

THE HONEYMOON.

REMEMBRANCE OF A BRIDAL TOUR
THROUGH SCOTLAND.

BY THE

COUNT DE MEDINA POMAR.

AUTHOR OF "ESTUDIOS ACERCA DEL PROGRESO DEL ESPIRITU,"
"LA RELIGION MODERNA," ETC.

VOL. I.



LONDON:
TRÜBNER & CO., 57 AND 59 LUDGATE HILL.
1874.

[All Rights Reserved.]

251. b. 318.

Digitized by Google

" Perplex'd in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out ;
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

" He fought his doubts and gather'd strength ;
He would not make his judgment blind ;
He faced the spectres of the mind,
And hid them : thus he came at length

" To find a stronger faith his own ;
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

" But in the darkness and the cloud."—TENNYSON.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

Will shortly be published,

A SEQUEL TO THE HONEYMOON, ENTITLED

“THROUGH THE AGES,”

A PSYCHOLOGICAL ROMANCE,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

DEDICATION.

TO THE COUNTESS OF CAITHNESS.

To thee, my dearest Mother, on my nineteenth birthday, I
dedicate "The Honeymoon," my first attempt in the
English language.

MEDINA-POMAR.

STAGENHOE PARK, HERTS,
23d September.



CONTENTS.

| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| CHAPTER I. | |
| THE MARRIAGE, | 1 |
| CHAPTER II. | |
| GLASGOW, | 20 |
| CHAPTER III. | |
| RELIGIOUS SCRUPLES, | 64 |
| CHAPTER IV. | |
| DUMBARTON, | 70 |
| CHAPTER V. | |
| THE PUNISHMENT OF PRIDE: A LEGEND, | 82 |
| CHAPTER VI. | |
| THE KYLES OF BUTE, | 114 |
| CHAPTER VII. | |
| THE FIRST SUNDAY, | 127 |

| | PAGE |
|------------------------------------|------|
| CHAPTER VIII. | |
| THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, | 142 |
| CHAPTER IX. | |
| FAITH AND REASON, | 174 |
| CHAPTER X. | |
| LOCH LOMOND, | 185 |
| CHAPTER XI. | |
| THE BRIDE OF LUSS, | 198 |
| CHAPTER XII. | |
| TARBET, | 214 |
| CHAPTER XIII. | |
| A MOONLIGHT WALK, | 219 |
| CHAPTER XIV. | |
| THE SUNRISE ON THE LAKE, | 243 |

THE HONEYMOON.

CHAPTER I.

THE MARRIAGE.

THE second of July 18— was the happiest day of my life, for on that day I was united for ever to the purest and loveliest woman that has ever existed in this world.

Concepcion Vargas was in truth one of those angels that heaven sends sometimes upon earth to console men, and help them to bear their cross. Born under the bright sun of Andalusia, and educated in a convent at Seville, the young girl to whom I can now give the sweet name of wife, was the realisation of the ideal of perfection that I so often had dreamt about, and that I had almost given up the hope of finding in this world, where vanity and selfishness seem almost to rule.

An orphan at the age of twenty-one, when I had but just come into possession of the large fortune that, by the death of my father, Lord Carlton, belonged to

me, I found myself alone in that immense and over-populated desert called London. I did not know of a friend on whom to rely in my sorrow ; for although many of the college companions of my youth called themselves my friends, they were as foreign to my heart as the undertakers who had just borne from my sight the cold body that had once been my mother.

My sorrow was intense : my mother had been, till then, the only friend I had known ; and in her alone I had placed all my love, all my interest. I loved her more than a mother ; for since my father's death, that had taken place several years before, when I was but a boy, she had been to me father, mother, sister, friend ; for we two had been left alone in the world together.

While she was by my side, I never felt the want of a family, for she filled the whole of my existence with that love that only a mother can give ; but I suppose God had only been preparing and educating her sweet spirit for a higher and a better life ; and He who had given her to me took her away when the purpose of her earth-life had been accomplished.

Oh, that mine had but finished at the same time !

Lady Carlton had been a model of women, of daughters, of wives, and of mothers ; and so her fate gave me but little anxiety. I had too much confidence in the Supreme Being who so admirably and wisely rules our steps, to doubt of His justice and of His mercy. I know that the good actions of my mother and her exemplary life could but be rewarded as they should by that All-powerful Being to whom men have given

the name of God ; and this conviction consoled me, mitigating my sorrow, and soothing my grief.

Death ! I tried to make myself believe is but a word, in reality it does not exist ; the same as birth, they are but words made by men to express ideas which they scarcely understand. Man has never seen a being born or die : he has seen a spirit appear under the form of a germ, in an embryotic existence ; some time after he has seen this spirit disappear, and his body dissolve into its component material substances ; but as for the principle which gave life to this form, it has always escaped his comprehension. Yet it continues to exist. I am sure of that. My mother's love for me was more than human—it was more than a mere material passion. She had a pure and noble spirit that gave life to her fair form, but from whence it came and whither it has gone are both mysteries to me, for, as Boucher de Perthes remarked with so much reason, "Everything changes, but nothing dies." If the decomposition of the body were the end of man's life, we should have to admit a creator who unmakes with one hand what he makes with the other, or two rival powers, two powerful beings, one creative and the other destructive. The ancient Brahmins must have believed this when they established the worship of the two Gods, Brahma and Siva, the first the almighty creator, the second the destroyer, both of whom, gifted with equal power, ruled according to their creed, the universe under the protection of the god Brahm.

In this way, thousands of years ago, did the ancient Hindoos solve the problem that now, as then, puzzled the human understanding.

But if these phenomena of nature seem to us so contradictory, is it because they are so, or is it not rather because we are ignorant of their laws? Yet men will believe in anything rather than in their own ignorance. We have only one thing to guide us in this, as in every problem, Reason—and reason condemns this theory. Oh! let us beware of believing anything that stands against reason; God did not give us this great blessing in order that we might believe unreasonable doctrines. The order of nature is *one*, because God the universal Father is one, and and for this reason is his work called the *Universe*.

It is, therefore, impossible to admit two such powers, for, according to this doctrine, that destroys the unity of action, and changes the equilibrium that rules the universe, there would be left in the world nothing but death and desolation. This would be less than nothing, it is the dissolution of matter and the annihilation of spirit, it is chaos.

But it is enough to cast one look over the wonderful universe that surrounds us, in order to see the falsity of this doctrine, everything there lives, everything participates in that divine breath that gives life to matter; everything in the universe lives, and yet they would have us believe that death alone rules in it! The very bodies of those we have so loved and that are no more, are, at this moment, full of life,

full of animation. And this is only the house—can its inhabitant have perished?

“Oh! convince me of this,” I cried, “and it will be enough to make me die too. Tell me that my mother has died, and that she is lost to me now and for ever; prove it, and you will find me a cold corpse a moment afterwards. Our life depends, a great deal more than we allow ourselves to think, on that of those who have gone before us to the other side of the grave. Somebody has said *we live with the dead*; yes, we live with them, for what is our existence but a succession of remembrances and hopes? The past and the future! And both are based upon one ideal which we shall never be able to realise in this world. The present is nothing to us, it is but an instant, and we very seldom appreciate its importance, but the past and the future are an eternity—an eternity that is equally dear to us, and this eternity can it not be, even as Bulwer suggested, “a succession of those transitions that men have called life and death?”

Some years previously I had heard Victor Hugo pronounce, over the grave of a young girl that death had just taken from her parents, a discourse that will never fade away from my mind.*

“In a few weeks we have been occupied with two sisters; we have married the one, and we are now burying the other. Such are the perpetual changes of life. Let us bow, my friends, before its severe destiny.

* It was in Guernsey during the year 1865.

"Let us bow with hope. Our eyes were not made for weeping, but in order that we might see ; our hearts were not made for suffering, but in order that we might believe. The faith in another existence proceeds from the faculty of loving. Do not forget this, in this inconstant life of ours, it is the heart that believes. The son believes that he will again find his father, and the mother never consents to lose her son forever. This faith that makes us refuse the idea of annihilation is the greatness of man.

"The heart cannot mislead us. Flesh is but a dream, it soon passes away. If this decomposition were to be the end of man, it would take away from our life all its pleasure and object ; we cannot be satisfied with vapour ; we want a certainty. In spite of being loved, man feels that not one of the points on which he rests is on this earth. To love is to live beyond this world. Without this faith, none of the perfect gifts of the heart would be possible ; to love, which is the object of man's existence, would be a torment. This paradise would turn into a hell. No, let us say with a loud voice, the being who loves needs immortality. The heart needs the soul.

"There is a heart in this coffin, and this heart lives, and at this moment is listening to our words.

"Emily de Putron was the pride of a loving and united family. Her smiles were sunshine to her parents. She was a flower of beauty in her paternal home. From her cradle, every tenderness surrounded her ; she had grown up happy ; and receiving happi-

ness, she gave it to others ; fondly loved, she loved in return. She has just gone.

"Where?—To darkness? No ; it is we who are in the dark. She is in the light of heaven, receiving her recompense. Those young girls who have done no evil during their lives, are the holy ones of the grave, and their heads rise slowly out of the tomb towards a mysterious crown that awaits them.

"Emily de Putron has gone to find there supreme serenity, the completion of her innocent existence. She has gone away ! Youth, towards eternity ; beauty, towards the ideal ; hope, towards certainty ; love, towards the infinite ; pearl, towards the ocean ; spirit, towards God.

"The wonderful part of this great celestial journey that is called death, is that those who go away do not leave us. They are in a world of light, but they visit, although unknown to us, our world of darkness. They are at once above us and at our side.

"Oh thou, whoever thou art, who hast seen the body of a beloved being disappear in the darkness of the grave, do not make yourself unhappy. He is always there. He is at your side, closer even than he was while on earth. The beauty of death is the presence, the indescribable presence, of the souls we love smiling at our tearful eyes. The being we mourn has disappeared, he has not gone away, we no longer see its sweet face. . . . the dead are the invisible, they are not the absent.

"Let us give full justice to death. Do not let us be

ungrateful to it. Death is not, as it is so often said, a separation and a forgetfulness. It is a mistake to believe that here, in the obscurity of this open grave, everything is lost. Here everything is found anew.

"The grave is a place of restitution. Here the soul gains back the infinite; here it finds its full powers; here it comes into possession of its mysterious nature; free from the body, free from wants and pains, free from burden, free from everything. Death is the greatest of *liberators*. It also is the greatest of *progressors*. Death is the augmentation of all that has arrived to the superior degree of all the superior qualities. Every one receives therefrom his augmentation. Everything is transfigured in the light and by the light. He who has been honest on earth becomes beautiful; he who has been beautiful becomes sublime; he who has been sublime becomes good."

This philosophical and spiritual discourse had made an extraordinary impression upon my heart, but I did not arrive at its full meaning. I did not comprehend nor understand all its beauties to their full extent, till the moment when my mother's death came to plunge me, in my turn, into the deepest grief.

In spite of this, hope, that ministering angel that God sends to console and sustain man in his deepest sorrows, came to my rescue, and I tried to convince myself that my grief, after all, was only selfishness, and that I ought instead to be glad that my mother

had at last quitted this miserable world, and taken her place among the angels in heaven.

Such was the train of thought that occupied my mind; my sorrow was not so much caused by her absence as by the solitude in which her death had left me. I saw myself alone in the world where I had been so happy in her company. I did not dare to weep for her death—such a thing seemed to me a sacrilege, an open opposition to God's law. Moreover, her happiness did not make me in the least uneasy, the same faith that prevented my shedding tears upon her grave assured me of that. But mine? What was going to become of me? Alone! I who had never left her side for a single day!

One day, soon after her death, I received the following letter, and this short epistle restored to me by slow degrees my spiritual strength. It ran thus:—

“MY DEAR WALTER,—A great blow has fallen upon you. I must see you, and console you. I appreciated the one you so loved. But I do not grieve for her. You also, my friend, ought to see farther than the horizon, and then you would believe, as I do, in the reality of the future life. But it is not to you to whom I should say *hope*. You are a philosopher, and what is more, a man with a heart.

“You should not grieve for the death of your mother. Do you think for a moment that she has left you? No, I at least am sure that she is always at your side, guarding and guiding you—invisible to your eyes, but not so to your heart. You have lost

the outward form of the mother, it is true, but not the mother's love and guiding care."

After reading this consoling, manly, and feeling letter several times, I resolved to go and see this friend. A man who could write with so much conviction and earnestness about immortality, must have at least sure proofs of its truth. Not that I doubted it for a moment, but that in my anxiety, and in my present frame of mind, I wanted some one with whom I could converse freely upon this, the most important, in my case, of all questions.

I therefore went to my country-house in the north of England, near which this friend resided. But the sight of the ancient mansion of my fathers only made the few days that I spent there sadder still. The sight of those deserted drawing-rooms, that I so often had seen full of friends in my past happy and joyous days, that immense hall, where my mother had so often played with me when a child, filled my heart with the most profound grief, and not even the consoling words of my friend, nor my philosophical speculations, could divert my mind from the dreadful contrast of the present with the past.

Allen Adare, this was the name of my friend, seeing me in such a state, and observing that my health was also becoming affected by my long meditations and inaction, resolved on taking me away from those sad remembrances of the past.

I, in my turn, was only too glad to quit England. Its damp climate, and its dull and heavy atmosphere

bad, I thought, a great deal to do with my illness. Could I but see the sun, breathe the fresh air of heaven, I thought I should soon recover and master my sadness.

Allen Adare and I started, therefore, on a journey that we meant at the time to last at least a year, at the end of which some new train of ideas, (such was his language,) would make me forget the shock that at present was only too fresh in my mind.

France was the first country we visited.

We spent at least a month in Paris, but this gay city, that I had so much admired when I saw it for the first time with my mother a few years previously, could not on this occasion dissipate the grief that consumed me by slow degrees. I wanted something new, new places and new people. It was the month of November, and the winter was just beginning, accompanied with all its miseries. We proceeded then south to Spain, and after visiting Madrid, and two or three other towns, we determined to spend the winter in Seville.

It was there I found the angel that was to console me at last, and that was to change the whole of my existence, restoring to my heart the happiness I had lost.

It seems so strange to talk of sorrow and grief, now that I am so happy ! but the remembrance of the sad past seems to make my present only the brighter.

Surely, surely, my friend was right, and my angel mother's watchful love had guided me to happiness again.

During my stay in the ancient capital of the Moors, I frequented the *tertulias* of the Countess de Fuen-carral; these kind of receptions, only known in Spain, brought me into frequent contact with several persons whom otherwise I should have utterly ignored.

Of those the one with whom I was most intimate was Doña Manuela Vargas, a lady of middle age, widow of a colonel in the Spanish army, who had died in the seven years' war against the Carlists. This lady was one of those few women who bring life and animation wherever they go; her wit was great, and her accomplishments, although she did not in the least make a show of them, were brilliant and numerous.

She offered me her house, according to the old Spanish fashion, and I lost no time in going to see her. Our friendship grew deeper every day, and the more I saw of her the more I liked her.

One day she told me that she had a daughter of nineteen in a convent near the town in Friana, and that she wanted her to come and live with her; for although she was very happy with the nuns, she was almost too old to be with them as a school-girl, and she would never consent to her taking the veil, and thus to lose her only child for ever.

I naturally approved of this decision, in spite of being a Roman Catholic. I did not at all like the idea of a young girl shutting herself up for ever in a convent. This seemed to me against all the laws of God and nature.

La Señora de Vargas and myself drove down that afternoon to see her daughter at the Carmelite convent, on the other side of the bright Guadalquivir.

We were shown first into a dark, half-Moorish, half-Gothic cell, and afterwards we passed into that mysterious room where the world ends and the seclusion of the monastery begins. The iron gate was opened by some unseen nun, and out of the darkness of the inner cell there came into the old Moorish apartment a perfect vision of light, the most beautiful creature that I had ever beheld.

It would be impossible to paint her beauty, for it was felt rather than seen. It would be impossible to describe those bright yet dreamy eyes, half hidden by long and dark lashes. Her hair was of the brightest gold, and as glittering. At that moment, illuminated by the rich full colours of the old painted windows, she looked like a *Conception* of Murillo's stepping out of her frame—a blonde *aux yeux noirs* such as we only see in the ideal pictures of the saints.

Her dress was the plain blue serge worn by the school-girls of the convent, and her head was covered by the whitest cap of French muslin, open at the back to allow two long and abundant golden tresses to escape, which nearly touched the ground.

Her dress, her figure, her face, the dark back-ground against which she stood, the surrounding pictures and coloured windows, the entire aspect of the apartment, made such an impression upon me, that when Doña Manuela said, "*Concepcion ven á mi corazon*," I really

thought that I beheld the Virgin herself coming from the interior of the holy church in her most beautiful and divine of impersonations, as we see her represented in the famous pictures of the *Conception* both at Madrid, at Seville, and at the Louvre.

The impression was so great, that I nearly fell at her feet, as if bending my knees before the mother of God.

But this was only for a moment, for the next found her in the arms of her mother; and there, warmed by the maternal heart, her cheeks bloomed with the freshest and most delicate of rose tints.

In this position, that aroused her earthly love and affections, she looked scarcely less lovely, perhaps more so to me, as she seemed more within my reach.

The happiness that the beautiful Concepcion showed when she saw her mother made me almost forget my sorrows; and the day that I passed by the side of this innocent and bright angel was the first happy one that I had experienced since the death of my mother.

She heard the news of her leaving the convent with tears in her eyes. "Don't you like the idea, Señorita, of leaving the college?" I asked her.

"Yes," she answered, in the rich language of Cervantes, "I like it because it is the will of my mother, but I am afraid I shall never be so happy in the world as I have been here amongst my flowers and my books, beloved by the nuns and by my companions."

There was so much innocence, so much feeling, in those few words, that my heart nearly burst when they were uttered. "Poor young girl!" I thought, "how many wrong notions those ignorant old women must have given her about the world and its inhabitants!"

When we were returning in the carriage from the convent, I could not restrain myself from giving expression to what my heart was so full of. "What a beautiful daughter you have, Doña Manuela," I said; "she is indeed a Concepcion, and a real conception!"

"We all call her Concha or Conchita," said the over-joyed mother, "we think it is shorter and prettier." Then, changing her bright smile for a more serious look, she continued, "I am sorry to be obliged to take her away from that convent, there she is happy, and she is well cared for by the sisters. Who knows, as she herself said, if she will be the same in the world? The countess has promised to present her to the Infanta, the Duchess de Montpensier, that will, perhaps, bring her into notice."

"Oh!" I answered impatiently, "I am sure she will make a great sensation in the palace of San Telmo. I am only afraid that you won't have her with you long after she comes out."

"Do you think so, Lord Carlton? I fear, on the contrary, that she will pass unnoticed, and that she will at last have to return as a nun to the convent that now she quits as a girl. You see we are poor, and we have no name. She is beautiful, I can not

deny that, but what is the use of beauty? She is too natural, too innocent, too retiring to attract the attention of the world."

A week after, a great ball took place in the palace of the Countess de Fuencarral, to celebrate the coming out of Concha Vargas.

I had the pleasure of dancing with her, as a foreigner, her first valse, and if I had thought her beautiful in the dark cell of the monastery, when dressed as a school girl, how splendid and dazzling did I not think her now, enveloped in clouds of white tulle, and in a brilliantly lighted room!

From that instant the young men of Seville almost abandoned the former belles, and dedicated all their attentions to the new beauty that had appeared amongst them, for, even in the luxurious saloons of the ancient capital of Andalusia, so proverbial for the witching beauty and loveliness of its dark eyed daughters, Conchita was the most beautiful, the most lovely, the most attractive of them all.

Her pearly white skin, and the profusion of golden tresses that fell over her shoulders, made, I think, a great impression, contrasting with the dark haired and proud Spanish beauties.

I observed her during all the rest of the season, and I saw, with great pleasure to myself, though I could not then tell why, that she received the courtesy and flattery of the aristocratic youths of Seville with the greatest indifference.

From the night of that first ball I managed to

see her every day, sometimes I met her with her mother in the cloisters of the cathedral, sometimes I saw her in the saloons of the ducal palace of the Montpensiers or in the gardens of the Moorish Alcazar; frequently I met her at friends' houses. She attracted me in a manner most inexplicable to me, but that always compelled me to follow her. At first it was her face that seemed to fascinate me, but soon I found that her soul had even greater power over my heart.

Her conversation was so agreeable, so full of sentiment, so interesting. She alone had been able to make me forget my great loss, for which I was still in the deepest mourning. Life had been as a blank to me before I had met her, but now she filled the empty space that another love had so recently left in my heart, for, as La Rochefoucauld said,—“In the human heart there is a perpetual generation of passions, so that the ruin of one is almost always the foundation of another.”

When I compared her with the other young ladies of my acquaintance, her charms seemed to grow greater and greater. What a difference between her and the English girls that are either so cold or so fast, and all, more or less, modelled after one pattern, or the Spanish beauties, so proud, so passionate, so jealous of their beauty. In her, everything was natural, sympathetic, pure.

The day that I ventured to declare my love, I thought I should have died, fearing she would answer

I.

B

me that she loved another. But it was not so, and I soon found that she loved me as much as I loved her.

I asked her hand of her mother, and la Señora de Vargas answered me with tears in her eyes, that she only wanted to insure the happiness of her daughter, and that if she loved me, our union would be blessed by her with all her heart.

On the morrow our engagement was in everybody's mouth. With what pride did I not receive the congratulations and good wishes of my friends!

We decided that Madame Vargas and Conchita should come with me to England in order to accustom her to the new country, and to the new society in which she was to live and move in the future, and so as not to separate her all at once from her mother.

We left Seville early in April *en route* for London. Allen Adare accompanied us as far as Paris, where he left us on his way to Baden.

I shall always remember with pleasure my stay in Spain. I had arrived there the most miserable of men, and lo! I returned from thence the happiest of lovers.

Such are the changes of life. One day the sun may shine upon our sorrows, and the next it may dawn upon our happiness, everything in this world is so uncertain. But we should not complain, for this very uncertainty is, perhaps, its greatest charm.

On the second of July took place the ceremony that united our destinies for ever. "*Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.*"

That same afternoon we left London by the express train for Scotland with the intention of spending there our *honeymoon*.

This trip, that will always be associated in my heart with the dearest remembrances of my life, is the subject of this book. It may seem strange to begin a book with a marriage ceremony, but how often does not man's life in reality begin with one?

In this book I will try to paint some of the happiest hours of my life.

Let us begin therefore

"The Honeymoon."

CHAPTER II.

GLASGOW.

GLASGOW is the second capital of Scotland, and its mercantile metropolis. The town is situated in Lanarkshire, on the banks of the Clyde, in that place where its waters become navigable. The hills of Campsie and Kilpatrick form a wall that protects the city on the north and on the east. Its climate is temperate, on account of its vicinity to the sea and the mountains that surround it. This city was founded in the year 560 by St Mungo, its patron saint.

Our journey from London to Scotland had been made in about twelve hours, and at nine in the morning of the 3d of July we arrived in Glasgow.

The first impression that this great city produces upon the stranger who arrives there for the first time is in reality not a very agreeable one. Some time before entering the town itself, the train passes through a country almost uncultivated, and, to a great extent, bare and dirty, where nothing meets the eye but an innumerable succession of manufactories, that seem to have been placed there to announce to the stranger the great manufacturing riches of the

town to which he is bound. These fabrics are generally built of bricks that the smoke and damp soon render black. If we look before us towards the point of attraction to which we are going with such velocity, we can only see a dark mass that extends for several miles on the horizon, crowned with thousands of tall chimnies that seem to rise from the darkness below to the pure air and bright atmosphere of the skies. Such is the first impression that this great city made upon our minds when seen from the railway.

The train, after traversing the suburbs and the great manufactories, enters into a tunnel, at the other side of which is the station, that, like all the great stations, is a labyrinth of trains, carriages, and omnibuses.

I must say that all this bustle and fuss did not in the least please Concha, who expected to find the Scotland very different that I had painted to her as so poetical and so picturesque. She could not but compare this new Babylon with that other metropolis even more busy and over-populated that we had just quitted.

The hotel at which we intended stopping was situated near the station, and it even had a door that opened into it; so leaving my valet in charge of the luggage, I gave my arm to my youthful wife and went into the hotel.

This was full, but as I had fortunately written for rooms some days before, no sooner had they learnt our

names than they conducted us to the little sitting-room they had prepared for us, where a quarter of an hour afterwards we breakfasted together, Conchita and I, as if we had been husband and wife for years !

In the afternoon we went out to see the Cathedral. This we found to be a beautiful old Gothic church, but not of that elegant and elaborate Gothic style that we admire so much in the cathedrals of Milan and Burgos, but of the gloomy, massive, and cold architectural style of the north.

The exterior is sombre and imposing. A tower of some height rises from its centre, and the whole of the church is surrounded by a graveyard which used to be the burying-place of the ancient inhabitants of the diocese. The site that this old minster occupies adds a great deal to its dull and melancholy aspect. On one side lies the town, but, unfortunately, the part of it that one sees is the poorest and oldest, and is more suggestive of decay and misery than of poetry and architectural beauty.

On the other side rises the Necropolis, a hill of rather small dimensions, that to-day serves the purpose of cemetery. This burial ground presents a striking and solemn aspect when viewed from the steps of the old cathedral. On the highest part, that rises about 250 feet from the level ground, is situated the monument of John Knox. This column of granite, straight and solemn, which seems to pierce the very skies without the least effort, never bending its proud top, and looking grimly all the while down

upon the church below, struck me as the most appropriate emblem of the great reformer's soul.

We went into the cathedral by a side door that admitted us at once into the great nave. The interior of this church is cold and dull, and the obscurity and silence that prevail produce a disagreeable sensation. The nave was at the time full of tourists, some with hats on their heads and hands in their pockets, others looking at the ceiling with their opera glasses, none seeming in the least to feel that they were in a church.

The effect that a Protestant temple produces on the mind is always contrary to that caused by a Catholic structure,—that of solitude and sadness. Conchita, I suppose, felt this too, for she leant on my arm and came as close to my heart as possible. I knew that this lonely and damp building displeased her, and that her vivid imagination refused this cold and monotonous form of adoration, for the serious and dark architecture of the Scotch churches does not touch the human heart.

"What a difference there is between this and the Catholic churches!" she exclaimed. "Here they make religion the dullest and saddest part of man's life, when it should be, on the contrary, the happiest and most joyful act of our whole lives; for in what is there so much pleasure as in talking with one's own Father—with one's own God? The consequence is, that real devotion is unknown in this country; it cannot exist; their mode of adoration cannot inspire

them with any holy passion ; it cannot light in their hearts any sacred fire ; their religion is as cold as these bare and dull stones that decorate their churches. See there, those men with their hats on their heads, do you think that if they felt themselves in a really holy place, they would not take them off? I defy anybody to go into the Cathedral of Seville without feeling moved by something holy, by something that tells him that he is in the presence of his Creator and Judge."

