

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS, JUN.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

NO. 121. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, MARCH 25, 1871.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

### CHAPTER XXIII. THE PARTY AT ROYDON HALL.

COLDLY handsome, an hour later, looked Lady Vernon, at the head of her table, with old Lord Verney beside her. Lord Barroden and her other guests, who had assisted at the legal consultation, were also of the party. The Dean of East Copely was there, very natty in his silk stockings, and apron, and buckles, and Sir Thomas Grummelston, Lady Grummelston, and Miss Grummelston, with several others who had attended the unveiling of the statue and the bishop's sermon.

Lady Vernon was never very gay; but she was this evening more than usually conversable and animated.

"What an admirable sermon the bishop gave us to-day," remarked the Dean of East Copely. "He always preaches well, I need not say; but to-day there was so much feeling; it really was, even for him, an unusually fine sermon. Didn't it so strike you, Lord Verney?"

"I have had," said Lord Verney, looking across the table with his dull grey eyes solemnly upon the dean, "the advantage, Mr. Dean, of listening to the bishop of your diocese, in, as we say, another place. But I had been applying my mind to-day, I may say, to business a good deal, and although I have, people say, rather a facility of getting through business and things——"

Lord Verney's dull eyes at this moment had wandered to the bald head, flushed pink with champagne, of his attorney, Mr. Larkin, who instantaneously closed his eyes and shook his tall head with a mysterious smile, and murmured to the dean at his side:

"I wish I had his lordship's faculty; it

would be an easy thousand a year in my pocket!" Which graceful little aside Lord Verney heard, and dropped his eyelids, raising his eyebrows with a slight clearing of his voice, and turning his face more directly towards the dean, suppressed in his own countenance, with an unusual pomp, a tendency to smile at the testimony of the man of business.

"People will form opinions and things, you know; and I was a little tired about it, and so I didn't mind, and I took a walk, and other people, no doubt, heard the bishop preach, and he seems to have gone somewhere."

"I wanted him to take his dinner here," said Lady Vernon, interpreting Lord Verney's rather vague but probable conjecture, "but he could not manage it."

"You were a little tired, also, I fear, Lady Vernon," said Mr. Foljambe. "A great many people, as well as I, were disappointed on missing Lady Vernon from her place."

"I had intended going, but I did feel a little tired; but I made an effort afterwards, though very late, and I glided into our little nook in the gallery without disturbing any one, and I heard the sermon, which I thought very good, and the anthem, which was better than I expected. I like our bishop so much; he's not the least a prig, he's not worldly, he is thoroughly simple—simple as a child; his simplicity is king-like; it is better, it is angelic. He is unconsciously the most dignified man one could imagine; and so kind. I have the greatest respect and affection for him."

"He was a good deal moved to-day," said Mr. Foljambe, leaning back a little grandly. "It is charming, so much sensibility; I saw him shed tears to-day while

he spoke of the early years of Mr. Howard, my predecessor."

Mr. Foljambe blinked a little, as he said this, being always moved by the tears of people of any considerable rank, hereditary or otherwise.

Lord Verney being thus addressed by the stately vicar, whom he assumed to be a man of some mark, made answer a little elaborately.

"Sensibility and all that, I think, very well in its place; but in public speaking—and I hope I have had some little experience, I ought—sensibility, and that kind of very creditable feeling, ought to be managed; there's a way of putting up the pocket-handkerchief about it—all our best speakers do it—to the face, because then, if there *are* tears, and things, the faces they make are so distressing, and, you see, by means of that, it is always managed; I can do it, you can do it, any one may do it, and that is the way it is prevented."

"Very true," said Mr. Foljambe, thoughtfully nodding, as he helped himself to a new entrée, a something aux truffes, which piqued his curiosity; "one learns something every day one lives."

"You don't, of course, recollect Mr. Howard very distinctly, Lady Vernon?" inquired the Dean of East Copely.

"Perfectly—I was twenty when he died."

"A plain man, I should say, judging from that statue?" inferred the dean.

"He was not that—no—he had a very agreeable countenance, and his features were well-formed—his forehead particularly fine," she replied.

"His opinions were, I've been told, very unsettled indeed," said the dean.

"It did not appear from his preaching, then. It was admired and approved, and the then bishop was not a man to permit any trifling with doctrine, any more than the present," answered Lady Vernon. "Mr. Howard was very much beloved, and a most able teacher—his influence was extraordinary in this parish—I am speaking, of course, upon hearsay a good deal, for at that time I did not attend as much as I ought to such things, and my father was still living."

"Mr. Howard was, I believe, very highly connected?" said the dean.

"Quite so," answered Mr. Foljambe. "In fact, as far back as we can go, there was Chevenix, and then Craven, and Vernon, one of this house; and then Percy, one of the old Percys, and Dormer, and

Stanley, and Bulkely, and Howard; and, in fact, it is really quite curious!—the people here do seem always to have liked to be taken care of by gentlemen," said Mr. Foljambe, grandly.

"I can't see that there is anything very curious in that," said Lord Verney. "I can't concede that. One naturally asks oneself the question, why should not a gentleman be preferred? And one answers, he should be preferred, because he is naturally superior to persons who are inferior to him; and we know he has certain principles and things that all gentlemen have, about it, and that, I conjecture, will always account for gentlemen, and things, being considered in that sort of light."

"I entirely concur," said Mr. Foljambe, who always concurred with peers. "I only meant that it is a little curious that the vicarage of Roydon should have been always filled by a person of that stamp."

"That is what I have been, I hope, endeavouring to say, or, rather, what I have not said, because I have endeavoured to say something different; in fact, that it is *not* curious. I'll take some sherry, about it." The concluding remark was addressed to the butler.

And so the conversation proceeded very agreeably.

But—

Pleasures are like poppies spread,  
You pluck the flower, its bloom is shed.

The most agreeable dinner-party, its cutlets and conversation, its wit and its château-yquem, are transitory, and the hour inevitably arrives when people prefer their night-caps and the extinguisher.

Lord Verney has uttered his last wise and lucid exposition for the evening, and the stately vicar, who would not object to a visit to Lord Verney's hospitable house at Ware, has imbibed his latest draughts from that fountain of illumination. Lord Barroden has said his say to Lady Vernon, and enlivened by a nap, has made some agreeable sallies in conversation with Lady Grummelston, and to that happy lady, in the drawing-room, Mrs. Foljambe has told her story about the two young women in whom she took an interest, who left Roydon and set up a confectioner's shop in Coventry, and prospered.

The pleasures of that festive evening are over; and Miss Max and Miss Vernon are having their little chat together, in their dressing-gowns.

Miss Max has a little bit of fire in her grate, for this is, thanks to our variable

climate, by no means like last night; not at all sultry, rather chilly, on the contrary.

"Well, we shall soon hear something, I fancy, about mamma's annual trip to town," says Maud, speaking from a very low-cushioned chair, in a corner of which she is nestled, with her feet on the fender.

The young lady's dressing-gown is of rose-coloured cashmere, some of the quilted silk lining of which, in her careless pose, appears. She is extremely pretty, looking up from her cushioned nook at the old lady, who sits, in her odd flannel garb, before the fire in a more formal arm-chair.

"And why do you think so? Have you heard anything?" asks the old lady.

"Only that Jones says that Latimer is making the usual preparations," answers Miss Maud.

"Latimer's her maid, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"And why doesn't she ask Latimer directly?" demanded Miss Max.

"Because Latimer would be afraid to tell, and she would be afraid to ask. Mamma finds out everything she chooses to find out. You don't know mamma as well as I do in this house. Whatever she chooses to be secret is secret, and whatever she chooses to know she does know; and the servants are awfully afraid of her. You might as well ask that picture as Latimer; and Jones would not be such a fool as to ask her, for she does not know the moment mamma might say, 'Latimer, has any one been asking you anything about my going to London?' and so sure as she did, Latimer would tell her the truth, for there is no fault she is so summary upon as a falsehood; and the servants think that she somehow knows everything."

"Well, at all events, Jones thinks she is going in a week?" says Miss Max.

"Yes. Do you know what Mr. Coke said to me to-day?"

"No. What?" says Miss Max, looking drowsily into the fire.

"He said he thought, or had reason to think, or something of that kind, that mamma is going to marry."

Miss Max turned, with a start, and looked for a few silent moments at Maud.

"Are you sure?"

"Perfectly sure."

"Well, that is very odd. Do you know, I've been thinking that, this long time. Did he say why he thought so?"

"No."

"Nor who the person is?"

"No; nothing. He only said that, and he looked very sly and mysterious."

"Mr. Coke is a very shrewd man. I don't think he had heard before of your mamma's excursions, and when I told him to-day I saw that his mind was working on what I said, and I suspect he has connected something he may have learned from a different source with what I told him, and has put the whole case together, and formed his conclusions. I wonder you did not make him tell you all he knew. I wish he had said so much to me. I should have made him say a great deal more, I promise you."

"He talks to me as if I were a child, and it came so much by surprise, and really I don't think I could have asked him one word about it; I felt so insulted somehow, and disgusted."

"Suppose she has fallen in love with some one of whom, for some reason or other, she is a little ashamed, and suppose there is an engagement? I don't understand it. I have been suspecting something for some time, and I did not like to say so, but you see it has struck Mr. Coke the same way. If it is that, there is a disparity of some kind you may be sure."

"I dare say. I don't care," says the young lady, who looks, nevertheless, as if she did care very much. "I shall have as much money as I want. Mr. Coke said I should have ten thousand a year, and I should go and live with you. You would take me in. Here nothing on earth should induce me to remain. People have told me she merely took a fancy to papa, soon grew tired of him, and ended by disliking him. But I shan't stay here to see his place filled and his memory insulted, and to be hector'd and ordered about by some low man."

"I shall be only too glad to have you at any time as long as you will stay with me. But don't be in too great a hurry. You are assuming a great deal; and even if she does marry, it may turn out very differently; and you know, my dear, widows will marry without intending any particular affront to the memory of their first husbands."

"It is not a pleasant home to me as it is," says the young lady, glancing fiercely along the hearth; "but if this takes place I shan't stay here to see it; that I am resolved on."

"In about a week she'll go, Jones thinks?" asks Miss Max. "I have grown very curious. I should like to see what sort of swain she has chosen. You never

know what fancy a woman may take. He may be a very third-rate man. I was thinking he may possibly be in the army. Mrs. Stonix swears she saw her alone in Chatham last year. But it is growing awfully late. Good-night. We'll get to our beds and dream it over."

CHAPTER XXIV. A GENTLEMAN IN BLACK.

THEY had both risen preparatory to Miss Maud's flitting and a parting kiss and good-night, when Miss Max said, suddenly:

"And what about Mr. Marston?"

"Well, what about him?" answered Miss Vernon, a little crossly, for she had not recovered the conversation that had just occurred.

"Nothing very particular—nothing at all, in fact—only I had intended talking about him fifty times to-day, and something always prevented. He's coming to the ball at Wymering, isn't he?"

"I don't know; he said so. I don't care," said the handsome girl, drowsily. And she advanced her hand and her lips a little, as if for her final salutation.

But Miss Max had not quite done.

"I like him so much. I think him so clever, and so good-natured, and so nice. I wish so much, Maud, that you and he were married," said Miss Max, with audacious directness.

