HUMAN NATURE:

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IPHIGENIA.

By Henry Pride.

I.

In Aulis by the sea, the Grecian chiefs,
Impatient to o'erwhelm their goading griefs
In Troy's deep desolation, turn their eyes
Full oft upon the ships, and mark how flies
The lofty pennon: many days have passed,
And still they wait in vain a favouring blast.

King Agamemnon's brow is dark with care;
Within his heart hope struggles with despair,
And ever weaker grows; oft-times he strives
To speak, as many times stops short and drives
His heavy heel into the silvery sand;
In listless silence all the warriors stand.

At length, low-voiced, he says:—"O valiant Greeks,
I am o'ercome with woe, and sorrow speaks
To me from every eye that meets my own:
Day follows day, and still no wind is blown
To bear us on to Troy. What may it mean?
Is not our purpose just? Can gods e'er lean
Athwart the wrong-redresser?—ever hold
The wronger in esteem?—their favours doled
To wretched mortals only by caprice?—
Or are there any gods that watch o'er Greece?"

He ceased; and there a murmuring arose
And died away; but none sought to oppose
A solace to his plaint, and all fell still
And moody as before, and thought of ill.
Then, on a sudden, one of them exclaimed:—
"Where is the seer, old Calchas, long-time famed
For gifts mysterious? Through him, perchance,

The gods will speak, yea, show him, in a trance,
Their mighty purposes, and our offence."

The words seemed good; and one was missioned thence
To seek the holy man; but ere his feet
Had wandered far, Calchas, the king to greet,
Appeared, and straight began, in solemn tone:—

"O, Agamemnon, unto me alone
The thronéd gods have spoken in a dream:
Through me thou mayest know how to redeem
Thy grievous fault: for thou hast done a thing
Which till thou expiate will closely cling,
Like death-dewed shroud about thee, and make nought
Thy every enterprise, till low thou'rt brought.

"The eve of yesterday, I lay within
A sea-scooped cave, and listened to the din,
Not unmelodious, of the washing waves—
The lonely lullaby that sadness craves:
For I was sad, O king, o'er fading hopes
Of Greece's triumph when with Troy she copes.
I wept the while the sun was sinking down,—
Wept that another day had vainly flown;
And from the stars I turned my tear-wet face,
For solace seeking in the gloomy place.
Anon, the moonlight o'er the heaving deep
Moved like a spirit; I no more could keep
My eyes upon the dark, but let them drink
The virgin light, till it did seem to sink
Into my whirling brain; and then I slept.

"And, lo! within a wood methought I stepped;
Winding my way amid umbrageous trees,
Filling my ears with warbled melodies,
And tinklings soft of diamond-sparkling brooks
That mingled kisses pure in mossy nooks.

"Oh, such a tenderness was in the light!
No dazzling glare, and yet divinely bright;
As though some greater sun were sphered above,
And this the spot of all he most did love.

"And so I wandered on, until I came
Into a flowery dell, of which no name
Of beauty known to men the loveliness
Could utter forth; and here in dreaminess
Methought I lay me down, and whispered low,
Scarce noting what I did: 'O, this, I trow,
Is Dian's temple!' Then I veiled my sight—
Diana goddess, in a heaven of light,
Was beaming down on me; she bade me lift
My quivering lids; smiled as when through a rift

In rolling clouds the summer sunlight peeps,—
The sombre field in golden glory steeps,—
Bade me again, in voice of crystal rill,
To mark a stag which thy hand, king, did kill.

"Still on the grass was now the antlered head
That once reared loftily above the mead;
By Dian's snowy feet for ever still,
And Dian feeling at her heart a thrill
That floods with tears her eyes, those azure deeps!
(Woe, woe to mortals when a goddess weeps!)
I thought of thee, O king, in agony,
And bowed upon the ground in suppliancy,
And then I heard these words of dismal fate:—

"'Calchas, divinely-gifted, not with hate
I speak the doom,—too high am I enthroned;
All mortal ill to gods must be atoned.
Albeit my stag was slain unwittingly,
My stag more dear than all his kind to me,
Henceforth shall Agamemnon fail in all;
Till life shall end, misfortune's linked thrall;
And for a sign of this my sure decree
The winds shall still be missioned contrary;
And Trojan voices for an age shall sing
The story of the Greeks' dishonouring.'

"O king, my spirit quailed before despair;
'Is there no hope,' I moaned, 'then, anywhere?—
No expiation to o'ertop the wrong?—
Does mercy but to human hearts belong?'—
And for an instant's space I raised my eyes,
Dared once to look on beauty's paradise,
And, lo! methought I saw a shadow fall
And mingle with the lines ethereal
That wove the sweetest smile e'er mortal saw!
She spoke; part mournfully she seemed to draw
The words from her divinely-pitying heart:—

"'Calchas, heaven-gifted seer, man set apart
For good, no way there is but only one,
By which may be atoned the injury done:
King Agamemnon must consent to slay
His guiltless daughter: so shall be allay
The wrath of throned gods, and overthrow
The towers of Troy, and lay her princes low.'

"The final words seemed carried far away,
Or I scarce heard them in my deep dismay;
In vain I strove to speak, when, suddenly,
The gorgeous turf and every forest tree,
Like insubstantial vapour disappeared,

While strains of music sounded, sad and weird;
And then I sank into oblivion.

"Long years, methought, had lingered and gone,
When I awoke: the starry night had fled;
The sun gleamed brightly on my rocky bed;
But still the waves were crooning near at hand,
Low-murmuring my vision to the sand:
Ah, how I sang it o'er to my own soul,
Sought for the comfort of it, felt the dole,
Ere I could brave my heart to come to thee
And show thy daughter's woeful destiny!"

The voice of Calchas to a whisper sank
Ere all was said, nor on the dreary blank
Of Agamemnon's face his eyes could rest;
His hoary head drooped low upon his breast.
And all the chiefs stood motionless and pale,
And nought was heard save but, not far, the wail
Of Ocean loth to part: Then, suddenly,
The king threw back his dark-flushed brows, and free
As mountain-torrent at the winter's close,—
When all in tears the violated snows
Rush frantiely to hide them in the deep,—
His words rolled from him with tumultuous sweep:—

"Vain, dreaming dotard, hence! and thank the years
Whose silver circlet crowns thee, and the fears
Oft changed by thee to smiles in days gone by,
When thou hast lulled my soul with melody,
That I mete not to thee the long-drawn death
Which thou hast chosen to steal away the breath
Of her—my child;—sweet imaged-innocence—
Iphigenia!—O!—begone!—hence!—hence!—
Bear with me, chiefs.—Ye Powers who dwell on high
In joy, who know not what it is to die,
Blast with swift thunderbolt the sturdy tree,

But spare the tender plant that twiningly
About it grows! By my wrung father-heart,
I scorn and hate you pitiless, apart,
Beholders of man's pain and healing not!
Better to be eternally forgot
And still defy, than for the wealth of Troy,
Or all the untold bliss that ye enjoy,
Mock on with craven reverence!—Farewell."

The king's last word broke from him like a knell;
And wildly glared his eyes, a moment's space,
And shook his towering frame; and half a pace,
As though expectantly, he staggered back
To take the doom he did not care to lack:

But still the fierce blood throbbed along each vein,
Nor changed to icy fear his rash disdain;
Still could he view the azure, arching sky,
Still mark the white-plumed sea-bird flashing by;
And in his burdened ears the sea made moan
A-dyingly.—He turned and passed, alone.

And all the thronging Greeks gazed after him;
And every face was white; and not a limb
But shook. And horror clave to every tongue.

Then spake, of many minds Ulysses:—"Stung,
O valiant chiefs, unto the inmost core,
Lift I my voice too feeble to deplore
King Agamemnon's rage. Our enterprise,
If he repent not, all a ruin lies,
Close by our very doors. The aged sires
Who sent us proudly forth to purge their ires
In Trojan blood, and bring fair Helen back,
Must seek a refuge from despair, alack!
Among the dismal shades. What say you, now?
Let some one to the king, intent to bow
His haughtiness to Jove's supreme command:
So shall our glory fade not from the land."

The thought was good; and since for eloquence
Ulysses' fame was great, and confidence
Of all did rest on him, and that the king
Did prize him most of all his following,
The single choice of each he took his way,
Nor shunned the burning glare of noontide's ray.

Long did Ulysses seek the king in vain,
And but for direful doubt he had been fain
To rest awhile; but as the shadows fell
On land and sea, a deeper, darker spell
Possessed him; half in fear he peered about,
And was in act to frame a mighty shout,
When, lo! the risen moon peeped o'er a cloud,
And with a glister like her own endowed
A far-off something lying on the strand—
"Perchance a javelin, or a warrior's brand."—
So thought Ulysses; and with careful stride,
Free-willed for every hap, he closer spied
And knew king Agamemnon's massy spear,
Thrown down beside a cavern opening near.
He paused a space, and then, in low clear tone,
Spake thus, as though to his own heart alone:—

"Ah me, how have I loved on such a night
To be abroad! How has the moon's soft light

Shed o'er my spirit sweet tranquillity,
While all the stars beamed blessings down on me!
My country! O my country, all is o'er;
Thy scroll of glory full for evermore:
Yea, not a deed thereon that blazed thy name
Among the timeless gods, swift-winged with flame,
But this foul shame hath overwhelmed and quenched!
Methinks I could have dared, and never blenched,
To front the dread infernal host for thee,—
Ay, bear their awful sum of misery!—
And Agamemnon——great is his renown,
And justly so; but Greece had never grown
To mighty sway, if all her sovereigns,
For private weal had bartered public pains:
Nor seems it right that one should have the power
To wreck the work of ages, in an hour.

"The gods bestowed on him a lovely child,
And made his heart a shrine; awhile beguiled
His coarser nature with her tenderness,
Refinement giving, and divine impress.
They planted her, a flower of purest white,
Upon a rocky ridge: now, ere a blight
Of mortal chance can come to wither it,
To take it back again it seems them fit:
And, oh, what bliss for her! for him what fame
To be the saviour of his country's name!

"But from the gods the king has turned his face;
Has once defied and lived upon the place;
And now, perhaps, strives vainly to believe
That men alone the threads of destiny weave:
What then?—he cannot save his daughter's life,
Nor his discrowned head: a baleful strife
Will widely rage for zealous precedence—
He happiest who first does them violence.

"For me all hope is dead; nought but despair
My weary soul can image anywhere.
I merit not to see my country's fall,
To be the stranger's or the anarch's thrall.
Come, death! Would but that my unworthy blood
Could flow as freely for the people's good!—
—What's this? the king's own spear that near me lies?
Lo! it shall tell him of self-sacrifice!"

So said he; and with seeming-eager clutch,
He raised the steely barb till it did touch
His naked breast; and with a backward leap,
Full to the moon before the cave's black deep

He showed himself, then ran as if to stay
The butt against a stone, that thereby lay,
And so transfixed die.—But from the shade
A voice, by fear and haste all broken made,
Cried out: "Ulysses, live!"—and then the king
Sprang forth, and seized on him, and they did cling
Long-time together: while more queenly shone
The moon, and wonderingly the stars looked on.

II.

Iphigenia sat beside a stream,
From palaces afar, and watched the gleam
Of nimble fishes snatching airy food,
As they went nigh her through the lonely wood.
And all around her gayest wild-flowers grew;
And time and time, and scarcely that she knew,
She plucked one out and laid it in her lap:
Then twined a garland, dreaming what might hap.

Chief in her thoughts her father held a place,
And all his hopes and fears she sought to trace:
Then, link by link, the chain of memory
That bound him to her heart, now with a sigh,
Now with a joyous smile, she lingered o'er,
And wept lest she should know his love no more.

"Ah, me!" she said, "'tis scarce a year ago,
Since, in our Argos, all the pride and show
Of Greece joined hearts and hands to honour him.
Even now methinks I gaze till eyes grow dim
From that high tower, to get the earliest note
Of each new pageant; even now I gloat
O'er waving banners, prancing steeds, the flash
Of sword, and shield, and plumed helm, the crash
Of martial music mingling with the cries
Of happy husbandmen to strike the skies.

"How grand my father looked upon his throne!
A king among the kings that one by one
Ranged proudly right and left in banquet hall!—
And I was dearer to him than it all:
Close by his side he placed me, and did turn
To me a beaming face, while I did burn
Through every beating vein, I knew not why,
And drooped beneath a storm of flattery.

