequently, brother."

"And what do you do, Ursula?"

"I take what people offers me, brother, and stows it away as soon as I can."

"Well, but don't people expect something for their presents? I don't mean dukkerin, dancing, and the like; but such a moderate and innocent thing as a choomer, {298} Ursula?"

"Innocent thing, do you call it, brother?"

“The world calls it so, Ursula. Well, do the people who give you the fine things never expect a choomer in return?”

“Very frequently, brother.”

“And do you ever grant it?”

“Never, brother.”

“How do you avoid it?”

“I gets away as soon as possible, brother. If they follows me, I tries to baffle them, by means of jests and laughter; and if they persist, I uses bad and terrible language, of which I have plenty in store.”

“But if your terrible language has no effect?”

“Then I screams for the constable, and if he comes not, I uses my teeth and nails.”

“And are they always sufficient?”

“I have only had to use them twice, brother; but then I found them sufficient.”

“But suppose the person who followed you was highly agreeable, Ursula? A handsome young officer of local militia, for example, all dressed in Lincoln green, would you still refuse him the choomer?”

“We makes no difference, brother! the daughters of the gypsy-father makes no difference; and, what’s more, sees none.”

“Well, Ursula, the world will hardly give you credit for such indifference.”

“What cares we for the world, brother! we are not of the world.”

“But your fathers, brothers, and uncles give you credit I suppose, Ursula.”

“Ay, ay, brother, our fathers, brothers, and cokos {299a} gives us all manner of credit; for example, I am telling lies and dukkerin in a public-house where my batu {299b} or coko—perhaps both—are playing on the fiddle; well, my batu and my coko beholds me amongst the public-house crew, talking nonsense and hearing nonsense; but they are under no apprehension; and presently they sees the good-looking officer of militia, in his greens and Lincolns, get up and give me a wink, and I go out with him abroad, into the dark night perhaps; well, my

batu and coko goes on fiddling, just as if I were six miles off asleep in the tent, and not out in the dark street with the local officer, with his Lincolns and his greens."

"They know they can trust you, Ursula?"

"Ay, ay, brother; and, what's more, I knows I can trust myself."

"So you would merely go out to make a fool of him, Ursula?"

"Merely go out to make a fool of him, brother, I assure you."

"But such proceedings really have an odd look, Ursula."

"Amongst gorgios, very so, brother."

"Well, it must be rather unpleasant to lose one's character even amongst gorgios, Ursula; and suppose the officer, out of revenge for being tricked and duped by you, were to say of you the thing that is not, were to meet you on the race-course the next day, and boast of receiving favours which he never had, amidst a knot of jeering militia-men, how would you proceed, Ursula? would you not be abashed?"

"By no means, brother; I should bring my action of law against him."

"Your action at law, Ursula?"

"Yes, brother; I should give a whistle, whereupon all one's cokos and batus, and all my near and distant relations, would leave their fiddling, dukkerin, and horse-dealing, and come flocking about me. 'What's the matter, Ursula?' says my coko. 'Nothing at all,' I replies, 'save and except that gorgio, in his greens and his Lincolns, says that I have played the . . . with him.' 'Oho, he does, Ursula,' says my coko; 'try your action of law against him, my lamb,' and he puts something privily into my hands; whereupon I goes close up to the grinning gorgio, and staring him in the face, with my head pushed forward, I cries out: 'You say I did what was wrong with you last night when I was out with you abroad?' 'Yes,' says the local officer, 'I says you did,' looking down all the time. 'You are a liar,' says I, and forthwith I breaks his head with the stick which I holds behind me, and which my coko has conveyed privily into my hand."

"And this is your action at law, Ursula?"

"Yes, brother, this is my action at club-law."

“And would your breaking the fellow’s head quite clear you of all suspicion in the eyes of your batus, cokos, {301} and what not?”

“They would never suspect me at all, brother, because they would know that I would never condescend to be over intimate with a gorgio; the breaking the head would be merely intended to justify Ursula in the eyes of the gorgios.”

“And would it clear you in their eyes?”

“Would it not, brother? When they saw the blood running down from the fellow’s cracked poll on his greens and Lincolns, they would be quite satisfied; why, the fellow would not be able to show his face at fair or merry-making for a year and three quarters.”

“Did you ever try it, Ursula?”

“Can’t say I ever did, brother, but it would do.”

“And how did you ever learn such a method of proceeding?”

“Why, ’tis advised by gypsy liri, {302a} brother. It’s part of our way of settling difficulties amongst ourselves; for example, if a young Roman were to say the thing which is not respecting Ursula and himself, Ursula would call a great meeting of the people, who would all sit down in a ring, the young fellow amongst them; a coko would then put a stick in Ursula’s hand, who would then get up and go to the young fellow, and say, ‘Did I play the . . . with you?’ and were he to say ‘Yes,’ she would crack his head before the eyes of all.”

“Well,” said I, “Ursula, I was bred an apprentice to gorgio law, and of course ought to stand up for it, whenever I conscientiously can, but I must say the gypsy manner of bringing an action for defamation is much less tedious, and far more satisfactory, than the gorgiko one. I wish you now to clear up a certain point which is rather mysterious to me. You say that for a Romany chi to do what is unseemly with a gorgio is quite out of the question, yet only the other day I heard you singing a song in which a Romany chi confesses herself to be cambri {302b} by a grand gorgious gentleman.”

“A sad let down,” said Ursula.

“Well,” said I, “sad or not, there’s the song that speaks of the thing, which you give me to understand is not?”

“Well, if the thing ever was,” said Ursula, “it was a long time ago, and perhaps, after all, not true.”

“Then why do you sing the song?”

“I tell you, brother: we sings the song now and then to be a warning to ourselves to have as little to do as possible in the way of acquaintance with the gorgios; and a warning it is. You see how the young woman in the song was driven out of her tent by her mother, with all kinds of disgrace and bad language; but you don’t know that she was afterwards buried alive by her cokos and pals, in an uninhabited place. The song doesn’t say it, but the story says it; for there is a story about it, though, as I said before, it was a long time ago, and perhaps, after all, wasn’t true.”

“But if such a thing were to happen at present, would the cokos and pals bury the girl alive?”

“I can’t say what they would do,” said Ursula, “I suppose they are not so strict as they were long ago; at any rate she would be driven from the tan, {303} and avoided by all her family and relations as a gorgio’s acquaintance, so that, perhaps, at last, she would be glad if they would bury her alive.”

“Well, I can conceive that there would be an objection on the part of the cokos and batus that a Romany chi should form an improper acquaintance with a gorgio, but I should think that the batus and cokos could hardly object to the chi’s entering into the honourable estate of wedlock with a gorgio.”

Ursula was silent.

“Marriage is an honourable estate, Ursula.”

“Well, brother, suppose it be?”

“I don’t see why a Romany chi should object to enter into the honourable estate of wedlock with a gorgio.”

“You don’t, brother; don’t you?”

“No,” said I, “and, moreover, I am aware, notwithstanding your evasion, Ursula, that marriages and connections now and then occur between gorgios and Romany chies; the result of which is the mixed breed, called half-and-half, which is at present travelling about England, and to which the Flaming Tinman

belongs, otherwise called Anselo Herne.”

“As for the half-and-halfs,” said Ursula, “they are a bad set; and there is not a worse blackguard in England than Anselo Herne.”

“All what you say may be very true, Ursula, but you admit that there are half-and-halfs.”

“The more’s the pity, brother.”

“Pity or not, you admit the fact; but how do you account for it?”

“How do I account for it? why, I will tell you, by the break up of a Roman family, brother,—the father of a small family dies, and perhaps the mother; and the poor children are left behind; sometimes they are gathered up by their relations, and sometimes, if they have none, by charitable Romans, who bring them up in the observance of gypsy law; but sometimes they are not so lucky, and falls into the company of gorgios, trampers, and basket-makers, who live in caravans, with whom they take up, and so . . . I hate to talk of the matter, brother; but so comes this race of the half-and-halfs.”

“Then you mean to say, Ursula, that no Romany chi, unless compelled by hard necessity, would have anything to do with a gorgio.”

“We are not over fond of gorgios, brother, and we hates basket-makers and folks that live in caravans.”

“Well,” said I, “suppose a gorgio, who is not a basket-maker, a fine handsome gorgious gentleman, who lives in a fine house . . .”

“We are not fond of houses, brother. I never slept in a house in my life.”

“But would not plenty of money induce you?”

“I hate houses, brother, and those who live in them.”

“Well, suppose such a person were willing to resign his fine house, and, for love of you, to adopt gypsy law, speak Romany, and live in a tan, {305} would you have nothing to say to him?”

“Bringing plenty of money with him, brother?”

“Well, bringing plenty of money with him, Ursula.”

“Well, brother, suppose you produce your man; where is he?”

“I was merely supposing such a person, Ursula.”

“Then you don’t know of such a person, brother?”

“Why, no, Ursula; why do you ask?”

“Because, brother, I was almost beginning to think that you meant yourself.”

“Myself, Ursula! I have no fine house to resign; nor have I money. Moreover, Ursula, though I have a great regard for you, and though I consider you very handsome, quite as handsome, indeed, as Meridiana in . . .”

“Meridiana! where did you meet with her?” said Ursula, with a toss of her head.

“Why, in old Pulci’s . . .”

“At old Fulcher’s! that’s not true brother. Meridiana is a Borzlam, and travels with her own people, and not with old Fulcher, {306} who is a gorgio and a basket-maker.”

“I was not speaking of old Fulcher, but Pulci, a great Italian writer, who lived many hundred years ago, and who, in his poem called the ‘Morgante Maggiore,’ speaks of Meridiana, the daughter of . . .”

“Old Carus Borzlam,” said Ursula; “but if the fellow you mention lived so many hundred years ago, how, in the name of wonder, could he know anything of Meridiana?”

“The wonder, Ursula, is, how your people could ever have got hold of that name, and similar ones. The Meridiana of Pulci was not the daughter of old Carus Borzlam, but of Caradoro, a great pagan king of the East, who, being besieged in his capital by Manfredonio, another mighty pagan king, who wished to obtain possession of his daughter, who had refused him, was relieved in his distress by certain paladins of Charlemagne, with one of whom, Oliver, his daughter Meridiana fell in love.”

“I see,” said Ursula, “that it must have been altogether a different person, for I am sure that Meridiana Borzlam would never have fallen in love with Oliver. Oliver! why, that is the name of the curo-mengro who lost the fight near the chong gav, {307} the day of the great tempest, when I got wet through. No, no! Meridiana Borzlam would never have so far forgot her blood as to take up with

Tom Oliver."

"I was not talking of that Oliver, Ursula, but of Oliver, peer of France, and paladin of Charlemagne, with whom Meridiana, daughter of Caradore, fell in love, and for whose sake she renounced her religion and became a Christian, and finally ingravidata, or cambri, by him:—

"E nacquene un figliuol, dice la storia,
Che dette à Carlo-man poi gran vittoria."

which means . . ."

"I don't want to know what it means," said Ursula; "no good, I'm sure. Well, if the Meridiana of Charles's wain's pal was no handsomer than Meridiana Borzlam, she was no great catch, brother; for though I am by no means given to vanity, I think myself better to look at than she, though I will say she is no lubbeny, and would scorn . . ."

"I make no doubt she would, Ursula, and I make no doubt that you are much handsomer than she, or even the Meridiana of Oliver. What I was about to say, before you interrupted me, is this, that though I have a great regard for you, and highly admire you, it is only in a brotherly way, and . . ."

"And you had nothing better to say to me," said Ursula, "when you wanted to talk to me beneath a hedge, than that you liked me in a brotherly way! well, I declare . . ."

"You seem disappointed, Ursula."

"Disappointed, brother! not I."

"You were just now saying that you disliked gorgios, so, of course, could only wish that I, who am a gorgio, should like you in a brotherly way; I wished to have a conversation with you beneath a hedge, but only with the view of procuring from you some information respecting the song which you sung the other day, and the conduct of Roman females, which has always struck me as being highly unaccountable, so, if you thought anything else . . ."

"What else should I expect from a picker-up of old words, brother? Bah! I dislike a picker-up of old words worse than a picker-up of old rags."

"Don't be angry, Ursula, I feel a great interest in you; you are very handsome,

and very clever; indeed, with your beauty and cleverness, I only wonder that you have not long since been married."

"You do, do you, brother?"

"Yes. However, keep up your spirits, Ursula, you are not much past the prime of youth, so . . ."

"Not much past the prime of youth! Don't be uncivil, brother; I was only twenty-two last month."