"And I wish so much that you and he were married," retorted Maud, looking lazily at the flame of her bedroom candle, which she held in her hand. "That would be a more natural consequence, I think, of your liking and admiring."

"You can't deny that he is wildly in love with you," said Miss Max.

"I can't deny that he was perhaps wildly in love with a poor seamstress in a dark serge dress a few days ago, and may possibly be in love with another to-day. That is wildly in love, as you say. I don't think there is anything very flattering in being the object of that kind of folly."

"Well, he will be a good deal surprised, I venture to say, when he comes in quest of his seamstress to the Wymering cloak-room," remarked Miss Max, with a pleasant anticipation of the *éclaircissement*.

"That depends on two things: first, how his seamstress meets him; and, secondly, whether she meets him there at all. Good-night. It is very late."

And with these words she kissed her genial old friend, and was gone.

Miss Max looked after her, and shook her head with a smile.

"There goes impracticability itself!" she says, and throws up her hands and eyes with a shrug. "I pity that poor young man; Heaven only knows what's in store for him. I shall engage in no more vagaries at all events. What an old fool I was to join in that madcap project of rambling over the country and concealing our names! What will Mr. Marston think of us?"

When she laid her busy, rheumatic little head, bound up in its queer night-cap, on her pillow, it began at once to construct all manner of situations and pictures.

Here was a romance in a delightful state of confusion! On this case her head may work all night long, for a year, without a chance of exhausting its fertile problems; for it presents what the doctors call a complication. Barbara Vernon, with her whole heart, hates the Warhamptons; and the Warhamptons, with all theirs, detest Barbara Vernon. It is too long a story to tell all the aggressions and reprisals which have carried the feud to the internecine point.

"I must certainly tell Maud. I'll tell her in the morning," thought Miss Max. "It's only fair."

Perhaps this incorrigible old match-maker fancied that it might not prejudice Mr. Marston if Maud knew that her mother had placed him under anathema.

By noon next day Lord Verney and Lord Barroden, and their attorneys, had taken flight, and Miss Maximilla Medwyn had gone on to see friends at Naunton, with an uncertain promise of returning in a day or two to Roydon Hall.

There is no life in that grand house but the phantom life on its pictured walls. The hour is dull for Maud, who sits listlessly looking from one of the great drawing-room windows. Lady Vernon, who has seen, in succession, two deputations in the library, returns, and in stately silence sits down and resumes her examination of a series of letters from the late Bishop of Rotherham, and notes them for transmission to Mr. Coke.

Maud changes her posture, and glances at her mother. Why is there never any love in the cold elegance of that face? Why can't she make up her mind and be patient? The throb of life will as soon visit that marble statue of Joan of Arc, by the door; Psyche at the other side, in her chill beauty, will as easily glow and soften into flesh.

Miss Vernon leans on her hand, listless, gloomy—in a degree indignant.

The room is darkening. The darker the better, she thinks. It is no metaphoric, but a real darkness; for clouds portending thunder, or heavy rain or hail, have, on a sudden, overcast the sky, and are growing thicker.

The light is dying out, the shadow blackens on Lady Vernon's letters; she raises her eyes. One can hardly see to read.

Lady Vernon lays her letter on the table. She can no longer see the features of the Titian over the door, and the marble statues at either side have faded into vague white drifts. Some heavy, perpendicular drops fall, plashing on the smooth flags outside the window, and the melancholy rumble of distant thunder booms, followed by a momentarily aggravated down-pour, and a sudden thickening of the darkness.

This was a rather sublime prelude to the footman's voice, announcing:

"Mr. Dawe."

Maud glanced toward the door, which was in obscurity, and then at Lady Vernon, who, sitting full in the light of the window, had turned, with a stare and a frown, as if she had heard something incredible and unwelcome, toward the person who was entering.

By no means an heroic figure, nor worthy of being heralded by thunder, has stepped in somewhat slowly and stiffly, and halts in the side-light of the window, relieved by the dark background. It is a small man, dark visaged, with a black wig, a grave, dull, mahogany face, furrowed with lines of reserve. Maud is certain that she never saw that small, insignificant-looking man before, who is staring with a very grave but not unfriendly countenance at her mother.

He is buttoned up in a black outside coat, with a cape to it; he holds a rather low-crowned hat in his hand, and wears those shining leather coverings for the legs, which are buckled up to the knees. Getting in and getting out of his posting carriage he has scrupulously avoided dust or mud. His boots are without a speck. His queer hat is nattily brushed, and, in stable phraseology, has not a hair turned. His black coat is the finest possible, but it has great pockets at either side, each of which seems laden with papers, mufflers, and other things, so that his hips seem to descend gradually, and culminate near his knees.

This man's brown face, smoothly shaved, is furrowed and solemn enough for five-and-sixty. In his dress and air there is

nothing of the careless querness of a country gentleman. His singularities suggest rather the eccentricity of a precise and rich old city humorist.

There is something characteristic and queer enough, in the buttoned-up and black-wigged little man, to interest Maud's curiosity.

He has not been ten seconds in the room, and stands poised on his leather-cased legs, looking gravely and quietly at Lady Vernon, and, like a ghost, says nothing till he is spoken to. One can reckon the tick, tick, tick of the Louis Quatorze clock on the bracket by the chimney-piece.

Lady Vernon stood up with an effort, still looking hard at him, and advancing a step, she said:

"Mr. Dawe? I'm so surprised. I could scarcely believe my ears. It is such an age since I have seen you here."

And she put out her hand hospitably, and he took it in his brown old fingers, with the stiffness of a mummy, and as he shook it slightly, he said in his wooden tones, quietly:

"Yes, it is sixteen years and eight months. I was looking into my notes yesterday—sixteen years on the eighteenth of November last. You look well, Barbara. Your looks are not much altered; no—considering."

"It is very good of you to come to see me; you mustn't stay away so long again," she replied in her silvery tones.

"This is your daughter?" he interrupted with a little wave of his dark, thin hand towards the young lady.

"Yes, that is she. Maud, shake hands with Mr. Dawe."

"Maud Guendoline she was baptised," he said, as he advanced two stiff steps toward her, with his small but prominent brown eyes fixed upon her. She rose and placed her pretty fingers on that hand of box-wood, which closed on them.

#### CHAPTER XXV. THE COUNTY PAPER.

WHEN he had inspected her features for a time, he turned to her mother and spoke.

"Not like her father," he said, still holding her hand.

"Don't you think so?" answered Lady Vernon, coldly. "I can see a look—very decidedly."

Maud was wondering all this time who this Mr. Dawe could be, who seemed to assert a sort of dry intimacy with Lady Vernon and her family, very unusual in the girl's experience.

"I think it is more than a look. I think her extremely like him," insisted Lady Vernon, resuming in the same cold tone, and without looking at Maud, as if she had that resemblance by heart, and did not like it.

"She has some of the family beauty, wherever she got it," said Mr. Dawe, deliberately, in his hard quiet tones, and he let go her hand and turned away his inflexible face and brown eyes, a good deal to the young lady's relief.

Lady Vernon was still standing. She did not usually receive such guests standing. There was a hectic red in each cheek, also unusual, except when she was angry, and she had not been angry.

"Her eyes resemble yours," said Mr. Dawe.

"Oh, no. Perhaps, indeed, the colour; but mere colour is not a resemblance," answered Lady Vernon, with a cold little laugh, that, in Maud's ear, rang with cruelty and disdain. "No, Maud's good looks are all her own. She doesn't, I think, resemble me in any one particular—not the least."

Maud was wounded. She felt that tears were rising to her eyes. But her pride suppressed them.

"H'm!" Mr. Dawe hummed with closed lips.

"Of course, Mr. Dawe, you are come to stay a little? It is so long since you have been here."

"I'm not so sure about staying. It is a long time—sixteen years and upwards. You have been well; you have been spared, and your daughter, and I. We have all reason to be grateful to the Almighty. Time is so important, and eternity so long!"

"Very true," she said, with a deep sigh, "and death so irremediable."

Mr. Dawe took his big silver snuff-box from his coat-pocket, and tapped it. He nodded, in acquiescence in the sentiment, leaned a little forward, and took a large pinch, twiddling his fingers afterwards, to get rid of any snuff that might remain on their tips. Perhaps the little superfluous shower that fell to the carpet suggested unconsciously his funeral commentary.

"H'm! Dust to dust."

Whereupon he applied his Indian silk handkerchief, not to his eyes, but lightly to his nose.

"By-and-bye, I shall have a word to say to you," he said, with a solemn roll of his brown eyes.

She looked hard at him, though with a half flinching gaze, as if to read the charac-

ter of his news. But the solemn reserve of his wooden face never changed.

"We shall be quite to ourselves in the library," she said.

"Then suppose we go there now."

"Very well; let us go," she said, and led the way.

At the door he made, with his stiff backbone, a little inclination to Miss Maud.

The door closes, and the young lady is left to herself, with matter for speculation to amuse her.

Quite alone in that vast and magnificent room, she looks wearily round. The care of Mr. Tarpey, on whom devolves the arrangement of flowers and of newspapers, has spread a table in a corner near the window with these latter luxuries.

Maud looks out; the rain is still tumbling continuously, and plashing heavily, though the sky looks lighter. She turns her eyes on the newspapers, and goes over to the table, and looks down upon them with listless eyes.

She carelessly plucks the county paper from among its companions, and in that garrulous and homely broad-sheet a paragraph catches her suddenly earnest eye. She reads it twice. The annual Wymering ball is to come off three weeks earlier than usual. She takes the paper to the window and reads it again. There is no mistake about it. "Three weeks earlier than the accustomed day!" There is an unusual colour in her cheeks, and a lustre in her eyes. She fancies, as she muses, that she hears a step in the passage, and she drops the paper. She is afraid of Lady Vernon's all-seeing gaze, and the dreadful question, "Have you seen anything unusual in the paper? Allow me to look at it." And she feels that her face would proclaim, to all who cared to look, that the Wymering ball was to take place three weeks earlier than usual.

No one is coming, however. She hastens to replace the paper on the table, and she sits down, with a beautiful flush, determined to think.

She does not think very logically, or very much in train, and the effort subsides in a reverie.

Well, what is to be done now? The crisis has taken her by surprise; then fancy leads her into the assembly-room at Wymering. There are lights, and fiddles, and—oh, such a strange meeting!

Cousin Max must be with her. With that spirited veteran by her side she would fear nothing.

Very glad she was when one of Lady Vernon's broughams drove up to the door a few minutes later.

In that great house you cannot get as quickly to the hall as, on occasions like this, you may wish. But Maud overtakes her at the foot of the stairs, as in her cloak and bonnet Maximilla Medwyn is about to ascend to her own room.

"Mamma is in the library; and there are three men, with ill-made clothes and lank hair, a deputation, as usual, waiting in the shield-room to talk to her about a meeting-house at Heppsborough; and two clergymen are waiting in the blue drawing-room, to see her afterwards about plate for the church of Saint Hilary. So you and I shall be very much to ourselves for a time; and do you know we have had a new arrival—a guest. I dare say you know him. Such an odd little figure, as solemn as a conjurer. His name is Dawe."