"And when the feast was done, a king arose,
Ulysses named; and as this water flows
Smoothly along, or ripples o'er a stone,
So with an even grace to me unknown

His words welled forth, or with a cadence soft
Made melody I could not hear too oft.
How breathlessly I waited on each thought,
That sped winged with his golden words!—and caught
And cherished them, till in confusion sweet
At such amass of riches, as was meet,
My soul shone out on him with truest smile
Of gratitude, and he did pause awhile!

"For he was holding high my father's fame,
And such sincerity of living flame
Out-darted from his eyes, that my eyes too
Clear-sparkled with a truth that held him true.
'Twas then he fluttered down; but not for long:
For, with a change of tone that stirred the throng,
He made sublime discourse on womanhood—
'Mirror of grace, and purity, and good,'—
And wove me in his speech, in deftliest way,
Since, though abashed, I could not give him nay.

"'But where,' said he—almost I hear him now—
'And fairest, purest, best is she, I trow,
Is Clytemnestra, Agamemnon's queen?
What heavy woe doth keep her from a scene
That womanhood delights in? from thy side,
O king, not sharing this thy day of pride?'
And even as he spoke, a little door
Behind the throne swung open, and a roar
Of admiration swelled up to the roof,
To greet my mother, whelming the reproof.

"Lowly she bent in due humility,
And strove to quell the blush that I could see
Unwonted on her cheeks, and pressed her lips
Together, while she intertwined the tips
Of her uneasy fingers: but they shook
The more, beneath the wonder of my look.
And I remember noting her attire,
Which roused in me a momentary ire
Against her women: for her hair was loose,
The bands not well arranged, and though profuse
Her robes in richness, still they lacked the grace
Of just disposal seeming her high place.

"So sat she down, supreme in loveliness:
And yet methought that I did love her less.
A wicked thought, and so I banished it,
And would have joyed me in the sparks of wit
That flew from brain to brain; but once I chanced
To mark Ulysses' visage, when he glanced
Half covertly to where my mother sat:

Oh, how I hated him! all I forgat
Of him that late had pleased me passing well,
But why the change no power had I to tell.

" Then Calchas came, and wove some stately chords
Upon the harp, and sang divinest words
Of Greece's olden glories: and the kings
Who listened, doubly regal, on the wings
Of poesy soared to the very stars,
And longed for equal fame in mightier wars.

" Then from the living strings a melody
Breathed on our charmed ears, so tenderly
That all the beauty we had ever known
Spake to our souls in each delicious tone!
Such strains methought had thrilled me when a child,
To slumber lulling me, then to the mild,
Ethereal brightness of a purer day
Alluring. Oh, what bliss such sleep alway!

" The music seemed to pass from earth to heaven,
Upwafted to the realms from whence 'twas given;
And all the place was hushed; and Calchas spake
One word, as though inspired, '*Helen*,' and brake
The charm, and gave a meaning to the sounds,
That wakened frenzy, opening deadly wounds.

" And yet again he struck the quivering strings,
And sang of Troy, and Paris, till the kings
Sprang up, and swung aloft their flashing blades,
And swore an oath by all the viewless shades
To live henceforth, and die, if need might be,
To tread down Troy for Helen's liberty!—

" How many thousands gathered on the plain,
Wildly expectant of the kingly train,
At cool of eve! for it was given out
That all our choicest ones would try a bout
For mastery in games of strength and skill.
And I was seated, though not by my will,
Upon a simple throne; and in my hand
A laurel wreath was laid, with new command
To crown therewith his brows who foiled the rest.

" Ah me! a fiery ray flared from the west,
Where sank the sun, and dimmed my timid eyes,
When young Achilles knelt, amid the cries
Of all the multitude, to take the crown
Of victory from me; and it slipped down
And touched the ground; and he did raise it thence,
And with a gesture craved obedience,
And said: ' 'Tis thine—beauty is more than skill;'
' But not than courtesy, so keep it still,'

I said, and joyed in my own ready speech.
Then taking it, as high as I could reach,
For he stood hesitant, upon his brow
I pressed it, in the ruddy evening glow.

"Ægisthus, too—his name awakes a pang—
Ah, yes, 'twas when the eager shouts that rang
To honour us were spent, and through the gate,
My mother's hand in mine, all free from state
We passed to our own palace, close behind,
Ulysses' voice, as from an evil mind,
Crept by his next companion's ear, and said:
'*Ægisthus came not till the feast was sped.*'
My mother trembled like an arrow's shaft
Into a tree new driven by archer-craft;
And quitted me to gain her room alone;
But I went after, and could hear her moan
Even through the closed door; and called aloud
And opened it, and lo! her face was bowed
Upon her hands, and she sobbed out: 'Betrayed!'
And fiercely chid me when I would have stayed.

"But I grow sad, and day wears on apace.
Such thoughts with flowers I should not interlace.—
And now the garland's twined. O river sweet!
Take it, and bear it from me on to meet
The wandering sea; perchance a cresting wave
Will show my father it, even though who gave
The little token he did never know.
It is a pleasant fancy: be it so."

Then rose the royal maid; and by the brink,
All fringed with posies that did stoop to drink,
Of that clear rivulet, she lightly trod,
Her feet like lilies drooping to the sod.
The birds made music for her as she passed,
And, here and there, the sun a glitter cast,
Tinged all with green, upon her unwrought dress,
And gave a transitory gorgeousness.

So to the other skirting of the wood
She crossed; and as beneath a tree she stood,
'Mid all the glory of the summer-time,
The dreamy splendour of a southern clime,
She thought: "O life, thou art a priceless boon!
Never so precious as this sunny noon!
Methinks if 'twere my lot ere long to die,
To such a scene as this I'd wish to sigh
My sad farewells: O bending sky of blue,
How longingly I'd hold thee in my view!
How lingeringly! Ye fields of golden grain,
I'd weep that I should ne'er see you again;

And Argos, thy proud battlements would wake—
Best-fitting memories for the hearts that break—
Remembrances of childhood's blissful days,
When flowers bloomed everywhere—no thorny ways.

"How all my thoughts to melancholy tend!
I know not what it means, but near the end
Of something that has long preparing been
I feel; as though a mystic curtained screen
Had hung 'twixt me and much that I should know,
And soon would shrivel up for weal or woe."

Thus in a reverie upon the grass
She sank, and drowsiness did gently pass
The shining portals of her dewy eyes,
For all the air was filled with lullabies.
And, lo! a change came o'er her beauteous face:
Pure radiance transfigured every trace
Of boding gloom, and told of happy dreams.
And when she woke, the sun in mellow beams
Was taking loving leave of all his charge;
And she arose, and from the forest-marge,
Her vision seeking vainly to recall,
Sped homeward, strong in heart to suffer all.

The self-same night, a man o'erdone with speed
Beat on the palace gate, for one to lead
Him instant to the presence of the queen;
And when the purport of his charge to glean
The warders sought, he showed a sealed scroll
As from the king, death-dooming to unroll.

So, soiled with dust, where Clytemnestra held
Diminished court the man was brought, all-quelled
Beneath the lustre of her countenance;
And, mute, could only awkwardly advance,
And yield the treasured parchment up, and long
To die for shame, then sink back through the throng.

And Clytemnestra read it, and full joy
Flashed from her starry eyes, then took alloy
Of sorrow, but the joy pre-eminent;
And every visage mirrored her content.
Then spake she: "Our beloved sovereign
Sends greeting here, and, though foul winds detain
The ships at Aulis still, writes hopefully
Of near release: Calchas doth prophesy—
The gifted seer—that all shall yet be well,
Seeing that the gods have missioned him to tell
Their high command: Achilles and our child
Must marriage make—thus all be reconciled.

It is Ulysses' hand, but our own seal.
Now Jove be praised for all the joy I feel!"

And while her mother spake, the royal maid
Dreamed on her face; and every glance that strayed,
Or undulating curve, was garnered close,
And every tone, and each unconscious pose.
Achilles' name came but as in a dream,
And only at Ulysses' did she seem
To leap from lethargy, and in affright
To stare about, o'erwhelmed with inner sight.
And Clytemnestra said: "We would retire;
Kind friends, good night to all;" and with the fire
Of hoped-for bliss still flaming in her look,
Iphigenia's hand in hers she took,
And queen and daughter passed into the night,
Among the patient stars and pure moonlight.
And neither spoke: the queen bent down her gaze;
The virgin child sad, wistful eyes did raise
Unto the gleaming firmament, and fell,
Amid a storm of tears she could not quell,
Upon a rustic seat that stood near by,
And wondered if 'twere very hard to die.

But on Queen Clytemnestra's brow a cloud
Grew darkling; searchingly upon her bowed,
Despairing child she turned, and far away
In thought was lost; then a triumphant ray
Out-darted from the gloom, and overspread
Each softened lineament whence doubt had fled,
And in low accents, dear in days of yore,
She bade the trembling maiden weep no more:
"And is it such a fearful thing to wed
With one of Greece's best?—but thou dost dread,
Poor, pretty bird, to quit the love-warm nest—
Wouldst fain for ever pillow on my breast!
Is't not so, daughter mine?" So spake the queen,
And sat beside her close, and made her lean
Her aching head on her own beating heart;
And, lo! the wayward maid, with sudden start,
Did clasp her mother in a long embrace,
And cried: "Oh, I have need of all thy grace
To-night; as from some wicked wizard's spell
Released, I happier feel than I can tell!
What of Achilles said the ancient seer?—
'The best of Greece's sons?'—and did I hear
That I might be his wife? *This* made thee glad,
And not my speedy riddance? I was mad,
And thought it could not be my father's deed,
To give thee word of this, and take no heed

Of all the sacred promptings of his love
To send a token for his petted dove:
And, then, Ulysses' name, the serpent-sound,
Hissed in my ears, and shivered to the ground
Truth's spotless image, from its pedestal—
My yearning heart; and I did think that all
Was but a subtle scheme of his for ill,
That thou, mayhap, wert subject to his will,
And fain wouldst have me hence; O pardon me!
My father was in haste—so speedily
Would have me with him, and from his own lips
Designs that I should know the cause that strips
Him of his darling child: O I did brood
O'er fancied wrongs, too much in solitude;
And when, dear mother mine, I thought thee changed,
'Twas my untutored heart that grew estranged!"

So ran she on: then silence fell again
On both, and, overhead, the solemn plain
Was floating of the soul-voiced nightingale.
And as the heaven-born song, in one long wail,
Died all away, the maiden murmured low:
"Is't very sweet to love?" and in a glow,
Kissed Clytemnestra's cheek; and she replied,
In dulcet accents, that appeared to glide,
Resistless 'mid the wonder of her will,
Straight from a passion-source: "O heart, be still;
And yet, love's native language speakest thou,
And canst not lie! Though words did smoothly flow
Even as the nightly song-bird's voice divine,
They could not yield a music true as thine!
When first I knew I loved, beneath a sky
Cerulean I trod, and every sigh
Up-breathed into the clear immensity,
Bore to the sun the tender mystery;
To every gurgling stream the summer breeze
Did blow it, and a rustling of the trees
Told me they knew it too: while all the flowers
Were whispered by the bee, in secret bowers,
And paid the tell-tale for his story well.
My soul was linked, by a mighty spell,
To everything that is: and yet *his* smile
Was brighter than the sun! *his* voice could wile
My thoughts from silvery droppings of the brook,
Or pearls in swinging crystal goblets shook!
And when *he* sighed, 'twas sweeter than the rose
As o'er his crispy lips the morn-breath goes!
A million worlds were nought, and *he* not nigh!
I could have lived a slave, so *he* were by!

He was my heaven: with him I feared no hell!—
O heart be still, O bosom cease to swell,
His name rang through my being, like the sound
Of an Æolian harp, and on the ground
I flung myself, and cried: 'Ægisthus, come!'"

She ceased, as if by sudden curse struck dumb;
And with a moan as of o'erwearied breath,
Iphigenia sank in seeming death.

III.

'Tis early morn in Aulis, and the sun,
Rejoicing in another day begun,
Walks forth in majesty upon the plain,
And gives his splendours to the sea again;
Lingeringly fades the last remaining star,
And, clad in purple, swell the hills afar;
The silent ships at anchor idly ride,
While sea-birds hover, stoop, and onward glide.

And once again, in mournful disarray,
The chiefs who languished at the long delay
Of proud Troy's overthrow, assembled stand,
And speak no word, upon the pebbly strand;
But dreadful hope looms through the late despair,
When they behold an altar builded there,
With new-cropped flowers adorned, sparkling with dews,
Vying sweet-scented, and for loveliest hues.