"Don't be offended, Ursula, but twenty-two is twenty-two, or I should rather say, that twenty-two in a woman is more than twenty-six in a man. You are still very beautiful, but I advise you to accept the first offer that's made to you."

"Thank you, brother, but your advice comes rather late; I accepted the first offer that was made me five years ago."

"You married five years ago, Ursula! is it possible?"

"Quite possible, brother, I assure you."

"And how came I to know nothing about it?"

"How comes it that you don't know many thousand things about the Romans, brother? Do you think they tell you all their affairs?"

"Married, Ursula, married! well, I declare!"

"You seem disappointed, brother."

"Disappointed! Oh, no! not at all; but Jasper, only a few weeks ago, told me that you were not married; and, indeed, almost gave me to understand that you would be very glad to get a husband."

"And you believed him? I'll tell you, brother, for your instruction, that there is not in the whole world a greater liar than Jasper Petulengro."

"I am sorry to hear it, Ursula; but with respect to him you married—who might he be? A gorgio, or a Romany chal?"

"Gorgio, or Romany chal? Do you think I would ever condescend to a gorgio? It was a Camomescro, brother, a Lovell, a distant relation of my own."

"And where is he! and what became of him? Have you any family?"

"Don't think I am going to tell you all my history, brother; and, to tell you the truth, I am tired of sitting under hedges with you, talking nonsense. I shall go to my house."

"Do sit a little longer, sister Ursula. I most heartily congratulate you on your marriage. But where is this same Lovell? I have never seen him: I should wish to congratulate him too. You are quite as handsome as the Meridiana of Pulci, Ursula, ay, or the Despina of Ricciardetto. Ricciardetto, Ursula, is a poem written by one Fortiguerra, about ninety years ago, in imitation of the Morgante of Pulci. It treats of the wars of Charlemagne and his Paladins with various barbarous nations, who came to besiege Paris. Despina was the daughter and heiress of Scricca, King of Cafria; she was the beloved of Ricciardetto, and was beautiful as an angel; but I make no doubt you are quite as handsome as she."

"Brother," said Ursula—but the reply of Ursula I reserve for another chapter, the present having attained to rather an uncommon length, for which, however, the importance of the matter discussed is a sufficient apology.

CHAPTER XXVII.—URSULA'S TALE—THE PATTERAN—THE DEEP WATER—SECOND HUSBAND.

"Brother," said Ursula, plucking a dandelion which grew at her feet. "I have always said that a more civil and pleasant-spoken person than yourself can't be found. I have a great regard for you and your learning, and am willing to do you any pleasure in the way of words or conversation. Mine is not a very happy story, but as you wish to hear it, it is quite at your service. Launcelot Lovell made me an offer, as you call it, and we were married in Roman fashion; that is, we gave each other our right hands, and promised to be true to each other. We lived together two years, travelling sometimes by ourselves, sometimes with our relations; I bore him two children, both of which were still-born, partly, I believe, from the fatigue I underwent in running about the country telling dukkerin when I was not exactly in a state to do so, and partly from the kicks and blows which my husband Launcelot was in the habit of giving me every night, provided I came home with less than five shillings, which it is sometimes impossible to make in the country, provided no fair or merry-making is going on. At the end of two years my husband, Launcelot, whistled a horse from a farmer's field, and sold it for forty pounds; and for that horse he was taken, put in prison, tried, and condemned to be sent to the other country for life. Two days before he was to be sent away, I got leave to see him in the prison, and in the presence of the turnkey I gave him a thin cake of gingerbread, in which there was a dainty saw which could cut through iron. I then took on wonderfully, turned my eyes inside out, fell down in a seeming fit, and was carried out of the prison. That same night my husband sawed his irons off, cut through the bars of his window, and dropping down a height of fifty feet, lighted on his legs, and came and joined me on a heath where I was camped alone. We were just getting things ready to be off, when we heard people coming, and sure enough they were runners after my husband, Launcelot Lovell; for his escape had been discovered within a quarter of an hour after he had got away. My husband, without bidding me farewell, set off at full speed, and they after him, but they could not take him,

and so they came back and took me, and shook me, and threatened me, and had me before the poknees, {312} who shook his head at me, and threatened me in order to make me discover where my husband was, but I said I did not know, which was true enough; not that I would have told him if I had. So at last the poknees and the runners, not being able to make anything out of me, were obliged to let me go, and I went in search of my husband. I wandered about with my cart for several days in the direction in which I saw him run off, with my eyes bent on the ground, but could see no marks of him; at last, coming to four cross roads, I saw my husband's patteran."

"You saw your husband's patteran?"

"Yes, brother. Do you know what patteran means?"

"Of course, Ursula; the gypsy trail, the handful of grass which the gypsies strew in the roads as they travel, to give information to any of their companions who may be behind, as to the route they have taken. The gypsy patteran has always had a strange interest for me, Ursula."

"Like enough, brother; but what does patteran mean?"

"Why, the gypsy trail, formed as I told you before."

"And you know nothing more about patteran, brother?"

"Nothing at all, Ursula; do you?"

"What's the name for the leaf of a tree, brother?"

"I don't know," said I; "it's odd enough that I have asked that question of a dozen Romany chals and chies, and they always told me that they did not know."

"No more they did, brother; there's only one person in England that knows, and that's myself—the name for a leaf is patteran. Now there are two that knows it—the other is yourself."

"Dear me, Ursula, how very strange! I am much obliged to you. I think I never saw you look so pretty as you do now; but who told you?"

"My mother, Mrs. Herne, told it me one day, brother, when she was in a good humour, which she very seldom was, and no one has a better right to know than yourself, as she hated you mortally: it was one day when you had been asking our company what was the word for a leaf, and nobody could tell you, that she

took me aside and told me, for she was in a good humour, and triumphed in seeing you balked. She told me the word for leaf was patteran, which our people use now for trail, having forgotten the true meaning. She said that the trail was called patteran, because the gypsies of old were in the habit of making the marks with the leaves and branches of trees, placed in a certain manner. She said that nobody knew it but herself, who was one of the old sort, and begged me never to tell the word to any one but him I should marry; and to be particularly cautious never to let you know it, whom she hated. Well, brother, perhaps I have done wrong to tell you; but, as I said before, I likes you, and am always ready to do your pleasure in words and conversation; my mother, moreover, is dead and gone, and, poor thing, will never know anything about the matter. So, when I married, I told my husband about the patteran, and we were in the habit of making our private trail with leaves and branches of trees, which none of the other gypsy people did; so, when I saw my husband's patteran, I knew it at once, and I followed it upwards of two hundred miles towards the north; and then I came to a deep, awful-looking water, with an overhanging bank, and on the bank I found the patteran, which directed me to proceed along the bank towards the east; and I followed my husband's patteran towards the east, and before I had gone half a mile, I came to a place where I saw the bank had given way, and fallen into the deep water. Without paying much heed, I passed on, and presently came to a public-house, not far from the water, and I entered the public-house to get a little beer, and perhaps to tell a dukkerin, for I saw a great many people about the door; and, when I entered, I found there was what they calls an inquest being held upon a body in that house, and the jury had just risen to go and look at the body; and being a woman, and having a curiosity, I thought I would go with them, and so I did; and no sooner did I see the body than I knew it to be my husband's; it was much swelled and altered, but I knew it partly by the clothes, and partly by a mark on the forehead, and I cried out, 'It is my husband's body,' and I fell down in a fit, and the fit that time, brother, was not a seeming one."

"Dear me," I, "how terrible! but tell me, Ursula, how did your husband come by his death?"

"The bank, overhanging the deep water, gave way under him, brother, and he was drowned; for, like most of our people, he could not swim, or only a little. The body, after it had been in the water a long time, came up of itself, and was found floating. Well, brother, when the people of the neighbourhood found that I was the wife of the drowned man, they were very kind to me, and made a

subscription for me, with which, after having seen my husband buried, I returned the way I had come, till I met Jasper and his people, and with them I have travelled ever since: I was very melancholy for a long time, I assure you, brother; for the death of my husband preyed very much upon my mind."

"His death was certainly a very shocking one, Ursula; but, really, if he had died a natural one, you could scarcely have regretted it, for he appears to have treated you barbarously."

"Women must bear, brother; and, barring that he kicked and beat me, and drove me out to tell dukkerin when I could scarcely stand, he was not a bad husband. A man, by gypsy law, brother, is allowed to kick and beat his wife, and to bury her alive, if he thinks proper. I am a gypsy, and have nothing to say against the law."

"But what has Mikailia Chikno to say about it?"

"She is a cripple, brother, the only cripple amongst the Roman people: so she is allowed to do and say as she pleases. Moreover, her husband does not think fit to kick or beat her, though it is my opinion she would like him all the better if he were occasionally to do so, and threaten to bury her alive; at any rate, she would treat him better, and respect him more."

"Your sister does not seem to stand much in awe of Jasper Petulengro, Ursula."

"Let the matters of my sister and Jasper Petulengro alone, brother; you must travel in their company some time before you can understand them; they are a strange two, up to all kind of chaffing: but two more regular Romans don't breathe, and I'll tell you, for your instruction, that there isn't a better mare-breaker in England that Jasper Petulengro, if you can manage Miss Isopel Berners as well as . . ."

"Isopel Berners," said I, "how came you to think of her?"

"How should I but think of her, brother, living as she does with you in Mumper's dingle, and travelling about with you; you will have, brother, more difficulty to manage her, than Jasper has to manage my sister Pakomovna. I should have mentioned her before, only I wanted to know what you had to say to me; and when we got into discourse, I forgot her. I say, brother, let me tell you your dukkerin, with respect to her, you will never . . ."

"I want to hear no dukkerin, Ursula."

"Do let me tell you your dukkerin, brother, you will never manage . . ."

"I want to hear no dukkerin, Ursula, in connection with Isopel Berners. Moreover, it is Sunday, we will change the subject; it is surprising to me that, after all you have undergone, you should still look so beautiful. I suppose you do not think of marrying again, Ursula?"

"No, brother, one husband at a time is quite enough for any reasonable mort; especially such a good husband as I have got."

"Such a good husband! why, I thought you told me your husband was drowned?"

"Yes, brother, my first husband was."

"And have you a second?"

"To be sure, brother."

"And who is he, in the name of wonder?"

"Who is he? why Sylvester, to be sure."

"I do assure you, Ursula, that I feel disposed to be angry with you; such a handsome young woman as yourself to take up with such a nasty pepper-faced good-for-nothing . . ."

"I won't hear my husband abused, brother; so you had better say no more."

"Why, is he not the Lazarus of the gypsies? has he a penny of his own, Ursula?"

"Then the more his want, brother, of a clever chi like me to take care of him and his childer. I tell you what, brother, I will chore, {318} if necessary, and tell dukkerin for Sylvester, if even so heavy as scarcely to be able to stand. You call him lazy; you would not think him lazy if you were in a ring with him; he is a proper man with his hands: Jasper is going to back him for twenty pounds against Slammocks of the Chong gav, the brother of Roarer and Bell-metal; he says he has no doubt that he will win."

"Well, if you like him, I, of course, can have no objection. Have you been long married?"

"About a fortnight, brother; that dinner, the other day, when I sang the song, was given in celebration of the wedding."

"Were you married in a church, Ursula?"

"We were not, brother; none but gorgios, cripples, and lubbenys are ever married in a church; we took each other's words. Brother, I have been with you near three hours beneath this hedge. I will go to my husband."

"Does he know that you are here?"

"He does brother."

"And is he satisfied?"

"Satisfied! of course. Lor', you gorgios! Brother, I go to my husband and my house." And, thereupon, Ursula rose and departed.

After waiting a little time I also arose; it was now dark, and I thought I could do no better than betake myself to the dingle; at the entrance of it I found Mr. Petulengro. "Well brother," said he, "what kind of conversation have you and Ursula had beneath the hedge?"

"If you wished to hear what we were talking about, you should have come and sat down beside us; you knew where we were."

"Well, brother, I did much the same, for I went and sat down behind you."

"Behind the hedge, Jasper?"

"Behind the hedge, brother."

"And heard all our conversation?"

"Every word, brother; and a rum conversation it was."

"'Tis an old saying, Jasper, that listeners never hear any good of themselves; perhaps you heard the epithet that Ursula bestowed upon you."

"If, by epitaph, you mean that she called me a liar, I did, brother, and she was not much wrong, for I certainly do not always stick exactly to truth; you, however, have not much to complain of me."

"You deceived me about Ursula, giving me to understand she was not married."