"Dawe? Why, for goodness sake, has Richard Dawe appeared again?" exclaims Miss Max, stopping on the stair, and leaning with her back against the massive banister in great surprise.

"His name is certainly Dawe, and I'll tell you what he's like."

And forthwith Maud describes him.

"Oh! there's no mistaking the picture," cries Miss Max; and then she is taken with a fit of laughing, very mysterious to Miss Maud.

Recovering a little, she continues:

"Mr. Dawe? We were very good friends. I like him—at least, all I could ever know of him in twenty years. He keeps his thoughts to himself a good deal. I don't think any one else in the world had half his influence with your poor grandpapa; but, certainly, I never expected to see him here during Barbara's reign. My dear! I thought she hated him. He was the only person who used to tell her, and in the simplest language, what he thought of her. Have they been fighting yet?"

"No, I think not—that is, they had not time. I don't know I'm sure what may be going on now."

"Where are they?"

"In the library," says Maud.

"I think he is the only person on earth she ever was the least afraid of. I wonder what he can have to say or do here. He has never been inside this door since—yes, he did come once, for a day or two, a few years after your poor papa's death, and that, I think, was simply because he had some direction of your grandfather's, about the

Roydon vault, which he had promised to see carried out; but, except then, he has never once been here, till now, since your poor grandpapa's death."

"How did he come to have such an influence here?" asked Maud.

They had resumed their ascent, and were walking up the stairs, side by side.

"I believe he understands business very well, and he is, I fancy, the best keeper of a secret on earth. His influence with your grandpapa increased immensely toward the close of his life; and he knew he could talk to him safely about that wonderful will of his."

"I wonder he allowed him to make that troublesome will," said Maud.

Miss Max laughed.

"I said the very same thing to him once, and he answered that he could not dissuade him, but that he had prevented a great deal. So, here we are."

The latter exclamation accompanied her entrance into her room.

Maud was more curious than ever.

"He's not the kind of person, then, who would have come here, under all the circumstances, without good reason," she said.

"Not he. He has a reason—a strong one, you may be very sure of that. It is very odd. I can't imagine what it can possibly be about. Well, leave him to me. I think he's franker with me than with any one else; and I'll get it from him, one way or other, before he goes. You'll see."

In this sanguine mood Miss Maximilla Medwyn put off her things, and prepared very happily for luncheon.

Mr. Dawe and Lady Vernon are, in the mean time, holding a rather singular conference.

## INSTITUTIONS.

INSTITUTIONS, like ghosts and policemen, are things more often talked about than seen. What is an institution? Where is the learned Dryasdust who has catalogued, ticketed, and classified what we choose to designate by that familiar four-syllabled word that runs so trippingly off the tongue? Everyone can speak of an institution, but it would be amusing to watch the struggles of even a trained logician to define one. How is he to bind Proteus with his clumsy syllogisms? The slippery creature eludes his grasp, changing form, and shape, and size, like the rival magicians in the Eastern

tale, utterly refusing to be caught and handcuffed and exhibited to the public gaze.

What is an institution? Harmodius J. P. Pell, of Syracuse City, Pa., would tell us, perhaps, that institutions meant whittling and iced water, a brandy-smash at the bar, and a trotting match in spidery vehicles on Philadelphia Course. In Arkansas, the most cherished institutions are playing-cards and plug tobacco; in Missouri, six-shooters and bowie-knives. A merry-go-round, with smartly caparisoned hobby-horses, spangles, flags, and a squeaking trumpet to enliven the infant riders as they spin round, is the nearest approach to an institution that young—very young—Paris knows. His elder brother believes—despite of siege and famine—in nothing so firmly as in the glittering cafés and asphalt trottoirs of the boulevards, and considers that nothing short of a cataclysm could prevent him from sipping his absinthe among the little marble-topped tables of the Muscadin Elysium. And if a travelling Briton of average education were to be peremptorily cross-examined as to the nature of our English institutions, it is doubtful if he would get far beyond the well-known palladia of our liberties, and whether trial by jury, the Derby Day, with Habeas Corpus, and a volunteer review, would not prove to be the handful of grain extracted from an enormous amount of chaff. It would be better, perhaps, at once to give up the useless attempt at exact definition. An archdeacon has been gravely declared to be a person who exercises archidiaconal functions. And on the same principle we may safely describe an institution as something which has been instituted—never mind how.

The very word institution is of fire-new modern coinage. Certainly, it was a phrase unknown to the wisdom of our ancestors. They fought for the Church. They rallied round the Throne. They did battle for Magna Charta and the liberties of England. But they never proclaimed themselves resolved to fight to the death for the sake of an institution, as such. Even the country squires who seventy years ago announced their readiness to die *pro aris et focis*, for the hares and foxes, as Sheridan wickedly construed their Latinity, would have been disgusted with so vague a name for things which they held dear and sacred.

But the actual institution, if not the name of it, is immemorial, and few tasks could be more difficult than to lay a finger on the methods by which it arose. It

would often be found, no doubt, that the growth of some custom or privilege that has struck its roots so deeply into the earth as almost to defy external violence, and which overshadows a realm with its wide-spreading branches, has begun very humbly, and perhaps from an apparent accident. An institution is often self-sown. And the toughest and longest-lived of the species are such as have had their origin in some seeming blunder or trifling incident. Very few have been successfully created by deliberate legislation, although the law-maker has constantly stepped in to back by legal sanctions the imperious decrees of habit and opinion.

But if it be true that institutions seldom spring into life, like Minerva, full-grown and armed at all points, it must be owned that nothing is easier than to scatter the seeds of what may, if it fall on fertile ground, be prolific of much good or of gigantic evil in the future. A bequest in a rich man's will, a philosophical treatise, a speech or a sermon, possibly a few burning lines in a poem, or a strong passage in a novel, may produce consequences that outlive the reputation of the author, the preacher, or the testator. There are dead men whose names would sound strangely to us, and yet whose voices we hearken to at fiftieth-hand, as it were, and whose uttered thoughts help to shape and sway a world that has forgotten them personally.

Sometimes the intentions of a founder are so very different to the results that spring from his acts, that his name comes down to us as being associated with doctrines or practices at which he would himself have stood aghast. That of Loyola, for instance, is in the popular imagination inextricably mixed up with the doings and sayings, the stern discipline, the artful casuistry, and the ill report of the too famous Order which he established. And yet, if history holds up a true mirror, it gives us back Loyola's image as that of a single-minded enthusiast, a reformed rake, and a hot-headed fanatic. If this poor Spanish captain, as he limped from one Roman shrine to another during the Easter sermons, waving his tattered hat in applause of the more vehement preachers, could but have known how tremendous was the agency he was about to evoke, it is likely that he would have heard the tidings with honest dismay. There was surely more of the dove than of the serpent in the man who is immortalised as the earliest general of the Jesuits.



Fairs, as they were and as they are, afford a familiar instance of the gradual warping of an institution valuable in its day. A fair at the present time means a licensed assemblage of ruffianry and rabel-dom; means noise, drunkenness, robbery, rioting, silly tumult, and gross vice, unrelieved by any of that harmless mirth and genuine clownish curiosity, of which the old poets and chroniclers were wont to tell. These gatherings, sinking from bad to worse, are every year growing beautifully less. Ere long, doubtless, the last of them will be improved off the face of the earth by magisterial prohibition. There will be no more gilt ginger-bread, no more dancing-booths. The last penny whistle and the last wooden back-scratcher will be sent in company to the South Kensington Museum, and the Patagonian giantess and the Sicilian dwarf, the performing fish and the fat girl, will pass into the limbo of forgotten monstrosities. But before the last of these assemblies shall come to an end, lamented only by beersellers and pick-pockets, it may be as well to compare its present decadence with its bygone period of glory and usefulness.

Fairs, indeed, were once very useful. When roads were bad and unsafe, when war was chronic and robbery perennial, when the plague hung out its black banner in most cities every score of years or so, it was no light motive that could tempt a trader to plod, with his strings of pack-horses, along tracks that a few days of wet weather would convert into quagmires. There were bridgeless rivers to be forded; there were tolls to be paid, here to a robber baron, there to my lord the abbot, and here again to the jealous corporation of a township. There was risk of dangerous floods, risk of pestilence, drought, and dearth, risk from the broken soldiers and banditti, whom every campaign left prowling like wolves about the country. To travel was at once most costly, laborious, and full of peril. A roving merchant had to feed a whole caravan of men, horses, and mules. And, even then, so slow a process was that of journeying, that the Venetian or the Flemish trafficker might set off towards a distant market, and when he got to the end of his weary route might find the city in which he meant to trade beleaguered, or the road blocked by hostile armies, and would be thankful to escape, with much loss to goods and gear. Fairs, however, were in a manner sacred. Charters, and patents, and the goodwill of all rulers, lay

and clerical, smoothed the road for those who attended them, whether to buy or sell. The very outlaw, beyond the State's protecting pale at other times, had his safe-conduct at fair time, and could walk the streets unharmed.

A fair of the old sort rose in the middle ages to the dignity of a national benefit. Then, and then only, could the petty dealers of the burghs, and the wealthier merchants of the cities, replenish their stores with foreign goods—the very words, foreign and foreigner, by the way, being derived from those occasions, when the “forain” folk came with their wares to the foire or fair. Then, and only then, could the rustics of Yorkshire, or Westphalia, or Provence, see spread before their eyes the glossy cloths of Flanders, the glistening silks brought from the Levant in Genoese galleys, furs of Muscovy, and spices from the far East, the dainty carpets of Ypres, and the unrivalled mirrors of Venice. Every large fair was incomparably more interesting to our forefathers than a great exhibition could possibly be to us. It was there that the cavalier bought his sword of Toledo steel, his plumed hat, and scarlet cloak of Spanish or of Lombard make. There, too, the boor could cheapen his Sheffield whittle or his Ghent wood-axe, and there careful housewives laid in their stock of napery and laces, and the wool and flax that were to keep the spinning-wheel busy through many a long winter's eve. The damsel waited eagerly for the fair, not only because gay ribbons, and kirtles, and trinkets would glitter in fifty booths, but because that was the annual opportunity of learning the fashions of the new apparel worn by grand ladies at the far-off royal court. Even the sufferer from toothache, or the invalid whom simples could not cure, longed for the fair, when travelling dentists and blood-letters, and grave doctors of medicine in furred robes, would come to minister in public to the ills that flesh is heir to.

What a fair was, the great gatherings of Nishni-Novgorod and Leipzig, and even the South of France fair of Beaudecaire, though shorn of their glories, and paling fast before the competition of shops, survive to show us. There the crush, the clamour, the excitement, recal the occasional outbursts of energy that broke the dull, slow-thinking monotony of mediæval existence. Under their acres of canvas and wooden booths are yet exchanged, wholesale and retail, the shawls, and scarfs, and gold

and silver filigrees of Tangiers and Teheran, of Bokhara and Bagdad, for the cutlery of Sheffield, the fire-arms of Liege, the sables of Russia, and the frippery that Paris claims as essentially her own. There the bearded trader of Kiew or Archangel meets the turbaned merchant, whose camels have made the long journey from Khiva or from Kashgand. There the Seville cigar-seller, in his silver-buttoned jacket and striped Moorish mantle, sets up his stall beside that at which a venerable Turk offers the amber beads and mouth-pieces, the embossed yataghans and gorgeous slippers, of Stamboul or of Broussa. An English commercial traveller, clean-shaven, and pert as a London sparrow, is selling Birmingham penknives and Leeds broadcloth in close proximity to a Polish Jew, whose gabardine is deeply incrustated with ancestral grease and dirt, and whose wares are sheepskins and corn-brandy.