"You are right, Conchita mia," I answered her, "the Scotch form of worship is as cold and dull as their country ; but this arises only from their character. That which for us is the object of greatest joy, is for them the most serious and solemn act of their lives."

Concha looked at me for a few seconds, and then she said in the full and rich language of Cervantes, "The Catholic church is the church of the heart, the other churches are only churches of the mind, this is their greatest difference. The Church of God appeals to the conscience, to the senses, and to the imagination. The Protestant Church appeals only to the human understanding, that, in most cases, is but too indifferent or mistaken. The one is based on faith, the other on——"

"Reason," I suggested.

"Well," she continued, "perhaps, but on human reason, which may be true or mistaken. In the one, you are sure to be right, in the other who can tell?"

"The Church of Scotland," I said, "is admirably adapted to their physical temperament; it would no more do for the Latin races than the religion of the latter would do for the Scotch, and yet they had the same faith not so very long ago, but I am sure that even then a great difference must have existed between the two: difference that must have found its excuse in the distance it was from Rome, and in the difficulties of communication which, at that time, were so great, and which have only lately, comparatively speaking, been removed."

"And they call that Religion!"

"Yes, my darling; and it is as true a religion to them as yours is to you, or the Koran is to the Arabs. They who seem so cold and passive to you, would not hesitate in condemning your views, which they would even call atheistic if they did not agree with their own. They consider everything a sacrilege that would render their worship pleasanter and easier, and that would soften and make less terrible their idea of God."

Conchita gave a sigh and murmured a prayer; "I pity them," she said, and moving on again, we passed into the inner church.

In this second church is placed the altar, or rather the communion table, that is just a plain wooden table, and the choir with the organ. In this place, used to be, in ancient times, the high altar of the cathedral, radiant with lights, gold and jewels, before which so many pilgrims and palmers must have knelt. Behind

the altar is the chapel, in former days consecrated to the Holy Virgin, and that has retained, to this day, the name of Lady Chapel. In this is situated the little staircase conducting to a subterranean church ; that used to be the old baronial crypt; and that after the reformation was called the Laigh Kirk; this melancholy and obscure colonnade was the scene of Rob Roy's mysterious warning to Francis Osbaldistone. Sir Walter Scott described it thus :—"Conceive an extensive range of low-browed, dark, and twilight vaults, such as are used for sepulchres in other countries, and had long been dedicated to the same purpose in this ; a portion of which was furnished with pews, and used as a church. The part of the vaults thus occupied, though capable of containing a congregation of many hundreds, bore a small proportion to the darker and more extensive caverns which yawned around what may be termed the inhabited space. In those waste regions of oblivion, dusky banners and tattered escutcheons indicated the graves of those who were once, doubtless, 'Princes of Israel.' Inscriptions which could only be read by the pains-taking antiquary, in language as obsolete as the act of devotional charity which they implored, invited the passers-by to pray for the souls of those whose bodies rested beneath."

This crypt is to-day deserted ; its aspect is perhaps therefore even more grim and mysterious than at the time of Sir Walter Scott's description. It is impossible to go through it without experiencing an inexpressible

feeling of sadness and horror creep over one ; there is an atmosphere of death in those funeral regions, where everything seems to remind us of the grave, and where every stone bears upon its face the mark of the remains of a being that cannot but remind us of the end of our short earthly career.

We went the round of those arches in as short a time as we could, and climbing up the worn-out steps, we found ourselves again in the inner church.

The Gothic churches exercise a power over the imagination that the Greek and Græco-Roman temples in vain have tried to equal. It is but too true that the Popes have employed, in building modern churches, the riches that the devotion inspired by the Gothic churches had given them. I observed this to Concha, and I added, "You must allow that the Gothic style of architecture is the true Christian style, and that, after all, the Roman and modern churches always put one in mind of the pagan temples."

Conchita, seating herself upon one of the benches of the choir, while I took my place by her side, said, "There is nothing so beautiful and that so much attracts our soul, and leads it towards prayer, as those old abbeys in which all is mystic and holy, lighted by the innumerable torches that burn constantly before the holy images that we worship, and that represent our earthly lives gradually burning in a flame of love and prayer that rises towards God in heaven. And those painted glass windows of our forefathers, through which the sun shone upon them, as the light of God

shone upon their minds through the teachings of the saints and martyrs painted upon them. Oh, such a church would be a fitting home for God, not such a Gothic anachronism as this. Here are the niches, but where are the saints? Who has substituted for the high altar, splendidly laden with shrines and reliquaries, this plain wood table, on which no longer is placed the real body of our Lord? This is indeed a Gothic church, but one that has long since been abandoned by the Deity and by His worshippers, and in which only the shadows of the past are visible."

"It is true, Conchita mia, this church seems more adapted to the dead that lie beneath its vaults, than for the living, who stare in mute astonishment at the relics of a faith that is not their own. One sees clearly that it was not built for the worship of her present attendants. Even now there is a service performed in it every Sunday, but it has no relation to the splendid ceremonies once performed beneath those arches, and for which it had been destined by its founders. The church is the same, but the religion has changed. Thus everything belonging to our spirit changes. All that is *immortal* must suffer certain changes, without which its progress would be impossible, for only what is purely material, only what time destroys and man can pull down, remains till the end in its primitive state. How different is the man of the nineteenth century compared with that man who built this church as a place in which to worship his God!

Each race has its civilisation and its religion, that

when it passes away, leaves traces of its existence upon the planet, for nothing is ever lost in the admirable economy of time.

Observe the Pyramids that were built thousands of years ago in order to commemorate the lives of men whose religion is totally ignored by us to-day, and yet there we have their temples and their altars just as they left them.

Each race leaves behind it the foot-prints of its civilisation, and by those we are able to arrive at the state of their progress. They are the only proofs that time has consented to leave us in its destructive and yet creative march through the centuries.

In a few centuries more perhaps—who knows?—another generation, more advanced and more enlightened, may contemplate these Christian churches, when even the nature of the divine Master that taught men the religion that inspired them to build them, may be very differently understood. For—

“ God is God from the creation ;
 Truth alone is man's salvation.
 But the God that *now* we worship,
 Soon shall be our God no more ;
 For the soul in its unfolding,
 Evermore its thought re-moulding,
 Learns more truly in its progress
 How to love and to adore.”

“ Thus you see that the truth of the present is but the truth of the
 past,
 But each phase is greater, and grander, and mightier than the
 last ;
 That the past is ever prophetic of that which is yet to be,
 And that God reveals His glory by slow and distinct degree.”

Conchita sighed, and a tear fell upon my hand. "I am sorry, dear Walter," she said, "that you should speak so lightly of the sublime religion to which it is our happiness to belong. Jesus established His doctrine for all eternity, and St Peter built His church, that will last as long as the world. If the pagan religions of antiquity have disappeared, and have been forgotten, it is because they were idolatrous, because they were false. But Christianity has been established by God himself, and therefore it must be an eternal religion."

"I do not want to argue with you, *amor mio*, if the ancient religions that you call idolatrous, were false or not, although I doubt very much that God in his justice would have allowed false doctrines to be preached and thought among his children, and, above all, that they should attain such a degree of success that Christianity itself has not yet, in nineteen centuries, been able to reach, for, without exaggeration, it is necessary that you should know that the Budhists, whom you, of course, believe to be all infidels, condemned to hell, number even to-day in their decline nearly four hundred millions—a cypher which the disciples of Christ are very far from reaching—and that the Brahmists, who profess, perhaps, the oldest existing religion in the world, count amongst their followers more than all the Catholics who acknowledge the Pope as sovereign pontiff put together; but one thing I swear to you, and that is, that if I could believe God to be capable of allowing

false doctrines to have such a success, and of sending all men who do not chance to hear of Christianity to hell, I would doubt of his justice, and even of his wisdom."

"Do you then believe, Walter, that the Budhists are right in believing in Brahm and Budha, and in denying Christ?"

"No, certainly not," I said, "but they do what they have been taught to do, the same as you believe in what the nuns have told you; they act according to their conscience, and, therefore, according to God's laws. If they worship Brahm it is because they know no better, or rather because they are not sufficiently advanced to be able to comprehend a more philosophical doctrine—they believe in Budha because their parents and masters believed before them in him, but, in spite of this, I am sure they will not be condemned for following the faith of their forefathers. Christians are very easily led to condemn the Indians and Hindoos, because they do not give up their faith at once, and adopt theirs, but they are very long before they can be got to change the least important of their ideas. Every man must act so as to please himself, according to his best knowledge, and if his conduct and belief are such as please his better nature, you may be sure that they are acceptable to his Creator in heaven; it is not man's fault that God did not make him an angel, and did not place him in heaven."

"God is just," she said, "but cannot allow a false

religion to take the place of the only true one. Your ideas may be very philosophical, but they are not Catholic. What would the nuns at Seville say if they could hear you? Surely they would think I had married Lucifer himself. Walter! Walter!" exclaimed the beautiful girl, her eyes full of tears, "if I did not love you so much I think I should hate you!"

I took her burning hand in mine, and said gently to her while I took her out of the church,—“Come, queridita Concha, those ideas that the nuns have given you are quite opposed to my philosophical and liberal spirit, but I will respect them as thine own. I do not want to contradict you to-day; only yesterday we were married, and what no man must put asunder, I am afraid discussion and differences of opinion will, if I do not take care. Come, let us go out of this church—the fresh air will do you good.”

“Oh Walter, is it possible that you want to deny the church that has made us man and wife? Do you want to deny the power of that divine religion that has given me the power of being able to call you mine?”

There was so much innocence, so much love, and so much sadness in those words pronounced by the mouth of one so much loved, that I could not but admire the purity of her faith, although I could not think with her.

I had faith, too, but I wanted belief

We had just emerged from the cathedral, and the fresh air of the evening soon dissipated the black cloud that had veiled our happiness for a moment. We crossed the Bridge of Sighs and we entered the Necropolis. We walked through this city of the dead, arm in arm, but in utter silence. Our minds were too full of thought to speak, the recent conversation that Conchita had sustained with such force and resolution seemed to hang over us still, and when at last we arrived at the highest part of this hill, she let herself fall exhausted upon the pedestal of John Knox's monument. I could not but shudder at seeing the Catholic girl at the feet of the most zealous of the enemies of Rome.

CHAPTER III.

RELIGIOUS SCRUPLES.

THIS conversation, the first I had had with my youthful bride on religious subjects, made me extremely unhappy, for by it I saw clearly that Conchita's mind, so sweet and yielding in all other respects, refused, with the greatest determination, to accept the ideas which I had at that time, concerning this the most important of all earthly subjects.

This filled me with sorrow, as I have just said, for the reason that *I* also was inflexible in those days, having lately thought so much and so earnestly on the subject, that it seemed at last to form part of my very being.

Although the son of a Catholic family, bigoted and intolerant as they are only to be found in Protestant countries, where persecutions and continual religious discussions seem to impose upon them the duty of upholding the doctrines peculiar to their religion in the firmest and most inflexible spirit, my mind would not give its assent to believe in some of the mysterious and supernatural teachings of the Church of Rome as they were then explained to me.

In my earliest youth, all the care and affectionate

zeal of my parents to teach me their belief had only found in me an indifference that pained them more than I could then imagine. Like most children, during the first years of my life I occupied myself very little about religion; and I listened to the sermons of my elders and of the priests without lending much attention to them. At the age of twelve I was sent to a Catholic college in the north of England; and, before I left it, I began to use my reason in judging of the religion in which all who surrounded me seemed to have such blind faith.

We went to mass every morning before breakfast; and every afternoon we were present at vespers and benediction. Moreover, a day was not allowed to pass without a sermon or oration, the subject of which was but too often that of condemning the Protestant doctrines that, in spite of them, formed the religion of our mother-country, and impressing upon the students' hearts the truth of God's one only faith as taught in the Catholic Church.

This persistence could not but attract my attention; and I began to think that if the Catholic religion was the only true one, as they said, what was the use of preaching so much against the other faiths, and ridiculing their sectarians?

This idea soon took possession of my mind, and, as I was extremely impressionable, it soon took deep root in my heart. All my thoughts were directed from that moment to the search for proofs of the religion of my ancestors, only one scruple deterred

me, and that was the thought, whether I was quite justified in my desires to penetrate the mysteries that my forefathers, and my teachers, had so religiously respected and believed.

But, unfortunately, the peculiar bent of my mind, and my anxiety to discover the truth, made me but too soon overcome this difficulty, and I did not spare any pains to arrive at my object.

With this purpose, I began to read all the books that came in my way upon religious questions. I took particular interest in the history of the English Reformation, and in the causes that originated it. As I read, my mind naturally became more and more enlightened; and the more I read about this, the more I sympathised with the cause of the Reformers.

Soon I came to the conclusion that the Protestants were not wholly wrong after all, although I could not quite agree with their doctrines. But in spite of this objection, I thought them decidedly more liberal, and above all, more reasonable than their persecutors. This very persecution and constant opposition to their new ideas served to increase my growing aversion to the creed of the Papists.

If the Bible be really the word of God, I said to myself, why should it not be read and studied by all? How dare man forbid the words of the Deity from sounding all over the world? And at that time not all the Catholic theology could have answered this to my satisfaction.

I had at my command the whole of the college

library, and one day I determined to read the Bible for myself in plain English, and to see with my own eyes the truth of the word that had been the cause of so many disputes and so much bloodshed. But in so doing I not only received a satisfactory reason why this book should not be generally read, but also a great disappointment. The old Testament seemed to me to be cruel, barbarous, and even irrational and inhuman in its teachings. The New certainly seemed to me to be better adapted to our present state of civilisation, but, I had read just before Newton's great work and *La Mécanique Céleste* of *La Place*, and how childish and simple the Mosaic account of the creation seemed to me after these sublime truths! And yet they say it is the *word of God*,—can this be true? Can God do such mighty works, I said to myself, and speak of them in such a manner? It never occurred to me then, that at the time when this revelation was given, the human race was but comparatively young upon the earth, and that the truth, the grand mighty truth, would have been lost upon them, for as St Paul remarks, "'Tis a folly to give strong meat unto babes." But in those days I did not think of all this.

My mind was in this unsettled state when I was taken away from the school and sent to the University of Oxford.

There I remained for two years, during which I ended by being convinced of the many discrepancies in the doctrines of the Church of Rome.

Not so much in the principal doctrines upon which our faith is based, as in those lesser dogmas that the Church insists in teaching with the articles of the creed.

I believed and acknowledged the truth of the doctrine of the one God, almighty, eternal, perfect, creator of all things. I believed, likewise, in the duty of loving this God above all things, and of obeying His laws; also in the necessity of loving our neighbour as ourselves; and I believed in the punishments and rewards of a future state. But I could not bring myself to believe in a God who sends His children to hell and for ever. I believed in the immortality of the soul, and therefore in a future state of existence, dependant upon the use we make of this, but necessarily of a more spiritual and fully developed condition.

"They tell us," I said to myself, "that we should love our enemies and forgive them until seventy times seven. Ought we not, therefore, to suppose that God loves *His* enemies? And yet the fathers of the Church tell us plainly that if we do not love God, we shall go to hell for ever, for God either *cannot*, or will not, save those that do not love Him. But even if He were to forgive them, and repay their hatred with a love that would be really divine, would He punish them more than would be for their good? And can an eternal punishment be good for anyone?"

"This we see plainly cannot be the case. An eternal punishment would be a useless punishment,

because the penitence that it would excite could not be carried out, and because the poor penitent could not come again upon the earth to correct the faults of his past existence. An eternal punishment would therefore be an utterly useless chastisement, and God could not establish anything useless. This doctrine may be a dogma of any church which teaches also that we shall have to suffer for an eternity if we do not believe in it; but can this Church, that professes to be the Church of truth, teach this, and at the same time insist in the doctrine of the supreme justice and mercy of God?"

I accepted the latter, and would not therefore believe in the truth of the former. I believed God to be infinitely better than the best of men, and I knew well that when man punishes, it is with the view of reforming the offender and teaching him a better course, whereas the punishment inflicted by the God of the churches, having for its end not the benefit, not the reformation, but the unceasing and eternal punishment of the sinner, can proceed only from the bitterest feelings of revenge, worthy only of the most malignant fiend, and therefore not of *my* God.

If God only loves those that are good, I said to myself, that is to say, those who love Him and do His will, he is in no way better than man. For we also love those that are good to us and believe in our word. But if we believe God to be perfect, we must also believe that He loves all His sons alike, good and

bad. Theologians tell us that we do wrong when we return evil for evil. Is it possible that God is right when He sends those He does not like to perdition and damnation? God, according to them, must be worse than the most wicked of men, for no man who had not the heart of a tiger could punish a son of his *for ever*; a human heart would burst before that, and yet God, who is divine, must do it if hell exists.

I have heard some priests say that God in his supreme knowledge knows the destiny of each of his sons, that is to say, that when he creates them, he destines them for heaven or for hell, as it strikes his fancy, or at least, in most cases, to suffer a long and painful ordeal in purgatory, before they have committed even the smallest fault. They also have told me; and this I believe is an article of our faith, that the children who die before they have been baptised, go to *limbo*, as if it were their fault to die so young, and God must have known, when he made them, that they would die without receiving the consecrated water. Now as by far the greater number of men die without being baptised, it follows that limbo must be a much larger place than heaven, purgatory, and hell put together.

Some even tell us that the wicked are not sons of God but of the devil; but if such be the case, why do they tell them to pray, saying, '*Our Father, forgive us our sins.*' But, is not God the father of all? Has He not made us? and if we be all His children, is it possible that He can hate us even though we prove to

be wicked? If God hate the sinner, would the sinner be wrong in hating God? Surely not. God cannot expect us to be better towards Him than He is toward us.

If we had enough power, should we not save the whole human race? No good man can be wicked enough to wish His enemies to suffer for ever; His wrath would be forgotten in time, and He would then forgive. This would be according to the laws of the human heart, planted therein by the Divine power. Can that Divine power contradict itself?

And yet, we can only judge the Deity according to our human ideas of right and wrong, we can only arrive at a precise knowledge of God's nature by studying His works, and by a knowledge of the laws that govern the universe. According, therefore, to man's standard of goodness and justice, God should punish the sins of His children to their full extent but no more; so as man cannot commit an eternal sin, an eternal punishment would be unjust and out of place; the sin of a moment, however inexcusable, cannot merit an eternal punishment. And even supposing the man to sin during his whole life, what is even that compared to eternity? An instant is as long a space of eternity as fifty years, or even a hundred, for in eternity there is no time.

Supposing, therefore, that God, after a certain adequate chastisement, pardon the sinner, forgive him, and that one day at last we shall all meet together in heaven; if such is the case, what was the use of being

saved by Jesus of Nazareth, as taught in the creeds of Catholic and Protestant churches? If God the Father saves everybody, what was the use of God the Son's coming to the world and suffering for our sakes?

This is, nevertheless, the fundamental doctrine upon which Christianity is based, unjust and inhuman as it may seem, for if God be indeed better than man (and being his maker, He ought to be superior to him in everything) He should not punish him more than it would be good for him, and at least He should make all, as they have a right to be, happy for evermore, and this of His own accord, for a father should not wait for somebody else to come and buy the freedom of his sons, he ought to give it to them of his own free will.

The church even tells us that there is only salvation through Jesus, as the author of the Acts of the Apostles says, '*there is only salvation in Him*' (iv. 12), and Christ himself said, according to St John, (xiv. 6), '*No man cometh to the Father excepting through me.*' This is a dogma of the church, and I suppose I am wrong in discussing it, but its truth, and at all events its justice, seem to me to be doubtful. If those words were ever said, is it not more probable that they have been badly understood? Christ could not mean such an unjust law to be one of the great and admirable laws established by the universal Father.

Thus ran my thoughts, I tried to defend the

doctrines of my church, to prove them by reasoning and investigation, by comparing them with the laws that we know to be true, and by the cases that I had before my eyes, but instead of proving their truth, I invariably arrived at the conclusion that they were all wrong and unworthy of God. It was impossible; I could form, to myself, too perfect and sublime an idea of the nature of the Deity, and the fact is that the more I studied His works, the greater He appeared to me, and that the more I read His word, the more it seemed to contradict His greatness.

Sometimes my thoughts ran in another direction, and I used to say to myself, We are told that we should be thankful for our existence, and that this obligation is general and extends to all men. And yet, was not God very unjust when He made some of us rich and powerful, and others poor, a few wise and happy, and the greater part ignorant and miserable. Life cannot be a blessing for those who are not happy, and as the greater part are far from being so, life seems to me to be anything but a thing one should be thankful for. It may be true that we must all go *through the mill*, but some seem to me to go through it with perfect ease and without the least trouble, while by far the greater part pass their whole lives hoping for something which they never get; for them, life cannot be said to be a blessing.

This the Church tries to make us forget, by telling us that this is not the true life, and that all we wish for here, we shall get on the other side of the

grave, if we obey her commands and follow her rules. But she does not explain the why, nor the wherefore. And if we do not obey her precepts, if we happen never to have heard of them, then we go to hell, to suffer for ever for the hardships of this life, and for our ignorance or disobedience of one of the articles of the Church. Under those circumstances it seems to me that it is almost impossible to be thankful to God for such an existence, that depends so little upon His mercy, or even upon His justice.

Not that I disbelieve in a future life. I do believe most assuredly in one, but I cannot bring myself to think that this can be one of eternal suffering and of everlasting sorrow, even for the worst of sinners.

This life is so short, so very short, so imperfect, the world is so frivolous and full of temptations, and we are so weak and so ignorant of our own good, that it cannot be our fault if we sin. The only sin can be ignorance—ignorance of our future state, and of the things most conducive to make that future a happy and a holy one. What blasphemy it would seem against the justice of any being to charge him with entertaining infinite wrath against creatures to whom he has given existence, because they are ignorant, he not having given them the knowledge, or the impulse, or disposition, or power to acquire the knowledge of the best way in which they can use the things provided for them. Yet this is what they tell me to believe in with respect to God. It seems to me that if we

sin, it is God alone who is to blame, according to this doctrine.

These thoughts may seem irreligious, and yet they were dictated to me at the time by my great faith in the love, justice, and mercy of God, and by my great and intense desire to investigate the truth of my faith. To this it may be objected, it is true, that God can make men as He likes, and that He can give them good or bad qualities as He chooses. This may be true, but the God that made the human heart would seem to me to be lowering Himself by putting such different and contradictory sentiments in His different children, and if this were true, ought we, the poor tools of his power and caprice, to suffer for this unjust proceeding? It seems to me that there must be a law, of which we are still ignorant, by which the immense difference that undoubtedly exists between the mental capacity of one man and another, and the position in which each of them is placed, is explained, and by which the justice of the Creator in so making and placing them is vindicated and established without even the shadow of a doubt.

But as I have before remarked, men will rather make the Creator appear unjust and unwise than declare themselves ignorant of the laws which they are not even yet sufficiently advanced to be able to comprehend.

In this I have a firm conviction; otherwise, if this life and the prospects of our future existence and welfare were such as the Church tells us, God would

be either unjust, unmerciful, unkind, unwise, or powerless.

Once it passed through my mind that the secret of all was, that God had not the power that we generally ascribe to Him, and that after making man as good as He could, He found Himself baffled, as it were, by His own creation, that He would gladly save the whole race if He could, but that it was out of His power to do so, and that this salvation must depend upon the man himself.

Once I entertained this idea, once only, and then but for a moment, for the next I looked at the radiant face of the sun, and I was obliged to acknowledge that the Being who had made that orbit of light and of life must at the same time be all-powerful and all-merciful.

Some one suggested to me that God having made man free, could not control his free-will, and could not be responsible for his conduct.

To this I answered, "You forget that man, being placed under certain conditions, is obliged to accommodate his conduct to those conditions. When man first comes into the world he is but a weak, ignorant, and innocent child, he can therefore only know what is taught him by his parents and masters, and if they are wicked, and teach him their ways, how can he help doing like them? The first impressions are never lost or forgotten, and bad example is the worst of temptations. If He had placed all men under the same disadvantages, and given them all the

same temptations, I should be able to understand His intentions, however unjust those may seem, but as some have more temptations than others, it is not extraordinary that some sin more than others. This confirms my belief in the existence of a law that can account for those differences of position and of character. But according to you, God requires of them all an obedience which, by your deification of Christ, you admit could not be rendered by mere man, however perfect, however free from temptation. He condemns them therefore to unspeakable tortures and torments for ever more. That is, having made them finite and imperfect, He condemns them for not being perfect and infinite like Himself, and would only be propitiated in their favour by the blood and agony of the only innocent one, the only one who had never offended Him in His life, His Son. So that, after all, men have nothing to do with their own salvation. They must, in order to be saved, independently of being good, receive the holy waters of baptism to save them from Adam's never forgotten sin, and believe in Christ, besides going to confession once a month, and paying no end of money to the Church. All this and a great deal more is required in order to be perfect, and I must say in truth, it has nothing to do with what we in the world would consider good and praiseworthy. A savage may be good, but he can never enter heaven, because he has never been baptized, and has never even heard of Christ. However good we may be, however constantly we may resist temptation,

we cannot be saved unless we receive absolution for our few sins from some priest of Rome. But as by far the greater part of men die without receiving absolution from Rome, God cannot pardon them, and they must all go to hell. This seems to me blasphemous, this is what I protest against. This unjust doctrine that takes away from men all the power they have to gain their own salvation. And yet it is the fundamental dogma of my own church, the church of my fathers."

Another of the doctrines that so much displeased me, and that I found in all the books of the church, was that of the personality of the Devil, the Spirit of Evil, Satan, from whom the church derives so much utility, frightening men with him in order to make them obey her commands.

I could not but ask myself, "Does such a being really exist?

If he exists, who made him? God, for He is the only creator we know of. But is it probable that God would make a being with as great a power as Himself? —(for the power that is generally attributed to the devil is almost unlimited; it seems he can tempt men even against the wish of God). But if the devil has so great a power over humanity, why do they tell us that God is All-mighty?

How could God, who is so good, create a being so wicked?

God could not, therefore, have made the devil, for

where would then be his justice, his wisdom, and his knowledge?

And yet if God did not make the devil he must have made himself. How could this be? I am at a loss to say, but at all events God cannot be the only creator if such is the case.

There is a tradition that tells us that the devil was in the beginning an angel, Luzbel, if I remember right, whose overweening pride induced him to endeavour to make himself a God, but who only succeeded in making himself a devil; but if this fable was not a mere invention, and did in reality take place, God must have allowed him to become such, for otherwise it would seem as if something could take place against God's will, and we are told he is omnipotent. Moreover, as a sin presupposes a temptation, whatever this may be, *what* or *who* tempted this holy angel, so that he sinned? In this case it is impossible to attribute the cause to the devil, so we are led to suppose that even in heaven there are temptations, that sin and strife can enter even there, where love and peace are supposed to reign, and that even the angels of the Lord *are not perfect*.

If an angel sinned, I said to myself, without there being a devil to tempt him, can we not also sin without a devil being in the case? The existence of such a being is, therefore, not necessarily to be inferred from the evil there is upon earth, for evil must have existed in heaven even before an angel became 'a devil.'