"She was not married when I told you so, brother; that is, not to Sylvester; nor was I aware that she was going to marry him. I once thought you had a kind of

regard for her, and I am sure she had as much for you as a Romany chi can have for a gorgio. I half expected to have heard you make love to her behind the hedge, but I begin to think you care for nothing in this world but old words and strange stories. Lor', to take a young woman under a hedge, and talk to her as you did to Ursula; and yet you got everything out of her that you wanted, with your gammon about old Fulcher and Meridiana. You are a cunning one, brother."

"There you are mistaken, Jasper. I am not cunning. If people think I am, it is because, being made up of art themselves, simplicity of character is a puzzle to them. Your women are certainly extraordinary creatures, Jasper."

"Didn't I say they were rum animals? Brother, we Romans shall always stick together as long as they stick fast to us."

"Do you think they always will, Jasper?"

"Can't say, brother; nothing lasts for ever. Romany chies are Romany chies still, though not exactly what they were sixty years ago. My wife, though a rum one, is not Mrs. Herne, brother. I think she is rather fond of Frenchmen and French discourse. I tell you what, brother, if ever gypsyism breaks up, it will be owing to our chies having been bitten by that mad puppy they calls gentility."

CHAPTER XXVIII.—THE DINGLE AT NIGHT—THE TWO SIDES OF THE QUESTION—ROMAN FEMALES—FILLING THE KETTLE—THE DREAM—THE TALL FIGURE.

I descended to the bottom of the dingle. It was nearly involved in obscurity. To dissipate the feeling of melancholy which came over my mind, I resolved to kindle a fire; and having heaped dry sticks upon my hearth, and added a billet or two, I struck a light and soon produced a blaze. Sitting down, I fixed my eyes upon the blaze, and soon fell into a deep meditation. I thought of the events of the day, the scene at church, and what I had heard at church, the danger of losing one's soul, the doubts of Jasper Petulengro as to whether one had a soul. I thought over the various arguments which I had either heard, or which had come spontaneously to my mind, for or against the probability of a state of future existence. They appeared to me to be tolerably evenly balanced. I then thought that it was at all events taking the safest part to conclude that there was a soul. It would be a terrible thing, after having passed one's life in the disbelief of the existence of a soul, to wake up after death a soul, and to find one's self a lost soul. Yes, methought I would come to the conclusion that one has a soul. Choosing the safe side, however, appeared to me to be playing rather a dastardly part. I had never been an admirer of people who chose the safe side in everything; indeed I had always entertained a thorough contempt for them. Surely it would be showing more manhood to adopt the dangerous side, that of disbelief; I almost resolved to do so—but yet in a question of so much importance, I ought not to be guided by vanity. The question was not which was the safe, but the true side? yet how was I to know which was the true side? Then I thought of the Bible—which I had been reading in the morning—that spoke of the soul and a future state; but was the Bible true? I had heard learned and moral men say that it was true, but I had also heard learned and moral men say that it was not: how was I to decide? Still that balance of probabilities! If I could but see the way of truth, I would follow it, if necessary, upon hands and knees; on that I was determined; but I could not see it. Feeling my brain begin to turn

round, I resolved to think of something else; and forthwith began to think of what had passed between Ursula and myself in our discourse beneath the hedge.

I mused deeply on what she had told me as to the virtue of the females of her race. How singular that virtue must be which was kept pure and immaculate by the possessor, whilst indulging in habits of falsehood and dishonesty. I had always thought the gypsy females extraordinary beings. I had often wondered at them, their dress, their manner of speaking, and, not least, at their names; but, until the present day, I had been unacquainted with the most extraordinary point connected with them. How came they possessed of this extraordinary virtue? was it because they were thievish? I remembered that an ancient thief-taker, who had retired from his useful calling, and who frequently visited the office of my master at law, the respectable S. . ., who had the management of his property—I remembered to have heard this worthy, with whom I occasionally held discourse, philosophic and profound, when he and I chanced to be alone together in the office, say that all first-rate thieves were sober, and of well-regulated morals, their bodily passions being kept in abeyance by their love of gain; but this axiom could scarcely hold good with respect to these women—however thievish they might be, they did care for something besides gain: they cared for their husbands. If they did thieve, they merely thieved for their husbands; and though, perhaps, some of them were vain, they merely prized their beauty because it gave them favour in the eyes of their husbands. Whatever the husbands were—and Jasper had almost insinuated that the males occasionally allowed themselves some latitude—they appeared to be as faithful to their husbands as the ancient Roman matrons were to theirs. Roman matrons! and, after all, might not these be in reality Roman matrons? They called themselves Romans; might not they be the descendants of the old Roman matrons? Might not they be of the same blood as Lucretia? And were not many of their strange names—Lucretia amongst the rest—handed down to them from old Rome? It is true their language was not that of old Rome; it was not, however, altogether different from it. After all, the ancient Romans might be a tribe of these people, who settled down and founded a village with the tilts of carts, which by degrees, and the influx of other people, became the grand city of the world. I liked the idea of the grand city of the world owing its origin to a people who had been in the habit of carrying their houses in their carts. Why, after all, should not the Romans of history be a branch of these Romans? There were several points of similarity between them; if Roman matrons were chaste, both men and women were thieves. Old Rome was the thief of the world; yet still there were difficulties to be removed before I could persuade myself that the old Romans

and my Romans were identical; and in trying to remove these difficulties, I felt my brain once more beginning to turn, and in haste took up another subject of meditation, and that was the patteran, and what Ursula had told me about it.

I had always entertained a strange interest for that sign by which in their wanderings the Romanese gave to those of their people who came behind intimation as to the direction which they took; but it now inspired me with greater interest than ever,—now that I had learned that the proper meaning of it was the leaves of trees. I had, as I had said in my dialogue with Ursula, been very eager to learn the word for leaf in the Romanian language, but had never learned it till this day; so patteran signified leaf, the leaf of a tree; and no one at present knew that but myself and Ursula, who had learned it from Mrs. Herne, the last, it was said, of the old stock; and then I thought what strange people the gypsies must have been in the old time. They were sufficiently strange at present, but they must have been far stranger of old; they must have been a more peculiar people—their language must have been more perfect—and they must have had a greater stock of strange secrets. I almost wished that I had lived some two or three hundred years ago, that I might have observed these people when they were yet stranger than at present. I wondered whether I could have introduced myself to their company at that period, whether I should have been so fortunate as to meet such a strange, half-malicious, half good-humoured being as Jasper, who would have instructed me in the language, then more deserving of note than at present. What might I not have done with that language, had I known it in its purity? Why, I might have written books in it; yet those who spoke it would hardly have admitted me to their society at that period, when they kept more to themselves. Yet I thought that I might possibly have gained their confidence, and have wandered about with them, and learned their language, and all their strange ways, and then—and then—and a sigh rose from the depth of my breast; for I began to think, "Supposing I had accomplished all this, what would have been the profit of it? and in what would all this wild gypsy dream have terminated?"

Then rose another sigh, yet more profound, for I began to think, "What was likely to be the profit of my present way of life; the living in dingles, making pony and donkey shoes, conversing with gypsy-women under hedges, and extracting from them their odd secrets?" What was likely to be the profit of such a kind of life, even should it continue for a length of time?—a supposition not very probable, for I was earning nothing to support me, and the funds with which I had entered upon this life were gradually disappearing. I was living, it is true,

not unpleasantly, enjoying the healthy air of heaven; but, upon the whole, was I not sadly misspending my time? Surely I was; and, as I looked back, it appeared to me that I had always been doing so. What had been the profit of the tongues which I had learned? had they ever assisted me in the day of hunger? No, no! it appeared to me that I had always misspent my time, save in one instance, when by a desperate effort I had collected all the powers of my imagination, and written the "Life of Joseph Sell" {326}; but even when I wrote the Life of Sell, was I not in a false position? Provided I had not misspent my time, would it have been necessary to make that effort, which, after all, had only enabled me to leave London, and wander about the country for a time? But could I, taking all circumstances into consideration, have done better than I had? With my peculiar temperament and ideas, could I have pursued with advantage the profession to which my respectable parents had endeavoured to bring me up? It appeared to me that I could not, and that the hand of necessity had guided me from my earliest years, until the present night in which I found myself seated in the dingle, staring on the brands of the fire. But ceasing to think of the past which, as irrecoverably gone, it was useless to regret, even were there cause to regret it, what should I do in future? Should I write another book like the "Life of Joseph Sell," take it to London, and offer it to a publisher? But when I reflected on the grisly sufferings which I had undergone whilst engaged in writing the "Life of Sell," I shrank from the idea of a similar attempt; moreover, I doubted whether I possessed the power to write a similar work—whether the materials for the life of another Sell lurked within the recesses of my brain? Had I not better become in reality what I had hitherto been merely playing at—a tinker or a gypsy? But I soon saw that I was not fitted to become either in reality. It was much more agreeable to play the gypsy or the tinker, than to become either in reality. I had seen enough of gypsying and tinkering to be convinced of that. All of a sudden the idea of tilling the soil came into my head; tilling the soil was a healthful and noble pursuit! but my idea of tilling the soil had no connection with Britain; for I could only expect to till the soil in Britain as a serf. I thought of tilling it in America, in which it was said there was plenty of wild, unclaimed land, of which any one, who chose to clear it of its trees, might take possession. I figured myself in America, in an immense forest, clearing the land destined, by my exertions, to become a fruitful and smiling plain. Methought I heard the crash of the huge trees as they fell beneath my axe; and then I bethought me that a man was intended to marry—I ought to marry; and if I married, where was I likely to be more happy as a husband and a father than in America, engaged in tilling the ground? I fancied myself in America, engaged in tilling the ground, assisted by an enormous progeny. Well, why not marry, and go and till the ground in

America? I was young, and youth was the time to marry in, and to labour in. I had the use of all my faculties; my eyes, it is true, were rather dull from early study, and from writing the "Life of Joseph Sell"; but I could see tolerably well with them, and they were not bleared. I felt my arms, and thighs, and teeth—they were strong and sound enough; so now was the time to labour, to marry, eat strong flesh, and beget strong children—the power of doing all this would pass away with youth, which was terribly transitory. I bethought me that a time would come when my eyes would be bleared, and, perhaps, sightless; my arms and thighs strengthless and sapless; when my teeth would shake in my jaws, even supposing they did not drop out. No going a wooing then—no labouring—no eating strong flesh, and begetting lusty children then; and I bethought me how, when all this should be, 1 should bewail the days of my youth as misspent, provided I had not in them founded for myself a home, and begotten strong children to take care of me in the days when I could not take care of myself; and thinking of these things, I became sadder and sadder, and stared vacantly upon the fire till my eyes closed in a doze.

I continued dozing over the fire, until rousing myself I perceived that the brands were nearly consumed, and I thought of retiring for the night. I arose, and was about to enter my tent, when a thought struck me. "Suppose," thought I, "that Isopel Berners should return in the midst of the night, how dark and dreary would the dingle appear without a fire! truly, I will keep up the fire, and I will do more; I have no board to spread for her, but I will fill the kettle, and heat it, so that if she comes, I may be able to welcome her with a cup of tea, for I know she loves tea." Thereupon, I piled more wood upon the fire, and soon succeeded in producing a better blaze than before; then, taking the kettle, I set out for the spring. On arriving at the mouth of the dingle, which fronted the east, I perceived that Charles's wain was nearly opposite to it, high above in the heavens, by which I knew that the night was tolerably well advanced. The gypsy encampment lay before me; all was hushed and still within it, and its inmates appeared to be locked in slumber; as I advanced, however, the dogs, which were fastened outside the tents, growled and barked; but presently recognising me, they were again silent, some of them wagging their tails. As I drew near a particular tent, I heard a female voice say—"Some one is coming!" and, as I was about to pass it, the cloth which formed the door was suddenly lifted up, and a black head and part of a huge naked body protruded. It was the head and upper part of the giant Tawno, who, according to the fashion of gypsy men, lay next the door, wrapped in his blanket; the blanket had, however, fallen off, and the starlight shone clear on his athletic tawny body, and was reflected from his large

staring eyes.

“It is only I, Tawno,” said I, “going to fill the kettle, as it is possible that Miss Berners may arrive this night.” “Kos-ko,” {330} drawled out Tawno, and replaced the curtain. “Good, do you call it?” said the sharp voice of his wife; “there is no good in the matter; if that young chap were not living with the rawnee in the illegal and uncertificated line, he would not be getting up in the middle of the night to fill her kettles.” Passing on, I proceeded to the spring, where I filled the kettle, and then returned to the dingle.

