V.

MILITARY COLONIZATION IN INDIA—CLIMATE.

The subject of Military Colonization in India has been discussed from time to time in that country, and the idea has found favour even among those who maintain the "Gorgeous East" to be unfitted for the permanent settlement of Europeans. In that Golden Age known as "before the mutinies," it was the opinion of some of the ablest writers in India, including the late Sir Henry Lawrence, that it would be both politic and practicable to establish colonies upon the slopes of the Himalayas, where soldiers, upon retiring, either through age or the expiration of their period of enlistment, might be induced to settle down in peaceful pursuits. The policy of the arrangement was unquestionable. It would cause a large class of Europeans to take root in the country, and encourage the growth of some more useful institutions than the empty beer-bottles which the old sarcasm declares would be the only remains of British rule if we were turned out of India to-morrow. It would be a source of strength, too, in a possible hour of need; and who, after the experience of 1857, shall say when that hour may not be at hand? As a compact mass of men trained in the use of arms, the aid of the
colonists as volunteers would be of much value. But a better use might be made of them even than this. Upon the condition of receiving a grant of land, or perhaps some small pecuniary aid, these men might be rendered available for military service, upon a footing similar to the Militia or Yeomanry at home, and so form a permanent reserve force, to be employed in enriching the country whenever not called upon to defend it.

At present a large number of men upon obtaining their discharge, remain in India instead of returning to England. But a soldier who has been accustomed to be looked after all his life, is a helpless being when he has to look after himself. He is as much out of his element as a sailor on shore, and too frequently falls a victim to his own passions, and the sharks who prey upon his class. He is like an old charger, who wants the trumpet and the word of command, and does not understand kicking up his heels by himself; with the rest of his troop he will go through his work with credit, but once alone he falls into bad paces, and discovers weaknesses of which he never dreamed. An organization of the kind suggested would be free from any of the objections made by the most sensitive official to the presence of the British "adventurer" in India. Instead of that exciting career of liberty, which is too apt to end in delirium tremens, the soldier would find a future before him imposing but few restraints beyond those of order and decency, and offering a prospect equally calculated to serve both his inclinations and his interests. If he happened to have a trade he could practise it. If he had no trade, and wished to learn one, nothing could be more easy. If he had a little capital, he could speculate with it. If he had none, he could, probably, get some land and employ himself in its
cultivation. He might have a pension to help him on, but in any case there could be no doubt of his being helped on in some manner, and finding out that there are worse trades than soldiering, when the soldier has the good fortune to be sent to India.

With regard to the practicability of the scheme, the main objection offered to European settlement in India is the climate. This objection has been much exaggerated, principally from political motives; but whatever the force of the opposing arguments as regards the general question, they can have no application to the present case. Nobody would think of establishing Military Colonies in the plains. Regiments on service must be quartered there for the sake of the position, and of these the sick have frequently to be sent to the Sanataria in the Himalayas. The part of the country best adapted for Military Colonies would be on the slopes of those mountains, or hills as they are irreverently designated in India, where the climate is healthy and bracing, the soil rich, and admirably fitted for many kinds of cultivation, that of tea being already pursued in several parts with signal success. It is doubtful, indeed, whether any spot in the world could supply a more pleasant retreat for the old soldier than the Himalayas and their slopes.

The advocates of Military Colonization, whose voices were hushed by the din of war, are once more making themselves heard in India. The organization which they propose, always admitted to be desirable, has now the additional claim of being urgent. If ever there was a time for it, it is the present, when the local European army has been amalgamated with that of the line, and placed upon a new footing. That European army, as our readers are aware, was enlisted exclusively
for Indian service. Few of the men composing the old regiments, when they embarked in the transport, ever thought to set foot in England again. They belonged to some extent to the same class of men as form Her Majesty’s army proper. Drunkenness or destitution may have led them in many cases to take the shilling, without any care whether the recruiting sergeant was a “Queen’s” or “Company’s” man. But a considerable portion of them were persons of a higher stamp. They were men of good family, who had lost fortune, caste, or it may be even character. They sought service in India as a country where they would be unknown, and as a land of adventure, in which they might hope to retrieve their position. That they were not wrong in their calculations is proved by the fact, that at the present time, there are many men in high position in India, who have gone out to that country in the ranks of the army, and the proportion of those who have been granted commissions is far greater than in the line. Among the gunners of the Artillery, the favourite branch for such adventurers, I once heard of a baronet, and scions of noble houses have been far from unfrequent. Of the “Company’s Europeans” a large portion took their discharge after the “white mutiny” of 1859, in which the new regiments were mainly concerned; but most of the remainder have accepted the amalgamation of the armies, and are now available for general service. Their condition, however, is certainly less favourable than the old; and these men would, when their period for retirement arrives, eagerly accept any prospect, such as that afforded by the scheme proposed for settling down in the land of their adoption. Moreover, it is highly desirable to popularize the Indian service with the troops of the line. One of the great evils of the
amalgamation measure, is the absorption which it effects of a body of men trained for special service in India, who have become acclimatised and accustomed to intercourse with the natives, whose language they learn, and whom they generally treat with kindness. How much good might be effected could the soldiers of the line feel that they might have a similar tie to the country, must be at once apparent. The knowledge that they had an opportunity of settling therein when their period of service expired, would exercise a most beneficial effect upon their conduct and habits, besides preventing that frightful waste of life and strength which, without some provision of the kind, cannot fail to be entailed by the maintenance of 70,000 European troops in India. It does not appear that the local government is taking any steps in reference to this object; it is, therefore, the more desirable that the attention of the home government should be directed towards it.

There is no need in India, in the hills or elsewhere, for the settlement of mere vagabonds and outcasts, though such men usually settle themselves, in a different sense of the term, before they have had time to do much mischief in the country. The cashiered officer who, on the strength of having once been a gentleman, takes a high rank in low society, and whose life is passed in the irrigation of his grievance with brandy and water; the ex-bandmaster, who is such a musical genius that he has never been able to keep either a band or a salary when he has had the opportunity; the dismissed kerankee, whose hatred of the tyranny of his superiors has caused a defalcation in his accounts; the promiscuous European, who came nobody knows whence, and is going nobody can guess whither, and who has tried his hand at everything with only the result of “putting
his foot in it;"—the classes of which these men are representatives, are nowhere considered useful members of the state, any more than they are agreeable members of society. In India they are simply public enemies and private pests. Yet it is among such men that persons having useful employment to bestow are usually compelled to bestow it; and even in the public departments, especially such as the Electric Telegraph and the Post-Office, as well as in connexion with the Railway, it is frequently found necessary to fall back upon the assistance of men whose characters will not bear the closest investigation, such is the want of respectable European agency in the subordinate class experienced by all employers in India. It appears plain, then, that it should be the object of a wise government to render both the state and private speculators independent of such disreputable and mischievous material, the growth of which is moreover increased by the impression, too prevalent, that any European is of so high a value in India that he is certain to be able to earn his living, whatever may happen. Let but a respectable and sober humble class be established, and the drunken vagabonds will have no chance; and drunken vagabondism itself will soon diminish when this fact is made fully apparent. Towards this object nothing can be better adapted than the encouragement, in every possible manner, of European soldiers to settle in the hills. They are ten times more likely to succeed than men going out straight from England, an arrangement open to objection, and hazardous in many respects. They are accustomed to the country, and cannot have an insuperable dislike for it, or they would prefer to go home. They must know something of the language, notwithstanding that the gentlemen consulted upon the subject have somewhat
gratuitously assumed that they know nothing at all. And with regard to their supposed dislike of the natives, it should be remembered that a soldier living in barracks, and a citizen engaged in industrial occupations, are very different persons; and that to live among and mingle with the people of the country, is the way of all others to remove old prejudices and promote good feeling. If the object cannot be accomplished in this manner, it can certainly be accomplished in no other. It may also be safely assumed that the settlers would belong to the better class of British soldiers, and that they would therefore be susceptible of better influences than the majority of their comrades.

With regard to the facilities for employment, I am aware that the range is not very extensive. If a man has capital, the matter is easy enough. Whether large or small, it can easily be turned to account, either in European goods, or commodities of the country—among which, as Mr. Dunlop points out in his interesting work, “Hunting in the Himalaya,” the common wool growing upon nearly every animal in the hills, has been strangely neglected. But even without capital to cultivate tea or purchase commodities on his own account, surely the settler has a fair chance in the employment of others, or even in that of the government itself; for, as Mr. Cust observes, in a report upon the subject, European soldiers might be employed as jail daroghas, thanadars, road surveyors, &c., in the hill tracts, with great advantage. Even granting that the success of the experiment is questionable, surely that is a matter for the settler himself to determine, and one that will soon arrange itself. If any number of men make the attempt and fail, it may be safely assumed that they will have no followers, and the authorities will be
relieved from all further anxiety on the subject. It can scarcely be supposed, that the Indian government will continue to have any morbid dread of the increase of the lower interloper class, who, however, it must be admitted, give so much trouble to the district officials, that we can scarcely wonder at these gentlemen, if consulted on the subject, thinking that they would do better in some other part of the world. But if the government really cling to their old prejudice against the most difficult class with which it has to deal, such prejudice should surely lead it to encourage men of a better stamp, who, as we have said, would to a great extent supersede their less reputable brethren, and drive them from the field. The days have long since gone by when the natives of India entertained the idea that every Englishman was a Sahib; and they can now behold the vagaries of the vagabond, without confounding him in any way with the more respectable classes of his countrymen. We are not, therefore, afraid of any evil being produced in this respect. It is upon other grounds that the British blackguard is a nuisance; and the only way of absorbing him is by a strong infusion of respectability.

I have already touched upon the subject of climate. It is so intimately connected with that of European settlement as to deserve special consideration.

The Indian climate has never borne a good character in this country. In the best of times it is supposed to have a bad effect upon the liver, to say nothing of the complexion and the morals, of those long exposed to its influence. And in the present day there are many who expect to find in the Anglo-Indian all his traditional peculiarities. They are astonished, in fact, if he is not yellow as to appearance, peppery as to temper, and cor-
rupt and extortionate as to his dealings with the world. But never has the Indian climate been in less favour than of late. So fatal have been its effects upon public servants, that candidates for places have been frightened away, and even high appointments are said to have been going a-begging for want of men to fill them. I allude, of course, to the right men; the wrong men are charmingly accessible, and are always ready in any number to go to any climate, on any service, and on any salary.

But the mere adventurer, though useful enough in India, when left to his own resources, is not precisely the sort of person to send out in an office either of trust or of dignity. And if no other men are to be found willing to seek a career in that country, what is to become of it? True it is that we have still the members of the regular Civil Service, who, from having an opportunity of becoming acclimatised when young, enjoy, of course, greater advantages. But it is only for a portion of the work of administration that these gentlemen are henceforth to be employed, and if the present dread of the climate becomes a settled conviction in the public mind, it follows that not only may the supply from this source be diminished but its quality deteriorated.