The Bible tells us that in heaven all are holy—‘only those that are perfect can see the kingdom of God,’ but this cannot be true if an angel could be there who was so wicked as to prove the devil himself.

Even admitting the devil to be a rebellious angel that fell, he was not less an angel for all that, and he sinned, so that Adam’s sin loses its originality.”

That sin committed, God knows when, by our great forefather Adam, has always struck me as a dogma of the most extraordinary nature. It seemed to me so cruel and so unlike God’s wisdom and justice to make the whole race suffer for the sin of one man, of whom, moreover, nobody knows when or where he lived, since the discoveries of science have proved man to have been on the earth for long ages previous to the Mosaic calculations.

Why should we suffer, I often thought, for the sins of another man? But the more deeply I went into this doctrine the more and more I doubted its truth. “Would it be more improper and ridiculous to attribute my sins to Adam than his to me?” I exclaimed. “If God loved Adam and was at the same time almighty, why did He allow the devil to tempt him? If He could not prevent it, it must have been either because He did not love him or because He wanted the power to do so.” So, either one way or the other, it seemed to me to be a most transparent contradiction of God’s qualities.

Adam sinned, but why did he sin? Surely

because, in his weakness, he could not resist the temptations that surrounded him. So that it was not his fault if God had made him so imperfect and so weak that he fell at the very first temptation. God's crowning work! Man, was not, therefore, as good and perfect as He meant him to be, and when, after making man, "He saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good," (Gen. i. 31.) He little expected that the very first thing that this man of His own making, made even after His own image (Gen. i. 26) would do, would be to sin against His laws. "And it repented the Lord that He had made man on earth, and it grieved Him at His heart." (Gen. vi. 6.) Yet God must have known this, and we must, on the other hand, remember that Adam did not know right from wrong, until after eating the forbidden fruit, so that the fault still lies with God himself.

If Adam sinned without an *hereditary sin*, why should we suppose that our sins proceed from that *original sin*, as the church calls it. It seems to me too unjust of God to make us suffer for the sins of the progenitor of the race. Can it be possible that God loves us when He treats us in such a way? But the Bible itself tells us plainly that God himself tempts His own children, for do we not say daily, 'Lead us not into temptation,' as Christ recommended us to pray? (Matt. vi. 13). And did not 'the Lord say unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth

God and escheweth evil. And still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movest me against him, to destroy him without cause.' (Job ii. 3). And again, 'the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created' (Gen. vi. 7). And, moreover, did not the Lord tempt Abraham? for the Bible tells us that 'it came to pass, after these things, that God did tempt Abraham' (Gen. xxii. 1).

This is beyond doubt. The Word of God cannot be mistaken, although He once 'greatly deceived this people' (Jer. iv. 10), and 'sent them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie' (2 Thess. ii. 11). But what can we expect from a God of whom we read in His own infallible Word, 'Now, therefore, behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all those thy prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee' (1 Kings xxii. 23); 'Then God sent an evil spirit' (Judges ix. 23); 'And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet' (Ezek. xix. 9); 'For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation' (Ex. xx. 5); 'Out of the mouth of the Most High proceedeth evil and good' (Lam. iii. 35); 'Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you' (Jer. xviii. 11); 'I make peace and create evil: I, the Lord, do all these things' (Is. xlv. 7); 'Therefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live' (Ezek. xx. 25); 'He

hath blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts' (John xii. 40); 'For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favour' (Josh. xi. 20); 'I will not pity, nor spare, nor have mercy, but destroy them' (Jer. xiii. 14); 'And thou shalt consume all the people which the Lord thy God shall deliver thee: thine eye shall have no pity upon them' (Deut. vii. 16); 'Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling' (1 Sam. xv. 2, 3); 'Because they had looked into the ark of the Lord, even He smote of the people fifty thousand and three score and ten men' (1 Sam. vi. 19); 'The Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them . . . and they died' (Josh. x. 11); 'The Lord God is a consuming fire' (Deut. iv. 24); 'And the Lord said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel' (Num. xxv. 4); 'For ye have kindled a fire in mine anger which shall burn for ever' (Jer. xvii. 4); 'And the Lord met him, and sought to kill him' (Ex. iv. 24); 'And He (God) said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering' (Jer. xxii. 2); 'Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword

by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour' (Ex. xxxii. 27); 'But all the women children that have not known a man, keep alive for yourselves' (Num. xxxi. 18); 'Lo, Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab . . . And the Lord said unto Jehu, Because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes, and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that was in my heart, thy children of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel' (2 Kings x. 11, 30)."

Such are a few of the innumerable verses of the Bible in which the character of Jehovah, King and God of the Jews, is described. I have copied them without note or comment, so that they may carry their weight solely upon themselves. They seem to me to be enough proof against the justice, merey, wisdom, and almighty power of the God of the Jews. And yet this is the God we are told to worship as the God of the Universe! whom Christ would teach us to love and to address as *Our Father*, the universal Father and Giver of all good, who maketh His sun to shine on all alike! They may tell us that Christ taught a very different doctrine when He came; but did He not also say, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. x. 34)? and in another place, "I am come to send fire on the earth" (Luke xii. 49)? Moreover, Christ did not put an end to the ancient

law. "I come not to destroy the law," He said. Thus we see that the God of the churches is warlike (Ex. xv. 3); changeable (Gen. vi. 6); powerless (Judges i. 19); unjust and partial (Ex. xx. 5); an author of evil (Lam. iii. 38); cruel (Jer. xiii. 14); ferocious (1 Sam. vi. 19); angry (Jer. xvii. 4); a liar (2 Thess. ii. 11)—in one word, a very Demon!

"Is it possible," I exclaimed, when I had finished reading the Word of God, in which I saw for the first time its true nature proved by His own acts and words, "is it possible that the men of the nineteenth century can believe in such a Deity, and kneel every day and worship such a demon? and all for fear of a devil and a hell that, I am sure, cannot be worse than God Himself and what His heaven must be. Is it possible," I repeated to myself, "that grown-up men can be so frightened with the idea of a bogie, as to worship such a God as the one that the Bible presents to us?"

And this at a time when so many new discoveries are every day bringing to our knowledge the wonders of the universe—just now, when the sublime laws of the Creator are being so clearly taught to us, and when our ideas of God ought to be greater and holier than ever. For the instruments discovered by Galileo and Leuwenhoeck have shown us more of the glorious works of God than all the Bibles, Eddas and Vedas of antiquity have ever done, and than all the theology of the churches will ever teach us.

Yes; to-day the telescope and the microscope open

to us a wider and a more extensive region of speculation, and carry our thoughts much more into the sphere of God than even Jesus of Nazareth was able to do on account of our ignorance, which was a consequence of the need of these aids to knowledge, as the time had not yet dawned for their invention; and therefore it would have been premature had He then spoken of the marvels of the universe as we now behold them, or else why did He say: "I have other things to tell you, but you cannot hear them now?"

Such was the train of thought that carried me out of the Church of Rome. I sometimes asked myself if others had had the same scruples. Of this I was soon convinced. I found that several of my college companions had the same views, but they either did not care to speculate upon them, or they were afraid of the consequences, and therefore did not dare to go too far into the subject.

I studied the works of those who with the best reasons had protested against the Church of Rome: Luther, Calvin, Voltaire, Rousseau, St Lambert, Comte, Tom Paine, Theodore Parker, Boulanger, Dupuis, Strauss, Renan, etc., and in those books I found an exact repetition of my doubts and scruples.

Sometimes when I read those books that the world has talked so much against, I could not but say to myself, "Can it be possible that I am going to abandon the religion of my parents?" This painful thought gave me the idea of going back, but it was too late; the dogmas of the Church appeared to me

insufferable, and all their doctrines pernicious and unjust. Little by little I had walked out of the Church. I had forgotten the obedience that the Church of Rome imposes upon her children, and now my mind had expanded too much to be able to return again through the narrow door of the Church that appeared to me almost to shut out the light of heaven. If the priests had only known what was passing in my mind, surely they would have called me an apostate. "This is a hard word, I thought, but was it not applied by the Jews to Jesus only a thousand years ago? and in spite of them His apostasy has become a great religion? But can this be called a heresy, as Rome most assuredly would call it, when I only seek to discover the way of establishing the direct communication with God that Catholicism does not establish by any means? Can one displease God when one is searching for the best way of arriving nearer to Him? Before I was a Catholic, and I was true to my faith; but now I am also true to that faith, and yet I cannot call myself a Catholic according to the Church, and be one in outward appearance and yet dissent in my heart. I could cheat the world, but I could not cheat myself.

I wanted to be still considered a Catholic, but I knew the innumerable faults of Catholic dogmas, and I could not believe in them. I could not live constantly hiding from my heart the thoughts of my mind; I wanted to be still a Catholic because it was the religion of my fathers. And religion, I thought,

is not a bond between men, but one that is to bind the creature to its Creator. What has the world to do with this sacred tie? Which would be more agreeable to God, an outer appearance of hereditary faith, at which I laugh in the bottom of my heart, or a true faith, based on firm belief and conviction, and that springs from the impartial study of the works of the Creator?

What matters what I seem to be? What I *am* is what God will approve or condemn, and most assuredly He will not approve of my doubt and incertitude. And, after all, these words, "*the religion of my fathers*," can be applied to all faiths. This cannot be said as a proof of its truth. Surely our fathers may have lived quite easily believing in a mistaken faith, and even what may have been a truth to them must not, therefore, necessarily be a truth for us. In my grandfather's time it was thought an impossibility for a steamer to cross the Atlantic; it was even proved on scientific principles, and sustained by the wisest of men, and yet to-day they cross it in every direction. Truths can only be relative and dependent upon the state of *progression* of the individual who receives them. This is one of the laws of progress. Why should not religious truths be also dependent upon the advancement of the individual mind that is to receive them? The Jews converted by the apostles abandoned the religion of their fathers and were right. God himself, we are told, established the religion taught by Moses, and He

himself supplanted it after a time for that taught by Jesus, and yet both are said to be equally true, although they seem to contradict each other almost in every point.

They tell me that I have had the *immense happiness* of being brought up in the Roman Catholic Apostolic Church; it might be a great blessing, no doubt, according to their ideas; but as all other communions would say the same to me if I belonged to their religion, it seems to me that I must choose for myself. That I have been brought up in the Catholic Church cannot be a proof of the truth of its doctrine.

But which *is* the true religion? Which of the Christian churches is the true one? Every one of them pretends to be the religion that Jesus taught in Judea so many hundred years ago, and yet does any one of them all teach the pure, unostentatious truths as they were first preached by Him?

The Churches of Rome, London, Berlin, and St Petersburg, each call themselves the only Christian Church, although they teach doctrines so adorned that they are quite opposed to those of Christ.

It seems to me that if He were to come again upon earth, the first thing he would do would be to preach against modern Christianity.

For where did Jesus say that he was God?

If Christ had been God, would he have said, 'If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true?' (St John v. 31.) Was Christ the God Almighty when

he said, 'I can, of mine own self, do nothing?' (St John v. 30.)

Was Jesus the God omniscient when he said, concerning the day of judgment, "Of that day, and of that hour, knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father?" (Mark xiii. 32.)

Was Christ the God omnipresent when he said, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and to my God, and your God?" (John xx. 17.) Can any one ascend to himself, and can any one be his own god?

Was Jesus the God all-good, when he reproved the rich man for calling him good, saying, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is God?" (Mark x. 18.)

Was Christ equal with God when he said plainly, "My Father is greater than I?" (St John xiv. 28.)

Where did Jesus say that we should worship him?

Where did Jesus say that the Holy Ghost was God himself?

Where did Jesus say that we should worship the Virgin and the angels, and even the saints?

Where did Jesus say that we should worship images?

Where did Christ say that the Jewish law was false?

How could Christ have believed that St Peter and his successors were saints and holy, when he said to him, "Get thee behind me Satan; thou art an offence unto

me, for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men?" (St Matthew xvi. 23.)

How could St Peter have been infallible when he denied his master three times? (St Luke xxii.)

When did Christ teach the doctrine of the Trinity?

When did Jesus teach as the church does now the sanctity of particular days?

Where did Christ say that he only came to save those that were good; did he not say rather that he came to save those that had need of him?

Can, therefore, the modern churches have any relation with Christ and his teachings, when they preach doctrines that are so opposed to those he taught when on earth?

Modern discoveries make us doubt of the truth of many statements contained in the Bible. Without some key to reconcile its contradictions, we find it impossible to believe in a book that tells us that the sun goes round the earth, and the chief doctrine of whose interpreters is, that three is equal to one, and one is equal to three. This is not the age for superstitions and bad mathematics. The bishops of the different Christian sects know this, but they can only tell us that science and religion have nothing to do with each other, and that mathematics that contradict the Bible must necessarily be wrong.

Yet a truth is a truth wherever we may find it. The church may make a Galileo recant his words, but it cannot contradict the fact that the earth goes

round the sun, although the Bible may say that it does not.

But, if the church cannot prove to us that science is wrong, why does it stand against its truth? For whom should we believe—he who can prove his doctrines to our understanding, or he who can only declare them to be *mysteries of faith*?

If the doctrines of the church of Rome be true, what is the use of making them into dogmas? Everybody believes that two and two make four, without its being necessary to add that his salvation depends upon his believing it.

They tell us that we should not trust in men's doctrines, but that we should obey only those that come from God, and then they preach that men should obey, in everything, the orders of the Pope. Is not this obeying a man? It is true that the church has made the Pope infallible, but to believe this, we must not only forget the past history of the Popes, but forget also that he is a man, and that Christ never told us that St Peter was infallible, much less his successors.

The church seems to me to take too much upon itself; it undoubtedly forgets that we are no longer in the fifteenth century, that men have lost all fear of the devil and his hell, as we can too clearly see, if we study the events that have taken place during the last two hundred years, in the very heart of Europe, where Rome used to rule supreme, once upon a time. The truth is, man has outgrown, or is fast outgrowing

this church, and yet Rome pretends still, in spite of everything, that she can pardon and absolve sins, and that her masses can release a soul from purgatory.

If this be true, God cannot possibly be all-powerful and unerring in His judgments, for He is made to change His plans, according to the decision of the Pope, and because any priest can send a soul straight into heaven, although He destined it for purgatory or even hell. According to this doctrine, the church and its priests have more power than God himself.

It seems to me impossible that a handful of gold can change the destiny of any being. If the church really have the power she pretends to have over man's future destiny, she should save every one according to their deeds, and not according to their money. Perhaps I think wrongly about all these things, but I judge others by myself, and I, if I had enough power, I would make everyone happy for evermore. I should certainly accept the money they would choose to give me, but I should not make this unjust payment, the condition upon which this salvation depended.

And after all, if after getting over all these difficulties, if after disappointing one's expectant heirs, and leaving no end of money to the Church to obtain one's salvation, one at last gets into the heaven the Church takes such pains in describing to us; can one possibly be happy in such a place when one knows that so many of our fellow-creatures are suffering in hell for ever? It may be, as St Augustin says, that the

chief pleasure of the angels is the contemplation of the endless pains and miseries of the damned that are suffering before them. But if they find *that* a pleasure, those angels must certainly have hearts very different from ours. What can we think of the happiness to be found in a heaven where—

‘ The godly wife conceives no grief,
Nor can she shed a tear,
For the sad fate of her mate,
When she his doom doth hear.

‘ He that was erst a husband pierc’d
With sense of wife’s distress,
Whose tender heart did bear a part
Of all her grievances,
Shall mourn no more, as heretofore,
Because of her ill plight,
Although he see her now to be
A damn’d, forsaken wight.’ * *

Such were the thoughts that passed through my agitated mind, and such was the consequence of the half-clerical, half-university education I had received.

Entertaining such doubts, I could not belong any more to the church of my fathers, and yet when I studied the doctrines of the Church of England, and when I criticised them with equal liberality, I must confess that they seemed to me to be exceedingly alike. The form was certainly another, but the basis of both was the same. Having found the one false, I could not but find the other equally so.

In the University of Oxford I had found two men

* “The Day of Doom.” By the Rev. M. Wigglesworth of Malden, New England.

that, like myself, had protested against the Church of Rome, to which they both formerly belonged. This naturally brought us constantly together.

The one was Dr John Gray, the well known and much appreciated master of natural philosophy. The other was a student of my own age, by name Francis Harrington.

Those two men had been my most intimate friends during my two terms in the university, but I had quite lost sight of them since my father's death, that forced me to abandon my studies, and called me to the side of my disconsolate mother.

Both of them, strange to say, had arrived at the same conclusion, although by very different routes. When I told them of my doubts respecting the Church of Rome, and when I confided to them my scruples, they both assured me that they also felt the same doubts and scruples, and entertained ideas similar to my own.

But, in spite of this similarity of ideas, there was something in their way of viewing religion, and in their respective reasons for protesting against Catholicism that did not please me at all.

The doctor, a man of the most profound knowledge and learning, thought that there was nothing in the world of so much importance as science, and seeing that the Christian religion was established upon the most unscientific basis, and that the Church denied several of the established laws of nature, and moreover, observing that her priests were for the most

part men of but little learning, and who had more faith in their own dogmas than in scientific investigations, abandoned the Church of Rome, and with that all other religions, thinking them all equally ignorant and untrue. He had become what the world would call an atheist. That is to say, that finding himself unable to discover a religion that would describe to him the Supreme Being, such as science acknowledges He must be, and such as he imagined He might be, he had abandoned all religion, and ended by denying the existence of any God whatever. He attributed the creation to certain causes and laws by means of which the ceaseless production of plants, animals, men, and all other living creatures was due to the fortuitous concourse of atoms.

This doctrine could not fill my heart. If I protested against the abuses and dogmas of Rome, it was solely because I did not find the idea that this religion gives us of the Supreme Creator adequate to the magnitude and grandeur of the universe created. I doubted the truth of Catholicism because this religion contradicted the greatness, power, and justice that I imagined Him to possess, but not because of this was I going to doubt altogether the existence of a God.

As for Francis Harrington, accustomed, since his father's death, to live among Protestants, he had grown, by slow degrees, to think like them. He dedicated himself solely to the study of the Bible, that his guardian told him to be the word of God, and from this study he, of course, derived that the Church of

Rome was all wrong as to her doctrine, and that the Christianity of the Catholics was very different from that taught by Jesus in Jerusalem ; so he abandoned the old faith and turned Protestant, joining the reformed church of England, in which he soon became one of its ministers.

His ideas, of course, did not agree with mine ; I did not doubt the truth of the Roman Church, because its doctrines were different from those established by the first Christians, but because its dogmas and rites were too narrow for my enquiring mind, and for my exalted idea of God.

So although these two men had protested against the church as I did, their motives for so doing were so different from mine, that their solutions could not satisfy me.

I was too much of a philosopher, and had too much heart to become an atheist, and had not enough faith in the infallibility of the Bible to join any of the reformed churches. So that I did not abandon completely the old faith of my forefathers ; for not finding any religion that agreed better with my peculiar ideas, I thought it better to be still a Roman Catholic at least to my family, although my Christianity was very unorthodox and very different from that preached in the churches. Thus was I situated when la Señora de Vargas, asked me if I belonged to the Church of England. I answered her, that my family were all Catholics, and that their religion was also my faith.

And this was but the truth ; to what other religion could I say I belonged ?

Until that time, I had not found anybody with whom I could speculate upon the subject dearest to my heart. I always expected to marry a woman who participated in my ideas, or to whom I could, at least, confide my doubts, and the peculiar views upon which my moral existence was based ; but one day I saw Conchita Vargas in the old convent in Catholic Spain, and I forgot all my intentions, all my scruples, and even the moral ideal of a woman for which I had so often sighed. Love made me sacrifice my religious ideas to his all-powerful passion.

But now that I at last possessed the object so well loved, now that I could call my wife the angel of beauty and purity, that had made me forget so much, I began to see plainly the reality of what I judged to be my folly, my unpardonable mistake.

"Great God ! I exclaimed, what is going to become of me, obliged to live by the side of a devout and narrow-minded girl, accustomed only to dress images in a convent. Why have I married such a woman ! Why, oh my God, have I sacrificed my most holy sentiments to a passion that I shall so soon forget ?"

I was so vexed with the language used by Conchita in the cathedral, that I gave up all hope, at once, of ever convincing her of the truth, and of making her change the doctrines that she held so much at heart. I accused myself of not having foreseen the consequences of marrying a girl out of a convent, who

only could entertain the narrow-minded ideas of the inhabitants of the cloisters.

And now that my readers are aware of the origin of my religious views, they will see how insufferable must have appeared to me, the idea of living out my days with a being who professed doctrines that were so hateful at that moment to me.

I was submerged in these vexatious and melancholy thoughts, when Paula, Conchita's maid, came to announce that her mistress was waiting for me in her dressing room.

I went into this room that leads from the drawing-room, with my heart torn by those bitter thoughts; but no sooner had I entered the apartment, than all my agonies of fear and all my serious scruples were set to flight as the torments of a nightmare are dissipated by the brilliant rays of the rising sun.

I beheld before me my youthful bride, beautiful as I had never before seen her, and looking so radiantly happy, as to make my own heart beat with joy.

Conchita was waiting for me to enter into our nuptial chamber; and I, forgetting everything that had passed through my mind for the last hour, threw myself at her feet, blinded again by love.

CHAPTER IV.

DUMBARTON.

THE following day was the 4th of July, and a bright sun illuminated our windows since the early morning.

"What a splendid day!" exclaimed Conchita, as she came into the breakfast room, where I had been reading the *Times*. "It looks as if the sun itself came to bless and brighten our union." Saying this, she opened the window that looked upon George Square, and went out upon the balcony, where I soon joined her, and where we remained for a few seconds, my arm around her, breathing the fresh air of the morning. All of a sudden, Conchita, gliding from my arms, exclaimed, blushing, "Walter! Walter! what are you doing? Don't you see that everybody is looking at us from the Square? Did you ever see such a thing? To embrace me thus, before the solemn and serious Scotchmen! They will assuredly take us for a couple of lovers."

"They will only take us for what we are then, my own sweet love. Am I not your husband, and are you not my wife, my darling wife?"

"Ah! it is true," murmured the beautiful girl, while her superb black eyes bent down full of tears, and her golden locks floated round her face.

"Are you sorry for it?" I said, taking her hand in mine; "are you sorry because you can call me thine? Sorry that now I am yours, that I live for you, feel for you?—Oh! embrace me, Conchita, embrace me, wife of my heart, for at this moment I am your mother, father, brother—your lover—yes! your passionate lover. Come to my arms! and what does it matter if even the whole world were to be witness to our love? Are we not one?—one according to man's laws, and one according to God's laws? Let them stare at us, I am sure that if they knew our love, and saw our hearts, their smiles would change into jealous frowns, and their mockery into envious sighs."

Conchita took my arm, and, coming into the apartment, she threw herself on the sofa, when she said, after a moment's hesitation, "This is too much happiness; I am too happy now; and I am afraid that this happiness will soon change into sorrow. It is so good to be loved by thee, that eternity would scarcely be long enough for me to enjoy our love: and yet you will forget this love so soon!—this passion that to-day fills our hearts! It is so sweet to love and to be loved, that this melody of life should last an eternity without the heart being fatigued by this passion."

"And do you believe, Conchita, that my heart can ever tire of loving you? No; remember this is a law of the human heart, my pet, that love creates love; it augments it; it developes it. The only change that it can undergo now is, that it will become calmer;

but even if less vehement, it will be all the more soothing and the sweeter. The secret of loving is, to occupy oneself constantly with the object loved—to live always together. To love, is to die to oneself: true love consists in living the one for the other. This passion, carried to its highest pitch, succeeds in making one being out of two. Such a love can last an eternity, an eternity of love, happiness, and felicity. For, without this, the union that was so agreeable at first becomes indifferent, perhaps hard and galling. Yes, Conchita; mutual affection is the essence of matrimonial union; and from the moment that this affection ceases, marriage is but a vain word."

"And do you believe, then, that we shall always be as happy as we are at the present moment?"

"Of course," I answered her. "A celebrated French author, Pierre Leroux, if I remember rightly, said, that 'heaven—the true heaven—was to be found in the conjugal life, such as that life used to be in the patriarchal times. Man cannot live for ever alone; he wants a companion that can partake of his pleasures, and can console him in his sorrows.' Adam needed Eve to be completely happy, even in Paradise."

"I am glad, Walter, that you should think so. When I was but a young girl in the convent, I used to say to myself, 'This cannot be the true life that God meant us to live upon earth. These holy women around me seem happy; but I am sure that even they feel that something is wanting in their existence to make them completely so.' I had not yet felt the

love that to-day fills my life, and causes my felicity, but I guessed at its effects; for they are dreamt of even in the cloisters.

"The nuns painted to me the sins of the world, but at the same time they said to me, 'Concha, you will soon attain a marriageable age, and when you least expect it, your mother will come to take you away from the convent. Once in the world you will find yourself alone and without real friends, for there all must be selfish, if they want to live according to the established customs. But remember that here in this sacred place all love you. Come to us then.' I cried, and was unhappy when the thought of leaving the convent was suggested to me. The church and my cell had been till then all the world to me, and I repeatedly told the superior that I would never leave them, and that when I arrived at the proper age, I would take the veil, and would become one of them. They always smiled at this, and said that I ought to see the world before becoming a nun. 'The world is not wicked in itself, and there is a great deal that is good in it.' Love, they also told me, is, like all the passions inspired and felt by men, one that can elevate a soul to the highest virtues, or sink it into the worst of crimes. In spite of this, like all that comes from heaven, it is a superior sentiment, destined eventually to elevate the creature to the Creator; as the Virgin's love and tenderness sanctified her holy person in the eyes of God.' 'My daughter,' added the lady abbess, 'if you ever feel such a love, resist it if the person

that inspires it cannot become your husband, and even if he asks your hand, do not grant it to him if you are not sure that he also loves you.' I then made up my mind that I would love my husband with all my heart, with all my soul, or that I would never marry. 'If ever I find such a man,' I said to myself, 'I would either die or become his wife. Yes, I will marry a man whose elevated soul will be able to help me and sustain me. I will help him, but he must also help me, and let me lean on him. He must have a loving and tender spirit, that will never get tired of loving me, one whom I shall also be able to respect and love.' Such was my ideal of a husband, and I feared I should never be able to find such a being upon earth, therefore I wanted to become the bride of Christ. He I knew would love me as none upon earth, for He once died for me, and so I fixed all my hopes on Him. But to-day, that I am your wife, I am happy, because my dreams have been realised, and I love you even more than I thought I should love the ideal picture I had formed in my mind of my future husband. Now I am not afraid of loving you too much. Even if I were to be condemned by it, I could not love you less."

I took her in my arms, and seated her on my knees. She looked at that moment more than ever the picture of the Immaculate Conception. "I tell you that I appreciate you, that I admire you, that I adore you," I said to her. "Can I tell you anything more passionate still, and that comes nearer to the

heart? Have I in those words exhausted the language of the heart? No; I have not even begun this rich language that only consists of a word, but of a word worth more than all the rest put together. I have one thing to say to you, only one, the last—*I love you!* Ten thousand words can precede this one, but not one can succeed it in any language, and once pronounced, it only remains to repeat it for all eternity.