Placing the kettle upon the fire, I watched it till it began to boil; then removing it from the top of the brands, I placed it close beside the fire, and leaving it simmering, I retired to my tent; where, having taken off my shoes, and a few of my garments, I lay down on my palliasse, and was not long in falling asleep. I believe I slept soundly for some time, thinking and dreaming of nothing: suddenly, however, my sleep became disturbed, and the subject of the patterans began to occupy my brain. I imagined that I saw Ursula tracing her husband, Launcelot Lovell, by means of his patterans; I imagined that she had considerable difficulty in doing so; that she was occasionally interrupted by parish beadles and constables, who asked her whither she was travelling, to whom she gave various answers. Presently methought that, as she was passing by a farm-yard, two fierce and savage dogs flew at her; I was in great trouble, I remember, and wished to assist her, but could not, for though I seemed to see her, I was still at a distance: and now it appeared that she had escaped from the dogs, and was proceeding with her cart along a gravelly path which traversed a wild moor; I could hear the wheels grating amidst sand and gravel. The next moment I was awake, and found myself sitting up in my tent; there was a glimmer of light through the canvas caused by the fire; a feeling of dread came over me, which was perhaps natural, on starting suddenly from one’s sleep in that wild lone place; I half imagined that some one was nigh the tent; the idea made me rather uncomfortable, and to dissipate it I lifted up the canvas of the door and peeped out, and, lo! I had an indistinct view of a tall figure standing by the tent. “Who is that?” said I, whilst I felt my blood rush to my heart. “It is I,” said the voice of Isopel Berners; “you little expected me, I dare say; well, sleep on, I do not wish to disturb you.” “But I was expecting you,” said I, recovering myself, “as you may see by the fire and the kettle. I will be with you in a moment.”

Putting on in haste the articles of dress which I had flung off, I came out of the tent, and addressing myself to Isopel, who was standing beside her cart, I said

—“Just as I was about to retire to rest I thought it possible that you might come to-night, and got everything in readiness for you. Now, sit down by the fire whilst I lead the donkey and cart to the place where you stay; I will unharness the animal, and presently come and join you.” “I need not trouble you,” said Isopel; “I will go myself and see after my things.” “We will go together,” said I, “and then return and have some tea.” Isopel made no objection, and in about half-an-hour we had arranged everything at her quarters. I then hastened and prepared tea. Presently Isopel rejoined me, bringing her stool; she had divested herself of her bonnet, and her hair fell over her shoulders; she sat down, and I poured out the beverage, handing her a cup. “Have you made a long journey to-night?” said I. “A very long one,” replied Belle, “I have come nearly twenty miles since six o’clock.” “I believe I heard you coming in my sleep,” said I; “did the dogs above bark at you?” “Yes,” said Isopel, “very violently; did you think of me in your sleep?” “No,” said I, “I was thinking of Ursula and something she had told me.” “When and where was that?” said Isopel. “Yesterday evening,” said I, “beneath the dingle hedge.” “Then you were talking with her beneath the hedge?” “I was,” said I, “but only upon gypsy matters. Do you know, Belle, that she has just been married to Sylvester, so you need not think that she and I . . .” “She and you are quite at liberty to sit where you please,” said Isopel. “However, young man,” she continued, dropping her tone, which she had slightly raised, “I believe what you said, that you were merely talking about gypsy matters, and also what you were going to say, if it was, as I suppose, that she and you had no particular acquaintance.” Isopel was now silent for some time. “What are you thinking of?” said I. “I was thinking,” said Belle, “how exceedingly kind it was of you to get everything in readiness for me, though you did not know that I should come.” “I had a presentiment that you would come,” said I; “but you forget that I have prepared the kettle for you before, though it was true I was then certain that you would come.” “I had not forgotten your doing so, young man,” said Belle; “but I was beginning to think that you were utterly selfish, caring for nothing but the gratification of your own strange whims.” “I am very fond of having my own way,” said I, “but utterly selfish I am not, as I dare say I shall frequently prove to you. You will often find the kettle boiling when you come home.” “Not heated by you,” said Isopel, with a sigh. “By whom else?” said I; “surely you are not thinking of driving me away?” “You have as much right here as myself,” said Isopel, “as I have told you before; but I must be going myself.” “Well,” said I, “we can go together; to tell you the truth, I am rather tired of this place.” “Our paths must be separate,” said Belle. “Separate,” said I, “what do you mean? I shan’t let you go alone, I shall go with you; and you know the road is as free to me as to you; besides, you

can’t think of parting company with me, considering how much you would lose by doing so; remember that you scarcely know anything of the Armenian language; now, to learn Armenian from me would take you twenty years.”

Belle faintly smiled. “Come,” said I, “take another cup of tea.” Belle took another cup of tea, and yet another; we had some indifferent conversation, after which I arose and gave her donkey a considerable feed of corn. Belle thanked me, shook me by the hand, and then went to her own tabernacle, and I returned to mine.

CHAPTER XXIX.—VISIT TO THE LANDLORD—HIS MORTIFICATIONS—HUNTER AND HIS CLAN—RESOLUTION.

On the following morning, after breakfasting with Belle, who was silent and melancholy, I left her in the dingle, and took a stroll amongst the neighbouring lanes. After some time I thought I would pay a visit to the landlord of the public-house, whom I had not seen since the day when he communicated to me his intention of changing his religion. I therefore directed my steps to the house, and on entering it found the landlord standing in the kitchen. Just then two mean-looking fellows, who had been drinking at one of the tables, and who appeared to be the only customers in the house, got up, brushed past the landlord, and saying in a surly tone "We shall pay you some time or other," took their departure. "That's the way they serve me now," said the landlord, with a sigh. "Do you know those fellows," I demanded, "since you let them go away in your debt?" "I know nothing about them," said the landlord, "save that they are a couple of scamps." "Then why did you let them go away without paying you?" said I. "I had not the heart to stop them," said the landlord; "and, to tell you the truth, everybody serves me so now, and I suppose they are right, for a child could flog me." "Nonsense," said I, "behave more like a man, and with respect to those two fellows run after them, I will go with you, and if they refuse to pay the reckoning I will help you to shake some money out of their clothes." "Thank you," said the landlord; "but as they are gone, let them go on. What they have drank is not of much consequence." "What is the matter with you?" said I, staring at the landlord, who appeared strangely altered; his features were wild and haggard, his formerly bluff cheeks were considerably sunken in, and his figure had lost much of its plumpness. "Have you changed your religion already, and has the fellow in black commanded you to fast?" "I have not changed my religion yet," said the landlord, with a kind of shudder; "I am to change it publicly this day fortnight, and the idea of doing so—I do not mind telling you—preys much upon my mind; moreover, the noise of the thing has got abroad, and everybody is laughing at me, and what's more, coming and drinking

my beer, and going away without paying for it, whilst I feel myself like one bewitched, wishing but not daring to take my own part. Confound the fellow in black, I wish I had never seen him! yet what can I do without him? The brewer swears that unless I pay him fifty pounds within a fortnight he'll send a distress warrant into the house, and take all I have. My poor niece is crying in the room above; and I am thinking of going into the stable and hanging myself; and perhaps it's the best thing I can do, for it's better to hang myself before selling my soul than afterwards, as I'm sure I should, like Judas Iscariot, whom my poor niece, who is somewhat religiously inclined, has been talking to me about." "I wish I could assist you," said I, "with money, but that is quite out of my power. However, I can give you a piece of advice. Don't change your religion by any means; you can't hope to prosper if you do; and if the brewer chooses to deal hardly with you, let him. Everybody would respect you ten times more provided you allowed yourself to be turned into the roads rather than change your religion, than if you got fifty pounds for renouncing it." "I am half inclined to take your advice," said the landlord, "only, to tell you the truth, I feel quite low, without any heart in me." "Come into the bar," said I, "and let us have something together—you need not be afraid of my not paying for what I order."

We went into the bar-room, where the landlord and I discussed between us two bottles of strong ale, which he said were part of the last six which he had in his possession. At first he wished to drink sherry, but I begged him to do no such thing, telling him that the sherry would do him no good, under the present circumstances; nor, indeed, to the best of my belief under any, it being of all wines the one for which I entertained the most contempt. The landlord allowed himself to be dissuaded, and, after a glass or two of ale, confessed that sherry was a sickly disagreeable drink, and that he had merely been in the habit of taking it from an idea he had that it was genteel. Whilst quaffing our beverage, he gave me an account of the various mortifications to which he had of late been subject, dwelling with particular bitterness on the conduct of Hunter, who, he said, came every night and mouthed him, and afterwards went away without paying for what he had drank or smoked, in which conduct he was closely imitated by a clan of fellows who constantly attended him. After spending several hours at the public-house I departed, not forgetting to pay for the two bottles of ale. The landlord, before I went, shaking me by the hand, declared that he had now made up his mind to stick to his religion at all hazards, the more especially as he was convinced he should derive no good by giving it up.

CHAPTER XXX.—PREPARATIONS FOR THE FAIR—THE LAST LESSON—THE VERB SIRIEL.

It might be about five in the evening when I reached the gypsy encampment. Here I found Mr. Petulengro, Tawno Chikno, Sylvester, and others, in a great bustle, clipping and trimming certain ponies and old horses which they had brought with them. On inquiring of Jasper the reason of their being so engaged, he informed me that they were getting the horses ready for a fair, which was to be held on the morrow, at a place some miles distant, at which they should endeavour to dispose of them, adding—"Perhaps, brother, you will go with us, provided you have nothing better to do?" Not having any particular engagement, I assured him that I should have great pleasure in being of the party. It was agreed that we should start early on the following morning. Thereupon I descended into the dingle. Belle was sitting before the fire, at which the kettle was boiling. "Were you waiting for me?" I inquired. "Yes," said Belle, "I thought that you would come, and I waited for you." "That was very kind," said I. "Not half so kind," said she, "as it was of you to get everything ready for me in the dead of last night, when there was scarcely a chance of my coming." The tea-things were brought forward, and we sat down. "Have you been far?" said Belle. "Merely to that public-house," said I, "to which you directed me on the second day of our acquaintance." "Young men should not make a habit of visiting public-houses," said Belle, "they are bad places." "They may be so to some people," said I, "but I do not think the worst public-house in England could do me any harm." "Perhaps you are so bad already," said Belle, with a smile, "that it would be impossible to spoil you." "How dare you catch at my words?" said I; "come, I will make you pay for doing so—you shall have this evening the longest lesson in Armenian which I have yet inflicted upon you." "You may well say inflicted," said Belle, "but pray spare me. I do not wish to hear anything about Armenian, especially this evening." "Why this evening?" said I. Belle made no answer. "I will not spare you," said I; "this evening I intend to make you conjugate an Armenian verb." "Well, be it so," said Belle; "for this evening you shall command." "To command is hramahyel," said I. "Ram her ill, indeed," said Belle; "I do not wish

to begin with that." "No," said I, "as we have come to the verbs, we will begin regularly; hramahyel is a verb of the second conjugation. We will begin with the first." "First of all tell me," said Belle, "what a verb is?" "A part of speech," said I, "which, according to the dictionary, signifies some action or passion; for example, I command you, or I hate you." "I have given you no cause to hate me," said Belle, looking me sorrowfully in the face.

"I was merely giving two examples," said I, "and neither was directed at you. In those examples, to command and hate are verbs. Belle, in Armenian there are four conjugations of verbs; the first end in al, the second in yel, the third in oul, and the fourth in il. Now, have you understood me?"

"I am afraid, indeed, it will all end ill," said Belle. "Hold your tongue," said I, "or you will make me lose my patience." "You have already made me nearly lose mine," said Belle. "Let us have no unprofitable interruptions," said I. "The conjugations of the Armenian verbs are neither so numerous nor so difficult as the declensions of the nouns; hear that, and rejoice. Come, we will begin with the verb hntal, a verb of the first conjugation, which signifies to rejoice. Come along: hntam, I rejoice; hntas, thou rejoicest: why don't you follow, Belle?"

"I am sure I don't rejoice, whatever you may do," said Belle. "The chief difficulty, Belle," said I, "that I find in teaching you the Armenian grammar, proceeds from your applying to yourself and me every example I give. Rejoice, in this instance, is merely an example of an Armenian verb of the first conjugation, and has no more to do with your rejoicing than lal, which is also a verb of the first conjugation, and which signifies to weep, would have to do with your weeping, provided I made you conjugate it. Come along: hntam. I rejoice; hntas, thou rejoicest; hntà, he rejoices; hntamk, we rejoice: now, repeat those words."