But before finally condemning the Indian climate upon the evidence advanced against it, let us try what a little cross-examination will do. I will suppose myself counsel for the defendant, for the nonce, and see whether the testimony be not capable of refutation. The prosecution brings its dead men in terrible array in support of the indictment. There they are:—Commanders in Chief and Governor Generals, Members of Council and Officers on the Staff; not only men in high
place, but women of high rank, without counting persons of inferior note, who had their spurs to win, all cut down by the same remorseless hand. The dead tell a terrible tale; but let us appeal from the dead to the living. Among these we find men who have faced the climate for thirty or forty years, and who maintain it to be the healthiest in the world. The old Indian in these days is no longer the yellow old gentleman that we are acquainted with in novels and on the stage. His inward man has changed as well as his outward man. He is not only of good heart, but of good liver; his pugnacity has disappeared with his pigtail, and neither his face nor his pantaloons are of the nankeen hue. He moves in the mass like other men, in town and country, and no passing observer would dream that his constitution had been tempered to the tropics. Take a younger man, home on furlough, who has still five-and-twenty years more in him that will "count as service." That man, in nine cases out of ten, is as hale and hearty as if he had lived all his life in Leicestershire, with nothing to do except in the hunting season. As for the Indian invalid—home on a holiday varying in duration from nine months to three years, for the benefit of his health—his appearance is simply insulting to men in the hard-worked West, who, if they have to make their way in a profession, think themselves fortunate if they can secure a month's run on the Continent, in the long vacation, without being tripped up by the electric telegraph, and sent for on one pretext or another back to the old weary grind. To such men it is perfectly disgusting to see the Indian invalid coursing about Europe, with no other care than to keep up his credit with his agent; the picture of health and ease, with months and perhaps
years before him ere he be recalled to duty, and enjoying life with the freshness of a boy from school. But even this comparison is inadequate to convey a sense of the contentment of this creature; for boys generally do not like returning to school, while the Indian invalid is delighted at the prospect when the time comes. Indeed, if he has ever been a bore to his friends during his home and continental career, it is when he has indulged in glorification of the luxurious langour of Calcutta, the frenzied exhilaration of Simla, the glorious excitement of tiger hunting in the Terai, or of pig sticking in the Mofussil anywhere. It is some satisfaction to his friends at home to think that, although his pay be fabulously large, yet he is cut off in a great measure from the civilization of Europe. But when he tells them how near an approach to a good dinner may be got at the Bengal Club; how the Madras Club has no parallel on the face of the earth for curries and companionship; how the Himalaya Club is associated with every enjoyment that can be derived from fresh air, good health, billiards, and balls, with first-rate racing in the season on the prettiest course in the world down in the Doon—then it is that the jaded “man about Europe” gets seriously annoyed with him, and feels more envy than he cares to express. It is certain, indeed, that most persons who have lived in India praise the country and recommend it to their friends, and many make it their home for life, not only from necessity but choice.

Dropping the position of the advocate, I will take a judicial view of the pros and cons of the case. Granted that there is a great deal of heat and ennui to be encountered, it seems clear that there are many compensating advantages; that the climate is not unfriendly to
all Europeans, and that the camaraderie spirit in society must have a certain charm. The real state of the case I believe to be this: that the Indian climate is not suited to some persons at all—it simply kills them off; that to an equal proportion, perhaps, it is particularly well suited—they thrive in it better than they would in England; that as far as the rest are concerned, they need be under no fear if they take proper precautions. And these proper precautions are, after all, only such as prudent persons take in Europe. They consist only in economising strength as much as possible; in keeping early hours; in taking invigorating but not fatiguing exercise; in abstaining from heavy dining and convivial excess; in not being exposed too much to the heat of the sun; keeping the mental system at the same time under similar discipline by not over-tasking it, as men are too apt to do in India, owing to the long hours during the day, in which at certain seasons they are confined to the house. I believe that, under such conditions, all medical men of experience agree that life in India is not quite so much like the brink of a precipice as people are inclined to suppose. And this may surely be taken for granted, that however bad the climate may be, it is no worse than it was, while it is certainly much better understood and guarded against.

All favourable circumstances being admitted, the question remains—what is the reason for the alarm which has of late seized upon our countrymen? I believe it to be caused by the simple fact that conspicuous men have been carried off instead of obscure men. The latter die and nobody notices them. That which is only a choleric thing in the climate when it kills a subaltern, is, when it kills a General, rank devastation. Yet, among the well-to-do Europeans in India, the
chances of life or death are tolerably equal. The lamented Lady Canning was not able to command better protection against bad air in her journey from the hills than could the wife of a junior Ensign under similar circumstances; and if, in place of the wife of the Governor-general, the obituary had announced, "the wife of Ensign ——, —th Regiment, N.I.," who except her immediate friends would have bestowed on her a second thought? It was well remarked the other day, à propos of the proposed removal of the seat of government from Calcutta, upon the ground that the climate is not suited to men in high places, that, after all, only one Governor-General has died in India during a hundred years, and he was worn out when he went back. Surely this fact should have some effect in dissipating the popular delusion. Moreover, it is certain, as was pointed out by the same writer, that Calcutta, the place dreaded of all others, is undergoing a sanatorial regeneration through a system of drainage which has already been commenced, and promises to be one of the healthiest cities in India. As regards the climate of the North-West, there are few dangers even alleged; and in the Presidencies the means of escape to the hills are being so facilitated that no rational man, with a knowledge of the chances in his favour, need for the future fear committing himself to a career in the East.
VI.

PARIS*—A BALL AT THE BARRIERS.

The visitor to Paris who has only seen the lions, has seen nothing. Though he hunt them with the avidity of Mr. Gordon Cumming, it is with this difference, that he kills nothing but time. For all the knowledge he gains of his own species, he might as well remain by his own fireside, cramming Murray's Guide for his facts, and cultivating his French accent by means of a pronouncing dictionary. Let him who would gain a knowledge of national characteristics, seek it—not in the English hotels—not even at the "best houses" in private society; for, in the first, he will find himself in only a transplanted Piccadilly; and in the second, as among the better classes of all European nations, he will observe no very perceptible difference of manners and customs. Indeed, these places are in what the author of "Eöthen" would call a state of "utter civilization;" the knives, for instance, are positively fit for use, and even salt-spoons are not absolutely unknown. Let the student of character betake himself, then, to the haunts of the "common people," with whom, if it be in the Quartier Latin, the students are usually associated. Here, in the

* The following sketches relating to Paris were written some few years ago, and refer to many things—including a Republic—which have no longer any existence.
quarter in question, the aborigines unite with a few civilized customs the charm and simplicity of savage life. The contaminating influence of railroads and steamboats, and the diffusion of knowledge, have been scarcely felt. The people talk, walk, and—shall we say?—dress, as if they had never heard of the Champs Elysées, or even of the Palais Royal. The conventional is unrespected or unknown. Human nature falls back upon itself; lives in seventh stories; keeps its hands in its pockets; spurns pomade; and addicts itself to short pipes. The general characteristics of the neighbourhood, in short, are those of an Arcadia, with gas-lights and a dash of slang.

The mention of Arcadia, is suggestive of the pastoral amusement of dancing; and dancing, by an association of ideas inevitable in the Quartier Latin, leads us direct to the outside of one of the Barriers, whence, leaving the last taint of the city behind, we emerge into a paradise of rustic simplicity and cheap wine. Of these two attractions, by the way, it must be confessed that the latter has the greatest number of votaries in the quarter: certain it is, that while deriving equal benefit from the ordinaire wine and extraordinaire simplicity of the locality, the visitor generally brings home with him a larger amount of the one than of the other.

Let us suppose the particular paradise to be the Barrière du Mont Parnasse, and the particular occasion a ball-night. The inevitable impression of the Englishman who passes through what he conceives to be a turnpike turned into a barrack, is that Greenwich Fair is not abolished, and that he is in the midst of that festivity. To be sure, there are neither booths nor beer (in an English sense,) and the majority of the persons are not intoxicated. But there are the same
sweet scents of oil, sawdust, and tobacco; the same streaming coloured lamps; the same vendors of curious condiments for the temptation of the appetite; and the same opportunity for the purchase of everything that one doesn’t want, at ruinously low charges to the buyer. The rival bands of musicians, too, are as energetic in their performance of opposing galops as the most devoted Greenwichite could desire.

In one respect, however, there is no resemblance whatever, and this is one in which the barrier has decidedly the advantage. While there is as much noise and confusion as would satisfy the most medical and musical of students, there is scarcely any quarrelling, and, perhaps, no fighting whatever. This is easily accounted for. The swaggering and ostentatiously defiant demeanour so popular in London—and, moreover, that verbal raillery which meets with such a ready exchange there among all classes—are entirely unknown in Paris. This is, of course, a severe annoyance to the fast Englishman, to whom habit is so dear, and leads him to believe that the French have no sense of humour.

Having made these useful observations, the wise visitor will now leave reflection for after the ball; lounging for the Champs Elysées; and ennui for that distinguished London society in which he doubtless moves; and plunge at once in medias res—that is to say, into either “Grado’s” or the “Mille Colonne”—prepared to be natural and good humoured, though Baker Street should frown, and Bloomsbury shed tears of respectable despair.

Suppose him to choose the “Mille Colonne.” He will see before him a large hotel, with a dancing-room on the first floor; windows everywhere brilliantly lighted up, through which he will behold the dancers.
vigorously at work, though it is scarcely seven o'clock. Some very pretty costumes may be observed (if it be carnival time) on the large stone balcony overlooking the garden—cooling themselves after the last quadrille, and exchanging perhaps some eccentric-comedy dialogue with their friends below.

The visitor, if he be an errant philosopher, a true, observant, metaphysical, vagabond—which is of course to be desired—will not be surprized if, while making these observations, he finds himself forcibly seized by two men, whose blouses and moustaches give them the appearance of butchers about to enter a dragoon regiment; nor will he be seriously alarmed when he finds his feet firmly planted upon a little wooden bench; although it must be confessed that under the circumstances it is excusable if one's thoughts wander towards the Inquisition; and not altogether imbecile to apprehend some diabolical species of torture. The fact is, however, that instead of suffering the punishment of the boot, you find your own pair superbly polished; and that the application of the "screw" is extremely mild; extracting from you nothing beyond a few sous to the shoeblack.

This polishing process is one that it would be a signal breach of barrier decorum to omit, even though the visitor be equipped in the most spotless of patent leathers, to black which is suggestive only of painting the lily, or putting slang into a burlesque.

The philosopher in question, unless he be too rapt in the contemplation of his faultless feet, will now see before him a couple of wide staircases, extending on either side, and united by the first-floor landing, where, guarded by sergents de ville—who guard everything, down to
the pewter spoons—he arrives at last at the entrance to the ballroom.