“I have told you, Conchita, that I love you; what more can I say to you after this one word? Everything passes, and is forgotten in this world, but this word remains always on our lips, and engraved on our hearts. Pronouncing it I have given you all my life, all my existence. Pains and pleasures pass as shadows and sunshine over our existence, they succeed each other constantly, they are the *chiaroscuro* of our lives, and life goes after them—life passes away as they pass away. What is life? A breath of existence, not even an instant of the eternity that is awaiting us. We are always between two eternities, the past and the future, both unknown to us. Earth life is but a succession of events that we shall soon forget, but if we love during our lives, if we ever experience that passion that is as a glimpse of the heaven above us, that is the beginning of a truer life. Then life becomes a succession of events for ever to be remembered. It is as a dream of happiness, a preface of the eternal happiness that we shall enjoy in the other world. Fill all your life, my dar-

ling, with this passion, remember that it is the only one that you will be able to carry with you to heaven, for God is love, and all love is from Him.

“Eternal love is the life of God. The life of man is composed of finite loves, but a succession of infinite finites is the eternal love, the divine love. Love carried to its greatest height is heaven itself. The love that spirits have for God, as shown to His creatures, is the complement of life, is the eternal life of the being who thus loves. The love of God is supreme knowledge, supreme power, supreme felicity. Love, Conchita mia, love, and love for ever.

“‘God loves from whole to parts; but human soul
Must rise from individual to the whole.
Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake;
The centre moved, a circle straight succeeds,
Another still, and still another spreads;
Friend, parent, neighbour, first it will embrace;
His country next, and next the human race;
Wide and more wide, th’ o’erflowings of the mind
Take every creature in, of every kind;
Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,
And heaven beholds its image in his breast.’”

John came soon afterwards to ask us our arrangements for that day.

“Let us go out of the town,” exclaimed Conchita; “let us go away far from the habitations of men, and let us enjoy the beautiful sun of God, as it shines upon the green fields of the earth.”

“I have thought of a very pleasant excursion,” I said; “it is to go up in the steamer Iona to the

Kyles of Bute, to-morrow, Saturday ; she sails from Glasgow ; we should, I think, take advantage of this circumstance to see those magnificent islands and lakes that are said to be the finest in Scotland."

My young bride was delighted with the idea. "But in the mean time," she observed, "could we not go out of Glasgow and spend this glorious day in the country?"

"We can go by the railroad to Dumbarton, I suggested ; Dumbarton has a fine old castle on the banks of the Clyde, and from there we could go to Greenock, where we shall take the steamer to-morrow for the Kyles of Bute."

This plan was approved of by Conchita, and an hour afterwards, we were in the railroad on our way to Dumbarton, where shortly afterwards we arrived.

One enters Dumbarton from the station by Church Street, a fine street, in which are situated the Town Hall and the Academy, a modern building of very good appearance. In the same street, a little lower, we passed the ruins of a very ancient archway. The street terminates before the church, where two others begin, called High Street and Castle Street, in which are the great manufactories of Mr Denny.

The hotel at which we stopped was called the Elephant. I remember wondering at the time what an elephant had to do in the centre of Scotland. We did not, however, stop very long there, and after some moments rest, we found our way to the castle.

The position of the castle of Dumbarton is, in reality, a most striking one ; it is built upon a rock

that rises out of the Clyde to a height of about 560 feet, and the blue waters of this river bathe the feet of its old walls. On the other side flows the Leven, previous to its junction with the great river. The country around is flat, and this makes the castle appear more picturesque and imposing. Its situation between the highlands and the lowlands was very favourable for the defence of the country, and for this reason, this fortress has been so often the object of terrific and bloody conflicts. We all know the brave way in which Sir William Wallace took it at the beginning of his wars against England, and we have all admired the courage and faithfulness that the young Edwin displayed in its attack. Here, too, Wallace was confined for some time previous to his being sent to England to die.

Since that time, many have been the battles that have been fought under its walls. That won by Captain Crawford of Tordunhill, in the reign of Queen Mary, being one of the most successful.

We ascended to the top of this formidable fortress by a narrow and very steep staircase that seems to have been cut in the rock, and after passing a little door or gateway, used anciently as a portcullis, that has on either side, the heads of Wallace and Monteith (the governor of the citadel at the time of the former's imprisonment), we entered a sort of small court, where one of the soldiers of the garrison, dressed in the picturesque costume of the country, offered himself as our *cicerone*.

We followed him through another stairway that ends at the highest point of the castle. From here, we obtained a magnificent view of the Clyde, of the old town of Dumbarton, and of the distant, but even from here, beautiful district of the lakes, over which seemed to rise, as a sentinel, the elevated Ben Lomond.

"There you see Scotland," I said to Conchita, pointing to this varied panorama. "There you have, at your feet, this land so often stained with the blood of her heroes, and that, in spite of her endless enemies, has never yet been conquered."

Our guide showed us the ruins of an old Roman fortress built, by the masters of the world, upon this rock, as a sentinel over the land they were never able to subject to their rule. For Caledonia, as Iberia, had her Viriatus and her Numancias.

He also showed us in the armoury, amidst a very poor collection of ancient arms, the sword of the great Wallace which is great even as its master, for it measures five and a-half feet in length.

On our way down, we visited Wallace's prison, after which, and as we were rather tired, and I did not want to fatigue Concha too much, we returned to the hotel with the intention of going out very early the next day to catch the steamer that was to take us to Rothesay and the Kyles of Bute.

The next morning we breakfasted before seven, and very soon afterwards we were on the pier waiting for the little steamer in which we were conveyed to Greenock.

This is the maritime port of Glasgow, and is rapidly becoming a large town that will, some day, be very important. When we arrived at the pier, the Iona was already there, and we scarcely had time to get on board of her, before she set sail in the direction of the mouth of the river.

It was about eight when we left Greenock, and when this beautiful steamer began to move her wheels over the waters of the blue Clyde.

The scenery of this river is really splendid. Few rivers can boast of such lovely and picturesque shores; from the place we now occupied, we could see a superb panorama of Argyleshire and Dumbartonshire, with their lakes and their mountains. The Gareloch, the Holy Loch, and Loch Long, pour their waters into the Clyde near this place, and their shores, for several miles, are thickly studded with villas and country places. Between the Gareloch and Loch Long, rises a promontory, thickly covered with trees, in the midst of which stands the mansion of Roseneath, an Italian palace, which occupies the site of the old castle of the Argyle family.

A moment after we doubled the point of Loch Long, and we came in sight of the town of Dunoon, one of the most fashionable summer residences in the west of Scotland.

"What a beautiful river this is!" Conchita said, enchanted with the first glimpse she caught of the scene that surrounded us on all sides. "How picturesque and how poetic! How I should like

to know the history of some of those castles that seem so romantic and so mysterious ! ”

“There is a curious legend,” I said, “about that castle that rises behind the now gay town of Dunoon. If you like, I will relate it to you, as well as I can remember it.”

“Oh, yes ! Walter,” exclaimed the beautiful girl, overjoyed with the idea. “Tell me that old legend. You know how fond I am of quaint stories ; and when they are told by you, they seem to have a double interest for me.”

I seated myself by her side on the deck of the steamer, and putting my arm around her, I began the following tale.

CHAPTER V.

THE PUNISHMENT OF PRIDE : A LEGEND.*

THE Castle of Dunoon, the ruins of which you see behind the town, that to-day is one of the gayest summer resorts of the rich inhabitants of Glasgow, rises upon a little hill not far from the shore.

At the time of my legend, however, this castle was an extensive Gothic pile, with high and solid walls, with warlike ramparts, and impregnable battlements. Its hall was spacious, and its rooms were adorned with the luxuries of the age ; but to-day all this grandeur and glory has disappeared.

" No more its arches echo to the noise
Of joy and festive mirth. No more the glance
Of blazing taper through its window beams,
And quivers on the undulating wave ;
But naked stand the melancholy walls,
Lash'd by the wintry tempest, cold and bleak,
That whistle mournful through the empty halls,
And piecemeal crumble down the towers to dust."

The view that this castle commands is one of the finest in all Scotland. Towards the north is seen, between two green hills, the blue and peaceful waters of the Holy Loch, that in truth is only one of the

* See Appendix, Note I.

arms of the Clyde that in this place runs into several parts of the land, forming a thousand lakes, as if the wide bed through which it runs were not large enough to contain it. A little farther, forming a background to this lake, rise the mountains that surround Loch Long, amidst which we can perceive the one called *The Cobbler*, always at work.

In front of the old castle extends the fertile and ever-beautiful valley of the Clyde, above which rise to-day towards the blue sky the hundreds and hundreds of chimneys of Greenock and Port-Glasgow. But at the period of which I am speaking, the valley of the Clyde was still in all its purity, and its virgin soil was still covered with the greenest of grass and the tallest of trees. Between this plain and the little hill upon which rises the Castle of Dunoon ran then, as to-day, the wide river Clyde, carrying everything with it, towards the sea.

From the ancient towers of this castle one could see in the distance the islands of Bute, and Cambray, covered with vegetation, and rising, always green, upon the blue sea, like emeralds upon a surface of crystal.

Would it be possible to find a more beautiful site for a castle of the middle ages?

It was about the middle of the fifteenth century when my tale begins. This old castle was then inhabited by Sir Hamish Campbell, Lord of Loch Awe, and his family.

The Lords of Loch Awe had been masters of this

castle, one of the safest strongholds of Argyllshire, since the year 1310, when Robert the Bruce conferred it, with all its surrounding territory, upon Sir Colin Campbell. Previous to this it had been a royal residence; and this, added to its magnificent situation, rendered it an object of admiration in the west of Scotland. The Lords of Dunoon were always feared and respected, on account of their influence with the Sovereign, and also in consideration of their impregnable fortress. Moreover, the Lords of Loch Awe were connections, although distant, of the Earls of Argyle, whose surname they bore; and this added to the influence they exercised in those feudal times, when the great lords were little less than sovereigns, who ruled as they pleased over their estates and their tenantry.

Sir Hamish Campbell was in every sense of the word a knight of the middle ages. All his time was given to hunting and to the other rural sports of the time; the field was his proper place, as he often said himself. He was also fond of war, and he kept a little army of his own always ready at his call. But in spite of those warlike preparations, the Lord of Dunoon had never been in any battle; and either because of his generous nature, or of the peace that reigned between him and his powerful neighbours, or because of his imposing little army, the fact is, that nobody ever molested him in his impregnable castle, where he lived as a true baron, in the bosom of his family.

His wife was a daughter of Lord Douglas of Tantalton; and as a descendant of this noble family, her pride knew no bounds. Often was the good Sir Hamish obliged to reprimand his beloved companion for this unparalleled haughtiness that she had inherited from her forefathers, and which he always said would finish by putting an end to his long sustained peace with his powerful and jealous neighbour, the Lord of Roseneath, and which even displeased the Earl of Argyle, the chief of the clan.

The first years of his married life were most happy; they were spent in balls and banquets, feasts and tournaments—intended to gratify the pride of Lady Campbell, who could not rest while others were greater than herself. But these pleasures alone could not satisfy her; feasts and entertainments were not enough to sustain the honour and pride of the house of Loch Awe; an heir was necessary, and this heir did not come. Only at the end of three years were her desires fulfilled, and then only partly: the beautiful Lady Campbell gave birth to the child that was to complete their happiness, but, much to their disappointment and grief, this child, so long wished for, proved to be only a daughter. The despair of Lady Campbell knew no bounds. At length, however, she resigned herself again to wait, but no heir made his appearance. At the end of four years, after an endless succession of doubts and fears, she began again to hope that her desires would at last be realised; but her pride and ambition were not destined to be grati-

fied in this respect: the new-born child was another girl.

After this, the unfortunate couple renounced all hopes of ever having an heir to whom they could transmit the old family name, and all their hopes in the future began to rest now on the young Margaret, the eldest of their daughters. Lady Campbell took upon herself the education of this child, and she, at the same time, begged her family to look out for some young nobleman worthy of the hand of her precious daughter, heiress to the castle and estate of Dunoon.

At the time my story commences, Margaret Campbell was a pretty and bright girl of sixteen. Her sister Alice was less beautiful and less interesting, and she was also four years younger.

The character of the two sisters was very similar. Living always together and alone in the old castle, and being too young yet to take part in the banquets and in the numerous feasts given by their mother, they were naturally thrown very much upon their own resources. The whole day they spent in playing and running together in the gardens and woods adjoining, and in reading together the old legends of chivalrous Scotland. They were so united and so fond of each other, that their souls were almost as one; all their ideas and thoughts were the same; secrets did not exist between them. But this moral influence that had so joined their thoughts and feelings had not been able to affect their physical appearance. They

were so unlike each other, that it would have been almost impossible to take them for sisters.

Margaret's complexion was dazzlingly fair, and she had a beautiful figure. Her beauty was most striking; her black hair and her large dark eyes were the talk of all who knew her. But her beauty was that of youth; and Dr Thomas Harris, the family doctor, used to say, "I should not be surprised, if this lovely child, that all now admire so much for her beauty, should grow up a plain woman;" and he was right: the beauty of this girl consisted in her fresh colour, her long and abundant black hair, and her flexible figure. But, well examined, Margaret Campbell lost all her attractions,

Her features were far from being regular and well formed; her mouth was large, and the corners of it slightly turned down, giving her a disdainful smile. Her eyes were large, it is true, but they wanted expression, and their colour was of a blueish gray, that did not suit with her black hair. To all this, I must add that the mother's stern haughtiness was reflected in every feature of the daughter; that this disdainful smile and this scornful look made her sometimes far from beautiful. But, in spite of all this, Margaret was considered in her paternal home a lovely girl; and people heard so much of the *beautiful heiress of Dunoon*, that they all agreed at last in thinking her really good-looking, and her mother, of course, thought her the most perfect of women.

Alice was quite different from her sister: less

beautiful at first sight, her beauty was more perfect, although less striking. Her complexion, it is true, was not so dazzlingly fair, nor her figure half so good, yet there was something about this young girl that announced a much more lasting beauty. Her features were perfect, although her hair was light chestnut, almost red, which ill became her dark complexion, but her eyes were much more expressive than those of her sister, and although she was in reality quite as proud, her extreme youth and her sweet smiles made one almost entirely forget it.

And now, my beautiful Conchita, having described my *dramatis personæ*, I shall begin my story.

Lady Campbell, who, from the first years of her marriage, had undertaken the entire management of the household, also took upon herself the education of her two daughters. But being still a young woman, with no small pretensions to beauty herself, she thought that it would be impossible for her to give up all her time to the girls, and as she did not like to send them to a convent, she constituted an old lady, one of her tenants, as *duenna*, to take charge of these girls. This good old lady took very little pains, however, with her young pupils, and the two sisters grew up with scarcely any education whatever. Their mother only took pains in teaching them the arrogance and pride that she had inherited from her ancient family, and that her own mother had instilled into her heart during the first years of her life, in her paternal home of the Douglas.

Lady Campbell spent hours and hours talking to the young girls about their ancient family, their importance, and their beauty. She was determined that her daughters should maintain the honour of the great family they were called to represent. Margaret was, of course, the object of her greatest care, not only because she was the eldest, and therefore the heiress, but also because she thought her the handsomest, and the one who united the best conditions to make a marriage suited to her high aspirations.

As Margaret grew up, those extraordinary notions became more and more developed in her heart. When she arrived at her sixteenth year, which was about the year 1460, that is to say, at the time when my tale begins, my young heroine thought herself so beautiful and so noble, that she did not consider any one worthy of notice if he were not a prince or a duke. Lady Campbell said to her every morning, "How beautiful you are, Margaret, you will some day be something great, you will be a princess if you let me manage everything as I think proper. And you should certainly hope to be one, for your family, as much by your father's side as by mine, would certainly not be unwelcome in any princely house."

In this way, always taught to think so much of herself, and with the conviction that she was destined to become a princess, she quite looked down from the height of her pride upon all the young nobles of the surrounding castles.

Lady Campbell used all her influence to find a

husband worthy of her daughter's hand, as soon as she arrived at a marriageable age, but she found this a difficult thing, much more difficult than she had expected, and, with the exception of the young Earl of Argyle, none seemed good enough for her. She therefore employed all her arts, and all her powerful relations, to secure this splendid match for her daughter.

The first fear of the anxious mother was, of course, that of her Margaret's falling in love with some poor knight of the neighbourhood, and this fear increased when she heard that Sir Guy Ashton, only son of the great enemy of her family, Lord Ashton, was madly in love with her. She watched each movement, each word of her daughter, as the officer of the customs observes and searches the packages belonging to persons whom he suspects. She scorned all advice from her husband and from her now banished brother, Lord Douglas, about this grand marriage, and at last she finished by placing her daughter at such a distance from her innumerable suitors, that no one dared even to approach her.

Margaret, in her turn, did not in the least object to being watched ; on the contrary, it made her feel of greater importance, and it added to her vanity, but all this care was perfectly needless. Her ambition was as great, if not greater, than her mother's ; and she did not in the least trouble herself about the sighs and tears of her admirers. Love had not yet taken possession of her heart.

The heart of a young girl may be compared to a fragile ship, which while it remains in the tranquil lake of innocence and youth, can be governed by any rudder; but which when it enters on the rough sea of the passions, and when it is carried hither and thither by the contrary winds of impulse, no rudder is strong enough to direct its course, and it remains tempest-tossed upon the furious waves of the ocean of life. This was the case with Margaret Campbell; at first she allowed herself to be led by her mother in the paths of her endless ambition; her youthful heart, open to every impression, became completely engrossed in the pride of the Douglasses, and she determined to wait patiently until some prince or some powerful chieftain should come to pay homage to her irresistible attractions. She was so convinced, that at last all the flower of Scotland would be at her feet, that she despised and disdained all the young knights and nobles that came to Dunoon Castle. But before a suitor of rank high enough came to ask her hand, an incident occurred that would have rendered the arrival of all the dukes and earls of the kingdom too late.

About this time the King of Scotland died. He was at the time engaged in the siege of the Castle of Roxburgh, an old fortress situated near the junction of the Tweed and the Teviot, that had remained in the hands of the English after the fatal battle of Durham. One of the guns that had been prepared to attack the castle burst in going off, and a fragment

of iron broke James' thigh bone, and killed him on the spot.

' Upon the death of King James, II. of that name, the army was dispersed, and began to give up all hope of freeing the country from the invading English. But Margaret, the widowed Queen, went to the council assembled by the chiefs, and, with her young son, James III., in her arms, spoke those memorable words :—" Fie, my noble lords !—Think not now so shamefully to give up an enterprise which is so bravely begun, or to abandon the revenge of the unhappy accident which has befallen us before this ill-omened castle. Forward, my brave lords, and persevere in your undertaking, and never turn your backs till this siege is victoriously ended. Let it not be said that such brave champions needed to hear from a woman, and a widowed one, the courageous advice and comfort which she ought rather to receive from you ! "

The chiefs took courage from this speech of the Queen's, and the siege was recommenced. Soldiers came from all parts of the country to help the persevering force that surrounded the fortress. Sir Hamish Campbell would himself gladly have gone with his little army to help his youthful king, but Lady Campbell would not hear of this. She could not easily forget the death inflicted upon her brave father in the castle of Stirling by the young sovereign's own father. She could not efface from her proud mind the memory of her three brothers slain by the king's soldiers. For

this proud family, that once even tried to appropriate to itself the royal crown, fell at length without any decisive struggle by its own unjust, rebellious, and wavering ambition. James Douglas, Lady Campbell's eldest brother, was determined to wear the crown of Scotland, after the murder of his father by King James, and several and bloody were the struggles that took place, until at last, the dreadful battle of the Carron, fought on May 1st, 1455, brought to an end all further trouble for the legitimate monarch, James Stuart. The domineering and princely family of Douglas was completely destroyed, as if the hand of God had preserved the legitimate king's rights against the armies of the rebellious Earl.

Archibald Douglas, Earl of Murray, one of the Earl's brothers, fell in the battle, his head was cut off, and sent to the King. Hugh, Earl of Ormond, was wounded and made prisoner, and immediately executed, and John, Lord Balveny, the third brother, escaped to England, where the Earl also found a retreat.

After twenty years of banishment the long-forgotten rebel returned to his own country in 1484, during the reign of the new King, James III. He attempted to make a small incursion on the frontiers of Annandale. He was, however, defeated, and sent as a prisoner to the Abbey of Lindores, to which sentence he submitted calmly, only using a popular proverb of this country, "He that cannot do better, must be a monk." He lived in that convent only four years,

and with him, as the last of his family, expired the principal branch of these terrible "Douglasses of the Bloody Hand."

But in the epoch of my tale this had not yet taken place. James III. was but a boy of eight years of age, and Lord Douglas still lived, although banished to England. Yet his youngest sister, Lady Campbell, lost no hope, (for this is the last thing we lose) and she still believed in the future grandeur of the house of her forefathers. She still hoped to see one of her race on the throne of Scotland. And she was ready to make any sacrifice to obtain the favour of Queen Margaret and of her son. Therefore she opened her castle of Dunoon to the troops sent by the northern clans to help the siege of Roxburgh.

Lady Campbell tried to hide her pride, and gain the gratitude of the young prince, by entertaining his soldiers, and giving them hospitality, as was not unfrequently done in those feudal times by the barons in their castles.

Good Sir Hamish was delighted with his wife's idea, and at once ordered a succession of festivities to take place, while the army of Lord Macduff (this was the clan that had accepted his hospitality) remained within his walls.

Amongst this numerous host there was more than one brave knight capable of turning the head of a Helen, but one above all others was noticeable amongst his comrades. He was but a common page, called Bernard Ross, but his appearance, his courage,

his talents, and his manners won for him the good graces of all that knew him. Even Margaret, who had displayed the greatest scorn for the handsomest and noblest knight of the clan, could not help noticing him, amidst this rough set of northern soldiers. His good figure, his courage, and above all, his conversation, won entirely her heart, as yet so free from any foreign affections.

She confessed to herself that she loved him, but she could not understand how it happened that he was not a nobleman. This doubt soon, however, passed from her mind; she convinced herself at last that the young Bernard was a duke in disguise, who wanted to win fame and be knighted on the field, before he would declare his proper station and rank, she had often read of such a thing, and his noble mein and proud carriage proved him beyond a doubt to be a nobleman in disguise. Once convinced of this, for we can easily bring ourselves to believe what we like, she did not hesitate to give him her heart with all the innocence of a young girl, and with all the self-love of a Douglas.

Bernard, who could not understand his easy victory, knowing the ambitious ideas of the young lady herself, and, moreover, having heard Lady Campbell say that her daughter was engaged to the Earl of Argyle, was quite bewildered. But this sudden passion of the young heiress soon found an echo in his noble heart, and he began to love Margaret with all the passion of a first love, such as our own is, my sweet

Conchita, but let us forget ourselves now, and only think of poor Margaret and her unfortunate lover.

The more Bernard saw of her the more he loved her, and the more he felt encouraged to declare his love. Soon after he became completely convinced that the young lady's heart was entirely his, when he heard one of the officers say to him one day, as they were walking on the ramparts, "How fortunate you are, Bernard! The beautiful heiress of Dunoon asked me but yesterday the name and position of your family." Bernard trembled for a moment, but at last succeeded in calming himself, and he asked of his friend, "What answer did you give to her questions?" "I said that you were the bravest and noblest fellow in the clan, and by St Andrew I was right." Bernard pressed his friend's hand, but remained silent. He was happy, for now he knew she loved him.

So passed the time quickly and happily for the inhabitants of the castle of Dunoon, and slowly and miserably for the starving garrison in the fortress of Roxburgh. The Scots pressed the siege, but their numbers were small, and the English army was already in Northumberland, menacing a sudden attack upon the united clans at the least expected moment. The assembled lords talked again of raising the siege, and this time not even the courage and decision of Queen Margaret would have sufficed to sustain the failing minds of the soldiers and their chiefs. But Bishop Kennedy went himself before the walls of Roxburgh, and called to every true Scot to follow

him and destroy the fortress that had caused the death of King James.

Lord Macduff no sooner heard this news than he decided to go, with all his clan, and help the army at Roxburgh. Not one minute would he wait. The moment of departure came. Bernard, whose heart was entirely given up to his love, could not make up his mind to go without first seeing his lovely Margaret, and receiving from her own mouth the avowal of her love. He therefore asked her for an interview. She at first hesitated, but at last she granted it: she wanted to know for certain his real name and his proper rank, although she was sure of his noble descent, and that he was a young earl in disguise. How easily we imagine a thing when we want it to be true!

It was a beautiful eve in autumn, and the full moon lighted up with her pale rays the terraces and ramparts of Dunoon, when Bernard, covered with his long cape, and quite concealed by the projection of the walls and by the rich vegetation that covered the lower part of the castle, descended to the lowest terrace, near the banks of the Clyde. Five minutes had not passed away before he discerned, at the opening of one of the wooded paths, the well-beloved form of his lady-love.

The young soldier rushed forward, and, bending one knee before her, pressed her lily-white hand to his lips.

Margaret was the first to speak. "I have granted

L

G

you this interview, Mr Ross," she said, "because I wanted to know your intentions and your true name."

"Do not let us talk of names and families, beloved lady: here all breathes love, and nothing else. Calm thyself, oh! my love, and forget, by my side, for a moment the dull hours you pass in yonder sombre fortress. Ah! is it not true, oh! my angel, that on this lonely shore the moon shines more clearly and one can breathe more freely? This air, so full of the aroma of the wild flowers that rise from those green fields; that water, so calm and blue, that seeks to kiss thy feet; ah! is it not true, my sweet Margaret, that they are whispering of love? And those two liquid pearls that are peeping out of thine heavenly eyes, and that rosy blush that now suffuses thy fair cheeks, are they not also born of love? Oh! my beautiful Margaret, see here at thy feet all my life and my fortune are prostrate. One word would open heaven to me; at the murmur of another, I will plunge into yonder river."

"Oh, stop, for God's sake! Bernard," the young girl cried, raising him from the ground; "when I hear those words, I seem to go mad, and my brain burns, my head swims, and my heart is ready to burst. If I had not loved thee, Bernard, would I have come to meet thee here? I know that my honour and that of my family is in my hands; but passion is stronger in my heart than the sense of duty, and even of pride."

"Oh! thank heaven you love me, Margaret. Now

I shall fear nothing ; no arm can hurt me, no arrow can pierce my heart, for I leave it here at thy feet. I will go to Roxburgh ; the world will hear my name ; my arm will slay the murderer of our King ; and then I shall be worthy of thy hand, my beautiful pearl, my lovely Margaret."

She trembled at this vehement speech. She loved him more than ever ; but why was he not *now* worthy of her hand ? why must he conquer that name that by his birth should belong to him already ? She wanted to clear the mystery at once, and after a little hesitation she began—

"Before loving one another, my Bernard, it is necessary to know our names. You know mine, but yours as yet is unknown to me. Discover thyself, my brave knight. I will keep thy secret as I have kept thy love, hidden in my heart. I see through your conduct, my gallant champion : you hide your noble name, in order to proclaim it one day before the world as that of the deliverer of Scotland."