And down king Agamemnon's fallen cheek
The hot tears roll: "Oh, I in vain shall seek,
Too soon, the fairest earthly flower that blooms!"
He says: "And waning life her love perfumes
Will change to dreariness!" and then he grasps
Ulysses' hand, who fervently enclasps
His other, and speaks flowing words of cheer.
Then one did say: "Lo, Calchas comes, the seer!"
And Agamemnon turned his haggard face,
And suppliantly moved, with tottering pace,
In thought to grovel at the prophet's feet;
But Calchas beckoned, and thus him did greet:
"Fear not, O king! the gods can do no wrong,
And thou, and we, and all to them belong;
Be we obedient, and evermore
Their joys shall bless us on the heavenly shore;
Turn we away, and age on age of woe,
And ever age on age, shall make us know
Man's folly with Olympus to contend:
Blessèd are they who may in time amend."

A wild, unearthly light blazed in his eyes,
As solemnly he spake, and towards the skies
He raised clasped hands, and stood in ecstasy,
Then bowed his head, and sank upon his knee,
While all the lordly Greeks were pale, and still,
And waited but the utterance of his will.

And when he rose, he said: "O king—the maid—
She came last eve"—and more and more afraid,
King Agamemnon cried: "O Calchas say—
O—by the mighty gods—is there no way
But this? Hear me—thou never hadst a child;
Hast never felt the thrill when it has smiled,
And twined its tiny arms about thy neck;
Hast never marked each guileless nod and beck,
To draw its mother to its side again;
Thou knowest not the aching sense of pain
A father feels, when but for one short hour
His little one has strayed; how he could dower
With all his worldly wealth the meanest man
Who saved his darling from a deadly ban.
O, I have watched my daughter lovelier grow
From day to day!—have laboured seeds to sow
That might bear fruit in gracious womanhood—
And all for this!—and yet the gods are good!

"Yestreen the sun was low, as forth I went
To meet my child; but though all things were blent,
And I could see but shadowy forms draw near,
A voice within me whispered—'She is here!'
And I made haste, and she sprang out to me,
And fell down at my feet, and piteously
Exclaimed: 'My father—only thou art left!'
And I did take her up, and bade her tell
Her grief—for Clytemnestra loves her well—
But no word more she spake till on her face
Looks beaming love had ta'en the usurped place
Of tears, and then she said: 'O happiness,
To be with thee—so nigh at hand to bless
And guard!'—Calchas, could I but then have died,
No earthly wish had been unsatisfied!

"So, closely linked, within my tent we passed,
And many a glance on former days was cast:
Much talked we of the scene at Argos town,
When all of Greeks the noblest in renown
Met sternly counselling the shame of Troy,
And how to make revenge a surer joy.
And so Achilles came to be our theme,
And from her modest lips I learned the scheme

By which her innocence had been decoyed:
Ulysses, cruel art hast thou employed!
And loftier once I deemed Achilles' soul
Than partner falsely for a maiden's dole!
What doest thou here, Achilles? Woe is me,
This very morn she hopes thy bride to be!"

He paused; and anger shook Achilles' frame,
And quivered in his voice: "Spotless my name!"
He cried: "If name be mine, no dole it shares;
And woe to him who weaves it with his snares!
Calchas, beware: there is in man as huge
Capacity for dire revenge on man,
As ever thy pretended gods did plan!"
And there he stayed, and marvelled at his speech,
And Agamemnon strode as if to reach
To him his hand, and doubt from many an eye
Peered out: but, piously, up to the sky
Ulysses gazed, and seemed in deadly fear,
As though Jove's thunderbolt impended near.

But Calchas groaned, and beat upon his breast,
Then seized his harp and lulled the storm to rest,
In plaintive melody: a low lament
He sang for Greece's day-star well nigh spent,
And prayed the gods to take his burdened life,
And make an end of all despairing strife.

Lo! as he ceased, a power took hold of him:
He stood erect; a filmy cloud made dim
His eyes that late had glowed with inner fire;
He seemed the favoured man whom gods inspire.
"Once more," he cried, "I see the waving woods,
And hear the silvery plash of distant floods;
The holy light of Dian's blest domain
Falls on my raptured vision once again;
And Dian's nymphs I see, immortal made,
In garments of unborrowed sheen arrayed,—
And as I gaze, another robe they weave,
And smile expectantly; ah! now they grieve
That one long waited for should still delay
To quit earth's night for their transcendent day;
O ecstasy! a name comes wafting on!
It bubbles from the brooks, and waves upon
The fadeless trees! trills sweetly from the throats
Of heaven-born songsters! over on it floats,
And fills my soul—'Iphigenia'—hark!
Oh, how it soars with yon celestial lark!"

And every heart was changed; and, bending low,
King Agamemnon cried: "Ah! now I know

My whole unworthiness: Diana chaste,
Rightly thou judgest one as I ungraced
Not meet to guard a destined nymph of thine,
And so wouldst speed her to thy bower divine;
Forgive my obdurance, unveil her eyes,
That, in assurance of a glorious prize,
Death as a longed-for bridegroom she may greet,
A loving friend who leads her to thy feet."

And while he spake, Ulysses left his side
And to the royal tent to fetch the bride,—
Alas, the bride of death!—in high haste ran,
And found her clothed in white pure as the swan,
And took her by the hand, and said: "Fair maid,
Thy father waits for thee—be not afraid;
Calchas is come, and famed Achilles too,
And lordly hosts to give thee honour due."
So forth the virgin went in innocence,
Clad worthier so than all the wealth immense
Of sovereign Troy could drape her beauty in,
And passed, aglow with hope, the bounds within.

With downcast eyes Iphigenia stood
Amid the chiefs; and silence long did brood
O'er all, save that the ocean surged not far.
Hushed were the bustling mockeries of war.
Then Calchas spake: "Daughter of Greece, this day
For thee all earthly clouds shall flee away.
The gods have spoken it: be patient thou,
To their behests thy gentle spirit bow,
And in the light of chaste Diana's smile,
For ever free from aught that can defile,
In happiness unchanging thou shalt dwell,
And all thy father's glooming care dispel.
Pure maiden, not to be Achilles' bride
The gods decree, but at Diana's side
A chosen nymph demand thee from thy sire,
His sin to expiate, and soothe their ire:
For know, thy father Dian's stag hath slain,
And all our purposes through him have lain
Beneath her ban: thy body's sacrifice,
Thy spirit's passage into Paradise,
Alone can bring Jove's favour back again,
And waft our ships exultant o'er the main."

He ceased; and as a marble statue cold,
And still, the maiden stood, and left untold
Her keenest pangs: then, in a great amaze,
Upon the circling Greeks she turned her gaze,
And mutely questioned if her ears held truth:
And owned it true, for not a ray of ruth

The whole resolvèd round of faces bore,
Nor any voice was lifted to deplore.
And when she saw the altar flower-crowned,
Her blood nigh forced each purple-veinèd bound,
Stirred by a mighty, youthful love of life;
And, 'neath the flowers, the sacrificial knife
Shot forth a gleam that pierced her through and through,
And full of agony, towards the blue,
Ethereal canopy she strained her sight,
And sank upon the ground to blackest night.

Long time she lay: and when again to earth
Her spirit came, with all the pains of birth,
When comprehension full had gained her mind
That death to her most surely was designed,—
With anguished cry, she clasped her father's hand,
Besought him to forbear his fame to brand
With such a deed: and when he spake of sin
Already done, the misery to begin
So speedily if he gave not his child
In expiation, fain would have beguiled
Her terrors with the prophet's dream of bliss,
All that world's joy bought with one pang of this,
She said: "O father, I a thousand times
Could die to bring thee weal, and all thy crimes
Would treasure up as virtues, to preserve
Thee from a moment's pain: but do not swerve
From clear-eyed reason: Calchas says a stag,
Diana's stag, was slain by thee; will drag
Thee down to ruin: but thou knewest not
'Twas Dian's stag, and penal sin, Jove wot!
There cannot be to men in ignorance,
Though greater knowledge may their sin enhance:
And if thy soul were dyed in plainest guilt,
How could avail thee my poor life-blood spilt?
What has my innocence to do with thee—
Do thy committed sins reflect on me?
How canst thou link my body's earthly pain
With what concerns thy spirit, moral stain?
And then, is death the sum of earthly woe?
Even at death's portal I declare not so.

"O father, is it just that I should bear
Thy fault? What if a subject now should dare,
Summoned for breach of thy high majesty,
To send his blameless son and still go free?—
My father, too convenient a creed
Is this for evil doers; must ever lead
To vast increase of evil; built on wrong,
Could never make the love of right more strong.

My innocence can be but mine alone,—
Thy own good deeds thy evil deeds atone.
O listen to the little voice within,
And with a trumpet-sound, above the din
Of frenzied priests, and hollow kings, 'twill swell,
Though banded worlds should seek its tones to quell!—
Thou see'st 'tis not my life I plead to save,
Thy spirit's peace is all in all I crave."

But Agamemnon said: "The holy seer
Hath spoken, he to whom the gods appear
In sacred visions; O my daughter, rest
On his inspired word, and so be blest."
And with a lofty air, the maiden cried:
"His gods are his sick fancies deified!
What can a god of vengeance breed but hate?
Yet every soul is ruler of its fate,
And through the night of error learns the way
To happiness in Wisdom's perfect day;
Each guilty act creates its proper hell,
But hell contains a germ of heaven as well."

Her words fell idly down as autumn-leaves.
And Calchas plained: "See where Diana grieves
For her reluctant nymph!" and moved a pace
To touch the maid; but she across the space,
With modest dignity, trod all alone
To where the altar stood: and o'er her shone
The glorious sun: then Calchas moved again,
But furtively, as though he would attain
His end without the virgin's early note;
But she had guard, and said: "No dumb she-goat
Awaits thy cruel blade!—Child of a king,
Daughter of Greece, yet ere my spirit wing
To realms of love, attend my brief farewells.
On such a noon as this, my memory tells,
Stood I in view of Argos, strangely sad,
Not many days ago, and musings had
On death: to such an arch cerulean
I raised my eyes, while sober fancy ran
O'er all the aching pain my heart would feel,
If that look were my last: and now the seal
Of death is on my brow, yet not one thought
Of sorrow shadows me: my soul is fraught
With peace and joy; I *know* that purer skies
Await my wakening sight: that beauty lies
To be revealed, of which the fairest scenes
This fair earth owns are but symbolic screens:
I *know* that Love is ever All in All,
And still sustains us when we seem to fall:

That my freed spirit, in the light of Love,
Shall rise to ever towering heights above!

"'Twas told me in a dream, that afternoon,
A wondrous dream,—ah, truly 'twas a boon
To strengthen me this day!—it bathes in light
My yearning soul, and bids it haste its flight
Once more to heaven, to dwell for ever there,
Not earthward sink again such woe to bear.—
I laid me down beneath a shading tree,
And slept and knew it not, for over me
I saw a figure bend,—so calm, so sweet
Of countenance,—and rose upon my feet,
And drank the music of a voice that said:
'Come, weary one: O quit this earthly shade!'
And, lo! we passed together through the air:
And first my eyes were dimmed as by a glare;
But in a while I seemed to be all sight,
Essential life, pure concentrated might;
A boundless heaven myself, and yet a heaven
As boundless everywhere: for then were given,
As stream flows into stream, the thoughts of truth
Too vast for words, sublime in timeless youth,
Whose broken outlines vein your nightmare-life.—
Nay, Calchas, yet a little stay thy knife—
And then my placid guide bade me behold
The ways of men: and error's mists were rolled
By Wisdom's beams away, and to the springs
Clear-welling in man's inmost soul, as wings
A thirsty songster to the rivulet,
My spirit flashed, all eager to forget
The murkiness commingled with the stream
That owns it not, incorporate though it seem.
Oh, how I longed to aid them when I saw
Nigh every one subservient to a law
Of selfishness! each pushing on to grasp
A good, and reaching it, with stiffened clasp,
Till death looks in on him retaining it,
Though all the rest in desolation sit!
Oh, how I longed to tell them that true good
Cannot be good for one alone to brood
Upon, but undiffused doth lose its power,
Its nature veil, a name its only dower!
And I exclaimed: 'O, is there none to teach?
Must mortals ever *wrongly* strive to reach
The happiness whose want is felt by all?'
And even as granted at my spirit's call,
The deeps of coming ages were revealed
At once, and all the mysteries unsealed
Became as part of my own traversed past:

"And in an eastern land scorched by the blast
Of cruel superstition's fiery breath,
I know a Man will rise from underneath
The arid mass of falsehood frowning high,
And soar on wings of truth beyond the sky;

"Who will proclaim that Love alone is God:
That earth for love was create to be trod,
And man by labouring for his fellow-man
So worships and fulfils his Maker's plan;

"Whose daily life shall prove His teaching true;—
Harmonious, constant to the inner view
Which is vouchsafed to all who seek it right,
For Light must be: 'tis man who blinds his sight.