Here, the first objects that a dull person expects to see, and the last that the philosopher dreams of beholding, are the "Mlle Colonne," which is the playful name, plagiarised from a famous café, and given to some thirty iron pillars supporting the ceiling, and dividing the promenade at the sides from the dancing-ground in the middle of the room. Across this important boundary are placed narrow tables devoted to refreshment, and above these, countless candelabra branch forth from the "Mlle [in this instance, French for thirty] Colonne." The tables are occupied by various articles belonging to the dancers—their bonnets, mantles, mammas and papas, &c.; the two first-mentioned articles being piled up promiscuously in the midst of bowls of wine, rich with slices of lemon, of which the latter are partaking. There is a greater proportion, too, of children in arms, than one usually observes at balls in London society; and these infants seem to enjoy themselves as much as the grown-up people, to judge by the wine which they drink, and the noise which they diffuse.

Regarding the dancers themselves, it must be confessed that the men are of extremely plebeian appearance, and present as great a contrast to the female portion as can well be. The latter, though seldom handsome in face, and never so in attire, are nearly always graceful and attractive. If nature has been niggard in its gifts of actual beauty, it has been most bountiful in its bestowal of the neatest of figures, the smallest of feet and hands, and a good taste that does more for the toilet than all the milliners of Bond Street and the Boulevards. Fancy costumes, too, of a kind
not very costly, but always pretty and effective, are very numerous on fête days and extra occasions; and many of these would do no discredit to the Opera ball itself. One would scarcely believe that these young girls, with their little airs and graces, their ease and self-possession, are nearly all gaining their own livelihood by the work of their own pretty little fingers. Some are employed by the milliners and artificial flower-makers; some of the best class, perhaps, assist behind counters; and a very large number are merely laundresses, with a sprinkling of professors of the higher branches of clear-starching: all are industrious, all independent, and all poor.

Except in rare cases, these young girls are accompanied to the ball by their parents or relatives, to whom, after dancing, they immediately demand to be restored. As may be supposed, an introduction is quite unnecessary as a preliminary to obtaining a partner; but it must not, therefore, be supposed that a partner is always obtainable: some are too exclusive to dance with strangers at all, and many are savagely monopolized by their friends and admirers. The great opportunity of the stranger is when, towards the close of the evening, the friends of a young lady have become tired of repeating the five sous which it is necessary to pay for every dance. Then it is that the more opulent aspirant may be seen leading off the beauty in triumph, to the mortification of her prétendu, and the satisfaction of her family.

The dances most in vogue at the "Mille Colonnes," are scarcely remarkable for novelty or variation. The first dance is invariably a quadrille—so is the second—so is the third—so is the fourth—so is the fifth—and so probably would be the hundred and fifth, if some
energetic persons did not, about three times in the evening, call out vigorously for a polka or a waltz. These figures, do not, however, flourish at the Barrière. Many will not attempt them; many who do, should not; and the consequence is, that after an occasional change, the quadrille resumes its supremacy, more popular than ever. The style of dancing is nearly always quiet and orderly; and as for the exaggerated and grotesque movements for which the French have so wide a reputation, they are here almost unknown. The only deviation from the usual order of things, is when you see a Cavalier seul, in the midst of Pastorale, performing frantic gestures while searching in his pockets for the inevitable five sous (which the Master of the Ceremonies will not apply for until the middle of the dance,) or another, pursued through the Chaîne des Dames by his remorseless creditor.

Should those “social wants that sin against the strength of youth,” prevent any youth so sinned against from dancing, he usually consoles himself with a cigarette. This annoys the nearest sergent de ville, who requests that it may be extinguished. The usual custom in such a case is to put the cigarette in your pocket, say something about ignorance of the customs of the place, and pass on—commencing again, and repeating the same ceremony at every interruption by every sergent de ville. The fact that it is défendu de fumer being announced conspicuously on every wall, and even that you are known to be the oldest of offenders, does not at all interfere with the success of this plan.

Except on state occasions, the balls conclude invariably at twelve o’clock, when everybody goes home, except perhaps some of the choice spirits among the men, who linger in the later wine-shops, drinking
bad ordinaire or worse brandy, and eating interminable hard eggs; or playing for glasses of liqueur with all sorts of rolling and revolving contrivances. Meantime the fathers of families take their elder children by the hands, and drag themselves, heartily weary, towards their dwellings; the mother following behind with the inevitable baby, who, having of course had too much wine, has been long since fast asleep.

In half an hour all the lights are extinguished; the conjurors, fruit and sweet-meat vendors, and vagabonds of every description, including the philosophic one already alluded to, have all past away; the last lingering customer has been stealthily let out from the latest of the closed wine-shops; and all is profoundly still—or would be so, but for some occasional student (who has probably fraternised with a hideous-looking ruffian in a blouse) giving vocal expression of his intention to mourir for his patrie (I am writing of days when that composition was the mode)—which very handsome offer seems to be received with the deepest ingratitude by sundry nightcaps at the windows, who intimate that his country would feel it an additional obligation if he carried out his views before the song rather than after; or, at any rate, that his exit would be more effective with the accompaniment of the softest possible music.

Such is the usual course of an ordinary ball. The fêtes are principally remarkable for the presence of a greater number of persons, and a multiplication of the same kind of amusements. Many of these extra festivities are held in honour of particular classes. Those of the blanchisseuses, which occur several times in the year, are perhaps the most extensive. Then it is that for four-and-twenty hours some twenty thousand per-
sons are supremely happy, and for a week afterwards there is scarcely a clean shirt seen in Paris!

The Barriers at all times are the favourite resorts of the humbler classes, and especially of the students, to whom untaxed wine, at five or six sous the litre, (cheaper than the cheapest of London beer,) is an irresistible temptation. Every day the hotels where the balls are held are thronged with diners and drinkers; and wedding-parties, especially, muster here in great force. In every café may be heard the familiar click of the billiard ball; and personages, with strange beards and strange attire, who would make their fortunes at the Adelphi as cut-throats, may be seen wasting their sweetness—that is to say, their ferocity—upon the desert dominos, from morning till night. Whether, in fact, it be to dissipate ennui or display merriment, to find a wife, or to keep a wedding, to celebrate good fortune or to forget bad, it is to this land of the very free that the populace of Paris betake themselves. And, truly, nowhere can they be seen to greater advantage, because nowhere are they more at their ease.
STUDENT LIFE IN PARIS.

The first impression of the Student of Students in Paris is one of curiosity. "When do the students find time to study?" is the natural inquiry. The next impression solves the mystery, by leading to the satisfactory conclusion, that the students do not find time to study. To be sure, eminent physicians, great painters, and acute lawyers, do occasionally throw sufficient light upon society to render its intellectual darkness visible. And the probabilities are that these physicians are not born with diplomas, as children are, occasionally, with cauls; nor the painters sent into the world with their pencils at their fingers' ends; nor the lawyers launched into existence sitting upon innate woolsacks. The inference, then, is, that education has done something towards their advancement, and that they, necessarily, have done something towards their education.

But the lives of great men are the lives of individuals, not of masses. And with these I have nothing now to do. It is possible that the Quartier Latin contains at the present moment more than one "mute inglorious" Moliere, or Eugene Sue, guiltless, as yet, of his readers' demoralization. Many a young man who now...
astonishes the Hôtel Corneille, less by his brains than his billiards, may one day work hard at a barricade, and harder still, subsequently, at the galleys! But how are we to know that these young fellows, with their long legs, short coats, and faces patched over with undecided beards, are geniuses, unless, as our excellent friend, the English plebeian, has it, they "behave as such?" Let us hope, at any rate, that, like glow-worms, they appear mean and contemptible in the glare of society, only to exhibit their shining qualities in the gloom of their working hours.

It is only, then, with the outward life of the students that I have to deal. With this, one may become acquainted without a very long residence in the Quartier Latin—that happy quarter where everything is subservient to the student's taste, and accommodated to the student's pocket—where amusement is even cheaper than knowledge—where braces are unrespected, and blushes unknown—where gloves are not enforced, and respectability has no representative.

If the student be opulent—that is to say, if he have two hundred francs a month (a magnificent sum in the quarter) he lives where he pleases—probably in the Hôtel Corneille; if he be poor, and is compelled to vegetate, as many are, upon little more than a quarter of that amount, he lives where he can—no one knows where, and very few know how. It is principally from among this class, who are generally the sons of peasants or ouvriers, that France derives her great painters, lawyers, and physicians. They study more than their richer comrades; not only because they have no money to spend upon amusement, but because they have, commonly, greater energy and higher talents. Indeed, without these qualities they would not have been able
to emancipate themselves from the ignoble occupations to which they were probably born; unlike the other class of students, with whom the choice of a profession is guided by very different considerations.

It is a curious sight to a man fresh from Oxford or Cambridge to observe the poorer class of these students sunning themselves, at mid-day, in the gardens of the Luxembourg—with their sallow, bearded faces, bright eyes, and long hooded cloaks, which, notwithstanding the heat of the weather, "circumstances" have not yet enabled them to discard. Without stopping to inquire whether there really be anything "new under the sun," it may be certainly assumed that the garments in question could not be included in the category. If, however, they are heavy, their owners' hearts are light, and their laughter merry enough—even to their last pipe of tobacco. After the last pipe of tobacco, but not till then, comes despair.

The more opulent students resemble their poorer brethren in one respect:—they are early risers. Some breakfast as early as seven o'clock; others betake themselves by six to their ateliers, or lectures—or pretend to do so—returning, in two or three hours, to a later meal. This is of a substantial character, consisting of two or three courses, with the eternal vin ordinaire. When living in a hôtel, the student breakfasts in the midst of those congenial delights;—the buzz of conversation, the fumes of tobacco, and the click of the billiard-balls. By means of these amusements, and sundry demi tasses and petits verres, he contrives to kill the first two or three hours after breakfast. Cards and dominoes are also in great request from an early hour, and present to an Englishman a curious contrast with his own national customs. In England, he is accus-
tomed to find card-playing in the morning patronised only by the most reckless; in France it is the commonest thing in the world to see a pair of gentlemen with grey hairs and every attribute of respectability, employed at nine o’clock upon a game of écarté, enlivened by little glasses of brandy and the never-failing pipe. If a young Englishman in London, instead of an old Frenchman in Paris, was to addict himself to such untimely recreations, he would probably be cut off with a shilling.

When the heat and smoke of the café become too much even for French students, they drop off by twos and threes, and seek the fresh air. The Luxembourg gardens are close by, and here they principally congregate. Amusing figures they look, too, in their present style of costume, which is a burlesque upon that of the Champs Élysées, which is a burlesque upon that of Hyde Park. The favourite covering for the head is a very large white hat, with very long nap; which I believe it is proper to brush the wrong way. The coat is of the paletôt description, perfectly straight, without shape or make, and reaching as little below the hips as the wearer can persuade himself is not utterly absurd. The remainder of the costume is of various shades of eccentricity, according to the degree of madness employed upon its manufacture. As for the beard and moustaches, their arrangement is quite a matter of fancy: there are not two persons alike in this respect in the whole quarter: it may be remarked, however, that shaving is decidedly on the increase.