"I can't," said Belle, "they sound more like the language of horses than of human beings. Do you take me for . . .?" "For what?" said I. Belle was silent. "Were you going to say mare?" said I. "Mare! mare! by-the-bye, do you know, Belle, that mare in old English stands for woman; and that when we call a female an evil mare, the strict meaning of the term is merely bad woman. So if I were to call you mare, without prefixing bad, you must not be offended." "But I should, though," said Belle. "I was merely attempting to make you acquainted with a philological fact," said I. "If mare, which in old English, and likewise in vulgar English, signifies a woman, sounds the same as mare, which in modern and polite English signifies a female horse, I can't help it. There is no such

confusion of sounds in Armenian, not, at least, in the same instance. Belle, in Armenian, woman is ghin, the same word, by-the-bye, as our queen, whereas mare is madagh tzi, which signifies a female horse; and perhaps you will permit me to add, that a hard-mouthed jade is, in Armenian, madagh tzi hsdierah."

"I can't bear this much longer," said Belle. "Keep yourself quiet," said I; "I wish to be gentle with you; and to convince you, we will skip hntal, and also for the present verbs of the first conjugation, and proceed to the second. Belle, I will now select for you to conjugate the prettiest verb in Armenian; not only of the second, but also of all the four conjugations; that verb is siriel. Here is the present tense:—siriem, siries, sirè, siriemk, sirèk, sirien. You observe that it runs on just in the same manner as hntal, save and except that e is substituted for a; and it will be as well to tell you that almost the only difference between the second, third, and fourth conjugations, and the first, is the substituting in the present, preterite, and other tenses e, or ou, or i for a; so you see that the Armenian verbs are by no means difficult. Come on, Belle, and say siriem." Belle hesitated. "Pray oblige me, Belle, by saying siriem!" Belle still appeared to hesitate. "You must admit, Belle, that it is much softer than hntam." "It is so," said Belle; "and to oblige you, I will say siriem." "Very well indeed, Belle," said I. "No vartabied, or doctor, could have pronounced it better; and now, to show you how verbs act upon pronouns in Armenian, I will say siriem zkiez. Please to repeat siriem zkiez!" "Siriem zkiez!" said Belle; "that last word is very hard to say." "Sorry that you think so, Belle," said I. "Now please to say siriá zis." Belle did so. "Exceedingly well," said I. "Now say yerani thè sirèir zis." "Yerani thè sirèir zis," said Belle. "Capital!" said I; "you have now said, I love you—love me—ah! would that you would love me!"

"And I have said all these things?" said Belle. "Yes," said I; "you have said them in Armenian." "I would have said them in no language that I understood," said Belle; "and it was very wrong of you to take advantage of my ignorance, and make me say such things." "Why so?" said I; "if you said them, I said them too." "You did so," said Belle; "but I believe you were merely bantering and jeering." "As I told you before, Belle," said I, "the chief difficulty which I find in teaching you Armenian proceeds from your persisting in applying to yourself and me every example I give." "Then you meant nothing after all?" said Belle, raising her voice. "Let us proceed," said I; "sirietsi, I loved." "You never loved any one but yourself," said Belle; "and what's more. . ." "Sirietsits, I will love," said I; "sirietsies, thou wilt love." "Never one so thoroughly heartless," said Belle. "I tell you what, Belle, you are becoming intolerable, but we will change

the verb; or rather I will now proceed to tell you here, that some of the Armenian conjugations have their anomalies; one species of these I wish to bring before your notice. As old Villotte {343} says—from whose work I first contrived to pick up the rudiments of Armenian—'Est verborum transitivorum, quorum infinitivus . . .' but I forgot, you don't understand Latin. He says there are certain transitive verbs, whose infinitive is in outsaniel; the preterite in outsi; the imperative in oue; for example—parghat-soutsaniem, I irritate . . ."

"You do, you do," said Belle; "and it will be better for both of us if you leave off doing so."

"You would hardly believe, Belle," said I, "that the Armenian is in some respects closely connected with the Irish, but so it is; for example, that word parghat-soutsaniem is evidently derived from the same root as feargaim, which, in Irish, is as much as to say I vex."

"You do, indeed," said Belle, sobbing.

"But how do you account for it?"

"O man, man!" said Belle, bursting into tears, "for what purpose do you ask a poor ignorant girl such a question, unless it be to vex and irritate her? If you wish to display your learning, do so to the wise and instructed, and not to me, who can scarcely read or write. Oh, leave off your nonsense; yet I know you will not do so, for it is the breath of your nostrils! I could have wished we should have parted in kindness, but you will not permit it. I have deserved better at your hands than such treatment. The whole time we have kept company together in this place, I have scarcely had one kind word from you, but the strangest . . ." and here the voice of Belle was drowned in her sobs.

"I am sorry to see you take on so, dear Belle," said I. "I really have given you no cause to be so unhappy; surely teaching you a little Armenian was a very innocent kind of diversion."

"Yes, but you went on so long, and in such a strange way, and made me repeat such strange examples, as you call them, that I could not bear it."

"Why, to tell you the truth, Belle, it's my way; and I have dealt with you just as I would with . . ."

"A hard-mouthed jade," said Belle, "and you practising your horse-witchery upon her. I have been of an unsubdued spirit, I acknowledge, but I was always

kind to you; and if you have made me cry, it's a poor thing to boast of."

"Boast of!" said I; "a pretty thing indeed to boast of; I had no idea of making you cry. Come, I beg your pardon; what more can I do? Come, cheer up, Belle. You were talking of parting; don't let us part, but depart, and that together."

"Our ways lie different," said Belle.

"I don't see why they should," said I. "Come, let us be off to America together!"

"To America together?" said Belle, looking full at me.

"Yes," said I; "where we will settle down in some forest, and conjugate the verb siriel conjugally."

"Conjugally?" said Belle.

"Yes," said I; "as man and wife in America, air yew ghin."

"You are jesting, as usual," said Belle.

"Not I, indeed. Come, Belle, make up your mind, and let us be off to America; and leave priests, humbug, learning, and languages behind us."

"I don't think you arc jesting," said Belle; "but I can hardly entertain your offers; however, young man, I thank you."

"You had better make up your mind at once," said I, "and let us be off. I shan't make a bad husband, I assure you. Perhaps you think I am not worthy of you? To convince you, Belle, that I am, I am ready to try a fall with you this moment upon the grass. Brynhilda, the valkyrie, swore that no one should marry her who could not fling her down. Perhaps you have done the same. The man who eventually married her, got a friend of his, who was called Sigurd, the serpent-killer, to wrestle with her, disguising him in his own armour. Sigurd flung her down, and won her for his friend, though he loved her himself. I shall not use a similar deceit, nor employ Jasper Petulengro to personate me—so get up, Belle, and I will do my best to fling you down."

"I require no such thing of you, or anybody," said Belle; "you are beginning to look rather wild."

"I every now and then do," said I; "come, Belle, what do you say?"

"I will say nothing at present on the subject," said Belle; "I must have time to

consider.”

“Just as you please,” said I; “to-morrow I go to a fair with Mr. Petulengro, perhaps you will consider whilst I am away. Come, Belle, let us have some more tea. I wonder whether we shall be able to procure tea as good as this in the American forest.”

CHAPTER XXXI.—THE DAWN OF DAY—THE LAST FAREWELL—DEPARTURE FOR THE FAIR—THE FINE HORSE—RETURN TO THE DINGLE—NO ISOPEL.

It was about the dawn of day when I was awakened by the voice of Mr. Petulengro shouting from the top of the dingle, and bidding me get up. I arose instantly, and dressed myself for the expedition to the fair. On leaving my tent, I was surprised to observe Belle, entirely dressed, standing close to her own little encampment. "Dear me," said I, "I little expected to find you up so early. I suppose Jasper's call awakened you, as it did me." "I merely lay down in my things," said Belle, "and have not slept during the night." "And why did you not take off your things and go to sleep?" said I. "I did not undress," said Belle, "because I wished to be in readiness to bid you farewell when you departed; and as for sleeping, I could not." "Well, God bless you!" said I, taking Belle by the hand. Belle made no answer, and I observed that her hand was very cold. "What is the matter with you?" said I, looking her in the face. Belle looked at me for a moment in the eyes, and then cast down her own—her features were very pale. "You are really unwell," said I; "I had better not go to the fair, but stay here, and take care of you." "No," said Belle, "pray go, I am not unwell." "Then go to your tent," said I, "and do not endanger your health by standing abroad in the raw morning air. God bless you, Belle; I shall be home to-night, by which time I expect you will have made up your mind; if not, another lesson in Armenian, however late the hour be." I then wrung Belle's hand, and ascended to the plain above.

I found the Romany party waiting for me, and everything in readiness for departing. Mr. Petulengro and Tawno Chikno were mounted on two old horses. The rest who intended to go to the fair, amongst whom were two or three women, were on foot. On arriving at the extremity of the plain, I looked towards the dingle. Isopel Berners stood at the mouth, the beams of the early morning sun shone full on her noble face and figure. I waved my hand towards her. She

slowly lifted up her right arm. I turned away, and never saw Isopel Berners again. {348}

My companions and myself proceeded on our way. In about two hours we reached the place where the fair was to be held. After breakfasting on bread and cheese and ale behind a broken stone wall, we drove our animals to the fair. The fair was a common cattle and horse fair: there was little merriment going on, but there was no lack of business. By about two o'clock in the afternoon, Mr. Petulengro and his people had disposed of their animals at what they conceived very fair prices—they were all in high spirits, and Jasper proposed to adjourn to a public-house. As we were proceeding to one, a very fine horse, led by a jockey, made its appearance on the ground. Mr. Petulengro stopped short, and looked at it steadfastly: "Fino covar dove odoy sas miro—a fine thing were that, if it were but mine!" he exclaimed. "If you covet it," said I, "why do you not purchase it?" "We low gyptians never buy animals of that description; if we did we could never sell them, and most likely should be had up as horse-stealers." "Then why did you say just now, 'It were a fine thing if it were but yours'?" said I. "We gyptians always say so when we see anything that we admire. An animal like that is not intended for a little hare like me, but for some grand gentleman like yourself. I say, brother, do you buy that horse!" "How should I buy the horse, you foolish person?" said I. "Buy the horse, brother," said Mr. Petulengro; "if you have not the money I can lend it you, though I be of lower Egypt." "You talk nonsense," said I; "however, I wish you would ask the man the price of it." Mr. Petulengro, going up to the jockey, inquired the price of the horse—the man, looking at him scornfully, made no reply. "Young man," said I, going up to the jockey, "do me the favour to tell me the price of that horse, as I suppose it is to sell." The jockey, who was a surly-looking man of about fifty, looked at me for a moment, then, after some hesitation, said laconically, "Seventy." "Thank you," said I, and turned away. "Buy that horse," said Mr. Petulengro, coming after me; "the dook tells me that in less than three months he will be sold for twice seventy." "I will have nothing to do with him," said I; "besides, Jasper, I don't like his tail. Did you observe what a mean scrubby tail he has?" "What a fool you are, brother!" said Mr. Petulengro; "that very tail of his shows his breeding. No good bred horse ever yet carried a fine tail—'tis your scrubby-tailed horses that are your out-and-outers. Did you ever hear of Syntax, brother? That tail of his puts me in mind of Syntax. Well, I say nothing more, have your own way—all I wonder at is, that a horse like him was ever brought to such a fair of dog cattle as this."

We then made the best of our way to a public-house, where we had some refreshment. I then proposed returning to the encampment, but Mr. Petulengro declined, and remained drinking with his companions till about six o'clock in the evening, when various jockeys from the fair come in. After some conversation a jockey proposed a game of cards; and in a little time, Mr. Petulengro and another gypsy sat down to play a game of cards with two of the jockeys.