No doubt, at best, a fair, sanctioned by the charters of kings, and encouraged by the presence and the smiles of my lord the count and my lady the countess, to say nothing of the approval of bishop and prior, mayor and aldermen, was not an unmixed blessing to any town. Along with commerce and the arts came ill examples and evil teachings. It was not only the limner, ready to take children's portraits, or to paint a fair altar-piece for the village church; it was not only the mender of crockery, the leech, the smith, the travelling tailor, and the barber-surgeon, who flocked to the fair. With these came the charlatan, the cutpurse, the gambler with his loaded dice and marked cards, the crop-eared passer-off of base coin, and the scowling bully, with a shirt of mail beneath his doublet. Along with the juggler, whose simple feats in sword-swallowing and ball-tossing made the villagers gape in rustic wonder; on the heels of the strolling players, whose performance in a barn made the link between the times of Thespis and those of Shakespeare—came much worse speculators on the credulity and passions of their audience. All the cunning and fraud of middle-aged Christendom came to a fair as to a spoil, and rely on it that it went hard, sometimes, with a "young man from the country," among the accomplished practitioners, who had learned their wickedness in London, and Milan, and rich Rome, and brawling Paris. Presently the glaring faults of these worn-out institutions came to outweigh their merits, and so we gradually get round to the time when fairs are

presented as nuisances at quarter sessions, and are put down piecemeal as scandalous anachronisms no longer to be tolerated.

A curious institution that starts into existence in countries inhabited by our own Teutonic race, is that of volunteer courts of justice. We Anglo-Saxons are—as, for that matter, are also our cousins of Holland and our High Dutch and Scandinavian kinsmen—a law-fearing people. Only it must be law that we fear. The downright arbitrary ukase of a master, the writ "de par le roi," before which France cowered, never obtained in this our island, nor had any emperor north of the Rhine the personal power which the Bourbon kings had south of it. But a lawful authority has always been obeyed among us, and when, from any cause, lawful authority has been asleep, an extra-legal deputy has commonly started up to fill the vacant place. The most notable instance of this is the Vehmgericht, which, for three centuries, exercised unquestioned sway over West and South Germany. The princes, lay and ecclesiastical, were too weak or too careless to do justice, the feudal nobles were the scourge of the country, the forests were full of outlaws, the roads of thieves, and the courts of justice were mere mockeries. At this pinch there arose the free-judge, from whose far-reaching arm there was no escape; a judge not to be bribed, not to be intimidated, working in darkness, but dealing out a rude, substantial, irresistible justice. There are few grander conceptions than that of the dread which this viewless tribunal, the sentences of which were carried out as by mystic agency, inspired among the wrong-doers of an age that set brute force and military prowess on a pedestal for worship, and in which equal rights were scoffed at by the strong.

The same spirit, that in the Germany of the dark ages supplemented the inertness of the law, has shown itself in the far west of America. California and Colorado are wild and bad enough, but they would have been uninhabitable had it not been for the pitiless justice of Lynch law. There, as on the Rhine of old, triumphant violence produced a terrible reaction, and the blood-stained ruffian, who had thought to make his red right hand the only law, found himself suddenly arraigned before the grim bar of a regulator's court, with the inevitable halter already tightening round his guilty neck. And though in England such unlicensed verdicts have, since the death of Piers Gaveston, been happily out of fashion,

still the accounts of the Porteous riots prove that the harsh captain of the Edinburgh town-guard was tried, condemned, and hanged, by order of a self-constituted tribunal, that would not spare, but that chose to execute its sentence with a fearful deliberation utterly unlike the frenzied impulse of a mere angry mob.

Can anything be prettier than a *rosière*, as she trips, crowned with white blossoms, herself a human rosebud, along the flower-strewn pathway that leads from the grey old church to her cottage home? Behind her, two and two, walk her young companions, all in pure white, and flinging from their full baskets flowers to right and left, as they go smiling onward. There are the village elders, the silver-haired patriarchs, the good old dames in lace coif and antique ear-rings, beaming approval on the chosen representative of the parochial youth and innocence. There is Monsieur le Curé, in shovel-hat and buckled shoes, the very type of a rustic priest. There are the rural authorities, a corpulent maire in an impossible waistcoat and a brown wig, a good-natured brigadier resplendent in his jack-boots, his gendarme's belt burnished till it glows yellow as a harvest moon, and the captain of the *Pompier*s in his grotesque helmet. The music plays—bassoon, serpent, cymbals, first and second fiddles, do their melodious best. *Boum! boum!* goes the big drum, and the children cry *huzza!* Then there are sugar-plums and sour wine, and dancing in the open air, while Church and State combine to shed their benignant approbation upon the festival of the happy villagers.

Happiest of all is the *rosière*, the crowned Queen of the May, the Flora of the feast. Besides her unsubstantial honours, she is to receive a very substantial dowry of real ringing five-franc pieces, the genuine silver five-franc pieces, heaviest and hardest of cash, minted in the piping peace times of King Louis Philippe, and of the value of which, in securing a suitable husband in cautious France, not even *rosières* are ignorant. She is a lucky girl, for this public celebration is to her a perpetual certificate of good character. Through life she will be well esteemed, as witness the mute testimony of the old *rosières* of bygone years, buxom matrons now, who walk behind her in the pageant, as so many old moons might follow the triumphant march of the young new moon of to-day. Is it not a pretty sight, and did not some old seigneur or lady do well in founding and

endowing such an institution for the reward and settlement of the fairest and the best?

Alas, what a falling off there is! The *rosière* of now-a-days may be, and very likely is, in every respect equal to the *rosière* of one or two hundred years ago, and the curé and the maire as excellent and single-minded. But the spirit of the show has fled, and the fault doubtless is with the spectators. Those staring tourists, with red Murrays in their hands, those sneering dandies of the Paris boulevards, those reporters for the penny newspapers, are not the right kind of audience before whose unsympathetic eyes *rosières* should parade. They believe in nothing, they jeer at everything, they hustle, and crowd, and titter, until they put the procession out of countenance. The peasants themselves grow almost ashamed of a ceremony which is received as if it were a theatrical burlesque, and in a few years, no doubt, even at Nanterre itself, the dowry will be given without the exhibition of the village maiden—Hamlet will be performed without the Prince of Denmark.

Does a potato deserve to be called an institution? Humble tuber as it is, it is quite important enough to take such rank, for it has done much to produce an economical revolution in Europe. It has helped to extirpate more than one hideous disease, once common among the rye-eating labourers, from the Wye to the Wolga. A plot of potatoes furnishes the winter provision on which the petty freeholder of France or Belgium relies for the subsistence of his family. To the Irish cottier the lumpers is almost as valuable as the bread-fruit to the Polynesian. Yet when Raleigh planted the first potatoes in his garden at Youghal, he could not have dreamed how huge a dish he was filling for the hungry mouths of millions, and as little could he guess that the vegetable he had brought from the Indies of the West would be accused of fostering barbarism and of thwarting improvement.

Is Sir Walter's other transatlantic present to us—tobacco—an institution? Is tea one? The first can claim, like Cæsar, to have come, seen, and conquered in all the quarters of the modern globe. In vain pope, patriarch, and sultan opposed their spiritual censures to the resistless progress of the pipe. In vain the British Solomon penned his Counterblast against the baleful weed. Within a few years tobacco triumphed everywhere, and few ex-

chequers could now endure the depletion that its disuse would cause. And when we think of the gigantic commerce, the frequent wars, and the deeply ingrained national habits that have risen, so to speak, from the fragrant steam of the tea-pot, it needs an effort of faith to realise that not so very long ago the first tea brought from Canton was a mere curiosity, apt to be cooked as spinach by those who got the gift of a packet, and that the China drink was chiefly sipped in the shops of apothecaries. Tea and tobacco have, at any rate, obtained so firm a foothold in the land, that it would take a very amazing autocrat, indeed, to drive them out again.

More picturesque and more legitimate are certain institutions that linger only in a few obscure nooks and corners, shadows of their former selves. The May-pole is laid as low as the bitterest of its Puritan foes could have wished it, but some feeble efforts at celebrating the floral games go on in remote hamlets. Only in a very few places do the parish stocks still gape with their wooden jaws for the imprisoned limbs of toppers. The parish bounds are beaten, but not with the antique zest, and the doles of bread-and-meat and raiment are either commuted into small silver, or else the distribution is huddled over, as much out of sight as possible, and as if all parties concerned were thoroughly ashamed of such an old-fashioned fuss about trifles.

But to make a fuss about trifles was the especial characteristic of our ancestors. Perhaps it would be more just to say that there were no such things as trifles to them. Exeter hanged Bardolph without inquiry as to the value of the "pyx of little price." The Recorder of London carted off scores of wretches to Tyburn for such puny thefts as a court of petty sessions would now hesitate to deal with. And, as with the Draconic severity of our forefathers, so with their bounty. Dame Dorothy went to her rest the happier for believing that every Michaelmas and Lady Day, for ever, eight poor old women should, at the church door, receive green gowns, black shoes, and grey cloaks, with "vij pence in money," and ale, meat, and loaves, and should carry candles in procession through the streets, and sing for the repose of their benefactress. It would have shocked Dame Dorothy could she have beheld, with the eye of foreknowledge, the hole-and-corner fashion in which all this green-gown and meat-and-drink business is shuffled through in our degenerate age. It would take many

times eightpence to bribe any eight elderly females, "poor but honest," of our day to march singing through the streets with flickering candles in their old hands. After all it is not the fault of an institution that it wears out after many years. It has very likely worked well in its time, and its wisest course would be, in the fulness of age, gracefully to step aside, and leave the stage clear for more youthful and vigorous competitors.

#### EVENING.

GOLD-FRINGED are the banks of violet cloud,  
The heavens' imperial purple: and the sun  
Shows through their gorgeous mazes, half-obscured,  
Yet gathering grandeur from his hidden might,  
As Beauty shines more powerful half-veiled,  
Than when 'tis all revealed.

From yon white thorn  
The blackcap runs the gamut of his song,  
With rival nightingale, the blackbird pipes  
From cherry bough, and, from the spruce, the thrush  
Joins the blithe evening choir. The apple-blooms  
Are scattered roseate o'er the orchard lands;  
The white-robed pear, the sweet-breathed damascene,  
Weighed down with blossomed fragrance, sprinkle snow  
Upon the daisied grass. The buttercups  
With golden buttons, gem the homestead mead,  
And pale blue squills glint 'neath the tangled wealth  
Of fern and bramble. Home the milkmaid trips,  
Quick, with sweet-scented pail.

The twilight shades  
Merge into mellow gloaming, and the sky  
Its purple glories lost, to crimson turns,  
And paling then to amber, sinks in night!