"Whose death, through ignorance of those bestowed
His suffering, human heart will have o'erflowed
To benefit, shall be no undue pain,
No woe unnatural, but lasting gain
To Him, though, truly, loss of blessèd years
For many a wistful brother left in tears;

"Whose memory shall live throughout all time;
Whose words shall ring in every earthly clime:
Though not for ages fully understood,
Yet purely treasured by the wisely good."

She ceased; and Calchas——

CHATTERTON.

(With Notes by Himself.)

[I composed this essay in the summer of 1874, while still unconscious of the great truths that death is rather an awaking than a sleep; and that spirits can return from the eternal world beyond the grave to this imperfect one in which we suffer for a time. There is much in the sketch that I could wish to alter; but, after mature reflection, I have decided to let it remain as originally written. The notes annexed to this biography were communicated to me by him whom I may now, indeed, term my dear friend, Thomas Chatterton. They will, I trust, prove as interesting to the reader, as they are to me.—J. L. V.]

Chapter I.

If, as an impressionable mind can almost credit, departed great ones haunt the scenes of their former fame, what mighty shadows must mix with the crowd of Fleet Street! Half the nobility of English literature have dwelt, or toiled, or died there. In this court Johnson gasped out the last evil days of a long and clouded life; here Milton lived; there Goldsmith sleeps. Do the famous authors, at times, unquietly steal back, to judge what manner of

pens are wielded by their successors? I confess the imagination pleases me. It may be, as I pause to look on the last cartoon *Punch* has issued, that behind me Thackeray and Jerrold are, unseen and unheard, comparing notes. If, issuing from beneath Temple Bar, a strange impression of something invisible brushing by, impels me to turn my head, wherefore should I not infer that the ghost of the burly lexicographer has just rolled past, to enjoy, unseen of mortals, a stroll through his beloved Fleet Street? I have even deemed, sitting in the grounds of the Temple, that surely Goldsmith,* though gone from earth, could not be entirely parted from the things that made his pleasure there, but must return at intervals to smile kindly on the children, and breathe the sweet perfumes of the flowers. These phantoms all, if permitted ever to revisit the busiest street of our restless Babel, must do so with pleasure, and welcome it as a scene that in life was dear. But, among the dead great of literature, whose names are inseparably associated with Fleet Street, and its neighbourhood, stands out prominently an unhappy genius, to whom, were his soul sent back to wander upon earth, the sight of the classical thoroughfare could recall only memories of the bitter miseries of his life, and the degradation of his pauper's grave. In a forgotten burying-ground, not a bow-shot removed from the busy causeway, whose flags he had so often trodden, were laid a century ago the remains of the most astonishing boy earth has yet produced. That dismal God's acre, a workhouse graveyard, received among its nameless horde of outcasts, the dust of Thomas Chatterton. All the deceits, and ingenuities, and marvellous labours of a life that has no parallel, won him but this! Despair, and the death of a suicide, for the most wonderful genius of the eighteenth century! A dog's grave† for the creator of the Rowley poems! What other tragedy, among the many that deface our literary history, can equal the bitterness of such an end? Otway, dead of hunger; Burns, beseeching five pounds, to escape the horrors of a debtor's gaol; Clare, made mad by misery; are sad spectacles enough;

* It is natural for all souls WHO CAN to visit the scenes of the past. But the illustrations here chosen are not exactly happy. John Milton has almost passed out of the sphere of earth-attraction; and good old Johnson loathes London as much as once he loved it. Goldsmith, however, does indeed sometimes linger lovingly around his ancient Temple haunts.

† What matters it where our clay is cast? The most gorgeous sepulchres of the earth contain bodies that in their time were tenanted by very worthless spirits. A huge number of illustrious nothings moulder in the vaults of Windsor; but all that army of crowned he and she-baboons would not equal in value the man Cromwell, whose body was hung on the gibbet at Tyburn. How he laughed—the stern old Protector—when they dragged his body to the triple tree.

but these found,* at least, through many years, the burden of life endurable. Chatterton's lot was one of wretchedness, from his cradle to his early grave. To an imagination ardent as Rousseau's, and strangely capable of founding huge expectations on the flimsiest nothings, were presented a thousand delusive bubbles of hope, ending but in disappointment. On a spirit as intensely melancholy as Dante's, were heaped the worst ills that poverty can inflict. So exquisitely unfitted for his station, why was this genius born to it? When, at the age of eighteen, despair beset him, with what weapon was the unhappy boy to combat the giant? He was as destitute of religion as of hope. Those powers, on which he had relied so fondly, could no longer win their possessor even bread. The delightful dreams of wealth and consequence that brightened his earlier boyhood, had lured, like marsh-meteors, but to entanglement and death. Two months of London life sufficed to clear away such cobwebs of the brain. Then, for still a few weeks longer, came the terrible fight with actual want—the writing of false letters that should conceal from a loving mother and sister his hopeless condition; the last vain attempt to procure employment; the last sad struggle between reason and despair; and then—That such a genius, ardent, unique, should perish,† hopelessly and eternally, for lack of a morsel of bread!

He was born in November, 1752. He died the 25th of

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* My friend Richard Savage had as sad an ending to his earthly life as any of these—I think even a sadder one. His last home on earth was Bristol prison, into which he had been cast for debt.

† The soul being created in God's image can never perish. Infidelity leads as widely astray as orthodoxy—the truth lies between the two extremes. When Byron spoke of the dreamless sleep that lulls the dead, he was neither more nor less mistaken than Dante and Milton, when recounting the supposed hideous tortures of the damned. It has hindered terribly the world's progress—that bottomless nightmare of the elect. The disembodied mind can suffer indeed, and suffer keenly; but the Eternal God is not what all Christian churches represent him—an Omnipotent Nero, delighting in torture for torture's sake. No spirit, not even Cain, or Pope Alexander the Sixth, has yet discovered that fabulous kingdom burning with fire and brimstone, where a fabulous Satan reigns as lord. The universe will sooner perish than that piously devised legend of the Day of Judgment be fulfilled, when the edified flocks of the various churches shall celebrate on golden harps the commencement of the sufferings of their unhappy brethren who have dared to overleap the pales of Christianity. How inhuman are these priestly teachings! Is it to be credited that a father could worship with sincere adoration a God who he knew had imprisoned in eternal fire his only son? Could the wife partake with a rejoicing heart of the joys of heaven while her husband writhed agonizedly in the gulf below? It is happy for mankind that the last days of this superstition have arrived, and that Satan and his sulphurous kingdom will both shortly vanish in thin air.

August, 1770, from poison swallowed the previous night.* Since Elizabeth's reign the office of sexton to St. Mary Redcliff, Bristol's chief church, had remained in the Chatterton family, descending regularly from father to son. The poet's great-uncle, who died in 1747, was the last to inherit the grave-digger's spade. His nephew, Thomas Chatterton the elder, master of a small school in Pyle Street, followed him to the grave in August, 1752, the son, afterwards so famous, being yet unborn. A strange nurse divided with his mother the task of informing the young mind of this extraordinary genius. Redcliff church† was the monitress of Chatterton's earliest years. Reared during infancy in the very shadow of the pile, he dreamed away the leisure which other boys employ in sports, by the side of Canyng's tomb. Is it not an instance of prematurity of genius altogether unique? The demon of poetry, indeed, began to torment Pope at twelve; but here we have a child, barely half that age, yet conscious already of the powers stirring within him, and brooding in infant retirement over the dim, unshaped fancies ultimately elaborated into creations so wonderful. Truly to St. Mary Redcliff literature owes the Rowley poems. Chatterton spoke but truth when he affirmed that the ancient structure had first enshrined them. Not, indeed, engrossed on mouldering parchments, and hived in the dusty recesses of a worm-eaten box, but graven in characters as yet unsuspected on the glowing mind of genius. That mind speedily proved what strength it possessed. In the Christmas season of 1763‡ Chatterton penned a hymn on the Nativity which might of itself establish the fictitious character of Rowley. He who, at eleven years of age, could cry—

"Almighty Framer of the skies,
O let our pure devotion rise,
Like incense in Thy sight!"

—was certainly capable at sixteen of composing the history of Bawdin, and the tragedy of Ella.

He went to the Colston Charity School with the seeds of

* I was *born* in November, 1752—that is true—but I did not *die* in August, 1770; I merely entered on a new phase of being. It is not possible for dwellers on the earth wholly to comprehend the existence that is in store for them. "Death," which closes the eyes of the body, is the only thing that can fully open those of the soul.

† That grand old pile! How I loved it—how I love it still. It has been altered lately—perhaps for the better; but I like to think of it as it was, when the happiest hours of my boyhood were spent there.

‡ I was but eleven years of age when I composed this hymn. I had a fancy at the time, which I did not like to speak of, that the spirit of some departed monk inspired me; and I have since had sufficient reason to believe that this was the truth.

these works already expanding in his mind. He nursed there for years the delicate plants that afterwards blossomed into perfection beneath the roof of Lambert. From 1760 till 1767 Chatterton wore the tonsure-cap of Colston's institution. The death of his father had left the family in circumstances which made it a boon to the widow that her son should be permitted to eat the bread of charity. Cast penniless on the world, she maintained him and an elder sister for some years by her labours as a milliner. But the appetites of the two increased more rapidly than the business, and an arrangement which lessened her burden by one-half was to be hailed with thankfulness. There was probably little consultation of the boy's wishes when he became dependent on strangers for his establishment in life. In after days he considered the seven years of his education as among the most miserable he had known. That the place was ill-managed, many accounts state.* The instruction was of the scantiest, the rules of the strictest, the food coarse, the masters harsh. One usher, indeed, Thomas Phillips by name,† proved to be a man of benevolent disposition and engaging manners—something of a poet, also—who encouraged in his young charges any symptoms they might show of a desire to court the Muse. To him Chatterton became sincerely attached. The elegy in which he laments the death of Phillips is perhaps the best of the young genius's acknowledged compositions.

Respecting his habits at this time, little has come down to us. The pride and melancholy, however, which afterwards so conspicuously characterised him, appear to have now developed. He was fond of solitude,‡ and addicted to promiscuous reading; bestowing his money, when he possessed any, on circulating libraries—his leisure time in composing verse. When, in 1767, he quitted the school, "Ellinoure and Juga" appears to have been already written, and "Ella" at least commenced. He was bound in July of that year, by the trustees of the charity, apprentice-clerk to Mr. Lambert, a lawyer, they paying a small premium to the gentleman, his master—if an attorney

* The Colston School was at that time neither worse nor better managed than similar institutions. It is a foundation much resembling Christ's Hospital in London, at which my friend Samuel Taylor Coleridge was educated, and suffers much from the same abuses. Edward Colston, who founded it, is now, and was on earth, a most worthy, pious, and benevolent being.

† Phillips' pure mind has borne him far from the earth and her sister planets. He has passed beyond these spheres, and will never return. I have not seen him for half a century of your time.

‡ I have always been liable to a desire for solitude; and there is more leisure in this world to indulge such a wish when it attacks me than on earth.

of a century back can be so described. Chatterton quitted the Colston life with willingness. What his feelings were towards his tutors may be inferred from the fact that shortly after leaving the school he despatched an anonymous and somewhat scurrilous lampoon* to the head master, getting a thrashing from Lambert on being detected. That seven years' servitude had inclined such a nature more to evil than good. It was the practice in all schools a hundred years ago to attempt reaching the mind through the body; and charity scholars were especially often called upon to kiss the rod. In such institutions, too, as Colston's foundation, piety was taught much in the fashion of arithmetic—the lad most attentive to his Catechism suffering least from the birch. Naturally, the chief products of the system were boy-Tartuffes, and humble saints of the type of Uriah Heep. On a mind so out of the common as Chatterton's the effect was widely different. Innumerable dreary sermons endured had made of him, not a hypocrite, but an infidel. The abuse of authority he had witnessed and smarted from had stirred his spirit to passionate revolt. Not sixteen, the boy already dreamt of suicide. To such a nature it was impossible that the service of a hard and narrow-minded master could prove endurable. The three years, in fact, of Chatterton's residence with Lambert were spent by him in a constant struggle to obtain release. Intensely conscious of genius, he already relied on his pen for fame and wealth.† During half the day, though forbidden to stir from the office, the youth was left altogether unemployed, his master's clients being but few. In these hours, and at night, when all others of the household were asleep, the Rowley Poems were composed and written down. It is but fit to summarise here the evidence which most convincingly exposes the imposture practised by the author of these brilliant pieces.