Though not much acquainted with cards, I soon conceived a suspicion that the jockeys were cheating Mr. Petulengro and his companion; I therefore called Mr. Petulengro aside, and gave him a hint to that effect. Mr. Petulengro, however, instead of thanking me, told me to mind my own bread and butter, and forthwith returned to his game. I continued watching the players for some hours. The gypsies lost considerably, and I saw clearly that the jockeys were cheating them most confoundedly. I therefore once more called Mr. Petulengro aside, and told him that the jockeys were cheating him, conjuring him to return to the encampment. Mr. Petulengro, who was by this time somewhat the worse for liquor, now fell into a passion, swore several oaths, and asking me who had made me a Moses over him and his brethren, told me to return to the encampment by myself. Incensed at the unworthy return which my well-meant words had received, I forthwith left the house, and having purchased a few articles of provision, I set out for the dingle alone. It was dark night when I reached it, and descending I saw the glimmer of a fire from the depths of the dingle; my heart beat with fond anticipation of a welcome. "Isopel Berners is waiting for me," said I, "and the first word that I shall hear from her lips is that she has made up her mind. We shall go to America, and be so happy together." On reaching the bottom of the dingle, however, I saw seated near the fire, beside which stood the kettle simmering, not Isopel Berners, but a gypsy girl, who told me that Miss Berners when she went away had charged her to keep up the fire, and have the kettle boiling against my arrival. Startled at these words, I inquired at what hour Isopel had left, and whither she was gone, and was told that she had left the dingle, with her cart, about two hours after I departed; but where she was gone the girl did not know. I then asked whether she had left no message, and the girl replied that she had left none, but had merely given directions about the kettle and fire, putting, at the same time, sixpence into her hand. "Very strange," thought I; then dismissing the gypsy girl I sat down by the fire. I had no wish for tea, but sat looking on the embers, wondering what could be the motive of the sudden departure of Isopel. "Does she mean to return?" thought I to myself. "Surely she means to return," Hope replied, "or she would not have gone away without leaving any message"—"and yet she could scarcely mean to return,"

muttered Foreboding, “or she would assuredly have left some message with the girl.” I then thought to myself what a hard thing it would be, if, after having made up my mind to assume the yoke of matrimony, I should be disappointed of the woman of my choice. “Well, after all,” thought I, “I can scarcely be disappointed; if such an ugly scoundrel as Sylvester had no difficulty in getting such a nice wife as Ursula, surely I, who am not a tenth part so ugly, cannot fail to obtain the hand of Isopel Berners, uncommonly fine damsel though she be. Husbands do not grow upon hedge-rows; she is merely gone after a little business and will return to-morrow.”

Comforted in some degree by these hopeful imaginings, I retired to my tent, and went to sleep.

CHAPTER XXXII.—GLOOMY FOREBODINGS—THE POSTMAN'S MOTHER—A VALEDICTORY LETTER FROM ISOPEL WITH A LOCK OF HER HAIR—THE END OF A CHAPTER IN THE LIFE OF THE ROMANY RYE—AND OF THE BOOK OF ISOPEL BERNERS.

Nothing occurred to me of any particular moment during the following day. Isopel Berners did not return; but Mr. Petulengro and his companions came home from the fair early in the morning. When I saw him, which was about mid-day, I found him with his face bruised and swelled. It appeared that, some time after I had left him, he himself perceived that the jockeys with whom he was playing cards were cheating him and his companion; a quarrel ensued, which terminated in a fight between Mr. Petulengro and one of the jockeys, which lasted some time, and in which Mr. Petulengro, though he eventually came off victor, was considerably beaten. His bruises, in conjunction with his pecuniary loss, which amounted to about seven pounds, were the cause of his being much out of humour; before night, however, he had returned to his usual philosophic frame of mind, and, coming up to me as I was walking about, apologised for his behaviour on the preceding day, and assured me that he was determined, from that time forward, never to quarrel with a friend for giving him good advice.

Two more days passed, and still Isopel Berners did not return. Gloomy thoughts and forebodings filled my mind. During the day I wandered about the neighbouring roads in the hopes of catching an early glimpse of her and her returning vehicle; and at night lay awake, tossing about on my hard couch, listening to the rustle of every leaf, and occasionally thinking that I heard the sound of her wheels upon the distant road. Once at midnight, just as I was about to fall into unconsciousness, I suddenly started up, for I was convinced that I heard the sound of wheels. I listened most anxiously, and the sound of wheels

striking against stones was certainly plain enough. "She comes at last," thought I, and for a few moments I felt as if a mountain had been removed from my breast;—"here she comes at last, now, how shall I receive her? Oh," thought I, "I will receive her rather coolly, just as if I was not particularly anxious about her—that's the way to manage these women." The next moment the sound became very loud, rather too loud, I thought, to proceed from her wheels, and then by degrees became fainter. Rushing out of my tent, I hurried up the path to the top of the dingle, where I heard the sound distinctly enough, but it was going from me, and evidently proceeded from something much larger than the cart of Isopel. I could, moreover, hear the stamping of a horse's hoofs at a lumbering trot. Those only whose hopes have been wrought up to a high pitch, and then suddenly dashed down, can imagine what I felt at that moment; and yet when I returned to my lonely tent, and lay down on my hard pallet, the voice of conscience told me that the misery I was then undergoing, I had fully merited, from the unkind manner in which I had intended to receive her, when for a brief moment I supposed that she had returned.

It was on the morning after this affair, and the fourth, if I forget not, from the time of Isopel's departure, that, as I was seated on my stone at the bottom of the dingle, getting my breakfast, I heard an unknown voice from the path above—apparently that of a person descending—exclaim, "Here's a strange place to bring a letter to;" and presently an old woman, with a belt round her middle, to which was attached a leathern bag, made her appearance, and stood before me.

"Well, if I ever!" said she, as she looked about her. "My good gentlewoman," said I, "pray what may you please to want?" "Gentlewoman!" said the old dame, "please to want!—well, I call that speaking civilly, at any rate. It is true, civil words cost nothing; nevertheless, we do not always get them. What I please to want is to deliver a letter to a young man in this place; perhaps you be he?" "What's the name on the letter?" said I, getting up and going to her. "There is no name upon it," said she, taking a letter out of her scrip and looking at it. "It is directed to the young man in Mumpers' Dingle." "Then it is for me, I make no doubt," said I, stretching out my hand to take it. "Please to pay me ninepence first," said the old woman. "However," said she, after a moment's thought, "civility is civility, and, being rather a scarce article, should meet with some return. Here's the letter, young man, and I hope you will pay for it; for if you do not, I must pay the postage myself." "You are the postwoman, I suppose?" said I, as I took the letter. "I am the postman's mother," said the old woman; "but as he has a wide beat, I help him as much as I can, and I generally

carry letters to places like this, to which he is afraid to come himself." "You say the postage is ninepence," said I, "here's a shilling." "Well, I call that honourable," said the old woman, taking the shilling and putting it into her pocket—"here's your change, young man," said she, offering me threepence. "Pray keep that for yourself," said I; "you deserve it for your trouble." "Well, I call that genteel," said the old woman; "and as one good turn deserves another, since you look as if you couldn't read, I will read your letter for you. Let's see it; it's from some young woman or other, I dare say." "Thank you," said I, "but I can read." "All the better for you," said the old woman; "your being able to read will frequently save you a penny, for that's the charge I generally make for reading letters; though, as you behaved so genteelly to me, I should have charged you nothing. Well, if you can read, why don't you open the letter, instead of keeping it hanging between your finger and thumb?" "I am in no hurry to open it," said I, with a sigh. The old woman looked at me for a moment—"Well, young man," said she, "there are some—especially those who can read—who don't like to open their letters when anybody is by, more especially when they come from young women. Well, I won't intrude upon you, but leave you alone with your letter. I wish it may contain something pleasant. God bless you," and with these words she departed.

I sat down on my stone, with my letter in my hand. I knew perfectly well that it could have come from no other person than Isopel Berners; but what did the letter contain? I guessed tolerably well what its purport was—an eternal farewell! yet I was afraid to open the letter, lest my expectation should be confirmed. There I sat with the letter, putting off the evil moment as long as possible. At length I glanced at the direction, which was written in a fine bold hand, and was directed, as the old woman had said, to the young man in "Mumpers' Dingle," with the addition, "near . . ., in the county of . . . ." Suddenly the idea occurred to me, that, after all, the letter might not contain an eternal farewell; and that Isopel might have written, requesting me to join her. Could it be so? "Alas! no," presently said Foreboding. At last I became ashamed of my weakness. The letter must be opened sooner or later. Why not at once? So as the bather who, for a considerable time has stood shivering on the bank, afraid to take the decisive plunge, suddenly takes it, I tore open the letter almost before I was aware. I had no sooner done so than a paper fell out. I examined it; it contained a lock of bright flaxen hair. "This is no good sign," said I, as I thrust the lock and paper into my bosom, and proceeded to read the letter, which ran as follows:—

“TO THE YOUNG MAN IN MUMPERS’ DINGLE.

“Sir,—I send these lines, with the hope and trust that they will find you well, even as I am myself at this moment, and in much better spirits, for my own are not such as I could wish they were, being sometimes rather hysterical and vapourish, and at other times, and most often, very low. I am at a sea-port, and am just going on shipboard; and when you get these I shall be on the salt waters, on my way to a distant country, and leaving my own behind me, which I do not expect ever to see again.

“And now, young man, I will, in the first place, say something about the manner in which I quitted you. It must have seemed somewhat singular to you that I went away without taking any leave, or giving you the slightest hint that I was going; but I did not do so without considerable reflection. I was afraid that I should not be able to support a leave-taking; and as you had said that you were determined to go wherever I did, I thought it best not to tell you at all; for I did not think it advisable that you should go with me, and I wished to have no dispute.

“In the second place, I wish to say something about an offer of wedlock which you made me; perhaps, young man, had you made it at the first period of our acquaintance, I should have accepted it, but you did not, and kept putting off and putting off, and behaving in a very grange manner, till I could stand your conduct no longer, but determined upon leaving you and Old England, which last step I had been long thinking about; so when you made your offer at last, everything was arranged—my cart and donkey engaged to be sold—and the greater part of my things disposed of. However, young man, when you did make it, I frankly tell you that I had half a mind to accept it; at last, however, after very much consideration, I thought it best to leave you for ever, because, for some time past, I had become almost convinced, that though with a wonderful deal of learning, and exceedingly shrewd in some things, you were—pray don’t be offended—at the root mad! and though mad people, I have been told sometimes make very good husbands, I was unwilling that your friends, if you had any, should say that Belle Berners, the workhouse girl, took advantage of your infirmity; for there is no concealing that I was born and bred up in a workhouse; notwithstanding that, my blood is better than your own, and as good as the best; you having yourself told me that my name is a noble name, and once, if I mistake not, that it was the same word as baron, which is the same thing as bear; and that to be called in old times a bear was

considered a great compliment—the bear being a mighty strong animal, on which account our forefathers called all their great fighting-men barons, which is the same as bears.

"However, setting matters of blood and family entirely aside, many thanks to you, young man, from poor Belle, for the honour you did her in making that same offer; for, after all, it is an honour to receive an honourable offer, which she could see clearly yours was, with no floriness nor chaff in it; but, on the contrary, entire sincerity. She assures you that she shall always bear it and yourself in mind, whether on land or water; and as a proof of the good-will she bears to you, she sends you a lock of the hair which she wears on her head, which you were often looking at, and were pleased to call flax, which word she supposes you meant as a compliment, even as the old people meant to pass a compliment to their great folks, when they called them bears; though she cannot help thinking that they might have found an animal as strong as a bear, and somewhat less uncouth, to call their great folks after: even as she thinks yourself, amongst your great store of words, might have found something a little more genteel to call her hair after than flax, which, though strong and useful, is rather a coarse and common kind of article.

"And as another proof of the good-will she bears to you, she sends you, along with the lock, a piece of advice, which is worth all the hair in the world, to say nothing of the flax.

"*Fear God*, and take your own part. There's Bible in that, young man; see how Moses feared God, and how he took his own part against everybody who meddled with him. And see how David feared God, and took his own part against all the bloody enemies which surrounded him—so fear God, young man, and never give in. The world can bully, and is fond, provided it sees a man in a kind of difficulty, of getting about him, calling him coarse names, and even going so far as to hustle him; but the world, like all bullies, carries a white feather in its tail, and no sooner sees the man taking off his coat, and offering to fight his best, than it scatters here and there, and is always civil to him afterwards. So when folks are disposed to ill-treat you, young man, say 'Lord, have mercy upon me!' and then tip them Long Melford, to which, as the saying goes, there is nothing comparable for shortness all the world over; and these last words, young man, are the last you will ever have from her who is nevertheless,

“Your affectionate female servant,

“Isopel Berners.”