#### PEACE.

THERE are things which everybody vaunts in theory, but which few people succeed in reducing to practice, and amongst those acknowledged desirabilities I think we may fairly reckon peace. Yet peace, in all its forms and phases, is better known by name than in reality. There are nations whose annals record more years of war, of preparations for war, of recovery from the exhaustion or the disasters of war, than they reckon years free from all thought of hostilities; there are families in which bickerings, jealousies, and disputes, are incessant and continual; there are individuals of so sour a temper that when they have no one else to quarrel with, they seem to take a pleasure in doing their best to pick a quarrel with themselves. It may even be stated that, in this vale of tears, peace is more widely known by its absence than its presence. Not a few unhappy wretches annually rush of their own accord to seek in the grave the peace which they despair to find elsewhere.

And yet what a beautiful thing is peace! The very word is melodious. The Greek

'Εὐφώνη, Eirencee is euphony itself, and has quite as good a right to be a favourite Christian name for women as Grace, Blanche, Aurora, Dagmar, and others. The Latin pax is short, sharp, and blunt; but no one cares how abruptly peace is made, even if it turn out only a truce. The Romans, untiring warriors at home, wished their colonies to enjoy peace, at least in name. The chief city of Estremadura, in Spain, was called Pax Augusta, while Portugal had Pax Julia, the Beja of the present day. Ovid raises Pax to the dignity of a goddess. There were coins that bore the effigy of Pacifer Hercules, Hercules the Peacemaker, and we have had only too recent evidence of what a herculean task peacemaking is. The French paix, though directly descended from the Latin pax, looks better on paper, and when pronounced drops the harsh final consonant. The German friede is a delightful dissyllable. Friedereich ought to signify rich in peace, if anything. It has not been the fault of a certain Frederick (Unser Fritz), we are told, if he has not been so in deed as well as in name. May he live to profit by the saying, "Friede ernährt, Unfriede verzehrt," "Peace nourishes, discord devastates."

In some languages, the word peace is employed only in the singular number, and has no plural, as if it might and should be one and indivisible, never broken in two nor rent asunder; as if peace were intended to be, like eternity, uninterrupted, without break or flaw. In English we may speak of treaties of peace, but can we say peaces as the Romans wrote paces? A treaty of peace is named after the place where it is made; thus we have the Treaty of Amiens, which we may also call the Peace of Amiens. We have had the treaties of Munster, which pacified all Germany, and of Ryswick which, in 1697, restored peace to nearly the whole of Europe, but we can hardly call them the Peaces of Munster and of Ryswick.

Peace, as understood with reference to public affairs, means the tranquillity enjoyed by a community, either at home (as in the absence of civil war and intestine discord) or, in its foreign relations, by the good understanding it maintains with neighbouring countries. One would say that peace at home and peace abroad was the normal and healthy condition of every people who value prosperity and pretend to civilisation. Hobbes, however, hazards the notion that war is the natural condition of man, in which every man's hand is

against every other man; which grates on one's ear as if he had said that pain and disease, not continued good health, were the natural condition of the human body. War is surely a malady of the body corporate, a dislocation of the joints of society, a fever fit attacking all the members who join in it, a determination of blood, not to the head, but to the slaughter-house. War is the fruit of human depravity, the outbreak of an unsound constitution, a convulsive disorder of the body politic. Witness its symptoms and their results. War thins the population of a country, spreads anarchy throughout its length and breadth, makes license take the place of law, jeopardises property, liberty, and life, obstructs all commerce, or brings it to a standstill, and leaves untilled the wretched fields it has devastated. Will any man in his senses, at the present time of day, talk of glory as the upshot of such a combination of miseries? Perhaps. For, after all, we may be told, "It was a glorious victory!"

Peace, like health, gives strength to empires; and empires may exist without having at their head a conquering hero as their emperor. Peace is the natural state of a nation which can isolate itself from morbid influences, from the infection of rabid oratory, and the feverish vanity of augmented territory. Peace maintains domestic order, gives law the strength necessary for its proper working, favours the increase of population, and encourages trade. Peace makes life a blessing; war almost tempts us to regard it as a curse.

In spite of the proverbs which prove the popular appreciation of peace—the end of a feast is better than the beginning of a fray; the beginnings of strife are like the letting in of waters—peace is a blessing whose full value is not felt until it is lost. Warlike nations show their sense of this by the way in which they symbolise peace. The Greeks figured Peace as a goddess, carrying in her arms the infant Plutus, the god of wealth. Peace thus holds the first beginnings of riches, which will increase if their nurse is suffered to survive. Amongst the Romans, we ordinarily find Peace represented with an olive-branch, sometimes with wings (to denote how easy it is to make her take her flight), holding a caduceus or wand, with which she threatens a serpent (the symbol of evil, mischief, and wickedness) crawling at her feet. The cornucopia, or horn of plenty, is often added as a fitting attribute.

The caduceus is the symbol of the mes-

senger Mercury, to mark the negotiations which have brought about peace. The olive-tree is the symbol of peace. Now it is the permanence of peaceful growth which is indispensable to the olive-tree, to enable it to yield its annual produce. It will not, like the vine or the peach-tree, give its fruit after a few years' culture. It is profitless in a country frequently devastated by war. "Hesiod delivers," wrote Sir Thomas Browne, "that none who planted the olive gathered of the fruit thereof." This corresponds to our "Plant pears, plant for your heirs." Horticultural skill, aided by quince stocks, has been able to do more in hurrying pears than it has in hastening the appearance of olives, whose blossoms take a long, long time to make up their mind to come into the world. This absolute need to live in quiet times, renders the olive-tree a specially apt emblem of peace. Moreover, it was the gift of Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, implying that if fools are pugnacious and rush into broils without knowing how they are to get out of them, wise men think twice before they venture to drag the rope of defiance through a Donnybrook fair.

One of the medals of Antonius Pius represents Peace holding an olive-branch in her right hand, and burning with her left hand bucklers and cuirasses, which, consequently, must have been made of wood, or at least of leather. The idea, if not novel, was at least ingenious; as also was that on the medals of Titus, which figure Peace with an olive-branch in one hand, and with the other leading a lamb and a wolf yoked together.

Peace has a variety of meanings, all offshoots from its one primary signification. There is the king's peace, or the queen's peace; namely, the state of public tranquillity which every good subject is bound to maintain, and breaches of which are punishable by justices of the peace, who are empowered by the law to bind over parties to keep the peace. In this minor sense (though the fact is not of minor importance, for blessed are the peacemakers, of whatever kind) judicious and kindly persons may succeed in making peace between litigious neighbours, quarrelsome husbands and wives, or jealous brethren. Pax, too, in Latin, as in English, means "Peace, be still; hold your tongue;" as if the tongue had really sometimes something to do with stirring up strife.

The peace of God of the middle ages

was rather the truce of God, the *trêve de Dieu*, peace being the cessation of hostilities between belligerent nations, and a truce or *trêve* the temporary suspension of fighting between individuals at feud with each other. The peace or truce of God was a lull of armed strife, from the Wednesday evening of every week up to Monday morning, enforced by ecclesiastics and the princes of the Church in the times when individuals had the right to kill the murderer of a parent, or to take justice into their own hands in any other case that might turn up in those days of unsettled authority. According to ancient custom, the hall of audience in which justice was administered, was the house of peace. Towns of peace were those in which persons were not allowed to avenge themselves, otherwise than by an appeal to justice, in contradistinction to towns and provinces where they had the right to settle their differences by private warfare.

The peace of God effected, in its day, an enormous amount of good. In feudal times, all Europe was studded with castles, whose owners were constantly at war with one another. The result would have been the ruin of agriculture, the suppression of industry, and the destruction of the population, if the clergy had not been able to diminish the evil; to prevent it entirely was out of their power. In 1034, a bishop, whose name is not chronicled, announced that he had miraculously received from heaven the order to preach peace on earth. The feudal lords were persuaded to meet in council with the prelates, to lay down rules for the peace of God. At first, it was too opposed to the manners of the day to have much effect. Whether for self-defence or the execution of vengeance, private war was a wild kind of justice, which could hardly be renounced, even while its consequences were deplored. Ultimately it was agreed that, to render due honour to the Sabbath, no man should attack his enemy on Sunday, no one should attack in any way a clerk or a monk travelling unarmed, or a man going to, or returning from church, or accompanied by women; no one should attack a church or the houses within thirty paces of it, under pain of excommunication, to be converted into anathema at the end of three months' impenitence. In this way the peace of God checked brutal passions to a certain extent, by enforcing the laws of religion and humanity. Little by little the *trêve de Dieu* was adopted in France and England, and

was confirmed by Pope Urban the Second, at the Council of Clermont, 1095.

As to treaties of peace, history supplies them by the bushful. We may sweep them up together in heaps, as we would the leaves of the coming autumn. Treaties, unfortunately, are radically deciduous, and by no means evergreen in constitution. A Light of Diplomacy once sang thus :

Come hither, come hither—by night and by day,  
We linger in treaties that never are done;  
Like the waves of the summer, as one dies away,  
Another as short and as shallow comes on.  
And the treaty that's o'er, in expiring, gives birth  
To a new one, as false and as hollow in bliss;  
And oh! if there be arrant humbug on earth,  
It is this, it is this.

Sundry commentators on treaties of peace have uttered wise saws which deserve some attention at the present moment.

A point of the first importance is: if public agreements or treaties of peace are regarded by nations as utterly sacred and inviolable, nothing can be more conducive than such treaties to the repose and tranquillity of the human race. Princes and nations having no common judge who is competent to take cognisance of and pronounce judgment respecting the justice of a war, men could have no confidence in a treaty of peace, if there existed fears of its being broken under ordinary circumstances. The expression "ordinary circumstances" is used, because there are cases in which the injustice of the conditions of a treaty of peace are self-evident. When the unjust conqueror abuses his victory to the point of imposing on the vanquished harsh, cruel, and absolutely insupportable conditions, international law would refuse to sanction such treaties, or to impose on the vanquished the obligation of complying with them.

Hear another bit of sage advice: "It is but too common that, in a treaty of peace, those who have been victorious during the war take all the advantage they can of their successes, by making those who have been beaten, and whom they know incapable of keeping the field any longer, buy the peace at a very dear rate; as it was proposed to make the French do it in the treaty of Gertrudenberg, which the late King of France, Louis the Fourteenth, would never submit to. . . . A prince should never refuse to enter into a treaty, on honourable and equitable terms, to put an end to a destructive war; since none is sure that victory, which is as great a jilt as fortune itself, shall always accompany his arms; and that favourable opportunity

once neglected, a turn may happen in the affairs, which shall force him perhaps to make a dishonourable peace."

When flatterers told Gustavus, after his great successes, that he was an instrument of Providence for the salvation of mankind, a visible proof of the Almighty's goodness, "Say rather of his anger," replied the conqueror. "If the war I have waged is a remedy, it is far more insupportable than all the evils you have had to bear."

More instructive and convincing than any argument or anecdote just now, is to flit across the Channel and go and see what war has done, and what peace would have left undone.

## IN THE FIELD WITH THE PRUSSIANS.

A MARCH TO THE FRONT WITH THE GRAND DUKE OF MECKLENBURG'S CORPS.