The young man was surprised at this unexpected speech ; his courage seemed to fail him, and he dropped the hand he held between his. "You know my name, Margaret," he said at last ; "I am the Esquire, Bernard Ross, page to the Lord Macduff. I have no secrets from you ; I have never deceived you. It breaks my heart to undeceive you now, if you have thought me more. I am not a nobleman, not even a knight ; but I will become both if you only love me as I love you. I offered you my love as Bernard Ross, and

you accepted it; but now I see that I am not enough for the daughter of Sir Hamish Campbell. I will therefore go to the battlefield, and make myself worthy of her. I fear nothing if you love me still. But, before going, tell me, oh! my beautiful and queenly love, will you accept my hand when I am worthy of thine?"

The proud girl had heard this speech as a criminal hears his death-sentence. She remained like a statue, leaning over the battlements; all the colour went out of her face, and her eyes looked vaguely upon her lover. All her long-cherished hopes fell to the ground: she who had refused knights and nobles, because she did not think them good enough for her, was now deeply in love, and at the mercy of a simple page, without name or friends! It was too hard a blow for her, and she could say nothing to that faithful and once loved, but now despised, lover.

Bernard noticed her indecision, observed her inner struggle, and, throwing himself once more at her feet, exclaimed, amidst his tears, "Oh! answer me, Margaret; answer me. This incertitude is worse than death. You yourself have just told me that you love me; have you so soon forgotten this love? Tell me, when I come back from Roxburgh, will you be mine?"

This last word was scarcely audible, but Margaret divined it, and, making a tremendous effort, answered, as she burst into a flood of tears, "*Never——never.*" She advanced two steps, and tried to fly, but her strength failed her, and she fell senseless to the ground.

Bernard looked at her for a second, knelt down, and kissed her fair forehead. "She is right," he murmured. "The descendant of the great Douglas cannot become the bride of a poor Squire. I was a madman to think otherwise.—It ruins my life. For her sake I would have been a hero; I would have tried to conquer a name and a title; but without her, only one thing remains for me—*death*," and saying those words, he threw himself over the ramparts, and plunged into the river below.

Six months had passed since that desperate scene between the lovers. Margaret had heard nothing of the fate of Bernard; she thought him with Lord Macduff; but her heart burned still with this first love; she could not forget his last words, and her cruel answer. She loved him more than ever. The war with England had come to a happy conclusion. The Scottish chiefs, helped by the little army of Lord Macduff, had persevered in the siege of Roxburgh castle until the garrison, receiving no relief from the English army in Northumberland, was obliged to surrender the place through famine. The English governor was put to death, and the death of the brave King of Scots was fully avenged. The assembled lords levelled the walls of the castle to the ground, and returned victorious from this enterprise which had cost them so dear.

Queen Margaret was delighted, and, to express her satisfaction, interceded with the young Earl of Argyle, and finished by promising the pardon of the Earl of

Douglas, and his restoration to all his former rights, if the Earl of Argyle married Margaret Campbell, the daughter of the Douglas' only sister, thus uniting the two most powerful families of the kingdom.

The Earl consented to this union; he had often heard the beauty of Margaret praised at the court, and he therefore accepted Sir Hamish's invitation to a great hunt on the banks of the Gare-Loch, in order to see his future bride, and judge for himself.

This news filled with pleasure the tenantry, and friends of Sir Hamish, and Lady Campbell who at last was going to see her long dreamt of wishes realised, surpassed herself in the preparations that she made in order to receive her noble guest.

Margaret heard this news with the greatest indifference; what was the world to her now that she had lost her lover? She, of all the inhabitants of Dunoon castle, was the only one who remained cool and self-possessed,

The day of the Earl's arrival came at last. All the inhabitants of the Clyde were ready to receive the chief of their clan in the park of the castle. The bells rung their merry peals from the early morning, the pipers played their gayest tunes upon their primitive but melodious instruments, the young girls sang as nightingales among the roses, all was gaiety and happiness that day. Inside the castle, Lady Campbell gave her last directions, and the arrangements of the horses and the hounds were superintended by Sir Hamish himself, for the great hunt that was to take

place on the morrow. All were gay and happy excepting our poor heroine, she for whom all these festivities were organized, she whom all hoped soon to see bride of the young chief, she alone was dull and miserable in the midst of the general rejoicings.

Bernard occupied all her thoughts even at this moment, when her ambitious plans were at last going to be realised. "Can he love me still?" she said to herself. Can he love me after that dreadful night on the ramparts? . . . Oh! if he has a heart, he must surely hate me now. I was so cruel to him, . . . and to myself! But what could I do; all my hopes had been destroyed, all my thoughts of happiness had vanished. I only did what I should have done, what the honour of my family obliged me to do, to refuse an unworthy love, although I should be obliged first to destroy my own heart. My uncle's life depends on my decision, and what is my poor heart compared to the honour of the house of Douglas? Now, thanks to me, he will again be taken into favour, and who knows if some day we do not end by occupying that throne that by right should be ours?"

Such were poor Margaret's thoughts, the two great passions of love and of ambition fighting continually in her tender bosom.

On the evening of that memorable day the Earl arrived, with all his retinue of pages, knights, and squires.

Sir Hamish Campbell received his noble guest in

the entrance hall, and after the ordinary salutations were exchanged, he conducted him to the great banqueting hall, where Lady Campbell and the other ladies of the castle, amongst whom was Alice, beautifully dressed in brocades and gold, and literally covered with precious stones, were assembled to greet the chief of their clan.

The Earl mistook this younger daughter for the renowned heiress of Dunoon, and, taking her hand, agreeably surprised by her beauty, he said, "In truth, my Lady Margaret, your beautiful face is even handsomer than I could ever have pictured to myself in my most pleasant dreams." Everybody was surprised at this mistake, but Lady Campbell corrected it by saying, "This is not my daughter Margaret, my Lord, but my second daughter, Alice; to-morrow you will see her, to-night she begs to be excused from paying her respects to your Lordship on account of a slight indisposition."

The young chief excused himself for his mistake, and, taking the hand of the mistress of the house, passed into the great dining hall, where a magnificent supper awaited them.

In the meantime Margaret had retired to her chamber, and, after sending away her attendants, she sent a message to her sister Alice, asking her to come to her as soon as possible.

Half an hour had passed away before Alice came to her sister's dormitory. She entered the door to find Margaret kneeling in front of an image of Christ

on the cross, in fervent prayer. When she saw her sister she rose, and, taking her by the hand, she showed her the image, saying at the same time, "Do you see that crucifix, Alice? It represents our earthly sorrows. Each of us is obliged to carry his cross, and at last we are all nailed to it, for each of us must be sacrificed for the rest of humanity."

Alice, grieved and surprised, tried to console her sister by describing to her the beautiful appearance of the Earl, his splendid dress, his numerous attendants, and the magnificence of his retinue. Margaret listened to her in silence, and when she had quite finished, she said, "What to me is the person of my bridegroom! I marry the Earl of Argyle, not the man that personifies him! If, instead of a handsome youth, he had been a deformed old man, I would have married him all the same. . . . My heart was never taken into consideration in this affair, no, not even by me. . . . My pride and my ambition were the only feelings consulted. . . . Oh, Alice, I am ashamed to own it, but I still love poor Bernard!"

After these sad words the two sisters separated. But before Alice returned to the hall where the guests were still assembled, her sister said to her, "Alice, I am afraid of being alone in this lonely part of the castle, now that there are so many strangers in it; lock the door from the outside, dear sister, and to-morrow you can give the key to my maid, in that way I shall feel safer, and will not be afraid of being molested through the night."

Alice went away, carrying with her the key, and Margaret lost no time in going to her bed, she was so worn out that she soon fell fast asleep.

An hour had hardly elapsed when a strange noise awoke her. She listened, and again and again she thought that she heard this strange noise. It seemed to come from the chimney of the apartment. Margaret, frightened out of her sleep, raised her head from her pillows, and, opening the heavy curtains that hung round the old bedstead, she saw a man descend slowly, whilst making the most extraordinary movements, down the chimney. This was a large and old fashioned fire-place, that occupied nearly the whole of one side of the chamber. Being summer, there was, however, no fire in it.

This man, whom she took at first to be a robber, had all his clothes in rags that hung about him like so many ribbons. His hair was long, and hung in the most complete disorder over his face, and the whole of his person was in such a dilapidated state, that it would surely have inspired any one with horror and disgust.

Margaret, pale with fright, and with all her beautiful black hair hanging around her, rushed towards the door thinking to escape before the strange person who had entered her apartment in such an extraordinary and unexpected manner could notice her. But the door was shut, and her sister had borne away the key.

The poor girl then, half dead with fright, could not restrain a cry of horror, she ran again to the bed,

and tried to hide herself among the hangings, but the strange man saw her, and rushing after her, began a chase around the chamber that would have horrified any living soul; the young girl screamed with all her force, and the man laughed with all his might, but the room was in the top of a lonely tower, and nobody could hear the dreadful cries of the one, or the awful laughter of the other.

At last her strength failed her, and she fell to the ground, the man who had come down the chimney took her in his arms, uttering a low, shrill, and penetrating cry.

Margaret raised her eyes, and for the first time she saw the face of the stranger. Then she recognised him. . . . It was Bernard Ross! . . . Her head went round and round, her heart beat with violence, her breathing ceased, and she fell senseless upon her bed!

Yes, it was Bernard Ross, but in what a state!

The six months that had passed since that memorable night, when his destiny had been so cruelly solved, had made of him a wild madman; those dreadful six months had transformed the gay cavalier into little more than a ferocious animal. His reason had gone after his love, and of the brave and gallant page, only remained the earthly body, deprived of his beauty, as of his senses.

One look had been enough to convince our poor heroine of the whole truth; it was too much for her, and she had fallen fainting upon the bed. Bernard

threw himself over her breathless form, and encircled her neck with his bare arms.

A whole hour passed like this, without either of them making the slightest movement. When at last Margaret recovered her senses, she found herself imprisoned in the arms of her former lover, who, noticing her movement, cried, with all the strength of his voice, "Now I have thee at last, cruel and proud woman, you who despised me, you who played with my heart. Ha! ha! ha! Now you will be mine—or die!" and the most diabolic laughter burst again from his lips that were covered with foam.

Margaret threw an anxious look around her, to see if there was any means of escape; but, alas! the door was locked from without, and this was the only exit available in her apartment.

She was obliged to submit to his embraces and his curses, to his kisses and his blows; for she had no power whilst thus imprisoned in his strong arms.

Thus passed the hours, that were more like centuries of torture for the poor girl. The sight of her lover in this condition had awakened in her the sentiments of the wrong she had brought upon his innocent head. Her conscience tormented her perhaps more than his blows. "It is thine own fault," it said to her; "you have turned his senses; you have destroyed his reason; you have extinguished his life."

She felt powerless in his grasp; her moral as well as her physical strength had disappeared. Now for the first time she saw the height that this love had

attained in the heart of this man ; now she perceived the vehemence of that love which she had not even imagined.

Bernard's reason had quite left him, but his love reigned still in his heart ; in all his ravings and fancies the name of Margaret was constantly mixed up ; and he pronounced that name, that once had seemed so sweet to her ear when pronounced by him, with the loudest and wildest cries.

Each hour seemed an age to the unhappy girl ; and when at last the day began to dawn in the east, it found the young girl changed into an old woman. The lovely features of the heiress of Dunoon had disappeared, as if fifty years had passed over her head during that single night !

At eight o'clock Alice came herself to open her sister's door. As soon as she saw the door open, Margaret gave a start, and, freeing herself at last from the madman's arms, ran through the passage and through the saloons, and did not stop till she entered the hall, where the Earl of Argyle and the whole family and their guests were assembled for the early meal.

The astonishment of all present was inexpressible. The person who entered the apartment was no longer the beautiful Margaret, the renowned heiress of Dunoon, but a worn-out old woman, enfeebled by intense suffering. Her haggard face had lost all its freshness and colour, and was disfigured with wrinkles that indicated the enormous sufferings she

had gone through. Her beautiful black tresses were now quite white; and altogether her aspect made one shudder with horror.

Such was the beautiful Margaret after this night of terror!

The general consternation was only augmented when the cause of this disaster rushed himself into the hall. The mystery was now explained, and several men rushed forward and secured the madman, who, pointing his finger towards Margaret, continued his horrible laughter.

The old doctor undertook the madman's care, and Lady Campbell and Alice conducted Margaret to her apartment. She had hardly strength to narrate what had happened, and finished by fainting again upon the bed.

Alice told them the unfortunate love affair of her sister, and her proud behaviour. Lady Campbell could not bring herself to believe in this love of her daughter's, that she had not even suspected.

To this dreadful scene succeeded a calm still more painfully trying. The Earl and all his retinue of gay cavaliers departed that afternoon, seeing that his presence was now useless in the castle; and with him disappeared all the gaiety and all the former happiness of the old place. The unhappy Margaret continued seriously ill from the results of that terrible and never-to-be-forgotten night. The fever consumed her by slow and marked degrees, and carried her to the very verge of the grave; but God did not want

to take her until she had expiated the harm that her pride and ambition had brought upon her lover and upon her family.

After three months of constant pain and suffering, the poor woman slowly recovered. The first inquiries she made when she recovered her senses were about Bernard's fate. The doctor then informed her that he was a great deal better, and that by degrees he was regaining his lost mind, thanks to the great care they had taken with him.

Then she also learned, for the first time, that on the night of their interview he had been found by some fishermen in the river, that at first they had thought him dead, but that finding he lived, they had transported him to their hut, where he recovered his health but not his reason. Since then he had been kept for six months in a cave that they had discovered near the castle, from which he had run away the day of the Earl's arrival, when the fishermen who kept it had forgot to shut the door in the general rejoicings.

Margaret's first care, when she had recovered her health, was to see her lover; she had suffered so much during that dreadful night that had robbed her of her health, of her beauty, and of her youth, that she could not banish from her thoughts the idea that he who had been so constant, and who was innocent of all, should suffer for ever, and for her cause.

Her heart was on the whole good and noble, and was touched by his constancy, and by his present

most miserable condition, and from that moment she dedicated herself exclusively to soothe his sufferings, and to try to restore to him the reason she had been the cause of his losing.

Through her constant care, and with the doctor's skill, he soon recovered his reason, and what was his joy when he found himself in the arms of the Margaret he had so much loved !

Alice, in the meantime, had taken the place of her elder sister in the castle of Dunoon. She was now the great attraction there, and her gaiety and her smiling face succeeded in time to restore to the old castle some of its former gaiety, and to her unfortunate family a great deal of their lost happiness.

The Earl of Argyle, who had been struck with Alice's beauty from the moment he had seen her on the night of his arrival, asked her hand from her father, who was, of course, overjoyed at the idea. The Queen herself approved of the union, and the proud and ambitious Lady Campbell saw the dream of her life realised at last in the person of her second daughter. The idea that her brother would perhaps recover his estates and return to Scotland, was enough to flatter her pride and ambition, and to make her forget the blow she had received in her ambitious hopes for her eldest daughter.

The marriage took place in the chapel of the castle, and all those who assisted at it returned convinced that the newly married pair were the happiest couple in life, but they certainly would not have sustained

this with such determination if they had seen in a corner of the chapel Bernard and his Margaret, who had obtained that very day the permission from Sir Hamish to solemnise their union, and who indeed presented the most perfect picture of felicity that one can imagine.

CHAPTER VI.

THE KYLES OF BUTE.

WHEN I had finished this legend I felt two tears upon my hand.

Silence reigned for a few seconds, and then was broken by the sweet voice of my young bride, who said, "Poor Margaret! she really deserved to be happy after all she had suffered. Yet although I pity her, I cannot say that I admire your heroine, she was too haughty, and in her heart ambition occupied a greater place than love."

I took her hand again in mine, and said to her, "And you my angel, you who are so beautiful and so good, what would you have done if you had been placed like her between pride and love?"

"I would have sacrificed all for my lover, if I could not first have extinguished with my tears the flame that consumed my heart, I could never have had the cold courage to sacrifice my love to the honour of my name. But, thanks to the blessed virgin, this was never demanded of me, on the contrary, my mother's wishes were always mine. And your love filled the whole of my heart, so that there was no room there for any other sentiment. When

one dreads loving, it is only because that love is not a true one. Those inner struggles cannot proceed from a true holy passion, for such a passion would know no opposition."

"Oh my Conchita," I exclaimed, moved by those words, "let us return due thanks to God that such a sacrifice was never needed in order to secure thy happiness; if your impressionable heart had been put to the trial of having to choose between your family and your love, I think you would have perished in the struggle, you who are so innocent, so loving, so obedient, you would have died before taking such a resolution."

"Yes, Walter, I should have died, perhaps, although I am not so weak as you suppose, but, thanks to God's mercy, this was quite unnecessary in our case, and I give Him thanks night and morning for preserving me from all those trials and temptations that the greater part of lovers must suffer before obtaining the reward of their love."

"You judge the world according to the novels you have read, perhaps, my beloved Conchita. In real life love's prize is not so difficult to obtain as it is painted in those books. How many are married from the first to the one they love, as it has happened to us! It is true that some times one mistakes a passing admiration for a true love, but this is only when the mind is guided by ambition, by selfishness, or by the persuasions of our friends or relatives, rather than by our own feelings. The heart cannot be mistaken.

And one cannot fail to be happy if one marries the bride of one's choice, unless, like Arthur—

'He loves better to bide by wood and river
Than in bower of his dame Queen Guinevere;
For he left that lady so lonely of cheer,
To follow adventures of danger and fear,
And little the frank-hearted monarch did wot
That she smiled in his absence on brave Lancelot.'

"For if such is the case, we must not wonder that the beautiful wife should seek in another the love she misses in her companion, and that she fills the heart with Lancelot's love that ought to have been filled with Arthur's only. How often this happens, however; how often misery and trouble are brought upon whole families by the negligence of one! And how many unhappy wives finish by exclaiming as Guinevere—

'I wanted warmth and colour, which I found
In Lancelot. Now I see thee what thou art—
Thou art the highest, and most human, too,
Nor Lancelot, nor another.'

"But then, it is not every husband who pardons so royally as Arthur did.

"Life, however, is not all winning, and we must expect to lose sometimes; nothing is as perfect as we dream it to be, and nothing is as bad as we imagine. We expect to find a perfect woman for a wife, but we should first be sure that we are perfect ourselves.

"If life is not all uphill work, neither is it all play, and the difficulties and obstacles only make the thing more valued when once won.

"If the love affairs that have so much interested you in the novels you have read had been accomplished without the smallest difficulty, surely they would have lost all their interest in your eyes. Sorrow, suffering, struggles, numerous obstacles, oppositions, and difficulties are much more interesting than happiness and true love.

"Our whole moral existence depends, however, on this word 'Love.'

"If we love an impossibility, we perish with it. If we love with hope, we waste our life, but we do not end its duration. But if we love and are beloved, then our lives are indeed supremely happy—sweet and serene as the heaven from whence love comes.

"This sort of love does not do for novels. In them the interest must augment as we advance in the book, and excitement and adventure are required to make up the plot."

Conchita listened to me in silence, and when I had finished, she remarked, "Sometimes I have wondered if our love was of the same class as that described in novels. I compared the love I had for you, Walter, with those all-consuming passions of the Lorenzas, Rebeccas, Claras and Helens, of which we read in the most celebrated novels; and I found that my love was different from that felt by those women. And then, everything went so well in our case, everybody was so glad at our union, that sometimes I thought, 'This cannot be love! This has no analogy whatever with the love of which I have read.'"

I could not restrain a smile. "And yet," I said, "you see, my darling, that after all we love each other as much as Romeo and Juliet, or Faust and Marguerite ever could love on earth. It is true that the history of our love would make a very poor plot for a tragedy or a novel ; but can it be less real for this ?"

The steamer stopped, and our conversation was interrupted. We had just entered the bay of Rothesay, and a moment after we reached the pier.

I turned my head to have a look at the town, and I was astonished at the magnificence of the scene before me.

Rothesay is situated at the extreme end of a large bay on the north side of the Island of Bute. In front of the harbour runs the Clyde, that stretches itself in every direction, forming an innumerable succession of lakes and bays, some of considerable extent. On the other side of the river rise the Highlands, always imposing, and always romantic and beautiful.

The town is built in the shape of an amphitheatre ; and on its highest part rises the old castle, the feudal residence of the ancient kings, and that, as an old man who is sitting next to me assures me, was built in the year 1100. He also informs me that Robert II., who rebuilt it, created his son David Duke of Rothesay, the first dukedom conferred in this country.

I also remembered that the celebrated Countess of Mar entertained here Sir William Wallace after the siege of Dumbarton, and how, in 1685, the Earl of Argyle burnt it to the very ground.

At ten o'clock we left Rothesay, and soon after we entered the famous Kyles of Bute.

This strait is formed by the northern coasts of the Island of Bute and by the mountains of Cowel, in the Highlands, forming thus a passage between the mouth of the Clyde and Loch Fyne.

What first attracted our attention on entering this sound was Loch Striven, a most romantic arm of the sea, that runs for a long way between the mountains into the mainland.

Conchita, who sketches very well, wanted to draw those peaceful waters, in which are reflected so many wonderful mountains and so many vaporous clouds; but one moment after this glorious dream-like scene had vanished from our sight.

But another view, no less beautiful, was now beginning to unfold itself before us. As we advanced, the mountains seemed to rise in height and splendour, and their reflection became more and more distinct upon the water, that like a mirror surrounded us. The vegetation was not particularly fine; but what can be compared with those grey and imposing rocks and cliffs against which the waters dash in foam, and sparkle like diamonds in the summer sun, with those solitary but magnificent lochs of Scotland that say so much to the imagination and to the heart?

Colintrive is situated half way up the strait, and from this place to the entrance of Loch Ridden a beautiful valley divides the mountains.

"Right through the quarry, we beheld
A scene of soft and lovely hue!
Where blue and grey, and tender green,
Together make as sweet a scene
As ever human eye did view.
Beneath the clear blue sky we see
A little field of meadow ground;
But field or meadow name it not—
Call it of earth a small green plot,
With rocks encompassed round."

Near this spot four lonely islands rise from the blue waves, and they seem to invite the traveller, already bewildered with the beauty of the scenery, to rest in their green meadows.

The Scotch gentleman by my side told me that in one of those islands, that of Eillangheirrig (name that is even more difficult to pronounce than to spell) existed once the famous fortress that the Earl of Argyle defended in 1685, when the Duke of Monmouth contemplated an invasion into Scotland. The Earl of Argyle, now Duke of the same name, is the powerful Mac-Callum More of the Highlands, and the chief of the clan Campbell. In the feudal times of old this nobleman exercised an unlimited power in this wild and warlike part of the island.

The Kyles of Bute end near the entrance of Loch Fyne, with some steep rocks called Ruban Point, on the other side of which the wide waves of the Atlantic roll with all their grandeur.

We were told we had passed the finest scenery, and so we took advantage of this to go down into the saloon to see if there were any signs of dinner. When

we arrived there, however, they told us that dinner would not be till two o'clock. So we returned on deck, and from thence ascended to the bridge, in order to see better the distant island of Arran, where,

“ In a lone convent's silent cell,
The lovely Maid of Lorn remained,
Unmarried, unknown, while Scotland far
Resounded with the din of war ;
And many a month, and many a day,
In calm seclusion wore away.”

For a long, long time we remained on the bridge, contemplating together the grim and mysterious peaks of Scotland that rose before our sight, and the blue waves of the ocean that rolled in all their majesty to break upon the virgin shores of America.

“ So brilliant was the landward view,
The ocean so serene ;
Each puny wave in diamonds roll'd
O'er the calm deep, where lines of gold
With azure strove, and green.
The hill, the vale, the tree, the tower,
Glow'd with the tints of evening's hour,
The beech was silver sheen ;
The wind breathed soft as lover's sigh,
And oft renewed, seem'd oft to die,
With breathless stop between.
O who, with speech of war and woes,
Would wish to break the soft repose
Of such enchanting scene.”

“ What a true image of our life is this ocean now before us !” I exclaimed, contemplating the waters that rolled beneath my feet, “ The soul, as the pilot, traverses the ocean of life, knowing the sand-

banks and hidden rocks that the tranquil surface hides from the anxious looks he casts before him. Can man appease the furious waves of the great ocean of his existence, which sometimes in their folly would rise to kiss the stars of the impossible heaven?

“If you want to direct the fragile heart of humanity, try first to bridle the tempest, to stop the hurricane, to quiet the furious waves, and to do away with the hidden rocks of life. The waves of the sea succeed each other even as our lives. Oh! nothing, nothing shows us better the immense power of God than this endless ocean, that seems to obey his slightest sign! For God disposes of everything; nothing occurs on the earth that has not its mission, the tempests, the hurricanes, even the hidden rocks in our path have their mission, and do their work, as dictated by the supreme creator, the same in the seas of the earth as in those of our existence.

“It is from him that we receive light, the greatest of benefits that He can give us. He moves the wind, governs the seas, gives freshness and purity to the stream, and verdure to the spring. He fills our fields with flowers, and our groves with song.

“It is he who inspires us with the religion that lights up our understanding. He moves our hearts, refreshes our worn-out spirits. It is He who gives innocence to youth; it is to Him that we owe the flowers that we find in our path; it is He who sings in our hearts, who gives double life to matter, and who gives eternal life to the dead.

"It is He who comforts the heart in this ocean of tears, and makes of two souls one, in order that they may worship Him as He should be worshipped, in order that they may render Him adoration in spirit and in truth."

Carried away by my devotional reveries, I had forgotten, as usual, all that surrounded me, and I only beheld Conception, who was looking at me with one of her most angelic looks, while her beautiful black eyes were filled with tears.

"You weep, my angel," I said. "Yes, I weep, but it is with happiness," and I took her in my arms, and pressed her lovely form to my heart.

How happy we were at that moment! How happy! Ah! none can tell.

The hours passed, the sea and its islands disappeared from our sight, we entered Loch Fyne. And when I beheld the deep, dark, mysterious, and solemn sheet of water that stretched itself before me, I could not restrain myself from exclaiming, as did Robert the Bruce—

"St Mary! what a scene is here!
I've traversed many a mountain strand
Abroad and in my native land,
And it has been my lot to tread
Where safety, more than pleasure led;
Thus many a waste I've wander'd o'er,
Climbed many a crag—cross'd many a moor—
But by my halidom,
A scene so rude, so wild as this,
Yet so sublime in barrenness,
Ne'er did my wandering footsteps press,
Where'er I happ'd to roam."

The view now opened before our astonished eyes, high rocks rose from the very depths of the sea, a profound abyss opened at either side of the loch, and the wild waters urged their way, running inwards into the mainland in solemn perspective, yet ever and anon, as ocean heaves and falls, rendered visible in its far sanctuary, by the broad and flashing light reflected by the foaming surges sweeping onwards from below !