After reading the letter I sat for some time motionless, holding it in my hand. {361} The day-dream in which I had been a little time before indulging, of marrying Isopel Berners, of going with her to America, and having by her a large progeny, who were to assist me in felling trees, cultivating the soil, and who would take care of me when I was old, was now thoroughly dispelled. Isopel had deserted me, and was gone to America by herself, where, perhaps, she would marry some other person, and would bear him a progeny, who would do for him what in my dream I had hoped my progeny by her would do for me. Then the thought came into my head that though she was gone I might follow her to America, but then I thought that if I did I might not find her; America was a very large place, and I did not know the port to which she was bound; but I could follow her to the port from which she had sailed, and there possibly discover the port to which she was bound; but then I did not even know the port from which she had set out, for Isopel had not dated her letter from any place. Suddenly it occurred to me that the post-mark on the letter would tell me from whence it came, so I forthwith looked at the back of the letter, and in the post-mark read the name of a well-known and not very distant sea-port. I then knew with tolerable certainty the port where she had embarked, and I almost determined to follow her, but I almost instantly determined to do no such thing. Isopel Berners had abandoned me, and I would not follow her; “perhaps,” whispered Pride, “if I overtook her, she would only despise me for running after her”; and it also told me pretty roundly that, provided I ran after her, whether I overtook her or not, I should heartily despise myself. So I determined not to follow Isopel Berners; I took her lock of hair, and looked at it, then put it in her letter, which I folded up and carefully stowed away, resolved to keep both for ever, but I determined not to follow her. Two or three times, however, during the day I wavered in my determination, and was again and again almost tempted to follow her, but every succeeding time the temptation was fainter. In the evening I left the dingle, and sat down with Mr. Petulengro and his family by the door of his tent. Mr. Petulengro soon began talking of the letter which I had received in the morning. “Is it not from Miss Berners, brother?” said he. I told him it was. “Is she coming back, brother?” “Never,” said I; “she is gone to America, and has deserted me.” “I always knew that you two were never destined for each other,” said he. “How did you know that?” I inquired. “The dook told me so, brother; you are born to be a great traveller.” “Well,” said I, “if I had gone with

her to America, as I was thinking of doing, I should have been a great traveller." "You are to travel in another direction, brother," said he. "I wish you would tell me all about my future wanderings," said I. "I can't, brother," said Mr. Petulengro, "there's a power of clouds before my eye." "You are a poor seer, after all," said I, and getting up, I retired to my dingle and my tent, where I betook myself to my bed, and there, knowing the worst, and being no longer agitated by apprehension, nor agonised by expectation, I was soon buried in a deep slumber, the first which I had fallen into for several nights.

Footnotes:

{1} He was christened George Henry, but he dropped the Henry, as, Tobias George Smollett dropped his George.

{2} Dafydd ab Gwilym, "the greatest genius of the Cimbric race and one of the first poets of the world." See *Wild Wales*, chap. lxxxvi., for a very interesting account of this "Welsh Ovid."

{5} Elsewhere he writes to John Murray: "What a contemptible trade is the author's compared with that of the jockey!"

{8} For a useful, if more commonplace and merely bibliographical study of Sir Richard Phillipps, see W. E. A. Axon's *Stray Chapters*, 1888, p. 237.

{12} This is no less true of Borrow's still earlier book *The Zincali*, *An Account of the Gypsies of Spain* (1841)—a book which every true Borrovian will carefully assimilate, if only for these reasons: First, it supplies a key to much of his later work, many of the greatest qualities of which may here be found in embryo. Secondly, it contains some of the finest descriptive passages in the English tongue, notably the account of the Gitána of Seville.

{20a} The beer he got was seldom to his taste; he called it "swipes," but went on drinking glass after glass. What a figure he must have made in the bar parlour of the Bald-faced Stag at Roehampton, with his tales of Jerry Abershaw, Ambrose Gwinett, Thurtell and Wainewright! Mr. Watts-Dunton says he had the gift of drinking deeply, but he adds "of the waters of life," a refinement which Borrow himself might have deprecated.

{20b} Henry Hall Dixon.

{22} Of the marvellous facility with which some people learn languages in the latter sense we have a good example cited by Alfred Russel Wallace, in the case of a Flemish planter of Ceram, near Amboyna, named Captain Van der Beck. "When quite a youth he had accompanied a Government official who was sent to

report on the trade and commerce of the Mediterranean, and had acquired *the colloquial language of every place they stayed a few weeks at*. He had afterwards made voyages to St. Petersburg, and to other parts of Europe, including a few weeks in London; and had then come out to the East, where he had been for some years trading and speculating in the various islands. He now spoke Dutch, French, Malay and Javanese, all equally well; English with a very slight accent, but with perfect fluency, and a most complete knowledge of idiom, in which I often tried to puzzle him in vain. German and Italian were also quite familiar to him, and his acquaintance with European languages included Modern Greek, Turkish, Russian and colloquial Hebrew and Latin. As a test of his power, I may mention that he had made a voyage to the out-of-the-way island of Salibaboo, and had stayed there trading a few weeks. As I was collecting vocabularies, he told me he thought he could remember some words, and dictated a considerable number. Some time after I met with a short list of words taken down in those islands, and in every case they agreed with those he had given me. He used to sing a Hebrew drinking-song, which he had learned from some Jews with whom he had once travelled and astonished by joining in their conversation." {23} Borrow's colloquial gift was, to all appearance, closely allied to that of this polyglot Fleming.

{23} Wallace, *The Malay Archipelago*, 1890, p. 269.

{25} Flunkeyism he called it, and thence deduced the pecuniary miseries of Scott's later life. His depreciatory view was in part, too, I believe, an echo from his favourite *Vidocq*. Speaking of the gipsies in his chapter on "Les Careurs," Vidocq calls them a species characterised and depicted with so little truth by the first romance-writer of our time. But Borrow certainly had a far deeper reason for his dislike of Scott. Under the specious pretence of deference for antiquity and respect for primitive models, he imagined that Scott was sapping the foundations of Protestantism. Newman from the opposite camp saw only the beneficial effect of Scott's influence in turning men's minds in the direction of the Middle Ages. (See his article in the *British Critic* for April 1839, and *Apologia*, chap. iii.). As for Wordsworth, Borrow (with characteristic wrong-headedness) conceived him as an impostor. Had *he* made Nature his tent and the hard earth his bed with the stars for a canopy? No; he walked out to sing of moorland, and fell from a "highly eligible" cottage in the Lakes, where women-folk, at his beck and call, bore the brunt of the "plain living."

{27a} The "splendid old corsair," E. J. T., is best known perhaps as the grim and grizzled pilot in Millais' great picture (now in the Tate) of the North-west

Passage. Trelawny and Borrow are linked together as men whose mental powers were strong but whose bodily powers were still stronger in the *Memoirs* of Gordon Hake (who knew both of them well). Another rival of Borrow in respect to the *Mens sana in corpore sano* was the famous Dr. Whewell, Master of Trinity. Mr. Murray tells a story of his concern at a dinner-party upon a prospect of an altercation between Borrow and Whewell. With both omniscience was a foible. Both were powerful men; and both of them, if report were true, had more than a superficial knowledge of the art of self-defence.

{27b} As a matter of fact there was nothing in the least degree squalid about Borrow's subjects or treatment. His tramps and vagabonds have nothing about them that is repulsive. Borrow, it is true, was ready enough to condone the offences of those who sought dupes among the well-to-do public; but he preferred the honester members of the vagrant class; and it is plain that they reciprocated the preference, for they regarded the Romany Rye with an almost superstitious reverence on account of his truth, honour bright and fair speech. Borrow had a passion for depicting the class that Hurtado de Mendoza had first caught for literature in his *Lazarillo* (1553)—that, namely, of the old tricksters of the highway who still retained many traits, noble and ignoble, from the primeval savage. For the characteristically mean and squalid one must go up higher in the scale of civilisation.

{30} Of all the reviews of *Lavengro*, extraordinary as many now appear, it was left for the month of July in the year of grace 1900 to produce the most delightfully amazing. We subjoin it verbatim from the *Catholic Times* of July 27th, 1900.

"Lavengro: The Scholar, The Gypsy, The Priest. By George Burrow. With an introduction by Theodore Watts-Dunton. (London: Ward, Lock, and Co., Ltd.) 2s.

"We suppose the publishers find that this sort of literary rubbish, suffused with antediluvian bigotry of the most benighted character, pays: otherwise, no doubt, they would not have issued it as a volume of their 'New Minerva Library.' It consists of a twaddling introduction by Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton, who tells us he has been 'brought into personal relations with many men of genius,' and so on *ad nauseam*, and of a sort of novel by Mr. Burrow, in a palpable imitation of the style of De Foe without a spark of De Foe's ability. The only thing for which this Mr. Burrow is distinguished is his crass anti-Catholic bigotry; and the terms in which, in one part of the book at least, he refers to the Blessed Virgin are an

outrage not merely on the religious feelings of Catholics, but also on ordinary propriety. Catholics, unless they deserve to be treated scornfully, will take note of the fact that such a work as this has been issued by Messrs. Ward and Lock.” To get an idea of the *semper eadem* of Catholic criticism, the reader should compare with the above the *Dublin Review* for May 1843, in which the author of the *Bible in Spain* is described as “a missionary sent out by a gang of conspirators against Christianity who denominate themselves the Bible Society.”

{37} The popularity of *Lavengro* has been rapidly on the increase during the past ten years, if we may judge by the number of editions. It was printed in the Minerva series in 1889, and reprinted 1900. A version of large portions of the work by Duclos appeared in 1892. Macmillans published an edition in 1896, Newnes in 1897. It was included in the “Oxford Library,” 1898. An illustrated edition, an edition produced under the supervision of Dr. Knapp, a miniature edition of Dent’s, and the reprint of the Minerva edition, already referred to, appeared in 1900, apart from booksellers’ reprints such as those of Denny and Mudie.

{38} Dr. Jessopp in *Daily Chronicle*. April 30th, 1900.

{39a} Borrow is said to have expressed a desire to meet but three sentient beings: Dan O’Connell, Lamplighter (a racehorse), and Anna Gurney. He was introduced into the presence of the last-mentioned at Sheringham, but so far below the vision was the reality (as must appear) that he turned and ran without stopping till he came to the Old Tucker’s Inn at Cromer (East Anglian tradition).

{39b} Mary Clarke, widow, daughter of Edmund Skepper, was wedded to Borrow on April 23rd, 1840. Her daughter, Henrietta, is still living at a great age at Yarmouth. Borrow gives a characteristic account of these two ladies in the first chapter of *Wild Wales*. “Of my wife I will merely say that she is a perfect paragon of wives—can make puddings and sweets and treacle posset, and is the best woman of business in East Anglia: of my step-daughter, for such she is though I generally call her daughter, and with good reason seeing that she has always shown herself a daughter to me, that she has all kinds of good qualities and several accomplishments, knowing something of conchology, more of botany, drawing capitally in the Dutch style, and playing remarkably well on the guitar—not the trumpery German thing so-called, but the real Spanish guitar.” Borrow’s mother had died in August 1858.

{40} This was written in December 1900.

{43} There remains only the *Appendix*. A delightful resumé of grievances brooded over in solitude, cruelly stigmatised by Professor Knapp as "certain posterior interpolations." The ground base of the theme is the wickedness of popery; and when argument gives out Borrow is ready with all the boyish inconsequence of a Charles Kingsley to throw up his cap and shout 'Go it, our side!' 'Down with the Pope!'

{49} Borrow's personal appearance, as we know from the later portrait by his most intimate friend, Dr. Thomas Gordon Hake, must have been sufficiently striking at any period of his life. "His figure was tall and his bearing very noble. He had a finely moulded head and thick white hair—white from his youth; his brown eyes were soft, yet piercing; his mouth had a generous curve—his nose was somewhat of the Semitic type, which gave his face the cast of a young Memnon." This is confirmed by the assurance in *Lavengro* that a famous heroic painter was extremely anxious to secure Don Jorge as a model for the face and figure of Pharaoh!

{52} "I am not cunning. If people think I am it is because, being made up of art themselves, simplicity of character is a puzzle to them."—*Romany Rye*, chap. xi.

{61} *Gypsy lad*.

{62} *Blacksmith*.

{63a} *Tell fortunes*.

{63b} Hill Tower: *i.e.* Norwich.

{63c} *Farewell*.

{64} *Blacksmith*.

{65a} *Smith*.

{65b} The "Wayland Smith" referred to in *Kenilworth*.

{67a} *Horse*.

{67b} *Horseshoe*.

{67c} *Striking*.

{69a} *Horse*.

{69b} *Knife*.

{69c} *Hoof*.

{69d} *Horseshoe nail*.

{69e} *Great file*.

{69f} *Tool box*.

{71} *Poison*.

{82} *Gipsy chap*.

{84a} *Going to the village one day*.

{84b} *Road my gypsy lass*.

{86} Mort, *i.e.*, woman, concubine, a cant term.

{87} *Again*.

{90a} *Old man*.

{90b} *Wretch*, *hussy*.

{91} An old word for knife, used by Urquhart and also by Burns.

{93a} *Carcase*.

{93b} *Knife*.

{94a} *Donkey*.

{94b} *Lad*.

{106} The main characters in *Lavengro* are three: the scholar (Borrow himself), the gypsy (Mr. Petulengro), and the priest, or popish propagandist. This last is the man in black. The word-master has in the course of his travels heard a good deal about this man, and he is able to identify him almost at once by his predilection for gin and water, cold, with a lump of sugar in it. He hears of him first from his London friend, Francis Ardry, then from an Armenian merchant whom he met in London, and then again from a brother-author, who describes a silly and intrusive Anglican parson, called Platitude, as a puppet in the hands of "the man in black." The latter he characterises as a sharking priest, who has

come over from Italy to proselytize and plunder; he has "some powers of conversation and some learning, but he carries the countenance of an arch-villain; Platitude is evidently his tool."