HALT! How gladly we obeyed that order! It was four P.M., and the weather, which had been as bad as it could be during the day, at last seemed inclined to be more merciful. The sun struggled hard to unveil himself from his thick envelopment of clouds, and, as the mud-splashed troopers in the van drew up at the welcome order, one could see a faint gleam from a few stray sunbeams on their spiked helmets. The place which the Grand Duke had chosen as a resting-place for his corps of over thirty thousand men was not a large town with comfortable cafés and hotels, nor was it a large village. As far as I could see, far and near, there was not a single house.

"Surely we shall go on?" I said to a young dragoon officer.

"The word halt means stay here," was the answer. "I, for one, don't wish to move another step, neither do you, do you, Fox?" said he as he patted his beautiful steed. "I say, young fellow," he continued, "you had better bivouac with us; we'll show you how to make a bivouac comfortable."

"Very well," I said, "I shall be very happy to learn." The bugle sounded, and the men fell out of marching order, and got into groups.

The road by which we had come was flanked on one side by a vast plateau, with a few copses here and there dotting its surface; on the other side of the chaussée the ground sloped gently downwards for a few yards, and then made a rapid descent till it met a branch of the blue Moselle, which danced over the boulders in the

rocky valley below. The beautiful chaussée, which was lined by two rows of fine lime-trees, was crowded by horses and baggage waggons, although most of the men had long since crossed on to the plateau; gradually these were disposed of, however, and the chaussée was perfectly clear. Men now came with bill-hooks, and the most beautiful trees, being chosen on account of the thickness and number of their branches, were felled. As each giant came down with a crash, so many men would come and cut the branches off, and bear them away to the spot appointed for their company's bivouac. It was a curious sight to see these trees falling over, two or three at a time, as far as the eye could reach down the chaussée. No more should they delight the Frenchman's eyes, and give shade to the weary peasant in the noonday heat. A few hacks from a German hatcher, and the work of years of care expended on them was undone. It was strange to see how the men built their various habitations. Usually ten or a dozen would club their supply of branches together to build what they called a palace. When finished I can't say that these buildings bore much resemblance to palaces in the usual acceptation of that word, but they answered their purpose well enough. Sometimes, however, a man seemed to prefer building a place of shelter for himself; this I usually noticed was the case if a man had a private supply of straw in one of the carts. It might be a mere handful, but it was such a precious article that its fortunate possessor was deemed quite justified in keeping it all to himself. The officers of the dragoon regiment with whom I bivouacked made their servants prepare their huts, under their supervision, and they certainly did have a supply of straw, which, though not very abundant, was some sort of covering to the ground soddened with rain.

The baggage waggon, a required cart, was unloaded; its contents consisted of a table, and four or five chairs, also required, and half a dozen cases of champagne, which I don't think were paid for.

"Here's luxury—tables, chairs, champagne! Why, the Parisians don't get much more than this," said a dragoon officer.

I took a hatchet, and set to work like a backwoodsman. It was a busy scene; the men had all piled their arms almost within reach of where each man was to sleep. They were all piled in fours, with the bayonets fixed, and on the top of the bayo-

nets the spiked helmets were placed. As night approached, the bivouac fires illumined the gloom, and faces gradually gathered round them. The outposts, horse and foot, were all on the alert; for although Marshal Bazaine would have to pass Prince Frederick Charles's forces before he could pepper us with his chassepots, should he wish to make a sortie, the distance from Metz was very inconsiderable. Beasts which each regiment had been driving on ahead of them were quickly slaughtered. Oxen and sheep seemed to be slaughtered indiscriminately, some of the soldiers getting beef, some mutton.

More carts now appeared on the bustling scene. What can they be, some drawn by three, some by four horses, attached to the carts by ropes? On they come. What do these wretched old tumble-down carts contain? Look at their drivers; why one would think the creatures were buffoons or clowns. One is dressed in a German soldier's uniform coat of Prussian blue, his legs are enveloped in the red pantaloons of some departed Frenchman, a lady's bonnet covers his head. Are they French or are they Prussians? They halt near the different regiments, and their presence seems instinctively to be felt, for soldiers, without having apparently noticed their arrival, make quickly toward them. The man in clothes of many colours descends, and brings forth from his cart a cask and a stand for it. This cask contains a fluid which both Germans and English know by the name of schnaps. The Mecklenburgers fill their flasks with it, as they have been emptied during the tiring march, and also buy bread, and sausages, or cheese, from the man in the cart, who goes by the name of "the market-tender."

"Now, my friend," said Von Uslar, "come, let us sit round our bivouac fire and have a talk."

I willingly consented, as I was wet to the skin.

In a few moments two more dragoons joined us. The conversation was entirely on the war, of course. We all had the greatest respect for Marshal Bazaine's powers, and none of us thought lightly of what would be the consequence if that savage old lion broke loose.

"I wonder how many men he has under him?" I said.

"About eighty or ninety thousand," was the answer.

"He has the Guards' corps and three other corps, I think," said a dragoon, light-



ing his fourth pipe. "Von Uslar," continued he, "have not you got a pack of cards?"

"Yes," said Von Uslar; "here they are."

We sat round a cask, and by light of the blazing bivouac fire we began a game of whist, of which we had not finished the first rubber, when heavy drops began to fall.

"Holloa! again a wet night," said Von Uslar. "What a time we have had of it! Three weeks' bivouacking every night in the rain. Some people say bivouacking is fine; let them come and try it. I, for one, prefer the worst roof to the best bivouac. It's no use going on, or these cards won't last another game out; as it is, it is difficult enough to tell one from another even now."

We now crouched round the fire, which hissed as the heavy drops came pattering down.

"Here's a night!" exclaimed another dragoon. "What a strange fellow you are to come this immense distance, to this wretched place, for the sake of helping wounded foreigners."

"Why," I answered, "I am amply rewarded by the pleasure I feel in the excitement of adventure, and in being of a little use. And as for immense distances, why a fellow does not think much of that when he has been cruising about for three years in the English navy from Labrador to the West Indies."

"Potstausend," said the officer, "we think ourselves great travellers in having been to Bohemia in 1866 and in being here now, do we not, Von Uslar? And now we meet an Englishman who, only half our age, has been all over the world, and thinks nothing of it. You are wonderful people, you Englishmen; it is a great advantage you islanders have over us. Travelling improves the mind more than tons of books; at least, so I think."

"Good-night," said Von Uslar. "Come along, Englishman; there's a bit of wet straw between us, and a few twigs overhead, which let in every drop of rain."

I did up every button of my waterproof, undid a rug, and laid myself down in the first soldier's bivouac I had ever slept in. The rain dripped on my face and pattered on the rug and mackintosh; but I was soon asleep, in spite of the constant gruff "Wer da" of the German sentries and the uncomfortable surroundings.

Grey dawn found me sitting upright, rubbing my eyes, and extracting my feet

and legs from a pool of water and mud into which they had sunk during the night. To say I felt cold would give you no adequate idea of what I felt. I was too numbed to be cold. I threw the wet rug off me, took off my mackintosh, and scampered down the road. The day was fine, and after half an hour's running and walking, I came back to get a tin panful of hot coffee, and to place my soaked boots over the glowing embers of a bivouac fire.

"We start at six," said Von Uslar, "and we go through Pont-à-Mousson. The Grand Duke is going to review us there."

"I'll ride on," I said. "The road is all open to Pont-à-Mousson, is it not?"

"Right away to Toul," was the answer.

A couple of hours' hard riding brought me to Pont-à-Mousson. I certainly was not sorry to take off my clothes, which were still wet through, in a comfortable room in the Hôtel de France, and sitting before a blazing fire, I made myself and them once more dry and warm.

Pont-à-Mousson is a lovely little town on both sides of the Moselle, with a ruined castle crowning a hill overlooking the usually peaceful valley. Alas! all was changed now; the ruined castle and the green hill were certainly still there, but no longer was the valley they overlooked peaceful. The heavy lumbering waggons of war rattled over the stony streets, and the tramp of armed thousands mingled with the loud, deep-toned voices of the German soldiery.

In front of the Hôtel de France at Pont-à-Mousson there is a large square open space. Exactly opposite the hotel is the town-hall, out of the balcony of which was hung the following German inscription: "Not unto us, but unto God be the praise. Hail, Wilhelm!" In this building the governor of Pont-à-Mousson had taken up his abode, and there were about two thousand Prussian troops garrisoned here, besides something like seven thousand wounded, distributed amongst the various buildings, so that the town was very full. I had just begun lunch when I heard the sound of a band approaching, and on going out I found the vanguard of the Mecklenburgers already in the market-place. It was past noon, and the sun had come out, and was shining brilliantly. Underneath the inscription hanging out of the town-hall's balcony, a group of handsomely attired officers on horseback stood awaiting the arrival of the army corps. The Grand Duke's horse was a little in advance of those belonging to the

officers of his staff. The Uhlans came trotting along; as they got opposite their leader they turned their eyes towards him. The Grand Duke cried in a loud voice, "Guten Morgen." There was a shout in reply from the Uhlans, and the splendid troop swept by. A band next appeared, and the Grand Duke motioned it to a spot exactly opposite to where he stood. The heavy tramp, tramp of the soldiers in a swinging step was now heard, but not another sound; on they came, with bayonets fixed, and their spiked helmets dancing in the sunbeams. It was a glorious sight.

There were no signs of weariness; the men, who had now spent three whole weeks in the open air, and for that time had been bivouacked in the pouring rain, showed no signs of discontent or fatigue. Onwards, press onwards! seemed the talisman which pervaded the whole force. The band stopped playing; the head of the leading column was now opposite the town-hall.

"Guten Morgen!" said the Grand Duke again.

All answered the greeting; from rank to rank it swelled into an irresistible wave; like a roar or thunder-clap it rolled along the sky, caught up and re-echoed by regiment after regiment through that mighty host passing through the narrow streets. The last sound of this burst of feeling had scarcely died away, when the band struck up the tune, Was blasen die Trompeten.

The soldiers passed, walking over four miles an hour. There was not a vestige of mud on their uniforms. They looked as if they had just been to Sunday parade in Germany, all was so bright and clean; yet they had been marching since six that morning, with eighty pounds weight of accoutrements and clothes.

The string of soldiers seemed ceaseless. On, on, on, hour after hour. After ten thousand men had passed, marching always four, and, when there were officers, five abreast, there was a clatter of hoofs, and a battery of light field guns trotted through the town, those springless carriages bumping their burdens, which do so much in war. The first thing a soldier asks when his regiment is on the march is, "Where are the guns?" Woe betide the commander who has to answer, "There are none!"

Again regiments of the line passed. They were all alike. Each man bore a joyous, defiant look; each one seemed to bear his heavy burden and long march with the utmost nonchalance.

Following a couple of line regiments came a company of engineers. These are the hardest worked men in every army corps, and their clothes already showed hard wear; and this for the Mecklenburgers was only the beginning of the campaign. Following this body of veterans came a pontoon train. It seemed strange to see an army carrying boats about with them; but bridge making is a very important branch of war making, as was shown to great advantage near Paris, when all the bridges were blown up.