The Luxembourg garden is principally remarkable for its statues without fingers, almond trees without almonds, and grisettes without number. Its groves of horse-chesnuts would be very beautiful if, in their cropped condition, they did not remind the unprejudiced
observer—who is, of course, English—of the poodle dogs, who in their turn are cropped, it would seem, to imitate the trees. The queens of France, too, who look down upon you from pedestals at every turn, were evidently the work of some secret republican; and the lions that flank the terraces on either side are apparently intended as a satire upon Britain. However, if one could wish these animals somewhat less sweet and smiling, one could scarcely wish the surrounding scene more so than it is, with its blooming shrubs and scarcely less blooming damsels, gaily decorated parterres and gaily attired loungers, the occasional crash of a military band, and the continual recurrence of military manoeuvres.

Just outside the gates, near the Boulevard leading to the Barrière d’Enfer, there is always something “going on”—more soldiers, of course, whom it is impossible to avoid in Paris, besides various public exhibitions, all cheap, and some gratuitous. On one side, you are attracted by that most irresistible of attractions—a crowd. Edging your way through it, as a late arrival always does, you find yourself, with the body of students whom you followed from the hôtel, “assisting” at the exhibition of a wonderful dog, who is doing nothing, under the direction of his master, in general a most repulsive-looking rascal, bearded and bloused as if hot for a barricade. The dog, by doing nothing, is not obeying orders;—on the contrary, he is proving himself a most sagacious animal by having his own way in defiance of all authority. This the master attributes, not to the stupidity of the dog, but to the absence of contributions from the spectators. A few sous are showered down upon this hint; which proceeding, perhaps, brings out the dog’s talents to a slight
extent; that is to say, he is induced to lie down and pretend to be asleep; but it is doubtful, at the same time, whether his compliance is attributable to the coppers of his audience, or the kicks of his spirited proprietor. This is probably the only performance of the wonderful animal; for it is remarkable that whatever the sum thrown into the circle, it is never sufficient, according to the exhibitor, to induce him to show off his grand tricks, so high a value does he place upon his own talents.

Who, among a different class of the animal creation, does not know what is called a "genius," who sets even a higher value upon his talents, who is equally capricious, and who certainly has never yet been persuaded to show off his "grand trick?"

You are probably next attracted by a crowd at a short distance, surrounding an exhibition, dear to every English heart—that of "Punch." The same familiar sentry-box, hung with the same green baize, hides the same mysteries which are known to everybody. But the part of "Hamlet"—that is to say, "Punch"—though not exactly omitted, is certainly not "first business." His hunch has lost its fulness; his nose its rubicundity; and his profligacy its point. He is a feeble wag when translated into French, and has a successful rival in the person of one Nicolet—who, by the way, gives its name to the theatre—and who is chiefly remarkable for a wonderful white hat, and a head wooden enough, even for a low comedian.

Nicolet is supposed to be a fast man. His enemies are not policemen and magistrates, as in the case of "Punch," but husbands—for the reason that his friends are among the wives. This seems to be the "leading idea" of the drama of Nicolet, in common, indeed, with
that of every other French piece on record. If it were not considered impertinent in the present day to draw morals, I might suggest that something more than amusement is to be gained by contemplating the young children among the crowd, who enjoy the delinquencies of this *Faublas* for the million, with most precocious sagacity. It is delightful, in fact, to see the gusto with which they anticipate inuendos and meet improprieties half way, with all the well-bred composure of the most fashionable audience.

It is not customary amongst the students to wait for the end of Nicolet’s performances. The fashionable hour for departure varies; but it is generally about the period when the manager’s wife begins to take round the hat.

Any one who accompanies a party of students in their morning rambles, will most probably find himself, before long, in the “Closerie des Lilacs,” which is close by the same spot. The “Closerie” is associated in name with lilacs, probably from the fact that it contains fewer flowers of that description than any other place in the neighbourhood. It is a garden resembling the now vanished Vauxhall; and at dusk there is an attempt made at lighting it up, especially on certain evenings in the week which are devoted to balls. These balls do not vary materially from any other tenpenny dances, either in London or Paris; but as a morning lounge, the place is not without attractions. One of them, is the fact that there is no charge for admission, the proprietor merely expecting his guests to consume something—a regulation which is generally obeyed without much objection.

Throughout the whole day may here be seen numerous specimens of the two great classes of the quarter—
students and grisettes; some smoking, and drinking beer and brandy in pretty little bosquets, others disporting themselves on a very high swing, which would seem to have been expressly constructed for the purpose of breaking somebody's neck, and to have failed in its object, somehow, like many other great inventions. Ecarté is also very popular; but the fact that its practice requires some little exertion of the intelligence, so very inconvenient to some persons, will always prevent it from attaining entire supremacy in a place so polite as Paris. To meet this objection, however, some ingenious person has invented an entirely different style of game; an alteration for which the Parisians appear deeply grateful. A small toad, constructed of bronze, is placed upon a stand, and into its open mouth the player throws little leaden dumps, with the privilege of scoring some high number if he succeeds, and of hitting the legs of the spectators if he fails. At this exciting game a party of embryo doctors and lawyers will amuse themselves at the Closerie for hours, and moreover exhibit indications of a most lively interest. The great recommendation of the amusement, I believe, is, that the players might be doing something worse; a philosophical system of reasoning which will apply to most diversions, from pitch-and-toss to manslaughter.

A few hours of this amusement is scarcely necessary to give the student that sometimes inconvenient instinct—an appetite. Accordingly, at about five, he begins to think about dining; or rather, he begins to perform that operation, for he has been thinking about it for some time.

Dining, in the weak imagination of conventional persons, usually induces visions of Vefour, and is suggestive of Provençal fraternity. But the student of the Quartier Latin, if he indulges in any such visions, or is
visited by any such suggestions, finds their end about as substantial as their beginning. His dreamy dinners have, alas! no possibility of realization. Truffles to him are tasteless, and his "trifles" are literally "light as air." Provence provides him, unfortunately, with more songs than suppers, and the fraternal associations with which he is best acquainted are those of the Cuisinis in the Rue Racine or Rue des Mathurins.

It is, very probably, with one of these "Associations Fraternelles des Cuisiniers" that the student, unless he lives at an hôtel with a table d'hôte, proceeds to dine. These societies, which are fast multiplying in every quarter of Paris, are patronised principally by Republicans who are red, and by Monarchists who are poor. The former are attracted by sympathy, the latter are driven by necessity. Indeed, a plat at six sous, which is the usual price at these establishments, is a very appropriate reward for the one, or refuge for the other. At these establishments—which had no existence before the last revolution—everybody is equal; there are no masters, and there are no servants. The garçons who wait upon the guests are the proprietors, and the guests themselves are not recognized as having any superior social position. The guest who addresses the waiter as "garçon" is very probably insulted, and the garçon who addresses a guest as "monsieur" is liable to be expelled from the society. In each case, "citoyen" is the current form of courtesy, and any person who objects to the term is free to dine elsewhere. Even the dishes have a republican savour. "Macaroni à la République," "Fricandeau à la Robespierre," or "Filet à la Charrier," are as dear to republican hearts as they are cheap to republican pockets.

A dinner of this kind costs the student little more
than a franc. If he is more ostentatious, or epicurean, he dines at Risbec's, in the Place de l'Odeon. Here, for one franc, sixty centimes, he has an entertainment consisting of four courses and a dessert, inclusive of half a bottle of *vin ordinaire*. If he is a sensible man, he prefers even this doubtful dinner to that of the Associated Cooks, who it must be confessed, even by republicans of taste, are not quite what might be expected, considering the advancing principles they profess.

After dinner, the student, if the Prado or some equally congenial establishment be not open, usually addicts himself to the theatre. His favourite resort is, not the Odeon, as might be supposed, from its superior importance and equal cheapness, but the "Theatre du Luxembourg," familiarly called by its frequenters—why, is a mystery—"Bobino's." Here the student is in his element. He talks to his acquaintance across the house; indulges in comic demonstrations of ecstasy whenever Mademoiselle Hermance (it was Hermance in my time at least) appears on the scene, and, in short, makes himself as ridiculous and contented as can be. The popular actress for the time being, it is necessary to add, is the goddess of the quarter, and has nightly no end of worshippers. The theatre itself is everything that could be desired by any gentleman of advanced principles, who spurns propriety, and inclines himself towards oranges.

After the theatre the student probably goes home, and there I will leave him safely. My object has been merely to indicate the general characteristics of his ordinary life, from which he seldom deviates, unless tempted by an unexpected remittance to indulge in more costly recreations, afforded by the Bal Mabille or the Chateau Rouge.
VIII.

THE TRUE BOHEMIANS OF PARIS.

The present Bohemians of Paris are not the Bohemians of Victor Hugo, or of Borrow; nor are they the clever scamps of the modern melo-dramatist. They do not number among their order, fascinating damsels who perform necromancies with goats and gilded horns, and turn the heads of an ardent public, from Captains of the Guard and Archdeacons, down to bell-ringers. They no longer swallow swords, balance coach-wheels on their chins, play at catch-ball with the rapidity of fireworks, or dance hornpipes on dessert plates. They are innocent of thimble-rig; and, being only dexterous enough with the cards to play at picquet, cannot predict the future, or pronounce on the fate of a lover by turning up the ace of hearts, or cutting the queen of diamonds. They have ceased to steal fowls, change children, (after the manner of their Egyptian brethren,) or to tell fortunes: for their hands are seldom crossed with silver. The true modern Bohemian is not the wild, wandering, adroit, unprincipled, picturesque vagabond, who has been the delight of the poet, the novelist, and the painter, for ages; because, being an artist himself, he does not see his own excellencies as a model for art;
yet he presents many points of resemblance to the Bohemians who have been immortalised by Hugo, Borrow, and at the Porte Saint Martin Theatre. Although neither a gipsy nor a mountebank, he is wild and wandering; occasionally mysterious, often picturesque, and not seldom, I am afraid, unprincipled. He does not beg; he merely borrows: he never robs; but his skill in creating debts, and his powers of "owing," are transcendant. The shopkeeper shuns him, but the loungers loves him. He is the terror of the counter, but the delight of the café.

In a word, the Parisian Bohemians of to-day are a tribe of unfortunate artists of all kinds—poets, painters, musicians, and dramatists—who haunt obscure cafés in all parts of Paris, but more especially in the Quartier Latin. They have been unsuccessful in their professions, and many deservedly so—aspiration being too often the substitute for inspiration, and inspiration not unfrequently wasted or misused. They are, in some respects, what our "Grub Street" authors were in the last century.