In the first place, no importunity could obtain from Chatterton the originals of "Ella," "The Battle of Hastings," or any of the more lengthy poems.‡ Of these only copies in his own

* It was not a "scurrilous lampoon" that I sent; merely a boyish pasquinade. The satire was rather telling, however, and it enraged the recipient.

† I did rely greatly on my genius when on earth, and the bitterness of disappointment was worse than the bitterness of death.

‡ There WAS a Thomas Rowley, and he lived and wrote in the reign of the Fourth Edward. That he ever penned poetry I do not believe, for I acknowledge that all the poems I gave to the world as his were of my own composition. But some of the prose pieces were genuine, and the groundwork of most of the others was formed from documents that had once lain in "Maistre Canynge's coffre." I even carried a few originals

handwriting were ever seen. The sole parchments produced by him as ancient consist of certain fragments varying in width from four to nine inches; and exactly corresponding with the blank spaces generally found at the foot of old deeds. How the boy obtained the parchments from which these slips were cut, all the world knows. In 1727 a coffer, deposited by Master Canyng, a Bristol merchant of Edward the Fourth's reign, in the muniment room of Redcliff church, had been broken open, the more valuable contents extracted, and the rest left a prey to spoilers. The chief plunderer was Chatterton's great-uncle, the sexton, whose gleanings ultimately passed into the hands of his nephew. By him they were employed to cover books for his scholars' use; but a number of parchments still remained unused at his death, and these the widow preserved. They lay unregarded in the house till Chatterton was some thirteen years old, when he manifested a desire to examine the hoard. After diligently perusing every manuscript, the boy announced that he had found a treasure, and seized them, to the smallest scrap. He shut his acquisitions in a small oaken box, and guarded the key ever after with jealous care. What that mysterious chest really contained will now never be known. When questioned some years later as to how the poems he asserted to be Rowley's had remained hidden through so many ages, to be ultimately unearthed by him, Chatterton declared that the originals, in the monkish author's handwriting, had been committed to the care of Master Canyng, placed by him in the coffer that contained his own parchments, and being overlooked at the breaking open of that repository in 1727, had passed into his uncle's possession, thence to his father, and finally to himself. Neither cajolery, bribes, nor threats, however, could win Bristol *literati* a sight of one MS. of consequence. Some epistles and introductions in verse, with a prose composition or two, of no great length or value, were all that the boy who duped them would produce. The most interesting of these, the Yellow Roll, is now preserved in the British Museum. Though concocted with a skill deserving of high admiration, this is plainly a false antique. An expert's eye speedily detects the cheat.*

As concisely as possible shall the rest of the external evidence be given. It consists in great part of admissions made by the poet himself. On one occasion, when closely pressed, he confessed to his mother that the authorship was his of that spirited

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with me to London, and destroyed them among my other papers on that wretched evening of the 24th of August.

* The expert's eye would be mistaken then, for the Yellow Roll was no work of mine. All else in the preceding account is accurate.

and pathetic ballad, "The Death of Sir Charles Bawdin."* Being in the company of Mr. Barrett, a surgeon, Chatterton bestowed on this gentleman the MS. of an epic celebrating the battle of Hastings, as copied by him from a document in Rowley's handwriting. Importuned to produce the original, he then stated that what he had given was in reality of his own composition, but that he had at home a second poem on the same subject, truly written by Rowley. A copy of this he accordingly brought, some few weeks later; but neither piece was printed till after his death. That both emanated from the same mind the most cursory examination will prove. That the mind in question was Chatterton's the above tale surely establishes beyond a doubt. I pass to the testimony of his friends. By one, a youth of his own age, he was actually seen to create a supposed ancient fragment: to another he explained how it might be done. When visiting his mother's house, he sometimes shut himself in an unused room, and would emerge with hands soiled with ochre and ink. He borrowed Chaucer from one gentleman: from another a lexicon of obsolete words. He had studied black-letter, and was accustomed to frequent the Bristol Antiquarian Library, to obtain a knowledge of English as spoken in the time of Gower and Lydgate. Such proofs are simply irrefragable. But even were this mountain of evidence removed, sufficient could be extracted from the poems themselves. In each are lines, the property of writers not born till the fifteenth century had long been dead. Here we find a thought belonging to Shakspeare; there an image taken from Dryden. This line is Pope's; that, Gay's. Even the antique garb in which the works are clothed is an incongruous one. Words out of date in Edward the Fourth's reign appear in the same stanza with others that did not come into fashion till Elizabeth was on the throne. Allusions to discoveries yet undreamed of at the period when Rowley was asserted to have lived, occur to complete the powerful internal testimony that joins with a still stronger body of external evidence in assigning the laurel to the brow of Chatterton. That sad wreath† may hang, undisturbed, above his pauper's grave.

* "Sir Charles Bawdin," or rather Sir Baldwin Fulford, was indeed a heroic knight. I had learned enough from ancient documents to recognise the nobility of his character; and I depicted him in my poem what he truly was—a patriot and a martyr. He passed centuries ago into the land "that shineth with perfect day."

† It may hang where Destiny pleases—I care little for the Rowley poems now. In this world I am winning a fame superior to what I could ever have had on earth. The universe is illimitable, and the human soul immortal—these are the two grandest of truths. All the joys, cares, passions, labours, sorrows, and hopes of this life beyond the grave are incom-

PEOPLE FROM THE OTHER WORLD.

By H. S. OLCOTT.

Reviewed by M. A. (Oxon).

Col. Olcott's book is in many ways very remarkable. An account of face-to-face interviews with some four hundred ghosts, temporarily clothed in material form, could hardly be any thing else. Independently of the tests applied, the mere record of the various apparitions which presented themselves during a three months' stay at the Eddy homestead goes far to induce the candid reader to put aside the theory of imposture. The man who could personate successfully these four hundred different forms —Indians and Russians, children and warrior chiefs, mothers with babies in their arms and African jugglers, must be possessed of rare histrionic talent, and of a remarkable theatrical wardrobe. The candid reader of this work will not entertain either supposition. William Eddy, lumbering, clumsy ploughman that he is, is little likely to personate any body with the least success: as little as he is to have round him in the far-away Chittenden homestead the "properties" of a first-class theatre. Whatever the explanation of the manifestations which occur in his presence, personation will not account for them.

In view of the extended interest that is taken in the subject of Materialisation at the present time, Col. Olcott's book is very welcome, and its records form the best collected narrative of investigations into this mysterious question that we at present possess. The author had rare opportunities for experiment: he is a trained and accurate observer, and his *penchant* for scientific tests is almost excessive. Had he been allowed the same facilities by the Eddy mediums as he had with Mr. and Mrs. Holmes, we should have had a scientific demonstration of the fact that spirits can appear amongst us in form not distinguishable from our own, with dress as real, and with movements of the body, speech, and accessions of ornament apparently substantial and material, and that they can dissipate these material frames and dresses in a moment, by the exercise of the same creative faculty that called them into being. As it is, if the

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parably loftier and less gross than those of the clayey probation-place of man. I do not, indeed, mean to decry the earth. It fills an important place in the "dominions of the sun," and, though one of the youngest of the planets, is not the least-favoured. The globe on which Christ and Socrates were incarnated has hung in the heavens for the last thirty thousand years. Others—Saturn, for example—have been suspended there for half a million of years past. Beyond our planetary system lie worlds incalculably ancient.

demonstration falls short of scientific proof, it is precise enough for ordinary men. If the evidence produced by Col. Olcott fails to produce conviction in any, it will be, not because the evidence is defective, but because the mind of the reader is not prepared to accept so monstrous a fact on any evidence whatsoever.

Doubtless there are points with regard to the Eddy manifestations on which the sceptical mind will fasten, such as the placing of two personal friends on the platform, and the rigid exclusion of every other observer from it; the dim and insufficient light which alone is permitted; the rude and repulsive manners of the mediums, and the like; and the author is far from slurring over these, but in the end the weight of evidence will overpower these minor considerations. The absence of sufficient light is perhaps the most serious point. It is alluded to over and over again.

"*The light in the room is so very bad*—about as strong as that in the parlour when we sit before the dying embers 'twixt the gloaming and the mirk' before the lamps are lighted—that it is impossible to see the features of Honto or the pattern of her shawl" (p. 139).

Another spirit "dresses in dark clothing, trimmed with bands of white, that look to us like broad tape *in the dim light*, but that Mr. Pritchard [who is on the platform] says are beads" (p. 140).

"I have seen, say, three or four hundred different materialised spirits, . . . and in every imaginable variety of costume. I have seen them of all sizes and shapes, of both sexes and all ages. I say seen them, because that is just what I mean. *True, the light has been dim—very dim—and I have not been able to recognise the features of a single face.* I could not even swear to the lineaments of certain of my own personal friends who presented themselves. . . . But, while my testimony is worth nothing as regards identity of faces, it is perfectly competent as to the fact that a multitude of apparitions, totally different from the medium, have been presented for my inspection" (p. 164).

And once again, "The light is so poor that one cannot, with unstrained eye, distinguish accurately between forms varying as much as six inches in height."

Mr. Robert Cooper, of Eastbourne, in an interesting letter addressed to the *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, makes the same complaint. The light, he says, is so dim, that features cannot be discerned. He entertains, however, no doubt as to the genuine nature of the phenomena.

Nothing is so deceptive as this dim twilight; and it is greatly to be desired that experiments should be made for the purpose of devising some kind of light which the spirits can stand. No amount of evidence such as the author produces can suffice to

make the reader content with the absence of fair light. If, indeed, the prophecy which is recorded as having been made at the Eddy circle on Sept. 26th last—that "on Sunday, Sept. 19th, 1875, in the Eddy circle room, spirits will materialise themselves in a brightly lighted room, and deliver orations as in life, with persons all about them on the platform"—is to be fulfilled, then we are not far distant from a time when the phenomena under discussion will rest on a very different basis to that which they occupy now. And it may, perhaps, seem to some who have watched their development, that it is not very improbable that such may be the case. If so, our present speculations are so far worthless, and we can but regret that the subject has been forced into premature and undue prominence by loosely-conducted and still more loosely-recorded séances. It is not too much to say that the vast majority of records of Materialisation séances are worth nothing as proof, however curious they may be as records of what *may* be the creation of a new body.

The story of the Eddy brothers and their surroundings is told with considerable power, and the profuse illustrations serve to bring home to the reader a vivid picture of the scenes. Certainly these illustrations do not err on the side of defect in numbers. We have pictures of the homestead and all its contents, from the circle-room to the cock-loft above it, and Col. Olcott on his hands and knees looking for "properties," and finding cobwebs. We have pictures of the mediums tested and lashed up in all sorts of fearful attitudes for the satisfaction of truth seekers. (These plates might easily do duty in a cheap edition of Foxe's "Book of Martyrs.") We have scores of forms in all sorts of attitudes, and in all sorts of clothes: Honto (the Katie King of Chittenden) materialising shawls; and Safar-ali-bek, a Kondc warrior, with a huge spear 12 ft. long, which is stated to have been materialised whilst the apparition was before the spectators; not to mention knives and pistols, scimitar, and all the paraphernalia of the most blood-thirsty brigand. There is Honto playing the piano, and a murdered woman with all her ghastly wounds upon her describing the scene of her death, and denouncing her assassin. There is the buckle brought from the grave of Madame de Blavatsky's father, 5000 miles and more away; "a jewel from the breast of a warrior sleeping his last sleep in Russian ground, sparkling in the candle light in a gloomy apartment of a Vermont farm-house." There is the score of a Perso-Caucasian song, and of the Lezguinka, a Georgian national air, played by these mysterious visitors for Madame de Blavatsky. There are fac-similes of direct writing, some of which purports to be the production of our old friend John King. There is the irrepressible squaw Honto smoking a pipe, and standing on the

weighing machine, and again allowing a lock of her hair to be cut off. There is a group of spirit-visitors of one evening, seventeen of them, from a baby in arms up through all gradations to bearded men and aged women; surely as wonderful a gathering of "people from the other world" as human eye ever looked upon. There is a phantom carriage, which came to presage death; and, strangest fancy of all, there are representations of Balaam and the Witch of Endor, to lend a Biblical flavour of respectability to the modern mediums. If Balaam can look down, he must feel that he has got into strange company, and that the artist has not been very merciful to him. This random selection will show how profusely the descriptions on the text are illustrated, and, if the artistic merit of the plates be small, they serve their purpose in bringing before the mind's eye a picture of the scenes which they depict.