Following the pontoon waggons (each of which, like the guns, was dragged by three pairs of horses), came more infantry, and other batteries of field artillery. Each regiment's band changed places with that of the former one. At last the light blue coats of the dragoons appeared, and their mounted band, with no other instruments than cornepeans, relieved the band of the foregoing infantry regiment. They played the German Fatherland. Von Uslar's troop looked in apple-pie order, and the Grand Duke called him to his side, and complimented him on their appearance. More artillery followed. The string seemed endless. Hour after hour fled, and still the living mass poured onward. A splendid band now struck up Die Wacht am Rhein, and the men, one and all, joined in. How many times had that song been sung since they had crossed and parted from that beloved stream? It was sad to think that so many of those manly fellows, now rolling out the deep notes of the solemn music, would never see the Rhine again. Each heart seemed wrapped in the song, however, which rose and sank, and rose again, while the tramp, tramp of the measured tread kept time. They had now been marching five hours consecutively through the town, and had been eleven hours on the march, yet the Grand Duke sat his horse, and still regiment after regiment passed before him. Six o'clock came and found the stream still flowing on. A band of a new regiment had just taken its place, and half the soldiers belonging to the regiment had passed, when there was a block. What could this mean? The first block for six hours! The Grand Duke was probably getting hungry, for he was terribly enraged at the stoppage. An aide-de-camp left his side, with an imperious message in all probability, for he spurred his horse through the gaping crowd of townspeople with the most utter contempt for life and limb. Many a man's muttered curse and many a

woman's shriek of horror followed his track to the front. Ten minutes passed, but still the Mecklenburgers were at a dead lock. In vain the Grand Duke ordered the men to crowd forward; in vain aide-de-camp after aide-de-camp left his side. At last the cause of the stoppage became apparent. A wounded convoy of French prisoners, some in carts, some on foot, got as far as the market-place. What a frightful contrast was there—the conquerors and the vanquished! There was a perfect yell of horror from the French crowd when they appeared, guarded by a file of Bavarians on either side. The Grand Duke ordered them to remain on the market-place till his army corps had passed, and rated the officer in charge soundly for having stopped the progress of thirty-five thousand men, with all their artillery and baggage.

The splendid appearance of the German troops showed the glorious side of war, but one had only to turn one's eyes to the crowd gathered round the wounded sons of France, to see the sad side. There they lay, with bandaged heads and arms in slings, racked by pain and crushed by misfortune, and had to watch the victorious march of their enemies into their bleeding country. Women would look at the stern face and manly figure of the Grand Duke reviewing his passing host, and then sidle up to their own countrymen to give them a drink of water, looking afraid of being caught at such an act of humanity, or ashamed of doing it; while the French peasants, with brows knit and teeth set, looked perfectly demoniacal in their bitter hate.

At last the ambulance train appeared. The waggons were eight in number. After the surgeons came a few companies of the line bringing up the rear. Thirty-five thousand men had passed through Pont-à-Mousson for the front. As the last files were in the act of passing, the aide-de-camp, who had been so careless in riding through the crowd, reappeared, and was spurring to the Grand Duke's side, when there was a report from a rifle, and a bullet struck a wall close by the aide-de-camp. He turned very pale. The little white puff floated away over the house from whence it had issued. There was a rush of the German soldiers garrisoned in the town, who had been looking on at the review, to catch the would-be assassin, but he was nowhere to be found.

The next day the district was fined two thousand pounds for this single shot, which

had missed its object. Such was the iron hand held by the victorious German army over the people of France.

## MY NEW IDEA.

DEDICATED TO MM. LES CHEVALIERS  
D'INDUSTRIE.

### IN TWO PARTS. PART I.

PLACED—owing to a combination of circumstances to be hereafter described—in a situation of great retirement, which affords me many most favourable opportunities for study and reflection, I have determined to employ such time as is at my disposal in putting together a short account of a certain curious episode in my life, a truthful description of which cannot, I think, fail to impress all who become acquainted with its details with a considerable amount of respect for an extraordinary display of ingenuity, and at the same time of compassion for an equally extraordinary exhibition of ill luck.

I have been, all my life, an original thinker—one of those men from among whom the ranks of the great inventors, discoverers, and originators are recruited. Indeed, this peculiar bias of my mind began to show itself at a very early age, so that I remember, when a mere boy, engaging in a competition, having for its object the invention of a new kind of omnibus which should be entirely free from the defects which belong to the existing vehicle. My design had great merits, but it was not accepted. There was some difficulty, as far as I remember, in connexion with the hind-wheels and the door, involving the necessity of sacrificing one or the other of those institutions, and as they were both looked upon by the authorities as essentials to a properly organised omnibus, my scheme fell through.

As I advanced in years, this tendency of my intellectual faculties to expand in the direction of inventiveness continued to develop itself more and more. It prevented me from settling down to any definite occupation. I always felt, indeed, very strongly, that there was one particular profession, or calling, for which I was pre-eminently fitted by nature—and from embarking in which I was only deterred by the one obstacle of its non-existence as a recognised business—I mean that of a suggester, or general adviser, on the largest scale. In this line I could always have done, and could still do, a prodigious good stroke of business. This was my niche.

If I could only have established myself in this profession of general adviser, I feel sure, as I look back, that incalculable advantage would have accrued to all sorts of people. It is really astonishing how fit I was for this post. I could have advised mankind upon all sorts of subjects. I should have been in a position to inform all those who might have consulted me exactly what course to pursue in every difficulty, great or small, besides furnishing, without hesitation, satisfactory solutions to all those social problems by which society is so continually puzzled. This function, of which I have spoken, having, however, owing to the indifference of mankind to its own interests, no existence, I set myself to consider what line of life would suit me next best to the oracular business, and soon came to the conclusion that the next best thing to being a General Adviser would be to become a General Inventor. And here I may remark that I had no sooner set up in this capacity than I became almost bewildered at the fecundity of my own inventive faculties. My brain was actually flooded with new and valuable ideas. To begin with, I naturally returned to that old notion of my boyhood of an improved omnibus—an idea which, purged of the faults which disfigured the original design, developed itself rapidly into what did, and does, appear to me to have been a very great and remarkable invention. My omnibus was to be called the *dos-à-dos*, or “seclusion” omnibus, the seats being arranged back to back, and each provided with a distinct roof and sides of its own, presenting the appearance of one of those porter’s chairs which are still to be met with in the halls of the British aristocracy. Opposite to each seat was a little door, with a step which, by a simple mechanical arrangement, descended whenever the door opened. The wheels were a difficulty for a while, interfering ruinously with the opening of these doors, but I conquered them ultimately, placing them under the vehicle, as in railway carriages, instead of outside it. The “seclusion” omnibus was a great idea, truly; so was the “oval pill,” which—its bulk being so much in length and so little in breadth—was certain to slip down the throat almost without the consciousness of the swallower; so was my aerial machine, held in air by a balloon, and worked by vast paddles turned by the feet of the passengers; so was my system of tattooing every human being at birth with his or her name, rendering identification, under any circumstances

which could possibly occur, a thing of certainty.

I soon found that to do anything with these inventions of mine—and there were many others besides, which I have not mentioned—in my native town, was a thing entirely out of the question. I had very good connexions there, it is true, and was, though I say it, thought a good deal of. My inventions got to be much talked about, and were pronounced by all the authorities of the town to be highly ingenious and deserving of general attention. Still it was agreed on all hands that a provincial town, however important, was not the proper sphere for the development of my genius, and that London was the place where my abilities would have the fullest scope. As I was in nowise unwilling to consent to this arrangement, the point was soon settled, and to London I went, big with schemes for attaining both fortune and fame.

I had excellent introductions. I have already stated that I had good connexions in my native town. I had always had a faculty for making friends, being—again though I say it, who shouldn’t say it—an agreeable young fellow enough, with sprightly manners and a good deal to say for myself, so that I had made plenty of friends in the neighbourhood in which I resided, besides those inherited from my parents, both of whom were now deceased. All these worthy people were quite ready to give me letters of introduction to their connexions and friends in London, and I arrived there with social prospects of the best kind, and feeling very sanguine indeed as to my future.

The society into which I found myself introduced was one, the principal members of which belonged mainly to the commercial class, the same kind of people as were the friends who had furnished me with my introductions, only richer and more distinguished. Of course I met with many persons who were not engaged in mercantile pursuits, such as artists, literary men, and others, but I knew them only as guests encountered from time to time at the houses of my commercial acquaintances, and it was with these last only that I could call myself really intimate. I must confess that I found them, every one, perfectly ready to help me with all my plans for making a fortune. They put me in the way of pushing my inventions, and though no particular individual among them was concerned either in the manufacture of omnibuses, or in the pill trade, they had

business relations with all sorts of agents and others who were able to get at those who were so concerned, and to these persons they committed me and my schemes, comforting me with the assurance that I was in the best hands possible.

Alas! these "best hands" were able to afford me but little assistance. I dare say they did what they could. They certainly laid my statements and my designs before what are called "practical men"—men engaged in the different callings with which my inventions were connected. These were all against me. The practical carriage-builder, to whom my omnibus design was shown, objected to the number of doors—six on each side of the vehicle. He pronounced that it would be necessary to have at least two conductors, one on each side, lest while the official in question was taking a fare at one of the doors on the "near" side (as the vulgar and suspicious man expressed it), all the passengers on the "off" side should let themselves out and "bolt." Practical man, indeed! Unpractical idiot I call him. As if anything could be easier than to fasten each passenger in, and let him out on his ringing a bell provided for the purpose. This very wretched creature took it into his head, besides, that my plan of placing the wheels of my omnibus under the conveyance, instead of outside it, would necessitate the raising of the body of the vehicle to an inconvenient height from the ground. Idiot again! As if that did not entirely depend upon the size of the wheels!

It was so with all my inventions; the practical men invariably picked holes in them. The practical chemist, for instance, was of opinion that my oval pill would be all very well if it could be guaranteed to go down the throat end foremost; but suppose it should find its way into the oesophagus—absurd, pedantic expression!—crosswise, and stick there, "How then?"

My other inventions fared no better.

As to my idea of tattooing every newly-born child with its name—this being the business of no practical man in particular—I submitted to the world in general by means of a letter sent to one of the daily papers. But this scheme met with the worst fate of all, the mere proposal bringing down upon me a mixed torrent of indignation and ridicule which it was really most difficult to bear. I was accused on one side of wishing to reduce the whole community to the level of convicts and malefactors, and on the other of treating

human beings as I would a flock of sheep, or New Forest ponies. In a word, no one would have anything to say to any one of my proposals, and I was soon brought face to face with the fact that, so far as the prospect of making a fortune went, I was no better off here in London than I had been in my native town.

Against all these failures, I had just this as a set-off, that my social successes were positively enormous. My circle of friends enlarged daily. Every time I dined out I made a host of new acquaintances, who in turn asked me constantly to their houses. I was, as I have already stated, lively and talkative, and I always observed that there were seldom any of those awkward pauses, which are so justly dreaded by the givers of entertainments, when I made one of the party. I think it was this power which I possessed, of running on perpetually with a glib flow of conversation, which got me so many invitations. At all events, there the invitations were stuck in my chimney-glass in a goodly array; invitations to garden parties, to dinners, to conversaziones, to balls. I never spent an evening alone by any chance.