The café where the Bohemians most do congregate is a quiet, pleasant place enough, when these distinguished persons are not present to make it noisy and disagreeable. It is distinguished from fashionable cafés by the scarcity of chance-comers, and the various signs, not difficult to observe, of its being mainly supported by regular frequenters. Call in on any evening, and you may always see the same hats on the same pegs, and the same pipes—which have hung all the morning in little numbered niches against the wall—in the mouths of their respective owners, who take great pride in smoking them until they have become as black as negroes, and nearly as valuable to dealers and con-
noisseurs. The owners of these hats and pipes are, for the most part, Bohemians. They congregate in an inner room by themselves, removed as far as possible from the shopkeeper, with his moderate opinions and white cravat; for they hold him in supreme contempt. They form what, in time-honoured phrase, is known as a "motley group"—so diversified are their toilettes, so strange and unconventional are their beards and their bearing. Some of them are playing at billiards in the middle of the room; others are consoling themselves with cards in the corners. All are talking, and with a volubility of tongue known only to Frenchmen and Mr. Charles Mathews. But their conversation has no reference to the games in which they are engaged; these they seem to conduct mechanically. Listen to them, and you will gain, perhaps, some useful ideas on the subject of Grecian art, mixed up with comments on the Charivari's last caricature of M. Thiers; the merits of the early Christian painters, as compared with a friend who has just made his début as a posturer; how far the eminent young Bohemian Jules—who has just been caught revoking at écarté—falls short of Raffaelle; and how the same Jules owes a duty to himself and the public, to give his genius fair play, and to surpass that master. The literary discussions—which range with great impartiality between the heights of transcendent-alism in poetry and philosophy, and the depths of some feeble bon mot in some feeble satirical journal—are conducted in much the same manner. That thoughtful-looking young man, with the bright eye and the blonde moustache, is the author of a tragedy, in five acts, in verse—and unhappily still in manuscript—which accounts for the gloomy state of affairs at the Odéon, where it was refused. Adolphe appeared for the first
time in print only yesterday, and now stands responsible for an “Epitaphe Anticipée” upon a popular journalist in the “Tintamarre.” He is occupied in playing at billiards, and holding forth upon the respective merits of the Classical and Romantic schools, with regard to which he does not seem to have any very settled opinions: it is probable that his tragedy belongs to some new school of his own discovery. He covers his cue with chalk while covering a Classicist with confusion; makes a cannon—and leaves a Romanticist no head to stand upon. In the same manner will embryo Handels and Mozarts hold forth upon the great masters of their particular art; but you may observe that nobody gives specimens of his own compositions, literary or musical: it is a strict rule in the order, that its members are neither to be read to nor sung to; such assaults being directed only against the common enemy, society in general; except at certain solemn sances of the Bohemians themselves, when every man has an allotted period of the evening for the gratification of his own idiosyncracy.

As for politics, you will scarcely hear them touched upon among the Bohemians—certainly never unless suggested by a subject of art. “Art before all,” is their creed; morality and the virtues they hold in high estimation—as elements without which poetry could not exist; and they have the greatest reverence for what is sacred—as furnishing inspiration to the painter. They bend themselves—it is to Dante; they adore—it is before Raffaelle.

So much for the aims and aspirations of the Bohemians. For the rest, you may listen sometimes to no inconsiderable amount of their conversation without being very much edified. Their muse is associated with
something like mockery, and their transcendentalism has a dash of slang. They speak, in fact, in a style of literary metaphor, which is somewhat puzzling to the uninitiated. But this is a habit common to all thorough artists—using the word in its general sense—who live isolated from general society—surrounded by nothing but art and its associations—until one might almost believe, from outward appearances, that familiarity had produced its proverbial effect.

Listen to that group in the corner of the café. That young man with the Vandyke beard, who sits under the peg which holds the broad-leaved felt hat, is evidently a painter. He is telling his friends the life and adventures of the grand historical picture on which he has now been engaged for several years. The picture originally represented the "Passage of the Red Sea," under which title it was duly refused admission into the Exhibition. The artist, however, unwilling to have lost his time entirely, altered some of the details without changing the general composition, and called it the "Passage of the Rubicon;" but Pharaoh, we are told, ill disguised under the mantle of Caesar, was recognised on the following year, and summarily repulsed. The third year came, and with it came the picture, once more a candidate for exhibition. This time greater changes were made—in the Egyptian especially, who now appeared in the uniform of the Imperial Guard. This time the piece was called the "Passage of the Bérézina." The committee, however, not only saw through the artist's design, but through his colours also. The work was, accordingly, again returned upon his hands. "Never mind," said the artist, in recounting this last mishap—"next year I shall call it the 'Passage des Panoramas.'"—Next to the artist is a
personage, a little older and more careworn. He is beginning to compromise, to some extent, with his ambition, and condescend to task-work. He has recently produced a vaudeville at the Variétés—that is to say, he has written the dialogue, under the direction of two established authors, one of whom has furnished the "idea" of the piece, while the other has sketched out and arranged the scenes, and given the principal "points." The names of the two established authors have appeared in large letters in the playbills; that of the Bohemian follows in small typography; and, as may be supposed, his share of the spoils has been proportionate. This division of employment is almost universal in French dramatic writing, and the least important author, who figures last, in small caps, is usually a Bohemian. Perhaps the successful authors, who now reap all the honours, have passed through the ordeal in their time, and the subordinate will have his day. Perhaps fortune will do no more for him, and he is able to do no more for himself. In the latter case, supposing that nothing worse happens to him, he sinks into the traditional "literary hack," and will write anything for which he can obtain the most miserable remuneration—from a History of the Universe, to an epitaph or a tradesman's puff.

But while the young ambition which spurns the lower walks of art, is not likely to be at once recognized and at once successful, the less aspiring or more experienced—who condescend to plod along wherever a finger-post points in the direction of a dinner—are not always certain to secure that refreshment at the end of their journey. If on the one road the fruits hang too high—on the other, where they are more accessible, there are too many gatherers. Accordingly, the path of the
Bohemians is nearly always one of hardship and difficulty. To be assured of this fact, it is not necessary to penetrate into their cheerless chambers, and watch their struggles—for struggles they very frequently are—for existence. Sufficient is it to meet them in their moments of relaxation at the café, where the general complaint of the proprietor is, that they do not “consume” enough. That is not their fault, they answer, but simply the fault of the infamous ready-money system upon which the house is conducted. Here you will learn how a celebrated musician (celebrated in the Bohemian sense) was, on the previous day, obliged to sponge upon somebody for a breakfast; and how a great painter, of transcendental tendencies, spent the morning in intriguing for a dinner—with much matter of the same suggestive kind. The subject of borrowing—its uses and abuses—is frequently brought under grave consideration. Among the Bohemians, it is said, there are some who have reduced the practice to a science. They keep an alphabetical list of their acquaintances, with the days on which they are known to receive money, and the sums which may be expected from each, according to his means. These they tick off from the list as they are used up one by one. They are a deadly class to meet with, whatever be your clime or condition; for it is reported that they know how to request the loan of five francs in every language under the sun.

But throughout all this battle for existence the Bohemians never lose their gaiety, nor their steady fidelity to Art; which communicates its influence to all around them. Such an effect, indeed, has their mingled facetiae and transcendentalism had upon the unprepared mind of a waiter at the café which they frequent, that I hear he has become an idiot in the flower of his youth.
Another garçon, under the same corrupting influence, has been detected writing amatory verses to the barmaid.

If the Bohemian never loses his gaiety in the darkest days of his distresses, the effect of an occasional gleam of sunshine, in the shape of a remittance, can scarcely be conceived. A member of the fraternity will appear one morning among his brothers with a five hundred franc bill in his hand. Perhaps it is the fruit of some lucky speculation; or, perhaps, he is an amateur Bohemian, whose parents are wealthy. Of this class, it should be observed, there are many: with means at their command to live in respectable competence, they prefer the life of the Bohemian from love and sympathy, and are quite contented to take their chance of its pains and pleasures. However that may be, there are the five hundred francs, to be devoted to the public good, or the public detriment; and, as long as the money lasts, there is no end to the most frantic festivities. The last penny expended, the Bohemians settle down into their former state of hazardous enjoyment and contented care.

It may be asked what is the ultimate destination of the majority? Do they ever emancipate themselves from the fatal fascination of this mode of life? Certainly, they do; that is to say, most of them who have any real claims to distinction, attain it in the end. These are no days of "mute inglorious Miltons," especially in France, where talent must eventually make its way. The Bohemians are continually losing old, and as continually gaining new, members. One of the tribe will suddenly disappear from the old familiar scenes, and will be given up as lost. A few months elapse, and his companions find themselves invited to a banquet in a fashionable quarter. Here they find their
old associate emerged from his chrysalis condition, and winging his way among the fruits and flowers of high life. He has in the meantime been thinking and working; has made a success, and has become a popular author, with an audience of his own—a constituency that elect him to a permanent seat among the honoured of the land. From his proud position he looks back to his Bohemian days as perhaps the most happy, and certainly not the least useful portion of his experience. For the rest, there are many to whom such honours are but idle dreams; they live on in the old way, unnoticed, unknown, and, worse still, unprinted. They abuse "the world" in their own little coteries, and imagine themselves martyrs. Instead of being great lights of the age, they flicker futilely, or burn themselves prematurely out by over-excitement. In the meantime, it is not the public that is to blame—and scarcely they themselves—poor fellows: it is their misfortune that they have not discovered their true vocation in the beginning, or taken warning in time; that they have not condescended to clerkships, or apprenticed themselves to respectable cheesemongers.

"There is a pleasure in painting which none but painters know;" there is also a pleasure in authorship which one need not be successful to experience. The struggle to ascend Parnassus has its fascination, futile though it be. One taste of the waters of Castaly is too intoxicating for many; yet who, at its fountain, would wish to be a moderate drinker? Perhaps, then, some of my readers, who may have had a drop too much of that celebrated beverage, will make some allowances for the poor, blind, flattered, and fascinated Bohemian.
IX.

PAINTING THE LILY.

All the world—that is to say, myself and about fifty of my acquaintances—were in Paris. It was Easter, and a great gathering of the idleness of all nations was making an exhibition of itself in the Champs Elysées, assisting at the fête of Longchamps. This festivity—it is as well to say, for the benefit of the "general reader," who is never supposed to know anything—is an assemblage of the élite of society, or of anybody, in fact, who can make a show of belonging to that favoured class—at which the fashions for the ensuing summer are understood to be settled and arranged. Feeble-minded persons never dream of giving orders to their tailors or milliners until Longchamps has passed. Those who are more bold appear, during these glorious three days, in the style which they believe to be most unexceptionable, according to the prevailing taste of the most distinguished of their acquaintance. These, tested by a yet higher standard, very often find themselves miserably deceived; and, as may be supposed, an immense amount of admiration, envy, disappointment, and general disgust, is given and exchanged. The only persons who really seem to enjoy Longchamps (with the exception of
the satirist, who, for obvious reasons, is in his element) are the common people, who, at a respectful distance from the principal promenade, divert themselves with shows, billiards, and congenial buffoonery, with a degree of indifference to public opinion almost dignified.