“ Where, as to shame the temples deck'd
By skill of earthly architect,
Nature herself, it seem'd would raise
A minster to her Maker's praise !
Not for a meaner use ascend
Her columns, or her arches bend ;
Nor of a theme less solemn tells
That mighty surge that ebbs and swells,
And still, between each awful pause,
From the high vault an answer draws
In varied tune prolong'd and high,
That mocks the organ's melody.
Nor doth its entrance front in vain
To brave old Scotland's holy fane,
That nature's voice might seem to say,
' Well hast thou done, frail child of clay !
Thy humble powers that stately shrine
Task'd high and hard—but witness mine.' ”

The scene again changes, and now it is a vast plain that extends before our eyes, a vast plain on a rising ground, the whole seeming to rise out of the lake of the waters in which it is seen reflected,—forming truly a picture of unrivalled beauty, and one on which it is delightful to dwell even in remembrance.

This sort of scenery continues till Ardrishaig, the terminus of our trip, and where we arrived at half-past twelve o'clock.

The steamer, however, only stopped ten minutes there, after which our return journey commenced.

We dined at two in the buffet in the saloon. The meal was very good, but we were in such a hurry to get on deck again that we could hardly enjoy it.

The night came with its gigantic paces over the beautiful scene, and with it, the mist soon enveloped the whole, obscuring it from our eyes, as a dream of beauty is obscured by the fancies of our vivid imagination.

"The evening mists, with ceaseless change,
Now clothed the mountain's lofty range,
Now left their foreheads bare,
And round the skirts their mantle furl'd,
Or on the sable waters curl'd,
Or on the eddying breezes whirl'd,
Dispersed in middle air,
And oft, condensed, at once they lower,
When brief and fierce, the mountain shower
Pours like a torrent down ;
And when returns the sun's glad beams,
Whiten'd with foam a thousand streams
Leap from the mountain's crown."

Once more we passed the open sea, where the surface of the water is so marvellously studded with

"All the fairy crowds
Of islands that together lie
As quietly as spots of sky
Among the evening clouds."

Once more we entered the Kyles of Bute, which

looked even grander and nobler now that the shades of evening were falling fast upon the mountains, and the moon lighted with her silvery beams the projecting rocks.

Conchita took my hand in one of hers, and with the other she pointed to the moon in the east, now in her first quarter or new moon, while she said, with a melodious accent that thrilled my heart—

“See how beautiful and how pure she rises to-night in her birth over the radiant skies, she, like our love, of which she is such a good image, begins to-night to shed her serene and peaceful light, and neither clouds nor mists dare oppose her march. But to-morrow, in her last quarter, will she be still the same? Will the passing clouds and the earthly mists respect her purity? Alas! who knows!

“There is a tradition in my country, at which, of course, you will laugh, for you laugh at all superstitions, and it is that the young bride who salutes the new moon in her first quarter, when for the first time she sees her after her marriage, can ask from her what she will, and it is sure to be granted.

“I believe in this, Walter, and I ask her that our love shall not change as does her phases, and that she may shine upon us as now for ever this sweet, this loving . . . HONEYMOON!”

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST SUNDAY.

THE next day happened to be Sunday, an exceedingly heavy day in all Protestant countries, but more so in Scotland, where the fourth commandment is carried to the most absurd extremes. Nothing is done here on the Sabbath of the Lord excepting, perhaps, a few people getting drunk, which, of course, is quite in accordance with God's word, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, . . . for the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, . . . wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it!" Such is the Calvinistic way of keeping the Scriptures!

To illustrate this curious fancy, I will relate an anecdote that happened to myself on the morning of that day. It was at the hotel at Dumbarton. I had just got up, and rang the bell for some hot water for shaving. A waiter answered my call. "I want some hot water, if you please," I said.

"And for what do you want the hot water?"

"For shaving," said I.

"Ye canna have hot water on the Lord's day for sic a thing as shaving," said the waiter, horror struck at the idea. I insisted again, but with the same effect.

"Na, na," said he, "ye canna have it." Necessity is the mother of invention, 'tis said, and this aroused mine. I thought that if I could arrange the order in such a way that it would not affect his religious scruples, he would bring it directly. I therefore proposed that I should like some *toddy*, and told him to bring me the materials for making it, consisting of whisky, sugar, and *boiling water*. These he brought without the least demur. I gave him the whisky, which he drank, and I used the hot water !

It was the first Sunday after our marriage, and Conchita, who already began to think that she ought long before this to have thrown herself at the feet of her holy patroness, "*the blessed Virgin of the Conception*," felt very much annoyed when she heard that there was not such an edifice in Dumbarton as a Roman Catholic chapel. Her first thought was to go to Glasgow and hear mass there. "Great God ! great God !" she exclaimed, overflowing with tears, is it possible that I have not been able to assist at the holy sacrament of the mass since my marriage !" And the superstitious young girl put the fault on me, saying, "Oh, Walter, why have you brought me to this land of heretics, where the holy religion of God is unknown !"

She cried and insisted so much about going to Glasgow, menacing me with the wrath of heaven, that at last I consented to go to the station to see if there was a train that would take us to that town. But unfortunately there was none. "The trains

don't run during the hours of divine service," said the station master, in a very dignified way.

When I carried this news back to Conchita, she became furious. "Oh Walter, it is your fault!—but all can yet be managed, let them put on a special train for us, and we shall still arrive in time."

I went again to the station, but with no better luck. "It is a matter of life and death," I ventured to say to the station master, but he looked shocked at my proposition, scandalized at the mere idea of running a train at ten o'clock on Sunday morning. "You must thank the English that we run a train on Sunday afternoon," said the Scotchman, "formerly it would have been considered a sacrilege; as for putting on a train this morning, it would be quite impossible. Go to church now, Sir, and in the afternoon we will take you to Glasgow; we are not Jews or heretics here."

More entreaties would have been useless. I offered any amount of money, for I knew that Conchita would never pardon me this, but all was useless, and I had to go back to the hotel with my dreaded answer. Fancy my being a mediator between the Roman Catholic girl and the Calvinistic station master!

Conchita would not listen to such reasons; blinded by her own superstitions, she could not understand those of other people.

I tried to reconcile her, saying, that not to hear mass under the circumstances could not be a sin, we

must therefore conform ourselves to the circumstances. "We have done all that was in our power to arrive in time at a Catholic church, and you see that it has all been useless."

"I will do penance for this," she said, "for three days I won't eat any meat, and then, perhaps, God will forgive me."

I found it hard to restrain a laugh when I heard this, it sounded so strange to my ear! but I supposed it was all right, and I said no more.

We went to the window, which looked on to a kirk, as the churches are called here. The people were going in; the service was going to begin.

My young wife was looking anxiously at them with her great dark eyes veiled with tears.

"What would you say to entering with them into that kirk?" I ventured to suggest.

"Are you mad, Walter?" she said, casting upon me an astonished look. "How can you even think of entering that place of perdition. Oh, never!—— never!"

"Then, I suppose, you think that all those good people are condemned for entering that *place of perdition*, as you call their church?"

"Of course, Walter. Can you believe otherwise, and call yourself a Christian?"

"Yes," I said, "I do call myself a Christian; but before being a Christian I was born a man, and as such I cannot possibly believe that God would be less generous and just than I, and that He will punish

those poor sinners for ever, because they do not happen to belong to the Roman Church, and because they thought they were doing right in attending their church. All places are equally good to worship the Creator in. Has He not made the whole earth? Does He not dwell everywhere?"

"God is the almighty Creator, and He liveth everywhere; but he cannot dwell in those places of iniquity, where wrong doctrines are taught, and the devil is worshipped instead of the Holy Virgin."

"Is that your idea of a Protestant church?"

"Yes," she said, with firmness, "and not mine only, but that of all good Christians; and for that we ought to pray and do penance, so that we may try to save those miserable sinners that condemn themselves unawares."

"So, the penance of one washes away the sins of another?"

"Ah! Walter," she continued, without answering my sarcastic question, "when I think that so many millions of men are condemned every day for not knowing the doctrines of salvation of our mother the Church, I seem to go mad——yes, mad with desperation. Oh! if I could only suffer myself in order to save the rest of humanity, I would sacrifice myself without hesitation."

Those unselfish words, so full of faith and so disinterested, softened my heart, and made me exclaim, while I embraced her, "Oh! Conchita, how infinitely more pure and heavenly, and how much more merci-

ful, are your sentiments than those taught by your Church! You would willingly sacrifice yourself in order to save your brethren, you, who are but a weak woman! And can it be possible that God, who is all-powerful, and to whom it would cost nothing to make all His children happy, condemns them instead to an eternity of torments?"

"Do not say such sacrilegious things, Walter. If God punishes, it is because He is obliged to punish. He can pardon the sin, but cannot do away with its consequences. His pardon, thus obtained, would be a great act of mercy on His part; but it could not be of any use to the sinner. He must suffer for his sins before he can obtain the absolution that God will bestow upon him after his contrition and his penance. Without those, the absolution of the priest is useless. Only a very few are damned for ever; the greater part of Christian sinners will go to purgatory, where they will do penance for their transgressions, until they are perfect enough to enter the kingdom of God."

"You think very well, Conchita, and your arguments are conclusive. That doctrine of purgatory is perhaps the most philosophical of those taught by the Roman Church, although I do not quite agree with it concerning the nature of the place; in fact, I do not think it is a place at all, but rather certain conditions of the mind. But in its foundation it is quite philosophical, for none are good enough, wise enough, or spiritual enough in this world to enter all at once

into heaven. Heaven is the supreme of happiness, and none can be perfectly happy till he knows all things, is all that is good, and loves God above all.

"This love is the perfection of our spiritual life, and can only be reached when one is the possessor of supreme knowledge, supreme goodness, and spiritual exaltation, for how can a poor creature love its creator if it does not understand Him? Man may obey God's laws, he may worship his maker, but he can only *love* him when he can understand him, and appreciate his works.

"The Catholic doctrine admits the possibility of progress after death, it does not deprive the soul of its faculties after it leaves the body, as the Protestants do; this is the great advantage that the Church of Rome has over the reformed churches; according to which man's soul goes either to heaven or to hell without remission. This is very disheartening, for as no one who thinks about himself with impartiality can imagine he is good enough to go straightway to heaven, there only remains for the poor sinner the bottomless pit of hell, always open at his feet. And this has made so many good Christians exclaim, like the poor old north countryman, 'I canna go to the church, look 'ee, they'r allus a readin o' cusses, and damnin, and hell fire, and the like, and I canna stomach it. What for shall they go and say as all poor old wimmin o' tha parish is gone to the deil, 'cause they picks up a stick or teu in 'e hedge, or likes to mumble a charm or teu o'er their churnin'? Them

old wimmin be rare an' good in ither things. When I broke my ankle three years ago, old Dame Stuckley kem o'er, i' tha hail and tha snow, a matter of five mile and more, and she turned o' eighty; and she nursed me, and tidied the place, and did all as was wanted to be done, 'cause Mary was away waking somewheris; and she'd never let me gie her aught for it. And I heard ta parson tell her as she were sold to hell! 'cause the old soul have a bit of belief like in witch-stones, and allus sets one aside her spinnin' jenny, so that the thrid shanna knot nor break. Ta parson he said as how God cud mak tha thrid run smooth, or knot it, just as he chose, and 'twas wicked to think she could cross his will; and the old dame, she said, "Weel Sir, I dinna b'lieve tha Almighty would ever spite a poor old crittur like me, don't ee think it? But if we've no help our-sells i' this world, what for have He gi'ed us the trouble o' tha thrid to spin? And why no han't he made tha shirts and tha sheets an' tha hose grow theersells?" And ta parson niver answered her that, he only said she was fractious and blasphemous. Now she warn't; she spoke i' all innocence, and she mint what she said—she mint it. Parsons niver can answer ye plain, right-down, natural questions like this'n, and that's why I wanna go to the church.*

"There was more truth in his words than the old labourer knew himself. The Church of England, as

* Ouida's Puck.

that of Scotland, is not adapted to the moral wants of the men of the nineteenth century, not even to those of the most ignorant of countrymen. The reformed church left much behind it that was good and true, and for this reason, during this nineteenth century the fallen Church of Rome is rising gradually from its oppressed state, and recovering its ancient dominion; for during the eighteenth century the influence of the Church of Rome was constantly on the downfall. Doubt made great conquests in all the Catholic countries of Europe, and in some countries it obtained a complete ascendancy. The Papal power got so weak in those times that it almost became an object of laughter for the infidels, and of pity more than hatred for the Protestants.

“But now none who calmly reflect on what has passed in Spain, in Italy, in America, in Ireland, in the low countries, in Prussia, and even in France and England, during the last few years, can doubt that the power which the Catholic Church has over the hearts of men is, although very small, greater than it was when the *Encyclopædia* and the *Philosophical Dictionary* were first published. ‘It is very strange,’ as Macaulay says, who, if I remember right, also thought as I do on the subject, ‘that not the moral revolution of the eighteenth century, nor the counter-moral revolution of the nineteenth, have been able to augment the power of the Protestants. During the first period, what the Catholics lost was also lost by Christianity; during the second, what Christianity

gained, was also gained by the Catholics. One would naturally suppose that a great many minds on their way from superstition to infidelity, or from infidelity to superstition, would have stopped at an intermediary point, but nothing of the kind. It is an historical fact, often noticed, that the Christian nations who did not adopt the principles of the Reformation before the end of the sixteenth century, have never adopted them since. The Catholic communions have become infidel since then, or they have united themselves again to the Catholic Church, but not one of them has become Protestant.'

"Thus expresses himself the great thinker of England, and with what reason. The Catholic Church has hundreds of defects and faults, and it even teaches several doctrines to which reason and philosophy is opposed, but in spite of this, it is superior to the Protestant churches, and for this reason, hundreds of Protestants turn Catholic every year.

"For several reasons the Church of Rome is superior to the reformed churches, but for none so much as for the doctrine of purgatory. The Protestants believe that those who are not good go straight to hell. Is this possible? The Catholics at least believe in an intermediate state, purgatory.

"We all must acknowledge that we are neither perfect nor good enough to enter the kingdom of God, whatever that may be; but that for this reason we must go to hell, and for all eternity, seems to me

to be rushing into the other extreme. Nobody, according to my ideas of humanity, is wicked enough to deserve an endless punishment."

"But my confessor has always told me that we are all the sons of sin, that we are born naturally wicked, and that we only differ from each other by the propensities we have towards sin. He has often told me, also," she continued, "that life is a constant struggle with sin that would precipitate us into the abyss that is always yawning at our feet, and in which we should undoubtedly perish, if it were not for the beautiful religion taught to us by Jesus, that detains us on the verge of the precipice."

"Do not believe in those blasphemies," I said. "God would be the agent of evil if he had not placed in each of our hearts the magnetic needle that is to guide us towards heaven. Our conscience is our compass, let us always steer the vessel of our lives by it over the rough seas of the world. According to the doctrine you have just mentioned, Conchita (I am going to show you its absurdity), man was alone and without a guide in the world, till the day when the Church came to correct the imperfect work of God. God made man as good as he could, I suppose, but soon afterwards, he finds Himself baffled by His own creation. He therefore sends His only Son into the world, to suffer and do penance for the sins of men. But as for all the thousands of men that died before His coming, or for those that die without hearing His word, they are condemned to eternal

damnation. All this is, according to you, very just and proper, I suppose !”

“No,” said Conchita, “God made man good, but He also made him free, and therefore He could not control his free-will. Man sins, and God must punish him accordingly. He would not be just if He did otherwise, (you see, Walter, that I put the subject quite in your style, so that it may appear most reasonable in your eyes, for you lack faith most sadly, however, I hope to give you even *that* in time). The glory of God demands the punishment of sin, heaven would not be heaven if sin were admitted therein.”

“You reason admirably, Conchita; but I must remind you that God made His children weak, innocent, and ignorant, and that He placed them in a garden of forbidden fruit, without the necessary knowledge of what was good for them. We sin, and therefore we suffer the consequences which are the punishment—but not an eternal punishment—that would be as useless as it would be cruel. God wants the sinner to be convinced of his sins, and to live; He does not want him to remain for ever in sin. We are not born, as your confessor told you, wicked; neither are we sons of sin; but we are ignorant and weak, and the world in which we live is full of temptations. The sin does not proceed from our forefather Adam, but from our inexperience. God is not baffled by His own creation, but is trying, on the contrary, to make that creation more perfect

by means of temptations that He puts in our path, in order to teach us what is really good by experience, and to develope our good qualities that would otherwise remain for ever dormant in our hearts. We fail sometimes to overcome those temptations, and we give way to what, in the eyes of men, is wickedness, though in reality it is only ignorance. This is sin.

"The devil can exist only in the imagination of the ignorant. This myth is a relic of the times when men believed in centaurs and mermaids, in sirens and fairies ; when, to account for the vicissitudes of nature, all objects, and even the elements themselves, were deified. Men were then obliged to acknowledge the existence of imaginary divinities, that presided over every mountain, river, sea and wind, in order to hide their gross ignorance respecting the phenomena of nature. Every quality was then also personified, and made into a deity : thus beauty was represented by Venus, wisdom by Minerva, good by God, and evil by the Devil. In those days of ignorance and superstition, man was taught that everything had its opposite ; and as light had its opposite in darkness, so God had His opposite in the Devil. But now we have science and reason to guide us ; and as the first tells us that light has no opposite, darkness being only a condition, not an entity—the second tells us that God can have no opposite, being almighty, and the Devil, being only a representation of evil, is not a reality.

"The same as to-day we should laugh at anyone who really believed in the existence of Venus, because there is beauty in the world; or in that of her son Cupid, because there is love therein; so we ought to laugh at those who tell us that there is a Devil in the universe, because there is sin therein.

"Temptation comes from God, and from God only, as everything that is good comes from Him; and what is there so beneficial to humanity as temptation? Temptation is the goad that helps us forward; and if it were not for this whip, that wakes the sleeping man, he would remain slave to his instinct, as the animals eating the grass of the prairies and the fruit of the wild woods. It is the temptation of living better that made him discover the grain of corn, domesticate the animals, raise the hut, cultivate his intellect.

"America tempted Columbus in his dreams, and a new world was obtained by this temptation. The hope of deciphering the enigma of human life tempted Pythagoras, and speculative philosophy appeared in the world. The ambition of Cæsar tempted him to conquer northern Europe, and with his armies he carried the civilization of the great empire of Rome to the wildest regions of the world. Guttenberg was tempted with the desire to render human thought permanent, and from this temptation proceed these types that now meet your eye. Could anyone but God have tempted man to do such things?

"It is true that temptations lead man sometimes

to sin ; but even this is as good as a lesson to him. He may fail twenty times in doing a thing, but if he persevere he will most certainly do it at last. Sin proceeds from our ignorance, not from a mythological devil. God can know no rivals, for

“All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul ;
That changed through all, and yet in all the same ;
Great in the earth, as in the ethereal frame ;
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glowes in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
Lives through all life, extends through all extent ;
Spreads undivided, operates unspent ;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart ;
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns :
To Him no high, no low, no great, no small ;
He fills, He bounds, connects, and equals all.*

“Yes, as Lamartine expresses it :—

“*Le monde en s'éclairant s'élève à l'unité.*”

* Pope's “*Essay on Man.*”

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH.

CONCHITA looked at me in silence. She could not deny the truth of my words, although they were so contrary to the doctrines she had learned in the convent. But she had a pure and investigating mind, and very good common sense. She believed with a blind faith in the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, but still she wished to hear what there was to be said against them.

This gave me courage, and after a brief pause, I began as follows:—

“I told you just now that I thought the Roman Catholic religion preferable in a great many points to the Protestant, but I must also tell you that I do not quite agree with it in every respect. You, my darling wife, will undoubtedly see, with your clear sense of what is right and just, that the Church that you believe infallible is far from satisfying the inquiring minds of the men of the nineteenth century; it was based, by the early fathers of the church (who, you must admit, did not enjoy the scientific light of the nineteenth century) on the teachings of Christ, and you know that these teachings were not *final*, for Christ

said to his disciples that he had more to tell ('other things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now,') and why did he not tell them all at once? Because, as he said, they could not have comprehended him; because all teaching must be gradual; it would be impossible for a boy to begin at the top of the class, and much less at the top of the highest class. He must climb up step by step, and gain each step by his own labour before he makes it his own: each truth that he masters enables him to see a higher truth beyond, for as Carlyle said, 'The goal of yesterday will be the starting-point of to-morrow.'

"It is impossible for *man* ever to see the creator as he really is, he can only learn by degrees to see him in his *works*, and these are only now beginning to be comprehended by man; thus you see that each century of progress serves to lift a little corner of the veil of ignorance that hides him from mortal sight. The tendency of man is ever to make God in his own image, as man improves he will improve the image that he forms in his own mind, therefore his God will be grander and greater as man advances in knowledge and wisdom. Even St Augustin, the great father of the Roman Church, was obliged to acknowledge this, and thus he said in these true words which the modern church is so apt to forget, that 'the councils that take place in particular regions, or in provinces, must submit without any difficulty to the authority of the general councils formed by the whole of the Christian world; and even these general

councils themselves are often corrected by those which follow them (*sæpe priora posterioribus emendari*) when what before was hidden is discovered by experience, and what was then unknown is at last known.'—*De Bapt.*, lib. II., c. iii.

"Thus, had Christ said all that he could have said at that time, had he even pictured to them the God we behold to-day, his hearers would not have comprehended him.

God is God from the creation ;
 Truth alone is man's salvation :
 But the God that now you worship, soon shall be
 Your God no more ;
 For the soul in its unfolding,
 Evermore its thought remoulding,
 Learns more truly in its progress
 How to love and to adore.

"But the Christianity that is taught in the churches now-a-days is not, by a great deal, that which Jesus taught in Judea one thousand eight hundred years ago ; and as I have heard several great thinkers observe, 'if he were to come *into* the world again, the first thing he would do would be to reform modern Christianity.'

"The change effected in the Christian doctrines has nevertheless come about most naturally.

"When St Paul and the other apostles introduced the new religion into Rome and her empire, they adorned it, so to speak, with the doctrines of the pagan ; and when later on, in the time of Constantine and his mother Helena, it was established de-

nitively in the city of the Cæsars, by far the greater part of its rites and ceremonies were Pagan. These have naturally remained among the Latin races, to which they were so well adapted; while the Jewish ones, which in the same way had been grafted on the Egyptian, that were dictated to quite another race of men, perished and were forgotten. Later on, Luther and the other reformers tried to establish anew the old and primitive Christianity, and with some success. The same, more or less, had occurred in the first centuries of the Church in the time of Arian, and again, later on, when the Greek Church was divided from that of Rome. St Athanasius and St John Chrisostomus first thought of this change, which, however, was opposed by St Augustine and St Ambrosius, who were for the Latin Church. The effigies of these four doctors sustain the chair of St Peter in the Vatican, in commemoration that it is to them we owe the popular theology of the modern Church. To them we must also add St Paul, St Jerome, St Benitus, St Thomas of Aquino, and all the other doctors of the Church.

“These were the real authors of the doctrines now taught by Rome. It is to them and to their successors that we owe those absurd and unphilosophical dogmas that make of God a hard taskmaster, of man a condemned sinner, of religion a narrow and bigoted creed, of life a curse, and of immortality a probable Hell!

“The fault, however, does not lie with them; or at

least let us suppose that they believed in what they taught, as Torquemada and Calvin believed in their most cruel, unholy, and dreadful doctrines. All those men were honest, and worked for what they, in their blind ignorance and superstition, considered the good of humanity. But how mistaken they were! How sad the results! They only drew the outline of what their successors afterwards painted with the most vivid colours; they only proposed that of which the others have made dogmas; and thus gradually this ill-called Christian philosophy has been growing, till it has come to be what we find it to-day.

"The Christian religion now-a-days, as taught by the Church, is still the agglomeration of all the early theologies, doctrines and philosophies, good and bad, that were entertained by the ancient fathers of the Church; and, as the priests have often told you, I dare say, dear Conchita, they believe that there is no love of God, no human pity, no morality, nor even hope of any kind, but in the bosom of the Church. He who does not belong to one or other of the Christian Churches is said to be an atheist and a heretic. One can only enter paradise, they say, through the doors of their Churches. But through which? Which is the true Church of Christ? This is the question that men ask every day in their hearts. Which is the true religion? If you ask the Catholics, they of course will tell you that they are the real Christians, the only sons of the Holy Church of God, and the only disciples of Christ. If you ask a Pro-

testant, he will say, 'We possess the Word of Jesus,' we have an open Bible before us, and we follow those sacred writings. Out of the canons of the Church of England there is no salvation; the Anglican Church (or the Scotch, if he happen to be a Scotchman; or the German, if he is from that country) is the only true Christian Church.' If you ask the same question of a Greek, of a Unitarian, of a Lutheran or a Calvinist, his answer will be more or less the same—'Our doctrines are the only true ones, and out of our Church there is no chance of salvation.' The man of the nineteenth century who is in search of a religion can be compared to a traveller who in his journey comes to a spot where several roads meet. He wonders which road he should follow, and at last determines to ask the question of a group of men that he meets. 'Which is the road that conducts to the port of heaven?' Upon which they all begin to quarrel, and to point to quite opposite roads, saying as loud as they can, 'That—that—that is the only road that leads to heaven; the others lead to quite opposite places.' The poor traveller is bewildered; he does not know which road to follow, and at last exclaims, 'Settle among yourselves first, my good men, which is the true road, and then come and tell me.'

"All modern religions have their truths, and yet how far they all are from *the truth*!

"The priests teach superstition, not philosophy. This has been said very often, and even the Church itself has owned to it. Christianity cannot pass, in its

actual state, for a philosophy ; for the modern philosophers do not acknowledge it. They laugh at the dogmas of Rome, and at the articles of the Anglican Church ; they ridicule the orthodoxy of the Czar and of the synod of Athens. Modern Christianity, I am sorry to tell you, darling Conchita, is a religion that lacks reason and unity. With its false doctrines concerning God, man, and the relations between the two, how can one hope that the scientific or philosophic world will ever join this Church ? Would it be possible for a good and intelligent man to believe in the existence of a God who is unjust and capricious, who has made a wicked and powerful being, in order that he might tempt His children, as He ordered him to tempt His servant Job, and that if it were not for the sacrifice of Christ, He would send all men to hell ? Could a philanthropist believe that His God hates all sinners, and that He intends condemning them to endless punishment, when *he* would gladly sacrifice himself for his fellow-creatures, and when *he* is unhappy if he sees his brethren suffering even in this life ? How can mortal man believe in a God who is less humane and more capricious and selfish than the worst amongst themselves ? Would it be possible for a man of science to believe in the infallibility of the Church, when Galileo and so many others have proved its ignorance ; or believe in the infallibility of the Bible, which is the basis of the Protestant religion, when geology, astronomy, chemistry and history have given testimony to its want of knowledge ?

Can a good woman, who loves her children, believe in the goodness of the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses?