Still, all this did not fill my pockets—on the contrary, I think it had rather a tendency to empty them. Live as carefully as he may, there are some expenses which a young man who goes much into society is certain to have to encounter. He must spend some money on dress, for instance. Hats and gloves are very expensive, and so, let me add, is clean linen. Then there is locomotion. Society is always rushing about, and rushing about costs money. It is desirable, too, for those who—well, who are not entirely secure about their position, to keep well with people's servants, and that, again, is not to be done without occasional disbursements. At all events, I spent a good deal of money, and as I received none at all, it may be conceived that my financial state could hardly be described as a satisfactory one, and that, far from improving, it continued daily to get worse and worse. Our troubles of a pecuniary nature sometimes sharpen our wits, and this truth was destined to be illustrated in my case, in a remarkable degree, as I shall proceed to prove.

The origin of many noble inventions is lost in obscurity, and it is a well-known fact that, in not a few cases, the authors of all sorts of glorious creations of the imagination have been unable to point to the exact moment when a great idea has en-

tered their heads, or to say by what particular incident or occurrence in their lives it was originally suggested. Just so is it with me in relation to a very ingenious—not to say sublime—conception, which developed itself in my mind about this time.

My great idea—as I propose henceforth to designate the ingenious and universally misunderstood conception, the history of whose development I am now writing—my great idea seems, like many other great ideas, to have grown and expanded gradually from a very small beginning. I was dining one day at the house of a friend, when happening in the course of conversation with my neighbour to raise my arm, which had been resting carelessly on the table, I observed that a silver spoon, which was lying in company with some forks by the side of my plate, had accidentally got inside the cuff of my coat, and that when I lifted my arm the piece of silver slipped up my sleeve and disappeared. I shook it out upon the table, and, in my sprightly manner, called the attention of the fair creature who sat beside me to the circumstance, pointing out to her how easily any one so disposed might in this way help himself to his friend's plate without being observed by his neighbours.

It was immediately after, and I suppose in consequence of, this apparently most trivial incident, that a thought, destined to have much influence on my future, first suggested itself to my mind. What a wonderful career, as an abstracter of articles not exactly belonging to him, a man might have who started with a good reputation and reputable connexions, and a large circle of friends! What endless opportunities of possessing himself of other people's property would come continually in his way, and how long he might continue his course of appropriating, so to speak, such property to his own use without anybody suspecting him! When the objects which such an one had st—appropriated, came to be missed, all sorts of people belonging to a lower grade in society than that held by the real "knight of industry," as our neighbours excellently term such pickers up of unconsidered trifles—all sorts of servants, waiters, kitchen-helpers, and the like, would be suspected, while the friend of the family, the man whom everybody knew about, who had been so well introduced, and who moved in such good society, would never, so much as by a thought, be connected in anybody's mind with the disappearance of the missing property.

I look upon the arising of this train of reflections in my mind as the first hint of the awakening of the great idea within me. The faint streaks that suggested its dawning were beginning to show themselves. It was some time before the idea itself really peeped up above the horizon, but that the way was prepared for it by that dessert-spoon incident, is a fact which cannot, I think, be doubted.

As to the course of proceeding immediately suggested by that incident, I need hardly say that I did not enter upon it, although I was really exceedingly hard up. The thought of it, however, stuck to me, and sometimes when sitting at table I used to find myself abstractedly scooping up a fork or a spoon with my cuff, and then letting it out again, just to prove to myself, as it were, how very easily it might be done if one were so inclined. "With my acquaintance and my good name," I sometimes said to myself, "I might appropriate—unsuspected—enough objects of value to keep me quite comfortably." I did not, however, as I have said, act upon this crude idea, but it stuck to me and prepared the way for something on a much more splendid scale which was to follow. That "something" was brought into existence in rather a curious fashion. It was brought into existence through the immediate agency of a photograph book.

Socially speaking, a man may generally be considered as being in a bad way when he spends an evening, or indeed any portion of an evening, in examining a collection of photographic portraits. It is a proceeding which indicates a certain amount of desertion by his friends, or a dearth of conversational resources in the individual himself. Still, there are moments when we all come to it, and I came to it one evening at the house of a rich City friend, when my conversational powers had broken down under an attack of low spirits, engendered by an unseasonable and inopportune consideration of my affairs, into which I had fallen after dinner. In this disastrous frame of mind I loitered disconsolate into the back drawing-room, and seating myself by the side of the inevitable round table, commenced a minute examination of the contents of a large square photographic album, richly bound in crimson morocco, with gilt clasps.

The book was full of portraits of City men, business associates, and private friends of the commercial magnate whose dinner I had just been eating.

There they were, and there were their wives, and sometimes their sons and daughters. I was in a morose, savage temper that evening, and as I looked upon the portraits of these worthy capitalists, I could not help regarding them with something very nearly akin to hatred. "How ugly they all are," I said to myself. "How ugly, how vulgar, and how disgustingly solvent." The memory of my own impoverished condition was still haunting me. "Confound their smooth broadcloth and their square-toed, well-blacked boots. I hate them." I fell foul of their hand-writings next; the book belonged to the young lady of the house, and she had got the signatures of nearly all the originals of those portraits written under each. "What trucing!" I went on still in the same truculent mood. "'Commercial hands' chiefly, thick down-strokes, thin up-strokes; now and then an attempt at an autograph, with just a sprawl and a splutter to make 'John Brown' look as unlike the real thing as possible." I paused, and went on turning over the leaves and thinking. "And yet those signatures which I despise would go for something in the City. I wish I had one of each of them at the foot of a cheque for a thousand pounds. I wish—what—no—yes—" I stopped abruptly, a sort of hot shooting sensation seemed to pass through my body; the portraits of the capitalists began to revolve and swim before my eyes, and I was hardly able to support the weight of the book as it lay open upon my knees. My great idea was just beginning to suggest itself.

At this moment the young lady, the daughter of the house, to whom the book belonged, came up to the table, and, seating herself opposite me, began talking.

"I thought I saw you busy with my album," she said. "What do you think of the collection?"

I was still entirely upset and confused by the magnitude of the idea which had just dawned upon me, but I managed to stammer out that I regarded the collection as one of very great interest.

"It is rendered additionally so," I added, "by the autographs which are placed under the portraits. May I ask how you managed to get them?"

"Oh, quite easily. I got the photographs first and stuck them into the book, and then, when any one of the originals came to see us, I made him sit down and write his name under his portrait."

"Oh—that—was—how it was—done—

was it? How easily managed!" I added, abstractedly.

"Yes; and, by-the-bye, that reminds me that I haven't got your signature yet. Your portrait is in the book somewhere I know—let me see—ah, here it is—but with no autograph. So I'll get you to write me one now. Here is a pen, and here is the ink—but," she continued, "you look quite bewildered, as if I had asked you to do something extraordinary."

"I was thinking of something," I said.

Then, rousing myself, I took the pen in my hand and wrote my name in my best style, and with none of those commercial down-strokes which my soul abhorred, I promise you.

That memorable evening was a turning-point in my career. From that smallest and most insignificant of incidents, the taking up of a book of photographs by a young man in a condition of listlessness and despondency, great results in connexion with the fate of the young man in question were destined to be brought about.

I had for some time seen very plainly that something must be done to retrieve my fortunes. The only question was what that "something" was to be—a question which I was continually asking myself, and to which I as continually received the same answer. "Go," said Destiny, "with all speed to America. There you will find something like a fair market for your abilities. There a man of your active and inventive turn of mind will be appreciated. There the novelties with which your brain teems will seethe and bubble to some purpose. Your discoveries and inventions will go at last for what they are worth. There your 'oval pill' will be swallowed by all sorts and conditions of men, and there you will ride on, in your own 'seclusion' omnibus, to wealth and glory."

Now all this I did "most powerfully and potently believe" to be true, feeling convinced that if I could once get to that great land of promise, the United States, all my difficulties would be at an end, that there I should at last be appreciated, that my inventions, on much too novel and startling a scale to suit our insular prejudices, would be adopted by an enterprising and unprejudiced race, and that in an incredibly short space of time fame and fortune would infallibly be mine. There was no doubt in my mind at all as to what the result would be, were I, and my schemes, once landed on American ground. The only thing that

troubled me at all in connexion with the idea of the journey was the question whence the capital was to come which would be necessary to enable me to start.

This was indeed a difficulty. As to my relations, I had already drained them dry as hay, in getting together the requisite capital to make that *début* in London which had been attended with such happy results socially, but which had led to so very little when regarded from a business point of view. From that quarter, then, I had nothing to expect. Still less had I any claim on my more recently made friends in London. Besides, even if I had felt that an application to any one of these was likely to lead to anything, I don't think I could have made it. I had really cut such a good figure before them, that I shrank from the notion of appearing now in the light of a beggar soliciting assistance. The idea was quite insupportable. Some other must be hit upon.

It was just when my affairs had arrived at this particular crisis, and when I was beginning to get thoroughly weary of assuring myself that "something must be done" every hour of the day, that my destiny was influenced, as I have shown above, by that very trifling incident of my getting hold of a photograph book with the names of those whose portraits it contained written underneath them. This trifling incident, as I have called it, suggested to me a ready means of getting out of my present difficulties.

As to the adoption of the expedient which had thus suggested itself to me, and the particulars of which will be presently detailed, I am willing to admit that there was something to be said against it, at the same time that there was much in its favour. Persons of a narrow and carping character would, doubtless, have objected that my scheme was not compatible with a scrupulous regard for the highest principles of what the world calls honour, and might even have gone so far as to say that the proceedings which I had in contemplation were regarded, from a certain point of view, almost dishonest. But I knew better.

It was thus that I reasoned with myself. "For the furtherance of certain great schemes infinitely beneficial to mankind if once carried out, I require a rather large sum of money—say a thousand or two of

pounds, more or less. The acquiring of such a sum is attended with many and great difficulties. I cannot obtain it from my relations, because they are already at the end of their resources. I cannot earn it by personal exertion, in consequence of an extraordinary and, at the same time, a very widely-spread want of appreciation of my labour, and its results, on the part of my fellow-creatures generally. With regard to borrowing, again; in order to obtain a loan from a professional money-lender, I must be prepared with security which I have not got, while as to soliciting it from a friend or friends, even if I knew of any who would be willing to entertain my proposal—which I don't think I do—I should still shrink from making it, being, I am happy to say, blessed with a proud stomach and an unconquerable aversion to ask favours of any one. Under these circumstances, when a plan enters my mind by which I may, so to speak, avail myself of the resources of my acquaintances, without offending against any of the laws of delicacy and good taste, and giving them, as it were, the opportunity of doing a good action unknown to themselves, I put it to anybody"—I did not, by-the-bye, put it to anybody at the time, except myself—"I put it to anybody, I say, whether, if I failed to avail myself of such a chance, I should not richly deserve to be regarded as a blockhead of the densest calibre?"

Such were my reflections. Let me admit at once that they resulted in a determination on my part to run no risk of incurring this charge of blockheadism. The Great Idea which presented itself to my imagination when I sat in the back drawing-room of my City friend examining his daughter's photographic album was in no wise thrown away or wasted. On the contrary, it was cordially received—though it staggered me a little at first by reason of its immensity—and at last freely acted upon. What that Idea was, and in what way I made the very most of it, may, perhaps, be best explained by my recounting how I acted under its influence from first to last.

Now ready, price 5s. 6d., bound in green cloth,

THE FOURTH VOLUME  
OF THE NEW SERIES OF  
ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

To be had of all Booksellers.

*The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND is reserved by the Authors.*