I was “assisting,” then, at the fête of Longchamps, having become tired of student life, and, changing my lodgings with my taste, taken up my residence in a more civilized quarter. Having also bestowed two hours of time and two years of anxiety, that morning, making as unimpressive a toilette as possible, I felt a secret pride in my appearance. In order to appear the more careless and indifferent, I took possession of the dirtiest and most weather-beaten of those little chairs which are such friends to flirtation and such foes to costume; and prepared, not to make a voyage round the world, but to let the world make a voyage round me.

The first half-hour of the Englishman at Longchamps is inevitably employed in wondering what would be thought of the French equipages in Hyde Park—where the French gentlemen get all their broken-kneed nags—and why, while adopting the costume of the celebrated Mr. Chifney, they do not now and then emulate his horsemanship. I had disposed of all these speculations, and had been further amused by the contemplation of some more than usually absurd imitations of English attire among the men, when my eye fell upon a young Frenchman whom, I thought, I had met before. As he was dressed like an English groom, I knew him to belong to the most fashionable classes; he was, besides, indulging in a very unequivocal yawn (Frenchmen do yawn now and then;) and, further, evinced sufficient
good taste to be tired of his own society. Our eyes met; we recognised one another, and he seated himself by my side. I had known him well in London, where he had been attached to the French Embassy, and had not seen him for more than a year; having myself, during that time, been figuring among the blest in what, according to Mr. Emerson, is a "Paradise of Fools"—in other words, I had been travelling.

My friend having inquired after my health, in which he took no interest, and I after his family, whom I had never seen—having, in short, achieved the remainder of the amiable untruths necessary upon such occasions, we fell back upon nature, and by becoming mutually egotistical, contrived to throw some earnestness into the conversation. Amongst other things of which my friend (whom I will designate only by his baptismal name of Auguste) was anxious to tell me, was an adventure that happened to him immediately after my departure from Loudon, and which had nearly made him a married man.

Interested in any event that could have led to so serious a catastrophe, I pressed him to tell me "all about it," being additionally desirous to hear when he informed me that his story would occupy but a very short time. Moreover, Auguste did not, like many story-telling Frenchmen, talk like a newspaper feuilleton; indeed he was half an Englishman in language and turn of thought.

"It was not two days after you left London," he commenced, "that I first made the acquaintance of the celebrated English beauty, Miss Walsingham, whom I remember you had been vainly attempting to meet for some two or three months. As a general rule, one is of course disappointed with celebrated beauties; but this
one surprised the other way. She had every grace that
the fairest of complexions, the bluest of eyes, and above
all, the most golden of all golden hair, could bestow.
Her hair, in fact, was her great attraction, as much,
from its peculiarity, as from its extreme beauty. There
were more verses written about this same hair in the
course of a fortnight, than the magazines could publish
in a twelvemonth—even if they had all editors as
insane as ——’s; and more, therefore, than the conccen-
trated blackheadism of a century could be persuaded to
read. Our acquaintance was commenced at a ball, and
the mutual impression seemed favourable. Isabel was
most grateful that I did not talk about even the
weather, the opera, or the hippopotamus; and, above
all, that I did not flatter—mark the last, for it has a
fatal significance. I certainly did not flatter, not being
addicted to painting lilies, or perfuming violets. Half-
an-hour’s conversation made me her friend—a quadrille,
her admirer—a polka, her adorer—and a waltz, her
slave.

“Obtaining permission to call the next day was an
easy matter; and I found it not very difficult to gain a
satisfactory response to my first whispered wishes.
When, however, these wishes passed beyond that sacred
boundary, and openly assumed the form of ‘intentions,’
our course of love assumed its proverbial aspect: from
a bowling-green it became a race-course, and from a
race-course, a steeple-chase, with the church almost
invisible. It was necessary, in the first place, to per-
suade my father-in-law elect, that all Frenchmen are
not of necessity either beggars or swindlers; and these
facts were not established, as far as my own case was
concerned, without the production of certain satisfactory
title-deeds, and the sacrifice of a no less satisfactory
moustache. Nor were these arrangements facilitated by the circumstances that my notary was innocent of English, and that the French language had apparently been given to Mr. Walsingham (to pervert the saying of Talleyrand) for the purpose of concealing his thoughts.

"These difficulties, however, were at length overcome; and everything was settled with as much certainty as is possible in a case where a young lady has yet a chance of changing her mind. In an affair of the heart a sensible man would of course be ashamed of behaving otherwise than as an idiot; and accordingly, for the next six weeks, I indulged in every ecstatic absurdity demanded by my situation; I made myself as ridiculous, in short, as could be desired by the most exacting of fiancées, or the most satirical of friends.

"Matters were thus proceeding pleasantly for all parties, when an unfortunate accident—that is to say, a maiden aunt of my Isabel's—came to interrupt our felicity. Miss Diana Walsingham, the lady in question, was ill-tempered, and seventy—therefore she was disliked; but Miss Diana was rich and rheumatic—therefore she was caressed. Miss Diana was going to Paris—nobody knew why, probably not herself. Miss Diana felt, naturally, the responsibility of travelling alone, and was looking about her for a companion. She appeared to be literally running up and down stairs in search of one, and as fate would have it, fastened like a vulture upon Isabel, who was reading Tennyson in the back drawing-room. Isabel must be her travelling companion. There should be no excuse. The marriage could easily (easily!) be postponed for a few weeks. If it was inconvenient for Isabel, surely she might be amiable enough to yield sometimes to her aunt, who had never asked her a favour before; and especially as
Isabel had reason to be especially grateful in that quarter, as the lawyer, who had recently drawn up a certain will, could testify—and a great deal more to the same effect. In the end, then, despite my remonstrances and Isabel's tears, and our joint surrender of all expectations—which we devoutly wished at the bottom of the sea—it was agreed by the unanimous prudence of the remainder of the family, that the despotic old lady should be obeyed. At this point, rather than be taken by storm, we wisely resolved to surrender, and my next endeavour was to find an excuse for proceeding to Paris myself. Accordingly, I gently insinuated my wishes to our secretary, who breathed them in a mild whisper to his principal, by whom the proposition was received in a spirit of as profound disapprobation as a diplomatist can venture to indulge in. What could Monsieur be dreaming of? and what attention had he been bestowing upon the political events of the last few weeks? At a period when a hostile fleet was in the Ægean, when Athens was in a state of blockade, and notes couched in the most hostile terms of diplomatic courtesy were being daily exchanged between the agents of the two powerful European courts, the withdrawal of Monsieur from the scene of his official labours could admit of but one interpretation, and might lead to most disastrous results—no less than lighting the flame of war from the Baltic to the Bosphorus, &c.

"Now, I entertained a private opinion, that the official labours in question might, possibly, be conducted without my assistance, considering that I never performed any duties much more arduous than being civil to female diplomats, and waltzing with the twenty-second cousins of persons who were acquainted with others who were supposed to be likely, some day, to
attain political influence. Nevertheless, I had had too much experience of official life to have an opinion of my own, and yielded the point accordingly.

"Everything must have an end—even a young lady’s preparations for a journey. Accordingly, after a trance of about ten days, I was aroused to consciousness by a rough voice observing that ‘if that party didn’t make haste and land, he would be carried across.’ It seems I was at Dover, bidding a last adieu to my Isabel on board the boat, which was a few minutes after cutting its way into deep water, leaving me disconsolate on the pier, forgetful in my grief of friends, home, religion, or the Foreign Office—forgetful even that I had been called a ‘party’—an insult which, under other circumstances, would be alone sufficient to drive me to despair.

"I now waited—I need not say impatiently—for the announcement of her safe arrival—for the sweet little illegible note that was to convey such glad tidings. To my astonishment, I received not a line, not an intimation. In vain did I write to an address in Paris which had been left me—I received no reply. The Walsingham family were all out of town—had gone I knew not whither—so I could gain no information in that quarter. It happened, however, that political events—as you may remember—took a certain turn which removed the restriction hitherto imposed upon me, and left me a free man. I need not say that I availed myself immediately of my freedom, and hurried over to Paris. The very first persons whom I met in the Champs Élysées (without counting some ten thousand strangers) on the day of my arrival, were the very ladies I sought. They were sitting very composedly in an open carriage, and, close by the little refreshment house up there, looked
me full in the face. I ran towards them—that is to say, I hastened my steps a little more than is considered correct in the Champs Élysées—expecting the carriage to stop. What was my surprise to see them pass on without honouring me with the slightest look or gesture of recognition! I must have looked somewhat absurd for a few seconds—standing with my hat in my hand, gazing at Isabel’s golden hair, as it set, like a sun, behind a cloud of vehicles. I thought at the time that Isabel looked somewhat agitated, but I have since remembered that ladies can be sullen, and that the carriage had a pink lining.

“What did I do then? you ask. I did not scamper after the carriage and throw myself under the wheels; such proceedings belong only to the rites of Juggernaut, and the writings of fashionable novelists. I did what most sensible men, who entertain any respect for their pantaloons and social position, would have done. I ate an ice, and wondered what the deuce it all meant. Returning home, however, I addressed a letter—full of point and passion—to Isabel, demanding the cause of her conduct to me in the morning. The next day I received a ‘correctly cold’ epistle from the elder lady, informing me, that, ‘as it was impossible to mistake my very mischievous pleasantry for anything short of an intentional insult, it was the wish of Miss Walsingham to cease any further correspondence,’ &c. Mystery upon mystery. I wrote again, and this time—and the next, and the next—received no reply.

“In despair—that is to say, very much puzzled and annoyed—I quitted Paris; and took up my quarters in a pretty little village a few miles off, for the double purpose of indulging my grief and allowing my moustache to grow again. While lingering over a late
breakfast one morning, I took up a number of 'Galignani,' and my eye at once fell upon a paragraph in which I could not doubt myself to be interested.

"The writer set forth in an impertinent sort of style, which he doubtless considered very lively and clever, that 'considerable amusement had been created in high circles, both in London and Paris, by the eccentricity of a young Frenchman, not very remotely connected with the Embassy of the Republic in London;' that this gentleman was betrothed to a young English lady, who, having occasion to visit France, was, on landing in that country, discovered to have no resemblance to the person described in her passport (which was a special document from the French Embassy in London, intended to secure the bearer every respect and attention;) that, in consequence of this fact, and the unsettled state of the diplomatic relations between the two countries, the lady had been arrested, under suspicions of a nature to which it was unnecessary (in the opinion of the writer) more particularly to allude, and was released only after considerable delay, and the establishment of her identity through the mediation of the English Ambassador.