"Could Strauss ever believe in the divine source of the Jewish Bible, or Voltaire in that of the church? Yet you may just as well pretend that they could, if you pretend that the others would. Is there a priest that could convince Newton that the Holy Ghost is speaking through him when he tells him that the sun goes round the earth?

"There are things that the most devoted friends of the Church cannot explain, and not even you, my dear one, can contradict what I have just said.

"The foundation upon which the Christian Church is based cannot possibly last much longer. The philosophers, the philanthropists, cannot believe in the dogmas of such a religion; their consciences do not allow them to believe in doctrines which are so opposed to their common sense, and to what they hold to be truth. The Church rests upon two columns, ignorance and faith. This is enough for those who do not read, who do not think for themselves, and for those who from habit let the church guide their consciences; but for those who dare to raise their eyes and scrutinize the truth of the doctrines they are taught, and for those who study the works of God as seen in modern science and philosophy, the Christian Church is not sufficient, and they leave it, but whither to go? Their reason has carried them thus far, but they want something to satisfy it;

they pull down the Latin church in their hearts, and they find themselves all at once in a desert with none to guide them. This is why there exists so many athiests in the world.

“The same takes place more or less in all the churches. But this picture is, however, more true of the Catholic Church than of the Protestant.

“Be it because the members of this church are in their greater part more studious, and less devout, or be it because its doctrines are more modern, and better adapted to the wants of the age, I know not, but such is the case. The Catholics must conform themselves to what the Pope and his bishops think fit to teach them; the Greeks and the Russians to what their holy synods say about religion; all the three hold their respective powers to be infallible, and they are not allowed to doubt of the truth of the dogmas taught by them. The Protestants have also the Bible, which they think infallible, but this book needs an interpretation, and every one is authorized to interpret it according to his judgment; from this proceed the innumerable Protestant sects. The Anglican Church, which as the national Church is the most important, must conform itself to the doctrines of its bishops and its archbishops, and to the dogmas sanctioned by the English primate. This gives an interpretation wide enough to the Bible, but from which none of its members must depart. This interpretation after revising, retranslating, correcting, and even changing parts of the scriptures, has formed a sort of conformity

between the ancient Jewish sciences, modern science, and modern discoveries ; conformity that would surely astonish the Jews of a thousand years ago, if they could only see it. But even after all this, the Bible cannot be quite reconciled with modern science. No matter how they retranslate and interpret the Bible, they will never be able to harmonise the thoughts of a barbarous and half-civilised race with the proved truths of a grand civilisation like ours. It would be easier to convert the Jerusalem of the first century into the London of the nineteenth.

“ To prove to you the insufficiency of modern churches, and the little power they are able to exercise over the minds of the people, I will repeat to you an anecdote from the biography of the great mathematician Euler, that Arago, the astronomer, related in the chamber of deputies of Paris in the session of the 23d of March 1837 ; since then it has appeared in several works, and Camille Flammarion copied it in his beautiful work that you, of course, must have read, ‘ *Les merveilles célestes*.’

“ Euler, the great mathematician, was a very pious man. One of his friends, the clergyman of a church in Berlin, said one day to him, ‘ Religion is utterly lost ; faith has no longer any basis to rest upon ; the hearts of our day are no longer moved, no, not even when they hear the marvels of the creation. Would you believe it, I have presented this great doctrine before the minds of my congregation in all its beauty, in all its most poetic and marvellous points ; I have cited

the ancient philosophers, and even the Bible. Would you believe it? Half my congregation listened to me unmoved, and the other half either went to sleep or left the church.'

" 'Do next time what I am going to propose to you,' answered Euler, 'instead of describing the world as did the Greek philosophers, or the Bible, describe it as the astronomers do, lift the veil that conceals the universe from their eyes as the religious descriptions have done. In the sermon heard with so much indifference, I suppose you made of the sun a body equal to the Peloponnesus, as does the doctrine of Anaxagoras. Well, next time, tell your congregation that, according to exact measurements, our sun is one million four hundred thousand times larger than the earth.

" 'I suppose you have also spoken of heavens of glass. Say that they exist no longer in the immensity of space wherein the stars move. The planets, according to your explanation, only differ from the stars in size and movement. Tell them that they are worlds, that Jupiter is one thousand four hundred times larger than the earth, and Saturn seven hundred times. Describe the wonders of its rings, and speak of the number of moons that those worlds possess.

" Speaking of the stars, do not cite distances; such high numbers as you would be obliged to use would not be appreciated. Take light as a scale of velocity, say that it travels seventy thousand leagues a second; add to this that there is no star whose light comes to

us in less than three years ; that there are some whose light takes at least thirty years in traversing the space that divides them from us. Passing from these true statements to those that are very probable, say to them that the greater number of stars would be visible several millions of years after their disappearance from their place in space, because the light that comes from them takes millions of years in coming to our earth.'

"Such was, in a few words, with the modification of some numbers only, the advice that Euler gave to his friend, and which he followed. Instead of the world of fable and the Bible, the priest taught the world of science. Euler awaited his friend impatiently. He arrived at last with his eyes cast upon the ground, and in a state that indicated desperation. The great mathematician, astonished, exclaimed, 'Great God, what has happened?'—'Ah ! Mr Euler,' said the minister, 'I am the most unfortunate of men ! they have forgotten the respect they owed to the holy Church ; they have become excited, and they have . . . *applauded* me.'

"This simple story, Conchita, tells you plainly the sentiments of modern times. The Germans slept during the Catholic sermons, but they applauded the scientific discourses. The world of science was much grander than that of the church, and its teachings belonged to the age, while those of the priest belonged to a past civilization.

"From this want of harmony proceeds the degene-

ration in which we find the church to-day. The great men of the times, the great politicians, philosophers, and men of science do not, in their hearts, belong to any of the Christian churches.

"The great men of ancient Rome were not Pagan, although this was the religion of their country; they were too much advanced for that. Christianity came, and, as late as the eighteenth century, all the great men and philosophers sustained the church. Solis, Fray Luis of Granada, Luis of Leon, Bacon, Newton, La Place, Pascal, and Leibnitz were defenders and sustainers of the Christian church, because this was on a par with their intelligence. But to-day, is the Church of Rome, or that of Russia, or even those of Germany and England, sustained by the philosophers or great men of the age? No, nor Humboldt, nor Littré, nor Von-Buch, nor Vogt, nor Stuart Mill, nor Lessing, nor Kant, nor Sir Humphrey Davy, nor Hegel, nor Goëthe, nor Byron, nor Schiller, nor Fichte, nor Guilmann, nor Flammarion, nor Figuier, nor Michelet, nor Boucher de Perthes, nor Victor Hugo, no, not one of the great men of modern times is, or was, what the church would call a true Christian.

"From hence comes the great lack of religion that we experience at every movement. The greater part of the people, it is true, content themselves with the religion taught in the churches, although they may sometimes pause and reflect after reading some scientific work, but when one thinks about the truth

of their teachings, when one dares to lift that sacred veil that hides from the world the unfitness of their belief, and which is wrongly called faith, then one sees plainly enough the backwardness and the mockery of this religion. How different is the Christianity of modern times from that simple but sublime doctrine taught by Jesus on the Mount of Olives! Rome has always covered her shortcomings with the pomp of her ceremonies, for the court of the Vatican, that you are taught to believe in as a holy and divine institution, is but a weak and miserable political hole. The church needs the state to sustain its truths. Ah! if it had not been for French guns, she would long ago have been obliged to fly from Rome. The faith of the people was not found enough to sustain the Papal throne, no, nor even their cannons! Rome is no longer what she was once, and her policy has also changed. But if it has changed, it is only because she can no longer command men's consciences as before; the people would rise in a mass, and would destroy the tyrant. One cannot now play with impunity with the lion of the populace. The clergy know it, and think it better to amuse him, while they endeavour to chain him anew. The church is as intolerant in reality as ever she was, and if she could, this very day she would exterminate all those who believe in other religions contrary to her own.

"This is the case with all Churches, just as much in the Christian, as in the Mussulman, Buddhist, and Brahminist, the general tendency of them all is to bind

the minds of the people, and to make them slaves of their will. Power is the magnet that attracts them all, and to obtain it they would not mind destroying everything that comes in their way, for is it not destruction to bind down and fetter human thought and understanding, which God made to be free?

“Christianity in its actual state cannot be a lasting religion; for its doctrines are opposed to the conscience and to the morals as well as to science. Its object is not to make men better, nor to advance the civilisation of the world; its desires are not the happiness of humanity here or hereafter. According to the doctrines of the Church itself, religion serves only to appease the anger of God, to liberate man from the devil, and to save him from hell. Human reason refuses to believe in the anger and injustice of God; our conscience tells us there can be no personal devil in the universe, and science destroys the idea of a hell of fire. Now, if those doctrines are false; if the anger of God, the existence of the devil, and the belief in a hell are unfounded, and impossible doctrines; what is the use of this Church?

“As religion is represented in opposition to reason and to nature, it is not to be wondered at that so many people abandon all kinds of religion, and become atheists. At least, they say, atheistic views *pretend* to be philosophical, while the Catholic ones are against reason and common sense. Pantheism, that holds nature as God, is a much more natural and philosophical belief than the Catholic one, which

represents its God with the passions and the propensities of a demon. The atheists are at least more philosophical than the Christians, for these acknowledge three gods and fear the power of a fourth, the devil; and the Catholics, moreover, worship an enormous list of virgins, saints and angels, a kind of smaller gods who exercise a miraculous but limited power upon the world, as did the gods of the Grecian mythology; while the others, although they deny the existence of *one God*, recognise in His stead the universal laws of nature. You know too well, however, dear Conchita, my opinion concerning atheistic doctrines, for me to enlarge on them now, in proving to you their utter falsity, and how much I despise and pity them; but I only say this to let you see how utterly unphilosophical the doctrines of the Catholic religion must be when I *even* venture to contrast them with such.

“But I must go on with my criticism. The God of your Church, Conchita, does not govern the world by means of natural and constant laws, but by miracles and a supernatural power, infringing upon and stopping the action of the established laws whenever He pleases. Thus the prayer of a poor mortal can change the order of the universe, and the faith of a man can, as it has done once, stop the sun and the moon in the middle of their course.*

“The God of the Christians is not omnipotent, as some who knowing the doctrines taught in the Bible

* Joshua x. 13.

still dare to assert.* It is also quite a mistake to say that He is everywhere ; for, according to the Churches, He is only to be found in heaven and in the temples, in spite of what David said in his 139th Psalm. According to the priests, however, God only lives in heaven, and comes down to earth sometimes, but this only in the churches. He is never present anywhere else. This idea is a very old one, and, I suppose, is derived, like all others, from the Bible, where we hear Him say, ' I have chosen this place to myself for a house (the temple). . . . Now mine eyes shall be open, and mine ears attend unto the prayer that is made in this place. For I have chosen and sanctified this house . . . and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually ;' † where He ' came down to see the city and tower of Babel ;' ‡ and where, we are told, He descended upon Sodom and Gomorrah, saying, ' Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me ; and if not, I will know ;' § and where we are told that ' Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden.' ||

" This doctrine may be very ancient and very Biblical, but it does not suit modern science, which needs a God present in all parts, and who does not need to go up or come down in order to see the works of men, nor

Judges i. 19, etc. † 2 Chronicles vii. 12-16. ‡ Gen. xi. 5.

§ Gen. xviii. 20, 21. || Gen. iii. 8.

to lead them for forty years in the wilderness, in order to 'know what was in their hearts.*' The actions of this God are moreover interested, and proceed only from His desire of glorifying Himself. How mean is this idea of the Deity compared with the words of Lord Byron, 'From the far distant archipelago of stars to the tranquil lake that kisses the feet of the mountain, everything partakes of an intense life, in which there is not a ray, a breeze, a leaf, that does not owe its existence to the great Creator!'

“ ‘Oui, c'est un Dieu caché que le Dieu qu'il faut croire ;
Mais tout caché qu'il est, pour révéler sa gloire,
Quels témoins éclatants élevant moi ressemblés !
Répondez, cieux et mers ; et vous, terre, parlez !’

as said Racine ; or, as your great poet Melendez Valdés expresses it, in his beautiful poem, 'La presencia de Dios :'

“ ‘Doquiera que los ojos
Inquieto torno en cuidadoso anhelo,
Allí gran Dios, presente
Atónito mi espíritu te siente.
.
.
.
Tu inmensidad lo llena
Todo, Señor, y más, del invisible
Insecto al elefante,
Del átomo al cometa rutilante.’

“ Yes, my beloved one, the worlds that the telescope opens before our eyes, showing us the sidereal regions, as that discovered by the microscope in a drop of dew, all breathe life ; from the colossal globe of Sirius,

* Deut. viii. 2.

whose diameter is of 4,500,000 leagues (twelve times larger than our sun), to the infusoria, microscopic animalculæ, ten millions of which do not take more room than a grain of corn, everything gives testimony of the supreme power and of the omnipresence of God. And can we believe, after this, in what the Church *reveals* to us about Him, and which would make Him so small in our eyes?

“Science cannot recognise a limited and local God. It proves to us, on the contrary, that God is uniform and perfect, just and good, and that He governs the universe by means of determined and constant laws. Astronomy reveals to us the immensity of space, the infinity of the universe, the myriads and myriads of worlds that move in it, all governed by infallible laws, established by the Supreme Creator. Natural history and geology relate to us the history of the earth, and show to us its smallest inhabitants, of which some are so minute, that 10,000 could be ranged on the length of an inch! And certain species are so small, that their whole bodies do not equal the 1500th part of a millimetre, about the forty-fifth thousandth part of an inch! Every drop of water contains in itself more inhabitants than there are in the world, and every grain of dust is peopled by millions of animalculæ; the very air we breathe is full of its minute creatures, and some of these can produce in four days more than 150,000 millions of their species! The divine creation knows no end. Could its Divine Author be a jealous and angered

God, who delights in the sufferings of His children? No, science will never recognise such a God.

"Science denies this wrong idea of the Creator, because it is against philosophy, philanthropy rejects it because it is immoral and wicked. So it is not so much to be wondered at, that many adopt the doctrines of Comte, thinking his teachings more elevated and reasonable than the Christian polytheism of St Augustine and St Thomas of Aquinas.

"Let us examine the dogma of immortality as it has been, and is taught by the Church.

"If what the theologians of Rome tell us respecting the immortality of the soul were true, this law would undoubtedly be the greatest malediction that God could impose upon His children; annihilation itself would be preferable. According to them, very few indeed are those who are saved at all, and even those few must pass through the hell-like torments of purgatory; all the rest are sent to hell, where they suffer for evermore—and this, in almost every case, not because they have sinned, but simply because they did not belong to the only Church that could save them.

"At the present day, according to your great geographer, Sanchez de Bustamante, there are one thousand one hundred and forty-five millions of men in the world, of which only two hundred millions are Catholics, and therefore the only ones who can have any chance whatever of being saved: this according to the

Catholics; for, according to the Protestants, that number does not exceed eighty-five millions (which is more or less the number of their faithful);* all the rest of humanity goes to hell, good and bad—and this without counting the poor wretches who died before Christ's time. But besides this, even the Catholics must be first elected by the Father, loved by the Son, and blessed by the Holy Ghost, before they can enter the kingdom of God, of which St Paul said we are all heirs, 'co-heirs of Christ.' This, in round numbers, comes to be, that only *one* of every *one hundred thousand* men that live this day in the world will ever be saved.

Some priests tell us that one of the pleasures, perhaps the greatest, of the reclaimed will be to see the sufferings of their brethren amidst the fires of hell. According to St Augustine and the greater part of the fathers of the church, also according to Calvin and his followers, this eternal torment will add glory to God, and will teach his faithful how thankful they ought to be to his mercy, when they see themselves happy, and in heaven; while their neighbours and friends, and even their very children, who were not a bit worse than themselves when on earth, are condemned to eternal sufferings in hell.

How a good man can find pleasure in seeing his friends, his family and even his children suffering eternal torments, and how he can have a heart after this to thank God for his justice, I leave it to the

* *Geographia General.* Bustamante. Madrid, 1864.

great theologians to explain. I, myself, can conceive of no man bad and inhuman enough to act and feel so barbarously.

“You talk of free will and of our intelligence, but you forget that the church does not allow us to think for ourselves, and teaches that she alone is the soul of Christianity; that we must all think and do as she bids us, without making use of our own free will and intelligence: the priests alone are authorized to preach religion and morality in Catholic countries, but they certainly are not the first to practice what they preach, and are generally quite as ignorant and as faulty as the rest of the population. Christianity, the priests tell us, obliges us to sacrifice everything to the dogmas of the church: ‘Out of the church of Christ there is no salvation.’ Thus, making people afraid of God and of his anger, and afraid of the devil and his hell, the church establishes herself as the only arbitrator of our fates; if any one wants to be saved, he has only two things to do, to have many masses said for his soul, and to leave all his money when he dies to the Church. The natural result of this is, that now-a-days by far the greater part of Christians pay the church to think for them, to do penance for them, and to save them in the last day. Thus the wicked are not afraid of hell. They pay the priest, they sustain the church of Christ with their gold, and he cannot do less than pardon their crimes, and charge this church to excuse their conduct before the world, and even before God himself.

Could the church possibly condemn, or even blame the conduct of a man and a Christian, when she is sustained by his gold and his influence? No; she could not afford to do this, it would be against her own interests; she must tolerate the vices of her faithful, as Rome tolerated anciently the villainous conduct of the Knight Templars who defended her rights. How could she refuse twenty mistresses to a man who renounced a wife to serve her? This is the case to-day. The wicked man does not fear the devil, nor even doubt of his own salvation, while a hundred pounds remain in his pocket with which to buy absolution. The church is not in a state to be able to refuse it to any one, no, not even to those who call themselves her most faithful servitors; and therefore, she must conform herself with the conduct of those on whom she leans for support.

"A great many weak and corrupted spirits shrink from religion during the whole of their lives, and they laugh at it, while they think themselves far away from hell; but when they feel their last moment approaching, they send for the confessor, they repent, they generously pay the Church the debts contracted during their lives with the money they no longer need, and in five minutes are changed into beings of angelic purity, and may count the next moment upon heaven as their everlasting home. Thus, we may sow a lifetime of sin, and, according to your church, reap an eternity of happiness; sow to the flesh and reap life everlasting. This, I must say, is very convenient, but

I scarcely need tell you that it is very far from being in conformity with the religion of Jesus! The greater part of Christians, however, are cowards, and are afraid that death may come when least expected; they are, therefore, always ready to pay a part of the price of their salvation. I suppose they find this an easier and cheaper method, but in the end it comes to very much the same thing—gold is in every case the key to heaven's door.

“This happens in every church, although in some the ways are different, but the end is always the same. If it were not for this conduct, which, after all, is but natural on the part of men, no church could subsist; no one would go to their services, no one would believe in their dogmas, and no one would pay their priests and ministers. By far the greater number of Christians are so only under these conditions, and go to church not because they love God, but because they fear the devil. You see, my dear, that however often the priests have told you that the Church is the Church of the blessed, they are sadly mistaken, for what can be more false and injurious than the doctrines she teaches?

“By far the greater part of the iniquities and atrocities practised upon mankind now-adays have their origin in the doctrines of the Church; her very ministers themselves give us the example. If the Church, purported to have been established by God himself to teach men the best road to heaven, tolerates and forgives those atrocities, who is to condemn them? The law punishes, but cannot teach the consequences of vice,

The Church says that her office is to save men from the anger of God, for this an absolution or a plenary indulgence from Rome is enough. But it is not enough; our own conscience tells us that it is not enough. Sin must have its punishment, crime and penalty are cause and effect. I cannot drink intoxicating drinks, and another get drunk for me; I cannot take poison, and another die for me; I cannot sin and Christ suffer the penalty for me. Does any one believe that after death one remains so perfect, so wise, and so good, that he can enter at once into celestial happiness, even if during one's life one has been most exemplary, can any of us feel that we are capable of heaven? No; priests know very well that this is impossible; a moment's repentance cannot wash away the stains of a whole life-time of sin; no absolution from Rome can change the nature of man. If he is a sinner, he must first learn the consequences of sin by experience before he can give it up, and then he must learn and accustom himself to do good before his former sins can be washed away and forgiven. Years are necessary to operate this change, and only experience and expiation can work it. Could the spirit of a Tropolmann be changed all of a sudden into that of a St Vincent de Paul? Who can imagine that the soul of Mrs Manning can be changed instantly after death so as to become as pure and as holy as that of Mrs Fry? In this world we take very good care not to give an important post to a villain because he comes on his knees to us saying that he repents of

his past conduct. Repentance is of no avail in a court of justice. Why should it be otherwise in heaven? The moral laws surely cannot be less strict there than they are here?

"But this is not the only evil caused by this theology; it also stops the progress of humanity in many other respects. The Churches, particularly those of Rome and Greece, are opposed to the education of mankind; their object is not to instruct and make humanity better, but to save it from God's anger and the fire of hell; for this the more ignorant the people are the better. To reach heaven it is not necessary to know the moral or physical laws of nature; to know and keep the commandment of the Church is enough, they say, but they forget that there are other commandments as important as those given by Moses to his people. It is true that we do not want any masters to teach us those commandments, our reason would teach them; but the Church wants to do away with reason, and, unfortunately, the greater part of men need some one to help them to keep these moral laws. All this is forgotten by the Church.

"Theology, as taught in the churches, with its extraordinary doctrines concerning the creation of the universe, its government, and the laws of nature, and with its false ideas respecting God, man, and the relation between the two, cannot possibly be the religion of the philosopher nor of the educated man; so the Church very naturally thinks it best to keep her people in the grossest ignorance.

"The Church and the Pope are the oracles of the Catholics, and they all must submit to their rule; the Bible is the oracle of the Protestants, and they must all believe in its infallibility. History denies the infallibility of them all, and tells us how one Pope contradicts another, and how wicked some of them have been; it also shows us the innumerable errors and contradictions of the Bible, and its most doubtful origin. History, therefore, destroys theology, as all other sciences do, so that we must either believe in what we know to be untrue or refuse to admit the testimony of proved science.

"But it is not the revelations of science alone that are against those doctrines; our own sentiments are, or ought to be, opposed to them.

"The Church presents religion to us under such an aspect that I find it impossible for me to love and respect it; its ministers tell us to fear God, and they are right; they know very well that it would be impossible for us to love Him such as they paint Him to us. Theology, with its irritated and jealous God, who punishes the sins of the fathers upon the children to the third or fourth generation, who hates them, who prefers to punish them for ever, and to curse instead of blessing them, with its poor and malignant idea of humanity, with its teachings about the mutual relationship of the two, and with its other numerous doctrines concerning the devil, hell, purgatory, absolution, heaven, limbo, infallibility, and worship of images, is opposed to all human sentiments. And yet you

will say that there are a great many millions who do believe in Rome and in its doctrines. Yes, I cannot deny that, but whether they believe in them in their hearts, or only in outward appearance, I do not dare to say; but there is one thing that I can assure you of, and that is, that the generality of them either ignore the natural and physical laws, or do not understand the nature of the doctrines they follow so blindly.

“The greater part by far of those who call themselves Christians have no idea of the doctrines that their churches really teach them; they follow them because their fathers did so before them, and because they have been educated in them since their earliest youth, and know no better; for them religion is custom more than anything else; they go to church every Sunday and listen respectfully to sermons, but they never stop to think of what they have heard, nor what signify those gorgeous religious ceremonies they attend so regularly, if they happen to be Catholics. For this, the unknown language in which the divine services are performed, is their excuse; as for the Protestants they believe that everything that is in accordance with their Bible is all right.

“But such a religion is anything but what it should be; it cannot satisfy the enquiring mind; men fear always to talk about it, and it is therefore a subject rarely discussed in polite society; *what a good sermon we have had to-day!* or *I wonder who will preach to-morrow!* are about as much as we ever hear any body say about *this*, the most important of all sub-

jects. But the priests have made it an abstract and most melancholy subject; they have rendered it one far more to be dreaded than loved, and the consequences are that men are fast becoming less and less religious.

"This is not the fault of man, but that of the Bible itself. Religion, according to the Old Testament, is not the elevation of man, but the worship of the Deity, and the rewards that it offers to those who follow it are the most worldly—honour, fortune, money, a long life, a numerous posterity. In the New Testament the same idea is continued, with the difference only, that as experience proved that this theory was all wrong, for riches and a long life were by no means accompanied always by virtue and obedience to the commandments, the same as adversity was not always the companion of vice, the rewards and punishments were said to be reserved for a future state. Modern Christianity is accordingly based on this new idea, and it is therefore a religion almost as selfish and worldly as the Jewish.

"Moreover, as I remarked to you before, besides the commandments of Moses and those of the Church, there are other precepts equally important, of which there is no mention made in the Bible. These moral precepts we are very often obliged to break, if we want to obey those of Jehovah.

"I could give you a hundred proofs of this if I had a Bible at hand, but I will nevertheless try to remember a few to show you that I am right in what I say. For instance, among men it is considered of the ut-

most importance to have a good name, and to be loved by every one; but we are told in this book, 'Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!' (Luke vi. 26) and 'Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.' (James iv. 4.)

"According to the physical laws, when one feels ill one should send for the doctor, and do all that is possible to be cured. Well, it seems God is quite opposed to this. The Bible says that King Asa called the doctors when he was ill, and confided in the science of his physicians, and, on account of this, it adds, as a punishment, 'Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign.' (2 Chro. xvi. 12, 13). Of a certain woman who, the New Testament says, 'for twelve years suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,' but straightway was healed through faith. (Mark v. 25-29). And there is this express injunction, 'Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up.' (James v. 14).

"Lawyers, according to the conventional interpretation of the Bible, are little better. 'Woe unto you lawyers,' it says, 'for ye load men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with

one of your fingers. Woe unto you lawyers !' (Luke xi. 45-52).*

"The philosophers are not considered any better either. 'Beware lest any man spoil you with philosophy and vain deceit,' (Col. ii. 8).

"Science is also said to be wicked and irreligious. St Paul said to the Corinthians, with contempt, 'The Greeks seek after wisdom.' (1 Cor. i. 22). And to Timotheus, 'Guard thyself from vain babblings and oppositions of science, falsely so called.' (1 Tim. vi. 20). For 'knowledge puffeth up.' (1 Cor. viii. 1).

"You see, my Conchita, that if we were to follow literally all the commandments of the Bible, the progress of humanity would stop. If science has flourished, it has not been because helped by religion, but, on the contrary, in spite of the Bible's direst opposition. It is true it does not recognise any material necessities. According to its teachings, we ought to have nothing to do with doctors, lawyers, philosophers, men of science, &c., &c. But if religion can do without them because 'its kingdom is not of this world,' we cannot.

"You see now, Conchita of my heart, that this religion is not at all adapted for our present state of civilization, for, as Christ himself assured us, none can belong to it unless he 'hate his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also.' (Luke xiv. 26).