The house of the Eddy Brothers lies seven miles north from Rutland, in a grassy valley among the Green Mountains, near to the Hamlet of Chittenden. The homestead is a rude structure, which for some years did duty as a wayside inn. It comprises a main building, and a long room of two storeys, recently added on, at the back of the house. The upper part of this structure forms the circle-room. The dining-room is a rudely-furnished apartment, in which visitors are received; and the kitchen, "an odd, dingy little place, with smoky walls and a worn floor," is the sanctum where the family retire from the crowd of visitors who fill the dining and reception rooms (if such terms can be applied to the bare, barn-like rooms in which visitors find accommodation).

The house is rude enough, and a visit to it must be anything but enticing. It stands, however, in a charming landscape. Lying in a valley, it affords a view on all sides of grassy slopes, backed by mountain peaks that catch the drifting clouds in days of storm, and on those of sunshine take rich tints of purple and blue. The woods in autumn are tinted with hues of crimson, and russet, and gold; and the whole landscape is one to inspire a painter with delight. In the depths of the woods the black bear is still to be found; foxes and sables, mink and racoon, and an occasional panther, await the pursuit of the hunter; and the cold mountain streams still contain trout enough to give the angler sport.

The people do not seem to be inspired by the beauties among which they dwell. They are a rude and prosaic set, labouring hard in a rugged country that gives back small returns for much toil; and looking for little relief to daily work except the yearly fair and occasional "huskings," and the like country assem-

blages. They are intolerant fanatics in religion—Methodists of the narrowest type, who have never been leavened by the liberalising influences that have lately softened theological beliefs.

The Brothers themselves seem to be repellent and uninviting. "There is nothing," says Colonel Olcott, "about the Eddys or their surroundings to inspire confidence on first acquaintance. The Brothers are sensitive, distant, and curt to strangers; look more like hard-working, rough farmers, than the prophets or priests of a new dispensation; have dark complexions, black hair and eyes, stiff joints, a clumsy carriage; shrink from advances, and make new comers feel ill at ease and unwelcome." The author was no exception. He was received by the family in the most inhospitable manner; never felt sure that at any moment he might not be requested to leave; was made to feel like an intruder whose room was preferable to his company; and was, at best of times, kept at arm's length. It says much for the candour and fairness of the author's mind that he should have spoken of what he saw without bias or prejudice, and should have cherished no ill feeling against the rude family who ought to have received him as their best friend.

William Eddy, the medium for materialisation, is a clumsy, uncouth man of 5 feet 9 inches high, weighing 12 stone 11 lbs.; a simple and rude ploughman or working farmer. He is slow and cumbrous in his movements, and his eye is sad and introspective, possessing that mysterious far-away look which (so far as I have observed) is common to all mediums. He lives within himself a quiet, retiring life, occupying himself all day with the household duties which usually fall to women; making few friends; *in* the world but not *of* it, more familiar with the denizens of the other world than with the inhabitants of this.

He speaks his mother tongue with a strong New England accent, and knows no other language. Colonel Olcott records his impression of him as "a man of pure mind and heart, tender and truthful, giving to the poor every spare dollar he earns, having no vices, disguises, concealments, or pride, hardly ever casting even a glance at the busy world that lies beyond his native hills. His very temperament unfits him for general acquaintance. His childhood was one of oppression and cruel treatment from his father; where other boys receive constant tokens of affection and indulgence, he got blows, revilings, and bitter denunciations." No wonder he is soured and sad.

Such is the medium. His mysterious gift is inherited from his mother, who was of Scotch descent, and who inherited from *her* mother the gift of second sight. She was clairvoyant and clairaudient in a remarkable degree. The mediumistic faculty is traceable without break to her great-great-great-grandmother,

who was tried and sentenced to death at Salem for witchcraft, but escaped to Scotland with her life. This is interesting, as bearing on the question of inherited mediumship: and I may add here that Mrs. Compton of Havana, N.Y., whose wonderful manifestations Colonel Olcott describes at the end of this volume, also inherits the gift, her paternal and maternal grandmothers and an aunt having been reputed to be witches. In both cases, too, the gift descends to the children.

The present Brothers Eddy showed very early traces of mediumship, as, indeed, did the whole family, with one exception. "Sounds were heard about their cradles, strange voices called through their rooms; they would play by the hour with beautiful children, visible only to their eyes and the mother's, who brought them flowers and pet animals, and romped with them; and once in a while, when they were tucked away in bed, their little bodies would be lifted gently and floated through the air by some mysterious power." They could not go to school, for raps followed them, and they were turned out amid the hootings and revilings of the scholars.

Zephaniah Eddy, the father, was a bigotted fanatic, hard, cold, and cruel, a man who ill-treated his wife and bullied his children. All sorts of cruelties were resorted to to drive away this "devil" from them; but when all failed, the exemplary father thought he might as well turn an honest penny out of the Satanic power, and sent his children out into the world under the tender care of a showman, to be lashed, and pinched, and burnt, and ridden on rails, and half murdered by seekers after truth. To the present day they bear traces of the treatment to which they were subjected. "Every girl and boy of them has a marked groove between the ends of the ulna and radius, and the articulation of the bones of the hand, and every one of them is scarred by hot sealing-wax." William has a bullet wound in the ankle, and Mary one in the arm, and Horatio has a stab wound in the leg and three broken fingers, to say nothing of minor matters. No wonder that these "boys" are retiring, soured, and repellent, and that they do not view investigators with any particular feelings of affection.

It has been repeatedly said that the Eddys make money by their circles: and this has been stated in my hearing more than once by persons who should be well informed. Colonel Olcott says the reverse. "As young children they travelled under the showman to most of the large towns in America, and two of them even to London, receiving only their bare expenses. After four years of this life they were hired by other speculators, and during the succeeding eleven years received an average of under 10 dollars a month a-piece. Their house and farm would not

sell for over 3,500 dollars all told; they do all the house work themselves; half their visitors are poor, and sponge on them for board, and the other half pay 8 dollars per week. Finally, the family unite in saying that the greatest blessing that could befall them would be to have their mediumship cease, so that they might work like other farmers and enjoy life like them." This decided statement from one who knows what he is saying should set the matter at rest.

It remains to describe the room in which the séances are held. It is the upper storey of the back part of the house before alluded to. The room is 37 ft. 6 in. by 17 ft. The ceiling is 9 ft. 2 in. high in the centre, and 6 ft. 11 in. at the sides. The windows are 13 ft. 9 in. from the ground, and no ladder is on the premises. At the west side is the kitchen chimney, 2 ft. 7 in. by 3 ft. 4 in. in the centre of the gable. To the right of the chimney is a closet of the same depth, and 7 ft. long, with a window in it 2 ft. 6 in. from the floor; and having a 2 ft. 2 in. by 2 ft. 3 in. opening. The door to this cabinet is 5 ft. 9 in. high, by 2 ft. wide. Three sides of it are lath and plaster, the fourth brick wall. There are no panels to slide, no loose boards in the floor to lift. Every inch is tight and solid. Outside the cabinet is a platform as long as the width of the room and 6 ft. 7 in. wide, elevated 23¼ in. above the floor level. Along its outer edge runs a hand-rail 2 ft. 6 in. high. On this platform the spirits appear. The audience occupy two benches and chairs about 12 ft. from the platform; and light is given from a kerosene lamp, placed at the south side of the room, nearly 30 ft. from the cabinet. Col. Olcott himself sat more than 15 ft. away from the cabinet, and must have found it very difficult to see anything by the turned-down light of a small lamp, 30 ft. away.

Over the circle room is nothing but an unfloored cock-loft, full of cobwebs, and too small for a man to stand upright in it. Such is the scene of the nightly séances, and Colonel Olcott demonstrates to satisfaction that no illicit means of access to it exists.

This circle-room was opened to the public Jan. 1, 1874, and circles are held every day except Sunday. During the sixteen months last past some two thousand or more "people from the other world" have visited this through W. Eddy's mediumship, and yet no perceptible drain seems to be made on his vital power. "He goes about his daily avocations, takes no rest to speak of, says he has eaten nothing for weeks but a little fruit; and yet, after as many as eighteen ghosts have appeared in a single evening, his pulse is regular, and he resumes his pipe which he laid down at the moment of entering the circle-room." This is very strange, and would seem to imply that the theories

about severe drain upon the health of the medium by frequent sittings are unfounded. I must say, however, that I have usually observed great prostration in mediums when a séance has been prolonged, or when the manifestations have been numerous; and I am familiar enough myself with the aching back and heavy feeling in the limbs which succeeds a séance in which "virtue has gone out of me."

It is simply impossible to give details of the spirits who materialised during Colonel Olcott's visit to Chittenden, nor is it necessary. It must suffice that I give facts respecting some of the more remarkable experiments which Colonel Olcott made.

WEIGHING SPIRIT FORMS.

The author tested the assertion of the spirits that they accrete matter from the atmosphere round their bodies, and that the relative solidity of this material envelope is under their own control, by the simple process of weighing the form on a "platform scale." The experiment was tried with the spirit Honto at the Eddys, and Katie Brink at Mrs. Compton's. The former experiment was conducted by Mr. Pritchard—Col. Olcott's aura being too *positive* to be allowed near the spirit—and the author himself conducted the latter. Honto started at 88 lbs. (W. Eddy weighs 179), then varied to 58 lbs., and finally rose to 65. Thus, without any change of clothing, and within the space of ten minutes, the spirit, who weighed at least 50 lbs. less than any mortal woman of her size and weight should weigh, reduced her materiality to the extent of 30 lbs., and, after holding it there several minutes, increased it 7 lbs.

In the case of Mrs. Compton, of Havana, N.Y., the author removed her earrings, and, seating her in a chair in the cabinet, fastened her in it by passing some No. 50 sewing thread through the perforations in her ears, and sealing the ends to the back of the chair with sealing wax, which he stamped with his private signet. He then fastened the chair to the floor with thread and wax in a secure manner. Though I have my own opinion as to the use of tying at all, in view of the power spirits have over gross matter, yet this is as satisfactory a fastening as I ever heard of. The white-robed figure appeared in due course, and was weiged at 77 lbs., again at 59lbs., and again at 52lbs. Compared with Honto (who measured 5 ft. 5 in.), Katie's weight reads thus:—

Honto.		Katie Brink.	
1st weighing, - -	88 lbs.	1st weighing, - -	77 lbs.
2nd ,, - -	58 ,,	2nd ,, - -	59 ,,
3rd ,, - -	58 ,,	3rd ,, - -	52 ,,
4th ,, - -	65 ,,		
Average weight, - -	67½ ,,	Average weight, - -	62⅔ ,,
Weight of Medium, -	179 ,,	Weight of Medium, -	121 ,,

Here is another account of a weighing in the dark circle, Horatio Eddy being the medium. The weighing scales were on the platform near the left-hand side, and the circle was held down below in the body of the room. The spirit George Dix, who is a leading hand in Horatio's dark circle, pulled these ponderous scales the length of the platform, until he reached the step, and then rolled them along until he put them by the medium's chair. George then set to work to weigh himself, and reported 163 lbs., his height being 5 ft. 8 in. We then heard Mayflower's voice, "Now, weigh me, George," and his answer, "All right, get on;" and another and lighter person was heard to mount the platform, and the noise of weighing, with another change of counterpoise weights, was followed by a call for a light. This being struck the medium was found exactly as before: and the mode of tying leaves nothing to be desired as regards security. The weight of Mayflower was read at 40 lbs., but the medium, speaking in the voice of a spirit known as French Mary, said, "No; 38 lbs.," and so it proved to be. Let it be noticed that the tying was perfect, and that even if the medium could unbind and rebind himself, which it was physically impossible for him to do, he could not see the figures on the beam, so as to correct a minute error. The experiment is valuable as showing the power over heavy bodies, and the ability to see in the dark which spirits possess. The whole distance traversed by the machine was 33 ft. 6 in.

PHASES OF MATERIALISATION.

Those who have had opportunities for careful observation of these forms know that materialisation is not always complete. "One evening, Mrs. Cleveland, a neighbour, who generally sits upon the platform, and who is a great favourite with Honto, was dancing with that spirit, and by accident took hold of her arm below the shoulder, when she found to her horror that it was not materialised, and her hand grasped only the sleeve of the robe. The hand was *a solid hand attached to a vapoury arm.*" Similar statements have been made by persons who have observed the Katie King materialisations through Miss Cook; and those of Florence Maple and Lenore through Miss Showers. Parts of the body have not been properly formed; as, for instance, a case is recorded in which the wrist of Katie one evening was without bone; and the spirit Florence has more than once shown a foot on which there was only one toe; and a hand which was misshapen.