"But the most amusing part of the whole affair, according to 'Galignani,' was the personal description which had been the cause of the contre-temps. The eyes of the lady, upon paper, were 'bleus comme le ciel'—upon her face, they were a very ordinary grey. The written authority gave her a Grecian nose—the authorities of the Custom-house were inclined to think it retroussé. In the one case her mouth was 'très petite'—in the other it was generally considered a moderate size. Nor would the matter-of-fact gendarme be persuaded that the neat little figure of the lady was a 'taille
superbe;’ and as for her hair being ‘dorés comme celui d’un ange,’ he pronounced it, at once, to be a clear and unmistakable red.

“The mystery was revealed, and I never felt so ridiculous in all my life. I need scarcely tell you that in my enthusiasm I had taken upon myself the subordinate office of filling up the passport; and there is even less reason to add that I had better have left that department to the clerk. The fact is, that a lover does not—nor is it desirable that he should—see with the same eyes as a Custom-house official.”

Auguste concluded with this wise reflection.

“If you had told me in the beginning,” said I, “that the young lady’s hair was red, I might have given you an interesting piece of information long ago—that she is again in Paris, and will probably drive past us in a few minutes. A dozen men have been telling me this morning of an amazing English beauty, with most delightful scarlet locks, who must be identical with your heroine. See, she is coming now.”

As I spoke, an open carriage and pair rattled past us. It contained a lady and gentleman—the former all smiles, the latter all admiration.

“Tis she,” cried Auguste, “but not quite so handsome, I think, as I once believed her. But who is that hideous-looking person by her side?”

“I should have told you,” I answered, “that Miss Walsingham is just married to the richest and ugliest Englishman in Paris. He is forty-five, and—never flatters!”
MY AUNT IN PARIS.

It was not long after Longchamps that I found myself taking considerable interest in Mademoiselle Delphine, the only daughter of the dirty little tailor who officiated as the portier at my lodgings. Mademoiselle Delphine was not in the literal meaning of the term beautiful; but she compensated, better even than most Frenchwomen, for its absence, by insensible charms and graces, that defy equally criticism or classification. I was sallying forth one morning as usual to transact—if I may be allowed the expression—my idleness, when, after several fruitless calls upon the cordon, I entered the Loge du Concierge. I found Delphine "desolated," as she informed me, and in tears, as I could see for myself. I was not long in eliciting the secret of her sorrow, which was communicated to me in the strictest confidence. She had a lover, which is not unusual in other countries besides France; and this lover was a soldier, which in France is particularly usual. Like many other gallant young fellows, this soldier had a soul above five sous a-day, and lived as much above that moderate income as kindness and credit would permit. His regiment had been lately ordered into the provinces, and pre-
viously to his departure, Delphine, it seems, had admin-
istered to some pressing requirement by a timely loan.
He was to return on the morrow, and Delphine did not
know how to meet him, because—because—she at last
said, reluctantly—because she had been compelled to
borrow the money in question upon the security of her
only valuable possession—a bracelet—the love-gift of
the soldier himself. To meet him without wearing his
gift, and in silence, would be impossible; to confess
that she had parted with it, although it had been
devoted to his use, would seem mean and mercenary;
or, what was immeasurably less to be endured, com-
mon-place. She had no other means of redeeming
the gift or accounting for its loss, and was desolée
accordingly.

This dismal tale called, of course, for consolation.
That the kind of consolation I administered was speedy
and effectual, may be gathered from the immediate
disappearance of all traces of desolation. Delphine was
echantée, and expressed herself in the superlatives
which only a Frenchwoman can muster on the shortest
notice. I had roused her from desolation to ecstasy.
She was enchanted and enraptured. I was noble and
generous; my bounty would be forgotten never!

"But," I asked, "where am I to find this bracelet,
which is so necessary for the preservation of tranquillity
between you and your fiancé?"

"It is at my Aunt's," was the reply.

"Your Aunt! Mercenary old lady! Surely she
does not take security when she helps lovers and
relations out of their little distresses?"

Delphine smiled, and enlightened my innocence by
some explanations, which I will here enlarge upon for
the benefit of the reader.
My Aunt, it appears, belongs to a very large family in Paris—a family, in fact, as large as the entire population of that city, and increasing year by year with the census returns. Her relatives are of every grade; from the Montmorencies—who are at the present moment glowing again under ancestral titles of at least six weeks’ standing, down to Monsieur Gougon, the chiffonnier, condemned to “pick up a livelihood,” with no other title than his prescriptive title—to whatever he can find. It must not be supposed, however, that all of this numerous family are on the same degree of intimacy with the respected lady: the Montmorencies are a little too high, and the Gougons scarcely high enough, to take much notice of her. She is principally cultivated by classes, ranging somewhere between the two extremes—a medium, certainly, but one which can scarcely be described as the golden. To say that they have “expectations” from the old lady, would be saying little enough, considering the uncertain nature of human hopes; but the fact is, there is no occasion to say anything of the kind. My Aunt, though she has a very large capital at her command, is certainly not generous. She was never known to leave anybody anything in her will, nor to ask them down into the country on a visit, nor out to dinner on a Sunday, nor to behave handsomely at Christmas-time—like the amiable aunts of most persons. All she will do for her relatives is, to lend them money; and then she takes very good care to be the gainer by the transaction, for she lends only on the very best security—the deposit of some article, of four times the value of the sum advanced. In a word, My Aunt in Paris is the very faithful and appropriate spouse of My Uncle in London. Like My Uncle, she is visited by her relatives only when
they want money; and, like My Uncle, she contrives to make a very good living by lending it to them. There is this difference, however, in what we may call the "constitution" of this worthy couple. My Uncle, in England, speculates on his own account, and flourishes or fails, as the case may be, without responsibility to anybody but himself. My Aunt, in France, on the other hand, is set up by the Government, who takes upon itself the risk of the speculation.

While noting the fact of My Uncle holding an analogous position to the lady in question, it is as well to state that My Aunt is no fanciful designation, induced by that circumstance. It is not a mere piece of pleasantry on the part of Delphine-alone. Ask the student of the Quartier Latin—who has just accomplished the popular feat of spending his month's allowance in ten days—as he marches gaily along towards the Mont de Piété; his watch ticking its adieu in his waistcoat pocket—"Where are you going?" "To my Aunt's!" will be the inevitable reply, delivered instinctively, and without any determined intention to be humorous. Cross the path of the griselette—who stitches ten hours a-day for a franc, and who every now and then finds herself, like her betters, living beyond her means—as she trips composedly (for no Frenchwoman, under any circumstances, was ever known to be embarrassed), and address her with a similar question: "Chez Ma Tante!" she will answer, with a slight shrug of the shoulder, and twinkle of the eye—in recognition of the playful nature of the designation, but with no idea of being understood literally.

Ma Tante, in fact, is the great popular impersonation of this most popular institution. Her origin, as...
an impersonation, is equally uncertain with that of My Uncle. It is not improbable, to be sure, that the two illustrious personages were the creation of some "mad wag" of the Medici family—some needy cadet whose relations kindly lent him money at fifty per-cent. The designations, considered as facetiae, have decidedly a mediæval look; and, as a joke, My Uncle, at any rate, is most certainly middle-aged.

I had engaged to procure the bracelet for Delphine; and half-an-hour after our conversation found me on my way to our mutual relative. I had been duly supplied with the necessary authorisation—a large official form, printed upon yellow paper—not unlike a passport, but rather more important in appearance, and guaranteed authentic by one of those imposing signatures which none but Frenchmen can execute, and not all, even of Frenchmen, can read. The address indicated upon this portentous document was that of a branch office, where I speedily presented myself. It was not a shop, but strictly an office, having very much the appearance of a bank—that is to say, of a French bank. Behind a screen of wire-work, which separated the public from the private portion of the room, were seated the officials, grave, dignified, military-looking men, writing at their desks, and apparently in no hurry to attend to the wants of several persons who were patiently waiting to transact business with them. These last were principally women, old and young; some with mysterious bundles and anxious looks; others of a better (or perhaps worse) class, selecting rings from their jewelled fingers, carelessly humming snatches from vaudeville, and quite at their ease.

After taking a brief survey of the group, I, by good
chance, caught the eye of one of the clerks, or field-marshal, or whatever they may happen to be, who advanced with a military step across the room. Six words on either side settled the business. Monsieur could have the article he desired on the morrow, by application at the office. The morrow! if Delphine was already désolée, the morrow would find her désespérée! But why could not the bracelet be reclaimed on the spot? Because every article deposited was sent to the central office, and could not be reclaimed without certain formalities; but if Monsieur liked to go to the central office himself, the business could be arranged in a few hours. In that case, Monsieur would certainly go.

The most important formality required, was the payment of the sum of money originally advanced, in return for which, and my original yellow document, I received another official form, even more imposing and portentous than the last—combining the solemnity of a will with the importance of a passport. This was signed, countersigned, and pushed towards me through the little gate in the wire-work, with an air which impressed me with a terrible sense of responsibility. I had not, indeed, quite recovered my self-possession, when I turned suddenly round, to find a musket, with fixed bayonet, presented at me. I started back. Had I done something wrong? Oh no! The assailant, innocent of any sort of attack upon me, was a woman. She marched into the place I had left, and placing her finger on the trigger, demanded of the official, in a gruff, your-money-or-your-life tone of voice “Ten francs!”

I thought the official decidedly prudent, when he at once acquiesced in the demand. The Amazon instantly
surrendered her arms at discretion, and the money was paid over to her, after she had duly satisfied the official that her husband was simply a gunsmith, and was not a soldier pawning the property of the State.

Leaving both sides satisfied with this honourable capitulation, I made the best of my way towards the central office, situated in a cross street somewhere between the Rue de Seine and the Rue du Bac. I had no difficulty in finding it. The first person I addressed, directed me to a conspicuous building guarded by two sentries, surmounted by a tri-colour ensign, and blazoned with the famous inscription—"Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité,"—which has since been shown to mean so very much. Over the Mont de Piété they had a certain suggestiveness, of the benefit of which the philosophic borrower in these days is most tyrannically deprived.

French sentries, unlike English ones, do know something about the buildings they mount guard over; and are not too sulky to communicate their knowledge. Accordingly, I was not surprised, when, in answer to my inquiry, one of the sentinels directed me across the court-yard to the left, where a large door stands hospitably open. All who enter here leave, not necessarily hope, but certainly comfort behind. The staircase is of rough timber, inconvenient, precipitous; dirty and crazy, from constant use. Above stairs there is a slight change for the worse. A suite of rooms all opening into one another, all dirty, all close, and all crowded.

In the first room two men are peering through two pigeon-holes in the wall, like those of the money-takers at the theatres; and to prevent the confusion which would be caused by the rush of the miscellaneous mob, a space is barred off, just sufficient to allow one person to pass at a time—an arrangement similar to that at
the pit of the London Opera on a crowded night, and such as is in use at the entrance to nearly all the French theatres.