{107} When Borrow (Lavengro, that is), was in London, his friend Francis Ardry warned him against a certain papistical propagandist: "A strange fellow—a half Italian, half English priest . . . he is fond of a glass of gin and water—and over a glass of gin and water cold, with a lump of sugar in it, he has been more communicative, perhaps, than was altogether prudent. Were I my own master, I would kick him, politics and religious movements, to a considerable distance."

{110} During his travels after his abandonment of Grub Street, "Lavengro" frequently came upon the traces of the man in black. While sojourning for one night with a hospitable though superstitious acquaintance, whom he met after leaving Salisbury, "Lavengro" heard the story of the Rev. Mr. Platitude, a sacerdotalist of weak intellects who had been cajoled from his lawful allegiance to the "good, quiet Church of England," by the wiles of a sharking priest come over from Italy to proselytize and to plunder. From what he then heard of the sharking priest, by putting two and two together, Lavengro was now able to identify him with the "man in black." Subsequently he heard of the efforts of the same clever dialectician to overcome the Methodist preacher Peter Williams—efforts which collapsed upon the appearance of the preacher's wife Winifred. "Wife, wife," muttered the disconcerted priest, "if the fool has a wife he will never do for us." In the course of his wanderings this nineteenth-century S. Augustine often gave himself out to be a teacher of elocution.

{117} The man in black was completely mystified by the knowledge of his own past life which this remark revealed (see Chap. IX. *infra*.). There were, as have been seen, a variety of threads connecting the man in black with definite scenes in the memory of Lavengro, though the latter did not happen to have seen the "prowling priest" in the flesh before this occasion. While in London Lavengro frequently met a certain Armenian merchant, who much resented the pretensions of the Roman Papa: that he, the Papa, had more to say in heaven than the Armenian patriarch, and that the hillocks of Rome were higher than the ridges of Ararat. "The Papa of Rome," said the Armenian to Lavengro, "has at present many emissaries in this country, in order to seduce the people from their own quiet religion to the savage heresy of Rome; this fellow" (describing the man in black) "came to me partly in the hope of converting me, but principally to extort money for the purpose of furthering the designs of Rome in this country. I humoured the fellow at first, keeping him in play for nearly a month, deceiving

and laughing at him. At last he discovered that he could make nothing of me, and departed with the scowl of Caiaphas, whilst I cried after him, ‘The roots of Ararat are *deeper* than those of Rome.’”

This same Armenian subsequently offered Lavengro a desk in his office opposite his deaf Moldavian clerk, having surmised that he would make an excellent merchant because he squinted like a true Armenian. Unhappily for the Flaming Tinman and for Isopel Berners, the word-master refused this singular offer.

{118} A passado at Belle’s avowed weakness for that beverage.

{125a} *A strange listens*.

{125b} *Up yonder*.

{153} The Catholic controversy was just at its height in 1825, and the Catholic Emancipation Bill received the Royal Assent in April 1829.

{156} The doctrine of economy in a nutshell.

{159} For Borrow’s final verdict on Sir Walter Scott, it is only fair to cite his *Romano Lavo-Lil*, a book on the English Gypsy Language, corresponding to his book on the *Zincali* or Spanish Gypsies, but published more than forty years later, namely in 1874. Here he relates how he once trudged to Dryburgh “to pay my respects at the tomb of Sir Walter Scott, a man with whose principles I have no sympathy, but for whose genius I have always entertained the most intense admiration.”

{218} The story of Mumbo Jumbo and the English servant in Rome is that narrated at great length by the postillion in the last chapter of *Lavengro*.

{227} See the third Appendix to *Romany Rye* on this subject of “Foreign Nonsense.” For Wolseley’s perversion see *Dict. Nat. Biog.*, lxii., p. 323.

{230} A blasphemous work by Albizzi. French version printed, Geneva, 1556.

{237} His deeds were not those of lions, but of foxes.

{238a} “Archibald Arbuthnot: Life, Adventures, and Vicissitudes of Simon [Fraser] Lord Lovat.” London, 1746, 12mo.

{238b} For later news of the red-haired Jack-priest and his dupe, Parson Platitude, see *Romany Rye*, chap. xxvii.

{242} Plenty of gypsy lads; chals and chies, lads and lasses.

{244a} *Modest*.

{244b} *Gentlemen and ladies*.

{244c} Drop it.

{247} The Petulengres, a wandering clan of gypsies, led by Jasper Petulengro and his wife Pakomovna are introduced to us in *Lavengro* (chaps, v. and liv.). The etymology is thus explained by Borrow. "Petulengro: A compound of the modern Greek πεταλον and the Sanscrit *kara*; the literal meaning being lord of the horse-shoe (*i.e.* maker), it is one of the private cognominations of 'the Smiths,' an English gypsy clan." Engro is apparently akin to the English suffix monger, and with it may be compared the Anglo-Saxon suffix smith, in such words as lore-smith or war-smith (warrior). Thus we have sapengro, lavengro, and sherengro, head man. Of the gypsy tribes in England, Borrow in his *Zincali* (ed. 1846, Introd.) has the following: "The principal gypsy tribes at present in existence are the Stanleys, whose grand haunt is the New Forest; the Lovells, who are fond of London and its vicinity: the Coopers, who call Windsor Castle their home; the Hernes, to whom the north country, more especially Yorkshire, belongeth; and lastly my brethren the Smiths, to whom East Anglia appears to have been allotted from the beginning. All these families have gypsy names, which seem, however, to be little more than attempts at translation of the English ones. Thus the Stanleys are called Bar-engres, which means stony fellows, the Coopers, Wardo-engres or wheelwrights, the Lovells, Camo-mescres, or amorous fellows, the Hernes (German Haaren), Balors, hairs, or hairy fellows, while the Smiths are called Petulengres, that is, horseshoe-fellows, or blacksmiths. Besides the above-named gypsy clans, there are other smaller ones, some of which do not comprise more than a dozen individuals, children included. For example, the Bosviles, the Browns, the Chilcotts, the Grays, Lees, Taylors and Whites; of these the principal is the Bosvile tribe."

{249a} There's a witch and a wizard and their name is Petulengro.

{249b} *Tent*.

{256} This refers to a notorious match between a lion and six mastiffs, arranged by George Wombwell at Warwick, in July 1825. The fight was that between George Cooper and Ned Baldwin, 5 July, 1825.

{257} Peel’s Metropolitan Police, constituted 1829.

{265} Said the gypsy lass to her mother—
‘My dear mother, I am with child.’
‘And what kind of a man made you with child,
My own daughter, my gypsy lass?’

‘O my mother, a great gentleman,
A rich gentleman, a stranger to our race,
Who rides upon a fine stallion,
’Twas he that made me thus with child.’

‘Vile little harlot that you are,
Be off, good-bye, you leave my tent!
Had a Romany lad got thee with child,
Then I had said to thee, poor lass!
But thou art just a vile harlot
By a stranger man to be with child.’

{266} *Pig-poisoning*.

{269a} *Honeycomb*.

{269b} *Tell their fortunes*.

{272} *King*.

{274} See Introduction, p. 10.

{275} The church of Willenhall, Staffordshire, near Mumpers’ Dingle, is, perhaps, intended. The hymn was originally Cennick’s, but the verse in question Charles Wesley’s. The old tune Helmsley (not St. Thomas) was a favourite of Queen Victoria.

{277} Chieftain.

{286} Dukkerin, fortune-telling: duk or dook, ghost.

{288} See Introduction, p. 9.

{289} The Shakespearean meaning was hysterical passion. See *Lear*, II., iv. 52:

> “O, how this mother swells up toward my heart!”

The word remained fairly common during the seventeenth century. Mary Rich, Countess of Warwick, in her Diary (1667) speaks of herself as suffering from “a fit of the spleen and mother together.”

{290} *Stranger men*.

{291} Ursula is evidently intended by Borrow to typify the gypsy chi. And the key to the type is supplied in the *Gypsies in Spain* (see especially chap. vii.). The gypsies, says Borrow, arc almost entirely ignorant of the grand points of morality; but on one point they are in general wiser than those who have had far better opportunities than such unfortunate outcasts of regulating their steps and distinguishing good from evil. They know that chastity is a jewel of high price, and that conjugal fidelity is capable of occasionally flinging a sunshine even over the dreary hours of a life passed in the contempt of almost all laws, whether human or divine. There is a word in the gypsy language to which those who speak it attach ideas of peculiar reverence, far superior to that connected with the name of the Supreme Being, the creator of themselves and the universe. This word is *Lácha*, which with them is the corporeal chastity of the females; we say corporeal chastity, for no other do they hold in the slightest esteem; it is lawful among them, nay praiseworthy, to be obscene in look, gesture and discourse, to be accessories to vice, and to stand by and laugh at the worst abominations of the Busné (gorgios, or gentiles) provided their *Lácha ye trupos*, or corporeal chastity, remains unblemished. The gypsy child, from her earliest years, is told by her strange mother that a good Calli need only dread one thing in this world, and that is the loss of her *Lácha*, in comparison with which that of life is of little consequence, as in such an event she will be provided for, but what provision is there for a gypsy who has lost her *Lácha*. “Bear this in mind, my child,” she will say, “and now eat this bread and go forth and see what you can steal.” The Romany, in a word, is the sect of the Husbands (and Wives) and their first precept is this: Be faithful to the *Roms* (husbands) and take not up with the gorgios, whether they be raior (gentlemen) or baior (fellows).

{293} *Godly book*.

{295a} Chore, to steal.

{295b} Hokkawar, to cheat.

{295c} Lubbeny, the whore.

{296} *God*.

{298} Choomer, a kiss.

{299a} *Uncle*.

{299b} *Father*.

{301} Batu, father; coko, uncle.

{302a} *Law*.

{302b} *With child*.

{303} Tan, tent.

{305} *Tent*.

{306} Old Fulcher was an amateur in the meanest kinds of petty larceny whose deplorable end is described in chapter xli. of the *Romany Rye*.

{307} The boxer who lost the fight near the Castle Hill (Norwich).

{312} Poknees, magistrate.

{318} *Steal*.

{326} See Introduction, p. 9. This is the book the MS. of which Lavengro sold for £20, and upon the proceeds of which he started upon the ramble which led him to the dingle. The *Life of Joseph Sell* is not known to Bibliography; but the incident is nevertheless probably drawn from Borrow's own career.

{330} "Good."

{337} The next time the compassionate word-master visited the landlord, he found him a 'down pin' no longer, but the centre of an adulatory crowd. The way in which he surmounted the sea of troubles that beset him is described with much humour in *The Romany Rye* (chap. xvii). The main factors in his relief were (1) Strong ale, taken by the advice of Lavengro, which leads to Catchpole knocking down the radical, Hunter, and winning back the admiration of the tap-room, (2) a loan from the parson of Willenhall, who wished to save a muscular fellow-Protestant from the clutches of the man in black. The brewer now became very civil, a coach was appointed to stop at the inn, and, in short, Catchpole is left by Lavengro riding upon the summit of the wave of popularity and good fortune.

{343} Jacobus Villotte, his *Dictionarium Latino-Armenium*, Rome, 1714.

{348} And this, alas! is the last glimpse we are to have of Isopel Berners, a heroine whose like we shall scarce encounter again in the whole wide world of romance. Charles Kingsley says of her, indeed, that she is far too good not to be true. The likeness is undoubtedly a masterpiece, yet, though Borrow has drawn the outline firmly, he leaves much for the imagination to fill in. Languid indeed must be the imagination that can fail to be stimulated by Borrow's outline of his Brynhilda. Cast in the mould of Britannia, queen, however, not of the waves but of the woodland, poor yet noble, and innocent of every mean ambition of gentility, faithful, valiant, and proud,—as she stands pale and commanding, in the sunshine at the dingle's mouth, in all her virginal dignity, is she not a figure worthy to rank with the queens of Beauty and Romance, with Dido "with a willow in her hand," with the deeply-loving Rebecca as with a calm and tender dignity she bids for ever adieu to the land of Wilfred of Ivanhoe?

{361} After the receipt of this letter three nights elapsed, and then the word-master himself left the dingle for the last time. The third night he spent alone in his encampment "in a very melancholy manner, with little or no sleep, thinking of Isopel Berners; and in the morning when I quitted the place, I shed several tears, as I reflected that I should probably never again see the spot where I had passed so many hours in her company."

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