The author records a similar case with Mrs. Holmes, during the series of séances which he had after the Katie King exposure; a series which seems to prove to demonstration the genuine

power of the medium under the most satisfactory conditions. Mrs. Holmes was alone in the cabinet. . . . "A man's head appeared, as if floating in the air. It was ghastly pale, a heavy black beard and moustache increasing the unnatural pallor by contrast. I went up to the aperture, leaned my arm on the bracket-shelf beneath it, and gazed into the face, which was not twelve inches from me. A more dreadful sight I never beheld. The lower portions, including the wavy silky beard, were perfectly formed, as also was the brow; but the eyes were not materialised, and the cavities they should have filled were edged with ragged rims, as though the face had been made of wax, and the eyes melted out by the application of a red-hot iron." And subsequently, after Mrs. Holmes had been put into a bag, and thoroughly secured, the first Katie King face is described as "much worse to look upon than the male one of the preceding evening. I could not think of anything to compare it with except the face of a corpse, half eaten by rats or crabs."

The time required for materialisation is sometimes so short as to be imperceptible. Honto pulls shawls out of brick walls, and from under chairs on which observers are sitting, and from the platform instantaneously. A sketch shows her and Mrs. Pritchard holding between them a long piece of gauzy fabric that stretches across the platform. And in the presence of Madame de Blavatsky there came a stalwart form, who in life had been one of her husband's body-guard, and the lady's personal attendant. He used to ride out with her, and was very proud of his equestrian skill and of his bravery of dress. This very man walked out of William Eddy's cabinet, dressed to the minutest detail as when she saw him last in Asia. "He came out empty-handed; but just as I thought he was about to retire, he bent forward, as if picking a handful of mould from the ground, made a gesture of scattering it, and pressed his hand to his bosom—a gesture familiar only to the tribes of Kurdistan; then he suddenly held in his right hand the most curious-looking weapon I ever saw. It was a spear, with a staff that might have been a dozen feet in length (perhaps more, for the butt seemed to extend into the cabinet), and a long steel head of peculiar shape, the base of which was surmounted with a ring of ostrich-plumes. This weapon, Madame de B. tells me, is always carried by the Khourdish horsemen, who acquire a wonderful dexterity in handling it. *One instant before his hand was empty, the next he grasps this spear with its glittering steel barb and its wavy plumes! Whence came it?* From Chittenden township, Master Sceptic?"

Not less curious is the way in which these forms are dissipated, melting away like wax before heat. Light seems, indeed,

to have upon them a similar effect to that which heat has upon wax. Col. Olcott saw Honto one evening "sink, as it were, into the floor up to her waist, the upper portion of her body retaining full solidity." And he prints a letter from one Franklin Bolles, "a worthy gentleman residing in Hartford," detailing a similar occurrence. His wife's mother was materialised, and stood outside the cabinet curtain, and stretched out her arms to her daughter as though she were longing to embrace her. Mrs. Prior asked the spirit if she could not speak to us, and she seemed to make a desperate effort to comply. But suddenly, as if she had exhausted all her power of materialisation in the attempt, her arms dropped, and her form melted down to the floor, and disappeared from our view. The figure did not dissolve into a mist, and disperse latterally, but sank down and disappeared, as if every particle comprising her frame had suddenly lost its cohesion with every other, and the whole fell into a heap together." It is observable that the process of dematerialisation is usually the same, as though the atoms were held in temporary suspension round a magnetic centre—the brain—and those farthest from that centre were the first to lose cohesion. The process is gradual, too. Col. Olcott, however, does record one case—the mother of Mrs. Bolles—in which the disintegration seemed to be instantaneous, and not in progressive ascension. Probably the process was only more rapid in the one case than in the other.

Omitting much that it would be interesting to note, did not space forbid, and were it not that I shall find ample opportunity of discussing all these questions in the course of my papers on the subject, I note, as a point of favourable evidence, the rapidity with which these spirits present themselves. Col. Olcott has disposed of the question of confederacy with complete proof, very minute and conclusive, but too long to quote here; and he has been at pains to record the exact length of time between the apparitions. Here is one of his time-tables. The séance began at ten minutes before seven, and closed at five minutes before eight. "In those sixty-five minutes eleven different spirit-forms appeared. Honto remained in sight five minutes, old Mr. Brown two and a half minutes, Chester Packard eighteen seconds, William (his brother) seventeen seconds. The intervals between the appearances of some of the forms were respectively four minutes forty-five seconds, three minutes ten seconds, two minutes forty-seven seconds, one minute thirteen seconds, and one minute." There must be confederacy to accomplish that by natural means. Here, again, is a crucial case. A spirit had presented itself, and "had hardly been gone an instant, when there came a light-complexioned, white-haired old man, a Mr.

Jonathan Bartlett. . . . *He must have been waiting for his predecessor to retire, for he almost passed him at the door.*"

On some occasions, moreover, more than one spirit is seen on the platform at the same time. The following certificate relates to a good instance:—

"Chittenden, Oct. 1, 1874.

"We hereby certify that at a circle held April 28 last . . . 'Santum' was out on the platform, and another Indian of almost as great stature [6 ft. 2¾ in.] came out, and the two passed and repassed each other as they walked up and down. The stranger retired first, and Santum followed him. At the same time a conversation was being carried on between George Dix, Mayflower, old Mr. Morse, and Mrs. Eaton, in the cabinet. We recognised the familiar voice of each. We had all examined the cabinet that evening, and helped to clear it of some plaster and other rubbish. There was no window in it then."

(Signed by five persons in the presence of Col. Olcott.)

After a most patient and exhaustive discussion of all possible and impossible theories whereby a sceptical mind may seek to account for these astounding phenomena—and the author's mind seems to be almost pedantically sceptical—this is the conclusion: "Confederacy, disproven; personation, discredited; spontaneous generation of the apparitions (?), impossible; mind-reading by the medium, followed by his creation of the shades of our deceased friends, absurd. Result: a possibility that by some occult control of some now unknown forces of nature, beings other than those in the body can manifest their presence to sight, touch, and hearing."

Horatio Eddy's light séance furnished another scientific proof of the power of spirits. Two shawls are suspended on the platform, and behind these are placed musical instruments. Horatio and some chosen investigator sits in front of these two shawls, and is covered with a third shawl, leaving their heads visible. A somewhat similar arrangement is familiar to those who have attended Bastian and Taylor's séances. To the hand-rail of the platform Col. Olcott affixed a spring balance, with cord enough attached to allow a spirit-hand, protruded from between the two shawls, to pull it horizontally. A hand came out, seized the cord, and then "easily, steadily, and without spasmodic action, compressed the spring until the pointer ran down to the 40 lbs. mark. To prove that the force had not been exhausted, the spring was held there until I took back the balance, and then was allowed to recoil as gradually as it had been compressed." On a subsequent evening George Dix pulled vertically 50 lbs., "and it seemed as if the spirit could pull 100 lbs. more." I have several times been grasped by a detached hand, when sitting with Mr. Williams, which has gradually raised me from a sitting to a standing posture, and then up till I have stood on my chair,

and finally on the table. When my hand reached the ceiling of the room, the spirit-hand disappeared. The hand was a good, solid, substantial flesh and blood member, attached to nothing that I could discover by my senses. Where was this fulcrum? and where was it in Colonel Olcott's experiments?

Space forbids further extracts from many passages which I had marked for notice. Those who wish to read a careful account of experiments carefully conducted, which demonstrate far more conclusively than any published records I have yet seen, the reality of materialisations of the full form, must be referred to the book itself. It is full of facts, gives few theories, but those sensible and shrewd, and all things considered, has little in it that does not bear upon the points at issue. A vivid picture of the far-away Chittenden farmhouse, which has been chosen as the theatre for these portentous manifestations, and a clear idea of the principal actors in their production, is left upon the mind. The results which the author considers himself to have obtained after his three months' investigation must be stated in his own words:—

"We have the writing of certain names that the medium had no means of knowing, the exhibition of detached hands of various sizes and colours, some deformed by accidental pre-mortem causes; we have the simultaneous playing of musical compositions by such a number of instruments that one or even two men could not have done it; we have the playing of Georgian, Circassian, and Italian music by invisible performers, in response to requests made in languages that neither the medium nor any other person in the room except the asker understood; we have the pulling of a spring balance by detached hands unlike the medium's, one with a finger amputated, and the other with tattoo marks upon the wrist, which in each case would prove that the medium had nothing to do with pulling; we have had the playing upon an instrument and the display of hands beyond the reach of the medium, and when his position and movements were all under easy scrutiny; we have had the passage of a solid iron ring upon the arm of a medium, and its transfer to my own, with both of the medium's hands held by mine; and also the dropping of the same solid ring from the medium's arm to the floor in the light, with a lamp standing within two feet of the medium.

"We have had the execution of airs upon various musical instruments in concert, in a style so utterly unlike the best efforts of the medium as to preclude the idea that he could have been the performer on either one of them. We have had, finally, the appearance of a multitude of figures emerging from a

closet, where in the nature of things it was impossible for any mortal person except one man to have been, dressed in a great variety of costumes, and differing in size, apparent weight, manner, sex, age, and complexion, from that person—to make no account of those whom he might have personated if he had been supplied with the appliances of the actor's art.

"We have, moreover, and especially, seen some of these figures dressed in Oriental costume and speaking Oriental languages, besides others, who conversed audibly in the modern tongues of Europe. Of the appearance of children, and even little babes in arms; of the appearance of two of the former at one and the same time; of the speaking of words and sentences by various children, I have given such circumstantial accounts, and the verification of my statements is so easy, that I cite the facts as among the most wonderful of the proofs accumulated during my protracted investigations."

This is a comprehensive list, and by no means exhausts the record, for the author has excluded some facts which he does not consider satisfactorily proven. It is an astounding record, and holds out to us an earnest of what patient and watchful investigation may effect. One gains from it a conviction that the time is nigh at hand when we shall be able to look into these occult phenomena in a way that we have not yet had means of doing, save in rare instances; and, so far, the mist seems to lift, and a gleam of light to be thrown athwart the gloom. And yet it is impossible to lay the book down without a feeling of great sadness. The impression left on one's mind is of a whole family possessed by a low class of spirits, who use them as mere machines for manifestations over which they have no control—pucks, "spooks," *poltergeists*, call them what you will—who seem to have a power to us incalculable, and to use it in a way nearly, if not quite irresponsible. *Beings they are*—"people," as Colonel Olcott well calls them—*but what beings?* "Those they purport to be, or the *simulacra* of such, formed and fashioned by tricky creatures, who are suffered to trifle with the sacredest feelings of our hearts? If spirits, those who have lived on this earth?—or those from other planets, where the same relations as ours of body and mind, the same laws of life and death, do not prevail? Who and whence are they? Are they all evil, all good, or partly both? Is there a limit to their power to interfere with the affairs of men, and especially to their control over those sensitives we call mediums? Do the things they do, and the things they teach, indicate that the law of evolution follows us beyond the grave, and that we may rise to grand heights of light and wisdom?—or must we shun them as the angels of hell itself, let loose to ruin us in body and soul? That is the issue."

These are weighty questions, and those who have looked deepest into the whole matter are most ready to give them full consideration. It is fair to say that Colonel Olcott is not a Spiritualist, and does not profess acquaintance with the philosophy or religion that the higher spirits teach. He modestly speaks of himself as "the collector of a few facts, and observer of certain phenomena, which others must classify and analyse." He is far more than that; but he would be the first to repudiate a deep acquaintance with the philosophy of Spiritualism. And even those who have looked hard and long into the mysteries that enshroud the material phase of spiritual action, can but say doubtfully, that there is much in it that passes their comprehension. In general, it is safe to say that those spirits who can most benefit us by their instruction, and win us to a belief in their Divine mission by words of sublimity, and by sentiments that bespeak their origin in a higher sphere than this, are not those who are able to operate successfully on the material plane. Nay, even the vexed question of identity which the author raises in the passage above quoted is not to be set at rest by these materialisations, for we know not who the invisible operators are, or what power they wield. We only know that their statements are generally irreconcileable with truth,—I do not say that they are frequently erroneous, that may well happen with the purest intent, but they are not such as inspire confidence in the moral tone or good faith of those who make them. Proof of identity, if it is ever had on earth, must come from a more trustworthy source than this.