Notwithstanding this wise regulation, there is a great deal of confusion, caused by the efforts of everybody (everybody includes, perhaps, a couple of hundred) to be first. Yellow gloves are clutching convulsively, to check the ambition of blouses; rags and tatters, in their turn, are asserting the principle of equality, which has here—and scarcely anywhere else, except at the Morgue—a real practical existence. But, although there is confusion enough, there is no quarrelling; everybody is good-humoured, and, if he cannot force his way, is contented to bide his time. Many a bloused and bearded operative may be seen pausing, perhaps, in his hot endeavours, and with a courtly bow, worthy of the old Court of Louis the Fifteenth, making way for "a lady." If these fine courtesies are really the "cheap defence of nations," France should be impregnable.

For myself—not having the hardihood, in the first instance, to thrust myself into the mass—I waited patiently, thinking to let the crowd become thinned, and to transact my business at my leisure. But, after half-an-hour's pursuance of this policy, the idea began to dawn upon me—as I watched the new comers, increasing in numbers and diminishing in patience—that, at this rate, I stood a chance of desolating Delphine four-and-twenty hours more. Seized with a sudden impulse, I made a dash for it; dislodged several free and independent citizens, with most determined and exasperating courtesy; and, finally, gained a place inside the barriers. Here I scrutinised those before me, in their negotiations with the officials; saw them stop at the first pigeon-hole, and exchange the grand yellow docu-
ment for another of smaller dimensions, after the former had undergone a careful examination; then I followed their movements to the second pigeon-hole, where an exchange of the second paper for a piece of card, bearing a number, was effected, each transaction being conducted with military precision, and by a person assuming all the grandeur of a General of Division, and the administrative dignity of a Lord Chief Justice.

Having gone through these formalities—which included the payment of a certain small sum (at the first pigeon-hole), as interest on the loan—I was once more free of the barrier. The number on my ticket was the number of the article which I had to reclaim; but, before presenting it in the room devoted to the jewellery department, I pause to observe the proceedings in that dedicated to habiliments and miscellaneous articles.

In the latter apartment, behind a counter, stands a person, who calls aloud various numbers in rotation, as the corresponding articles were brought up to him from some mysterious place at the back. "Quarante-cinq!" he shouts, at the top of his voice. The person representing forty-five steps modestly forward. She is a young girl—a grisetey, wearing a little cap. She approaches the counter; on presenting her ticket, she receives some article tied up in a handkerchief, having all the appearance of a bonnet. To-morrow is Sunday. She is probably going to some fête, or to the theatre, and is about to commit the hazardous impropriety of appearing like a grand lady, in a bonnet—an offence which a grand lady never forgives in a grisetey; and for which all grisettes who cannot get bonnets will become her enemies for life.

"Quarante-six!" cries the official, calling the next person so suddenly as to cause forty-five to drop her
bundle, with its precious contents. Forty-six comes tottering up; has nearly trodden forty-five's bonnet into a misshapen pancake; but, though an old man, steps adroitly aside, and blunders against the counter to receive a pair of boots. Poor fellow! will he ever wear them out? As quarante-six moves off, quarante-sept takes his place, almost before he is summoned; a lively young gentleman, most probably a student, who does not whistle, as an Englishman would, but hums the *stretta* of Bellini's Chorus of Priests; he receives a paletôt, which he carefully removes from its wrapper, and puts on, amidst the admiring smiles of the spectators. He is followed by a middle-aged woman, who "retires" a warming-pan—the aspect of which domestic utensil draws fresh smiles from the bystanders. More persons follow—men and women, of all ages, of all degrees of poverty and of every scale of pretension; the careworn and the timid, the reckless and the profligate; reclaiming articles of every possible description, of wearing apparel or household use; varying in value from some very minute number of francs up to a hundred, beyond which latter sum My Aunt has no dealings.

Meantime the expectants—careless, eager, anxious, hopeless, according to the respective numbers which they hold, and their consequent chances of satisfaction, speedy or remote—are awaiting their turns; some sitting tranquilly on the benches round the walls of the several rooms, others talking in groups; some few, strangers evidently to the place, and perhaps to the necessities which led them there, shunning observation in shy corners, or moodily pacing the corridors. In the next room, that devoted to jewellery, and that which more particularly concerns myself, there are fewer persons, and those are, for the most part, of a better class.
There is no jostling; no calling aloud of the numbers: the persons present transact their business whenever the opportunity arises, decorously, without haste and without noise. Ladies of elegant carriage and gesture—contrasted with stained and worn apparel—may be seen, closely veiled, as if shrinking from notice or recognition, claiming some trinket of a fashion long since out of date: heirlooms, perhaps, and marriage gifts, and pledges of friendship; records of past scenes and sensations, feelings flown, and givers dead. There is an old man with white hair. His great-coat has fallen open and revealed the cordon of the Legion of Honour. He has just concluded his negotiation with the official at the counter, and bears away with him a little locket, with a ribbon attached.

A young lady, clad in deep mourning, comes next. She steps hesitatingly up to the counter. Her eyes are fixed on the ground, and she turns her face from the general gaze. I can scarcely catch a glimpse of her features, and her figure is concealed in heavy and disguising garments. But her motions are full of grace, and even her voice excites at once the respectful attention of the man to whom she addresses herself. I do not hear the few words which are exchanged between them; but I observe that she receives a small morocco case, and, as she opens it for an instant, that it contains a cross, set with diamonds, the cross of some foreign order.

How vulgar, compared to the manner of this young lady, is the demeanour of the flippant fashionable who follows her! The ring which she reclaims, set dazzlingly with diamonds, she places on her finger with a triumphant air, as so much added to her decorations.

Meantime I am forgetting all about Delphine's deso-
lation, and the bracelet which is to be its cure. Musing and moralising, most unjustifiably, I twiste and tear my ticket. Never mind, it is still legible, and the official is disengaged. I assume a business air, and step up to the counter. Two minutes more, and my mission is accomplished. I pocket the bracelet, and and descend into the street.

Musing on my way home upon things in general, including bracelets, and soldiers, and desolated porters' daughters, I came to the conclusion that I might have passed my morning less profitably than in paying a visit to My Aunt.

My visit, however, had not altogether satisfied my curiosity respecting the old lady. Mademoiselle Delphine had told me something of her characteristics, and I had learned something more on my own account. Mademoiselle Delphine had a general notion that our mutual relative was a very convenient person to borrow money from, and—voilà tout! She judged of her simply as an individual, and from personal experience. And Delphine was in the right. She very properly considered that she was not called upon to interest herself in any matter of mere public utility, especially when her so doing involved the comprehension of anything so distressing as statistics;—that her mission upon earth was merely to look pretty and to be amiable.

“To what good uses can we put
The wild weed-flower that simply blows;
And is there any moral shut
Within the bosom of the rose?”

—except, indeed, as Mr. Tennyson goes on to say, such a moral as people may find out for themselves, according to their minds and moods.
For myself, however, not being so anxious as Delphine to preserve my bloom, and to keep off crows-feet, I did not scruple to inform myself as to some facts concerning the working of the system established by My Aunt.

In the first place, I learned what I should certainly have had no chance of learning from Delphine—that the profits arising from the transactions of the Mont de Piété are devoted to the aid of the public hospitals of Paris, which realise no inconsiderable sum from this source. During the financial year of 1850, the amount was four hundred and sixty-eight thousand eight hundred francs; being an increase of nearly sixty-two thousand nine hundred francs over the preceding year.

The profits of the two years, 1849 and 1850, amounted to eight hundred and seventy-four thousand francs; a sum which constitutes a new fact in the annals of the institution—there being no previous instance of the profits of two consecutive years amounting respectively to four hundred thousand francs. Indeed, during a long period this amount has been attained only three times, in 1823, 1829, and 1841. Since the re-organization of the Mont de Piété, in 1806, the year 1850 had, after making every compensation, yielded the largest amount towards the benevolent objects to which its profits are devoted.

The capital necessary for the maintenance of the institution is raised on debentures, bearing a small rate of interest. It appears that this capital had become considerably reduced in consequence of the death of several of the largest holders, whose heirs were not willing to continue the investment. To repair this deficiency, it was found necessary to raise the rate of interest paid to the holders, successively from three to
three-and-a-half, and subsequently to four per cent. This arrangement has been found successful.

Loans from the Mont de Piété may be effected, either directly at the central office, at the succursale, a sort of addition to the central office, established to meet the requirements of an overflowing clientelle—a "Pawn-brokery of Ease," in fact—or at the auxiliary offices. The business may be negotiated personally, the most prevalent custom, or through the agency of commissionnaires. During the period under review, the number of articles deposited were eight hundred and eighty-nine thousand four hundred and thirty; upon which, sums were advanced exceeding thirteen millions six hundred thousand francs. Including renewals, however, the number of transactions were upwards of one million one hundred, which increased the sum total to twenty millions and a half of francs.

This last amount exceeds by nearly a million and a half of francs the products of the preceding year; and this increase of original transactions is accompanied by a proportionate decrease in the number of renewals. Both of these facts are considered cheering signs by French political economists. From the increase of original transactions, they infer that the great bulk of the population are in possession of a larger amount of personal and available property; and, from the decrease in renewals, that they have better means at their command for the redemption of their pledges. There is, certainly, no reason to argue from an increase in the number of loans an increase in the necessities of the people; for, anybody who knows anything of the habits of the more humble classes of the Parisians, will easily believe that in, perhaps, the majority of cases, the loans are obtained merely for purposes of luxury and
amusement; that an ouvrier who should find himself without any effects available as pledges, would not, in all probability, be deprived of anything so serious as his dinner; but of his wine, perhaps, his fête, or his theatre. It is fair, therefore, to assume that these classes possess more property than hitherto. With regard to the decrease of renewals, the fact speaks for itself. The average amount of the separate sums lent, taking in the renewals, was seventeen francs thirty-three centimes—a slight increase over the average of the preceding year.

My Aunt’s balance sheet exhibits encouraging results, and these are attributed to the favourable terms on which the directors, during the last ten months, have been able to maintain their capital. The rate of interest which they have paid to the holders of their securities during that period has not been more than three per cent.—a fact which they consider signally indicative of the degree of public confidence enjoyed by the institution.

The amount lent upon goods deposited is thus regulated, in proportion to their value:—for goods that can be preserved, two-thirds of their estimated value are advanced; on gold and silver articles, four-fifths. In making the estimate, however, in the latter case, workmanship is not taken into consideration; the positive weight of the metal being the sole guide. Articles not redeemed within the year are sold, subject, however, as in England, to a claim for restoration of the surplus, if made within three years.

My Aunt’s constitution partakes more of a benevolent nature than that of My Uncle. My Uncle sets up in business for his own benefit. My Aunt is set up for the purpose of benefiting her borrowers; out of whose
necessities she, nevertheless contrives to make no inconsiderable sum, which, we are bound to say, she does not spend upon herself. How far My Uncle would find it practicable or expedient to follow her example, is a question open to discussion. It is certain that in Ireland an institution after the model of that of My Aunt has not been attended with unmixed success.