Nor is the question of less momentous import as it respects the mediums themselves. It is hard to picture a more terrible life than the members of this family have led. The spirits have made them their sport and plaything; they have disturbed their nights, and occupied their days, making it hard for them either to work or rest. They have harried and worried them until one would fancy that the rest of the grave would be a pleasant change, only that these denizens of the other world have succeeded in inspiring the horrid thought that the next world may be for some even less restful than this. Man has joined in the lengthened persecution. I have described the tests they have been subjected to, the fanatical persecutions they have undergone, resulting in soured tempers, cold and mistrustful bearing, and lonely isolation of life. "It requires rare elevation of character cheerfully to endure martyrdom; and if William, and Horatio, and Mary, and Delia, and Webster Eddy have grown sensitive, fretful, and worse in the course of all these leaden-footed, sorrow-burdened years, I, for one, cannot blame them. I am just selfish enough to ask heaven to preserve me from the like experience." To all

which I give my hearty amen. There must be pioneers of truth, and usually the truth that a coming age has reaped has been sown in the tears and watered with the blood of those who first proclaimed it. It is a law that obtains in all things; and though we do not now burn the seer, or put the medium to ordeal by water or by fire, we are not above submitting those who have the courage of their faith to a very real if petty persecution. And even as in Art,

> "One race will starve the living toil,
> The next will gild the name,"

so it is with those who are to us the heralds of the new age. Mediumship, at best, is a doubtful blessing; to the Eddys it is not too much to say that it has well-nigh been a life-long curse.

Col. Olcott rightly estimates the value of Spiritualism when he says that, properly pursued, we might "enjoy intercourse with the hightest spirits, as well as receive the visits of the most tricky, ignorant, or malicious. The Eddy materialisations, if proven true, while unquestionably the highest form of physical manifestation, cannot be regarded as comparable to the inspirational state, in which knowledge, wisdom, and thoughts of beauty pour into the receptive mind of the seer, from the sources of inspiration, and take the form of prophecy and poetry. Such men were Isaiah, Ezekiel, David, Jeremiah, and the other great Hebrews of those days; and the difference between them and the witch of Endor was just as great and no other than that between—say Swedenborg and William Eddy—the one the type of the greatest spiritual ecstasy, that of the most powerful physical mediumship." It says much for the author's spiritual insight that he should have advanced so far as to pen such words, without having means of knowing by experience how literally true they are.

But I shall have other opportunities of discussing these and kindred questions; and no doubts that one may entertain as to the eventual outcome of these manifestations need interfere with the expression of our obligation to Col. Olcott for his exhaustive investigation into their nature. For good or for evil they are with us, rife and becoming rifer day by day; and it is something to have the certainty that we are not befooled by a mockery, or the sport of a psychological delusion, but that "people from the other world," as real and substantial as ourselves, do, under certain conditions, walk about among us. So much he seems to me to have *proved* with three distinct mediums; and his facts corroborate those obtained elsewhere and under other conditions with other mediums. I say that *he has proved his case.* I am told that the Eddys have been exposed over and over again.

Well, I read regularly all that is written about them and other such mediums in the Spiritual periodicals, both of America and this country, and I have seen no account of exposure that was worth dirtying clean paper with. When I read a book as careful and exhaustive as Col. Olcott's, written to maintain the theory of fraud, I will give it the same candid attention I have given his. Till then "the Ayes have it." The verdict must be for the defendants, as the Brothers Eddy must for the present be considered.

Col. Olcott expects too much from men of science. They will not investigate this question. They do not want it. They will have none of it. Why should they? It would reverse the accumulated opinions of ages, and render null many a cherished conclusion. Nor do they bring to its study, with rare and honourable exceptions, a mind impartial or a judgment unbiased. Every lawyer knows that scientific experts are the most uncertain class of witnesses. Probably there is no question on which opinion can be asked respecting which half-a-dozen eminent scientific experts on one side will not be counter-balanced by six equally eminent on the other. All depends on the side from which the question at issue is approached, and on the prepossession of the individual. In the investigation of a totally new subject, this is not the tone of mind most suitable for eliciting truth; and the man who starts in his search for truth with a determination to find only falsehood, is not the man whom I should select as my guide. The mind should be unbiassed, free from prejudice *pro* or *con*, and ready to receive candidly any evidence that may be presented. This cannot be when, as in the case of most scientific men, the truth of Spiritualism, if established, would upset nearly all their most cherished theories. No, with great respect for them, they are not the men most likely to achieve the best results. But that need not prevent our wonder that they should be content to spend time on the subjects which in many cases engross their attention, and leave this untouched. Col. Olcott pillories scientific men who spend their time in the busy idleness of minute hobby-hunting in a passage that does one good to read. *The Report [of American and British Associations] for* 1871 contains "A paper on the Ciliated Condition of the Inner Layer of the Blastoderm in the Ova of Birds;" "On the Essential Oil of Orange Peel;" "On a Fat Woman Exhibiting in London;" "On the Contents of a Hyæna's Den." The intellects of members were exercised to consider how the lobster casts its shell, the wings of pterodactyls, and a number of equally important questions.

"Nice subjects these to be used as excuses for declining to observe and analyse the facts of Modern Spiritualism! How

much more important to science to know about lobsters and lice, orange-peel and fat women, blastoderms and hyænas' dens, than to explain how the law of gravity may be temporarily neutralised by some other and unknown force; how 'death does not kill a man;' how the resurrected spirit can reclothe itself with an evanescent, material form, by the power of its will over the sublimated earth-essences, suspended invisible in the air; and what are the occult laws by which the pulse of this shadowy body can be made to beat, the lungs to respire, the lips to speak words thought by the mind within the frail tenement, which waits only the further exercise of its creator's will to redissolve into the impalpable atoms of which it was a moment before composed.

"Our houses are seemingly invaded by an invisible host of good and evil spirits, and we turn in vain to scientific men for instructions as to how the one class may be detained and the other expelled. They bend in laboratory and study over wriggling insects and squirming reptiles, insensible of the glorified beings who stand, perhaps, behind them, and blind to the magnificent field of research that lies before them in the direction of the Inner World. They leave us to grope our own way towards the Truth. If they do not help us we must search for ourselves. We cannot remain ignorant, for we are all urged on by

> 'The wish to know:—th' insatiate thirst
> That e'en by quenching is awaked:
> And that becomes or blest or curst
> As is the fount at which it's slaked.'"

The author expects, I say, too much. Not from scientists nor from theologians, the accredited priests of hoary faiths and ancient prejudices, does Spiritualism expect anything; but from candid, able, impartial, and honest men like himself—the true Priests of Truth, be the truth welcome or unwelcome. Sufficient that it is truth, and one which, in a wider sense than can be applied to any other, shall make man free.

REVIEWS.

THE INFLUENCE OF PREMATURE PREGNANCY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF CANCER IN THE FEMALE; with the Special Treatment of Cancer in the Uterus. By John M. Crombie, M.A., M.D., formerly Resident Medical Officer, Cancer Hospital, Brompton. London: Mackay & Co., Bouverie Street.

THIS little work is more particularly for the professional reader. Yet it sets forth a fact, which is briefly expressed in the following sentence:—"The prevailing cause of cancer in the uterus in our day, among young women in England, is premature pregnancy."

If this be true, then the question permits of the widest possible discussion. We quote the opening paragraph:—

"It is a notable fact that of the great number of persons afflicted with cancer, at least nine-tenths are females; that among the latter the primary site of the disease is, with comparatively few exceptions, either in the breast or in the womb, and that with about equal frequency; and, finally, that in the womb the disease appears in many at a remarkably early age, and does so almost invariably in those who have borne children *when quite young*. Indeed, with the exception of a special form of malignant disease occurring in children, and which is happily very rare, it is as true as an axiom that the *earliest victims* to cancer are *very young mothers*, and that in them the disease commences its attack in some part of the womb."

At another place he says—

"Within the last three years, of 154 women suffering from cancer of the womb (all, with one or two exceptions, seen by myself), 46, or nearly one-third of the whole, became the subjects of it at ages varying from twenty to thirty years; and all of these, with only two exceptions, also married, had been delivered of viable children at what most will consider a premature—in several of them a painfully premature—age; that is, from fifteen to twenty. There was not a single instance, among the 46, of an unmarried woman. One was a mother at fifteen, three at sixteen, five at seventeen, and the rest from eighteen to twenty. The development, at so early an age, of the malady in so many instances where pregnancy was also out of season in relation to age, taken in conjunction with the absence of cases where no such antecedent was in operation, goes to show that there is a direct relation of cause and effect between premature pregnancy and the early development of cancer of the uterus."

Further on he says—

"As far as my finding goes, it is pregnancy, and in most of the cases rapid and repeated pregnancy, that leads to premature death from uterine cancer. It is not premature marriage, but the fulfilment of the function of gestation, that is connected with the development of the disease. Marriage alone has its influence, no doubt, as I have mentioned two cases of married women without children; and in this respect the contrast is remarkable, that not one single instance of the *inupta fœmina* of an age under thirty-four years has ever been seen by me with the disease in this situation."

The author then gives the reason as to the causes of this infliction, and remarks as a basis:—

"The bodies and minds of children—the germs, at least, the most important and the most precious—are taken from and given by their mothers; and, truly and solemnly, this is work enough for women, and not to be thought slightly of for their own sakes, by those who are themselves only yet children, or but the least iota more. The condition of the uterus itself cannot fail to be injuriously changed by the assumption of a function disproportioned to its development and power. Apart from the facts stated, as much might be inferred from the processes of gestation and parturition themselves. The true nature of the former, however, as regards the uterus has been generally much mistaken. The amount of active labour performed by that organ during gestation being almost wholly overlooked. When one thinks of an organ called upon to perform a nine months' labour of constantly-increasing movements, it conveys a different impression of the situation, from the notion that the uterus, until parturition, serves only as a simple receptacle."

The uterus then wears itself out with too much work, especially when called upon before it is fully developed, just as it is the case with any other part of the organism. The function of that organ is very much enlarged in importance by the consideration that its motion has much to do with the development of the fœtus.

"Without some auxiliary, it is impossible that the heart of the mother could act with sufficient force to maintain the placental circulation, or the circulation of the fœtus itself, before the heart of the latter is capable of assuming the function. It is not pretended that the movements of the uterus are as regular as those of the heart; but, acting with a certain degree of regularity, they do most undoubtedly, just as the movements in the voluntary muscles in our own limbs, contribute to assist the action of the heart."

The organ, thus called upon in a state of immaturity, is rendered liable to a wear and tear amounting to the disintegration and destruction of its tissue, and producing other injurious consequences; hence is the certainty that it frequently leads to cancer. These are considerations which, with many others which could be named, ought to restrain women from early parentage. Cancer of that interior kind is simply incurable. By very painful treatment it may be palliated, but never extirpated; while there is a tendency to transmit the disease to posterity as an hereditary legacy.

OBITUARY.—Samuel R. Wells, the well-known professor of phrenology, and publisher of numerous works bearing on that and kindred subjects, died yesterday morning of typhoid fever. He took an intelligent interest in social progress, and was to a great extent a popular educator. His genial temperament, winning manners, wide and extensive reading and observation, which extended far beyond the studies to which he gave special attention, exerted an influence that might almost be called magnetic on numbers who became acquainted with him personally or through his writings. Mr. Wells was born in West Hartford, Conn., in 1820. He studied medicine, and in due time received his diploma, but he never practised as a physician. Early in life he became interested in phrenology, and thenceforth devoted himself to the study and investigation of that subject with intense ardour. In 1860 he accompanied L. N. Fowler on a lecturing tour in Europe, and on his return to America, two years later, assumed sole charge of the establishment, which has since done business under his name. . . . . He founded the Phrenological Institute, where many students were instructed in the science of Gall and Spurzheim. He was a popular lecturer on this as well as on the subjects with which his name is more intimately connected.—*New York Tribune*, April 14.

"ERRATA."—We regret that the pages containing Mr. Barlow's poem had to go to press last month before the revised proof was received by the printer. Stanza I. (last line but three)—For *waxed* read *waxèd*. Stanza III., line 3,—For *as* read *no;* line 4, for *How* read *Now;* line 6, for *Where through* read *Wherethrough;* line 8, for *man* read *Man*, and for *glistening* read *glistering*. Stanza IV., line 9,—For *Refines* read *Refiner*, and for *purer* read *pure;* line 12, for *man* read *Man;* last line, for *a purer God* read *as pure as God's*. Stanza V., line 2,—For *All* read *Are;* line 4, for *while* read *white;* line 6, for *van* read *bran*.