"The Christian religion, therefore, you see plainly,

* Jesus probably meant the interpreters of the law of Moses.—
Author's note.

is only meant to save people from God's anger and hell's fire. But I have proved to you that God can never be angry, and that there cannot be such a thing as a hell of fire; so this religion is perfectly useless. We do not want now to die of fright like little children, thinking about that God so much to be feared, and that dreadful bogie and his hot abode of flames. We want something better than this false fear, and this coward selfishness of the future that lies before us. Death is no longer a thing to be dreaded. We ought, on the contrary, to be taught to meet it confidently, we ought to be taught to be good fathers, sons, brothers, and friends, that, when we die, we may feel assured that we shall be saved without the need of the prayers of the church; and that what we call death is but the entrance into a far higher life—our last day on earth is really a birthday. If religion made men what they should be, what they were called to be, rest assured, my beloved wife, that at their death they would all see the kingdom of God.

“One example of the evil the church has done with her wrong ideas and teachings, is to be found in Spain. If it were not for Rome, who has impeded the progress and the instruction of the Spanish people, do you believe that Spain, your beautiful country, would have been in her present sad and fallen condition? Oh Conchita! *faith* is all very well, but you should never trample down *reason*; the *heart* ought not to be everything in the body, for the head has got its part to play in the constitution of the whole.”

CHAPTER IX.

FAITH AND REASON.

CONCHITA waited in silence till I had quite finished my long discourse, and then with a deep sigh she began.

"I have heard with patience all your scruples and objections to our holy church, they, I must confess, do not prove to me that the church is wrong, but rather that you are very much mistaken in your ideas upon this subject."

I smiled and said, "My darling Conchita, if you could prove to me that I am mistaken in my judgment, if you could show me where I am wrong, I would most decidedly forget my scruples, and my doubts, and believe with blind faith in your religion, which I would be the first to defend, if I could bring myself to think its doctrines true."

"I have yet strong hopes of your conversion, Walter, and if you would not doubt every thing, and ask the why and the wherefore of everything, I think I could make of you the most devout of Catholics. Doubt is a wide open door, by which one can arrive at the truth, or get away from it. For him who is in error, it is the first step towards the truth; but for him who possesses the truth, it is a slope that leads to perdition.

"You yourself said, that men who begin to doubt of the truth of their faith, finish by abandoning the church of God; but where to go? their worldly reason has carried them thus far, but they want something divine to rest upon, they pull down in their hearts the true religion, and they finish by finding themselves all at once in a desert, with none to guide them. Yes, doubt is a desert by which God sometimes leads man to the promised land of truth. In this desert there is not one single fountain, not a single well, where the fatigued heart can quench the devouring thirst that consumes it, and get refreshed. There is not a plant which can put a stop to the horrible hunger that is killing him; there is not a tree under the shadow of which the poor traveller can sit down and rest, or take courage to continue his weary journey. In this desert, as in those others of earthly sand, whose waves the wind revolves in every direction, the ground gives way under our feet, while intelligence is consumed by the burning rays of the sun of remorse and vanished hope.

"But you, my Walter, have reverence, although you lack belief. You love your God too much not to pray to Him for belief. True, heartfelt religious sentiments are to belief and to religion what the radiant light of mid-day is to that uncertain brightness of the aurora, that seems to fight with the darkness of the night. God has given you reverence for, and faith in, Himself, Walter. You ought to be for ever thankful to Him for this great gift of His eternal mercy."

"And He has also given me a guardian angel in

you," I said, interrupting her, "who is to guide me to that belief I so much need; for which I shall be eternally thankful to Him."

Conchita smiled, while her beautiful eyes looked up to the blue skies to meet those of her Creator. She appeared divine in this attitude. Murillo's "*Conception*" would have looked material and earthly by the side of my beautiful *Concepcion*.*

"I am pleased, indeed, oh my husband," she said, "that I have been destined by the Almighty to convert to the truth of His holy church, such a man as you."

"It is impossible for me to prove to you the truth of the church doctrines, they can be felt, but never taught. I will try, nevertheless, to answer your scruples. As for the Bible, I can tell you nothing. I have never read it, its truths are too deep for me, as, indeed, they are for all of us, and for this reason the reading of it has not been encouraged by the church in Catholic countries. Yet I take it to be the word of God, and as such I respect it. The Protestants have tried to study it, and the consequences are, that they have abandoned the true Church of God, and sunk into innumerable errors."

"How can the Word of God," I said, "lead people into error? The Word of God should agree with His works, it should be all true, and all just, and mighty, and good, as they are, and the more I read the Bible, the less I can comprehend how He, in all

* Conchita is the familiar Spanish for the baptismal name of Maria de la Concepcion, an attribute of the Blessed Virgin, made so familiar by the beautiful paintings of Murillo.

His wisdom, could ever have written or inspired any one to write such a book."

"Let us leave the subject for the present, Walter. That you cannot understand the Bible is only a proof of what I have just told you. But religion, the Holy Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion is what I want to teach you.

"The word Religion expresses admirably the two fundamental truths of our faith. It tells us that we were separated from God, but that we are now, or can be, reunited and reconciled to Him. It tells us what we were, and what we are; it teaches us all the religious history of mankind. Through Adam's sin we were separated from God, and cast upon the earth, but through Jesus' sacrifice we are reconciled again to our Maker, and can attain the glories of heaven."

"I will not repeat to you again, my Conchita, the arguments which make me doubt of the truth of those two doctrines. I won't tell you again how unjust the dogma of the fall of man appears to me, and the pretended law that all must suffer for the sins of one. I will not repeat anew the argument by which I can prove to you positively, not the falsity of the doctrine of Christ's redemption, but the selfishness and injustice of God, if this were true."

"You may think whatever you like of this doctrine, but of its truth you cannot doubt, it is one of the mysteries of our faith; it is, in fact, the basis of the whole religion," said Conchita.

"I have read in the Bible," I answered, "in Matthew i., that 'Jesus shall save his people from their sins;' in 1 Tim i., 'Hear the word of the Lord,' 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners;' and in Luke xix., 'The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.' But this seems to me to imply that if we believe in his doctrines we shall be enlightened, and saved from darkness, our souls being improved by his teachings, which undoubtedly were very much in advance of the age. St Peter said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.' (Acts xvi. 31). Yes, saved from the sins we would commit if we were ignorant of his divine sayings, but not from the sins we have already committed. As I have just told you, I hold it as impossible that a man can take poison and another die for him, as it would be impossible for a man to suffer for the sins committed by another man."

"Yes for a man, that I grant you, but Christ was God Himself, and as such he was all-powerful."

"In that I cannot possibly believe. If Christ had been God he would have said so, but, on the contrary, he said plainly, 'My father is greater than I' (John xiv. 28), and he called himself the Son of man. How could the Creator be the son of one of His creatures, the cause produced by the effect? It is impossible.

"If Christ had been God, moreover, would he have said, 'If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true' (John v. 31)?"

"Was Christ the God Almighty when he said, 'I can of mine own self do nothing' (John v. 30) ?

"Could Christ have been God when he said, 'Why callest thou me good ? there is none good but one, that is God' (Mark x. 8).

"Was Christ the God omnipresent when he said, 'I ascend unto my father, and your father, and to my God and your God' (John xx. 7) ? Can any one ascend to himself ?

"Was Christ the God omniscient when he said, concerning the day of judgment, 'Of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man, no, nor the angels which are in heaven, neither the son, but the Father' (Mark xiii. 32) ?

"No, Conchita of my heart, I cannot possibly believe that Christ was God ; if I had never learned mathematics perhaps I might have believed in this doctrine, but now nobody can persuade me that three make one."

"Because this is a mystery of faith, and you cannot comprehend it, you will not believe in it ! This is not right, Walter. You must believe in the teachings of Christ, if not, you cannot be saved ; and fancy how we should suffer if we were to be condemned after death to dwell in different places, and never to see each other again. Oh ! Walter, try to save thyself, if it be only for my sake." There was such devotion, and so much love and tenderness in those words, that they made me shudder. "Even if the Catholic religion," she continued, "had not been re-

vealed by God himself, it would always be the best system of philosophy, and the most complete and sublime poem of the whole earth. In it alone we find the clue to the difficulties that have given so much trouble to the philosophers, and the solution of the mysteries, that they, with all their learning, have not been able to explain. Consult the philosophers about God, about man, about nature in general, and they will only give you doubtful, contradictory, and uncertain answers. To explain one mystery they will proclaim ten; to deny a miracle, they will affirm a hundred more inexplicable and more difficult to comprehend; in order to evade believing in the word of God, and in the doctrines of the Church, you will finish by believing in the words of man, and in the doctrines of a master.

“If you deny the holy mystery of the Trinity, because you cannot comprehend it, and you want to believe only in a universal unity of creation, you will have to accept the even more incomprehensible mystery of pantheism; for if it is difficult to conceive how the divine nature can be communicated to three different persons, retaining, notwithstanding, the unity of the Godhead, how infinitely more difficult is it to explain how this can be communicated to all beings, so different in their forms and so opposite in their actions, without losing the unity of action required in the universe!

“If you refuse to admit the existence of that original sin, of which our whole lives and our present

condition give so full a testimony, you will see yourself obliged to wander in absurd and incoherent hypotheses, in order to explain where evil comes from, and how sin first appeared. For, before attributing its origin to the free will of the first man, and the temptations of the devil, you will establish its cause in God himself, thus making Him God and devil all in one.

"The dogma of the incarnation will appear to you unphilosophic, and therefore inadmissible; and yet philosophy teaches pantheism, a doctrine which is infinitely more unphilosophical and contrary to reason. For it teaches that God is, lives, feels, thinks, and works in all, in each of the innumerable beings that make up the universe; this comes from the necessity that humanity feels for the Christian dogmas, which so well satisfy the necessities of our intelligence that we cannot do without them, and that, when we deny their truth, we are obliged to supplant them by errors, which often are but absurd exaggerations of the very dogmas we want to pull down.

"And you will see in everything the truth of this. Those who deny the redemption of man by Jesus Christ, are they not obliged to put in its stead the redemption of man by man's own blood, and to substitute brutal punishments for a heavenly forgiveness of all sins through Christ?

"Those who accuse the Church of exercising too much power over people's minds, are they not the same who want to control men's wills? Calvin, who accused the Church of burning people for their faith,

did he not also burn the Catholics because they did not believe in his heretical doctrines ?

"Of this I am convinced, Walter, that man's mind never separates itself from the truth but to fall into error ; truth is as a mountain, at whose feet is opened an immense abyss where all who wander from the right path fall into eternal damnation."

I took Conchita's hand in mine, and after a second or so I said, "It seems to me, my darling, that you have been running down *pantheism* instead of proving the truth of Christianity. I agree with you in almost all you have said, but because philosophers are wrong in believing in *pantheism*, I do not see that the priests must necessarily be right in teaching their dogmas. I do not see at all that Christianity is a philosophy, on the contrary, it seems to me to be most unphilosophical ; nor do I see that it solves all the mysteries of nature, for it establishes others besides, of which we have no need whatever ; for instance, the doctrine of the Trinity, that of the Incarnation of God, that of the virginity of Mary, and thousands of others.

"The mystery of the Trinity does not strike me as being one of so much importance, and it seems to me that if once one divides the person of God into three individualities, one can just as well divide it into three millions, for the unity of course is lost directly this division takes place. Neither do I see the necessity of believing in the devil because one believes in the existence of sin. Sin, as I have told you before, is only ignorance of good. Sin proceeds from ignorance, the

same as darkness proceeds from the want of light, but this state cannot last for ever. The sin does not proceed from our forefather Adam, but from our inexperience. And because I deny the existence of a devil I do not see in the least that I must make God the author of evil. Considering that evil is not an entity but a condition ; evil, in fact, is undeveloped good.

" You know very well, my dear instructress, that I do not believe in that absurd thesis of some philosophers, who maintain that the ceaseless production of plants and of all other living organisations is due to the fortuitous concourse of atoms, making thus, as you say very well, every living creature a part of God. And as I do not believe in the incarnation of the person of God in any earthly organisation, I neither believe in His incarnation in the person of Jesus Christ. I have also told you several times that I cannot believe that the sins of one are pardoned through the penance of another. You do not seem to approve of personal punishment, and yet how are sins to be forgiven if there is neither penance nor repentance on the part of the sinner ? The doctrines of Christ may help men to overcome temptation, but his death, glorious as it was, cannot serve as atonement for other people's sins.

" As I am not a Calvinist, I do not see the use of excusing Calvin's conduct, but I cannot refrain, for this, from accusing the inexcusable conduct of the Church of Rome.

" I think I have now answered all the proofs that

you have put before me concerning the truth of your religion, yet, notwithstanding this, there is nothing I would like so much as to be able to believe in them, if it were only for your sake. But I cannot possibly believe in anything that goes against my reason and common sense."

"Oh Walter," exclaimed the poor girl, burying her face in my breast, "if you only knew how much superior is faith to reason, you would directly forget your doubts, and believe blindly in the dogmas of our Holy Mother Church."

CHAPTER X.

LOCH LOMOND.

ON Tuesday the 8th of July we were still in Dumbarton.

Monday had been a horrible day, it had rained incessantly, and a thick Scotch mist had veiled every mountain and hidden every valley. The Clyde, however, seen through the mist that rises from its waters, is infinitely more poetical than when the sun shines in all its glory over its smooth waters. This atmosphere that gives such a peculiar and mysterious look to the beautiful scenery of ancient Caledonia, and that says so much to the heart, is much more pleasing to the imagination than those sunburnt hills of the south which can only speak to the eye, and leave nothing for memory and fancy to dwell upon.

How many sweet things can the imagination picture to itself in presence of this mysterious and picturesque scenery, and at the feet of those elevated mountains, whose tops are lost beyond the clouds! and up whose sides these graceful wreaths of mist are for ever rising, discovering undreamed of beauties.

But if this climate is so poetical, at the same time it is certainly most disagreeable. It is utterly impos-

sible to go out when all the waters of the neighbouring ocean seem to come down in gentle dew over our heads. I have witnessed rain storms in the tropics, and dreadful they were, too, while they lasted, but I have nowhere seen anything like this. The whole of the air seems to be impregnated with rain, and nothing can stop its penetrating power. The Scotch people go out when it rains the same as when it is fine, they are so accustomed to their climate that they think nothing of it. But this is not the case with foreigners, and so, when they are surprised with a day such as this, they are obliged to remain in the hotel, which is most tantalizing.

But I should not speak thus. Could time seem long when one is by the side of the being one loves best in the whole world?

When Conchita came out of her room to breakfast, she looked out of the window to examine the weather for a few seconds, and then she took her place at the table without saying a word.

She looked so beautiful as she sat opposite to me, making the tea in the English style, that I could not but shudder when, in thought, I contrasted the bright and gay Andalusian skies with the mists and fogs of this gloomy-looking and cold Scotland. I accused myself of taking her away from her country, her family, and her friends, of carrying her away from her pleasant home and her sunny climate, to shut her up amidst the hills and lakes of this cold and damp north, that we so much love, but that must seem so

dull and melancholy to those accustomed to live under the burning rays of a southern sun.

I observed this to my young wife, but she soon dispersed my remorse.

"Walter," she said, "is it possible you can doubt of my happiness when it depends so entirely upon yourself! Oh my husband!" she continued, whilst she encircled my head with arms that might have rivalled those of the Venus of Medici, "I should neither be a wife nor a woman if I did not consider myself happier at your side than anywhere else. And, after all, what have I lost! My country, its bright sun, its pure and clear sky, the envy of all the earth, my convent, my family, perhaps so! but have I not gained a husband? ah! what is all the rest compared to that? what is all the world compared to our love?"

"Oh, my sweet wife!" I exclaimed, as I caught her in my arms, "those words have made me very happy. I so often fear that the time may come when you will weary of this new life, and pine away under these cold skies of the north, and when even my devoted love may seem to you too dearly bought, and but poor compensation for all you have left behind."

She quickly covered my mouth with her small hand, as, with a look of entreaty, she murmured, "Oh, please, dear Walter, say no more! your love dearly bought indeed! what should I do without it? for it is the sunlight of my life, and could I not bask in its warm rays I should indeed pine away, even under the burning sun of Seville."

"You are right," I exclaimed, moved by those sweet words, "and it is not you who have lost Spain, but Spain who has lost you."

"Now I am no longer Spanish, then," and offering me a cup of tea she said, in English, "*Do you want sugar in your tea, my dearest?*"

"Lady Carlton," I answered, also in English, "*tea made by your sweet hands does not want any sugar.*"

After the breakfast I gave Conchita her English lesson. The progress she makes in that language appears quite marvellous to me, when I think of the time that I took to learn Spanish!

The other day I left her for a few moments alone in the hotel, and when I came back I was told that *my lady* had gone out. This surprised me, for I knew too well how she disliked going out alone.

Ten minutes after I saw her come in with a beautiful cigar case of Russia leather in her hand.

"See," she said, "I bought it all alone, and the man at the shop understood every word I said when I told him I wanted it for my husband."

Before leaving Spain la Señora de Vargas wanted her daughter to take lessons in English with a celebrated master of that language well known in Seville, but I told her that I would take charge of her instruction myself; and so I have done since our marriage. It is so sweet to teach the one we love! Woman forms generally a perfect contrast to the indocility and opposition that one has almost always to contend with in a child. Call a boy to his lessons, and

he will come against his will, or, more likely, he will pretend not to understand, and will go on playing; she, on the contrary, is in advance of the hour, she loves to be our disciple, and engraves each of our words in her tender heart. She has faith, deference, and even respect for the knowledge of the one she loves. In a word, if she were not the beloved being, and the happiness of our hearts, she would at least, by her docility and her promptitude, be the best of scholars.

Add to this, that she is only too delighted to prolong this pastime that makes her feel so young. She seems so happy when she receives even this small boon at our hands! She is moreover sensible to the gentleness of her master, to his praises, and also to his scoldings. Contrary to the child, she is afraid of being scolded. If one is too severe to her, if one calls her "*Madame*," she begins to cry, and she throws herself into the arms of her master. This finishes the lesson.

I do not know if all women are like this, but such, at least, has been my experience with Conchita.

The pious and, perhaps, bigoted Spaniard, accustomed only to the routinal lessons of the convent and the Church, feared sometimes to hear what she considered my too liberal ideas, and my outspoken thoughts seemed always to hurt her quick but superstitious imagination. Moreover, her mind, although most intelligent and well cultivated, was naturally timorous, and rendered more so by the kind of education she had received.

Sometimes when we were discussing a spiritual or a religious point, she would exclaim, "Oh, how ignorant I am! I pretend to understand your ideas when I can hardly comprehend my own. When you want me to open my heart to you, when you ask me my opinion, I cannot express myself. . . . Then you complain and think me cold. . . . But this is not so. I have to sustain in my heart a continual warfare between my religious belief and your advanced ideas; this is too much for me. I cannot doubt of the faith of my parents, and yet I cannot contradict your statements, although they break my heart. Is it talent that I want? or is it my tongue that will not utter my feelings? . . . Oh, I cannot speak! . . . You who speak so well, Walter . . . convince me if you can of the truth of your doctrines. I want to be yours in everything; oh, yes! instruct me, and place a soul in my bosom that may be elevated enough to understand yours, and that may teach me to love you as you deserve."

At last, on Tuesday, the 8th, we left Dumbarton by the railway for Balloch.

The morning presented itself dull and cloudy, and the Clyde was still veiled in a white but vaporous mist. The sun rose amidst clouds and upon a dappled sky, smiling in long blue streaks through a hazy screen. Conchita proposed that we had better remain another day in Dumbarton, where we were so well lodged in the Elephant Hotel. "It would be most tantalizing to see Loch Lomond on a misty day," she

said. But as we had already lost so much time on the banks of the Clyde, we decided to continue our journey through the Highlands in spite of the weather, which, however, cleared up during the day. I sent a telegram to the proprietor of the Tarbet Hotel, telling him that we should require rooms for the night; for at this time of the year it is most difficult to find rooms in the hotels if one does not write for them beforehand. A quarter of an hour afterwards I received the answer, also by telegraph. How grand is this invention, that carries our messages from one end of the world to the other with the velocity of thought. It seems to me that this is the greatest proof of man's progress, and of his power over the earth. Men can never be grateful enough to Sir Benjamin Franklin for the great blessing he discovered for humanity. But in spite of the velocity of the electric spark, my message arrived too late, and we were obliged to content ourselves with two back rooms in the hotel on Loch Lomond, for all the others were already engaged.

An hour later we descended from the railway at Balloch, a rather ancient town on the banks of the Lake.

I asked one of the porters where the steamer was that was to take us to Tarbet, and he told me that the train conveyed the passengers to the shores of the Lake. We once more entered our carriage, and took our seats in it, but for a few minutes only, for we soon reached the pier where the steamer was waiting our arrival.

The first look that one casts upon this lake is always one of admiration. Before us we see an immense expanse of water, that seems to lose itself in the horizon between lofty mountains. At our feet the mirror-like waters glide before our eyes like clouds of gauze and gold; and over these fair blue waters rise innumerable islands, green and fresh as if they had just come out of the water—a true archipelago of little islands.

But who can feel, when reading a mere description, written with cold ink upon a blank expanse of paper, what passes through an impressionable heart when it contemplates the sublime spectacle that virgin nature offers to his view in those fair northern countries, where everything is harmony, melody, and poetry? Who can describe this Mediterranean of the mountains, populated with islands so varied in their form and so different in their character?—some grave and majestic, covered with dark woods, that harmonise so well with the waters that surround them, reflected so perfectly upon their mirror-like surface; others, even more sombre, consist only of rude rocks, on which vegetation has found as yet no home. Farther back, we discern others,

“Like Highland maidens, sweetly fair,
The snood and rosebud in her hair,
Yon emerald isles, how calm they sleep
On the blue bosom of the deep;
How bright they throw, with waking eye,
Their lone charms on the passers by.”

What a sublime garden this is, where the soul is

transported with delight, and the eloquent beauty of which speaks to the hearts of all men !

Conchita leant on my arm ; and thus, side by side, we went on board the steamer. Almost all our fellow-passengers were tourists like ourselves ; and all, without exception, seemed struck dumb by the beauty of the scene before them. Exalted by its majesty, one is compelled to exclaim, as did Murray when he saw it for the first time, " Where is the man who would not fight for such a country ? This land was not made for slaves. Look at these bulwarks of nature ! Every mountain head which forms this chain of hills is an impregnable rampart against invasion."

Loch Lomond is the largest of the sweet water lakes of Scotland, and, without doubt, the most picturesque and beautiful. Towards the south—that is to say, about the place where we were at that moment—it forms a kind of bay of more than five miles in width, studded, as I have said, with innumerable isles, varied in form and character, but all equally picturesque and lonely. Towards the north, the surface of the water is prolonged, forming a rather broad gulf of nearly twenty-four miles in length.

High mountains surround this lake, some of which rise to three thousand two hundred feet and more. To this topographic description one must add the varied effects of a wild and virgin vegetation ; the beautiful little panoramas that one can distinguish between the mountains, and the golden clouds that cover their tops, together with the rising mist that

blends together the outlines, so as to make the shore hardly distinguishable from the blue waters of the lake below.

Such was the scene that surrounded us on all sides, and at each stroke of the engine a new panorama more and more beautiful unfolded itself before our sight.

I had been in Scotland before, it is true, but I had never till then learned to appreciate the beauties of this wonderful country. Conchita, however, felt the power of its witchery even more than I did. We both gazed long, and with deep admiration, upon this matchless scene without uttering one word to express our emotions; viewing it in silence, as though to break that silence would have broken the spell which had been thrown over our minds by the first look we had cast upon this wondrous lake.

After a deep sigh, she exclaimed, "I should never have thought that the earth contained anything so beautiful, so celestial! oh! this cannot be the world, this is . . . paradise!"

Now and then melodious strains, as those which proceed from an Eolian harp, came to our ears. Save this, all was silent around us, for the whole creation seemed spell-bound with admiration before such a magnificent scene. The silence was such that the smallest noises were distinctly perceptible. One could hear the silence itself, the distant murmur of a brook while running through the valley, the whistling of the wind over the mountains, the vaporous cascade

as it fell into the lake, the dew drops that fell from leaf to leaf, the twitter of the birds whilst they built their nests among the umbrageous foliage, their sweet songs, and even the soft breeze of the evening, all, all seemed to be singing a hymn of thanks to the Creator ; and those varied sounds came to our ears, forming a sweet and melodious harmony that rose from earth towards the calm heaven above.

Is there a melody comparable to the echoes of the mountains as they continually sound over the blue lakes of Caledonia ?

The steamer moved peacefully over the surface of the smooth water, leaving a long track behind that became wider and wider till it reached the distant shores on either side.

Inch Murrin was the first island we passed. It is said to be the largest, and it certainly is one of the most beautiful. Instead of being a wild spot, as the greater part of the isles of Loch Lomond are, it is to-day a well-planted park belonging to the Duke of Montrose, in which the deer run to and fro with entire liberty. At its southern extremity we perceived the ruins of a castle, some old feudal residence of an ancient chieftain.

After this island, we passed another, and after this another, and another, till we found it impossible to count them. And every one of those beautiful little spots of earth that vanished before our eyes like dreams of beauty in a midsummer night's dream, or the romantic site of some old tradition, left its trace

in the picture-gallery of our memory—never to be forgotten.

In this, which can truly be called the land of poetry, every little spot, every wood, every isle, every mountain, has served as the scene of some wild or romantic legend. For this is the country of old traditions. In this island took place the great battle of Clairinch, so well fought by the Buchanans; in the other, called Inch Chailliach, we can still see among the trees the ruins of the convent where *Mary of Leith* lived after the tragical death of her lover.

On the shore, above a little rising ground, we can see still the celebrated Buchanan House, the seat of the Duke of Montrose, which has been the scene of so many romantic dramas. On the left bank rises the town of Luss, with its old castle, the last heiress of which married the Colquhoun of Colquhoun, after the most romantic adventures. Further on we can just perceive the plain where the battle was fought between the Macgregors and the Colquhouns in the time of James VI., Glen Flinn, if I remember rightly.

On the right bank above Inversnaid and its picturesque waterfall, we find Rob Roy's cave, a deep and extensive cavern, so celebrated in Scotch romance, but which from here is almost imperceptible to the naked eye.

"Yes, slender aid from fancy's glass
It needs, as round those shores we pass,
'Mid glen and thicket dark, to scan
The wild Macgregor's savage clan,

Emerging at their chieftain's call,
To foray or to festival ;
While nodding plumes and tartans bright
Gleam wildly o'er each glancing height."

Loch Lomond is the spot where we find more traditions and legends than elsewhere. There is not an isle, a vale, a mountain, whose name is not united to those of Ossian, of Oscar, of Wallace and Bruce, of Colquhoun, or of James V., and which does not remind the traveller of the wild adventures and heroic deeds of the heroes of old Caledonia ; and, above all, the daring Rob Roy, whom Sir Walter Scott has made so famous throughout Europe.

"Can you not relate to me some of those old legends," said my beautiful bride, while she cast upon me one of her most lovely smiles.

"Yes, I will," I said, "if you sketch for me, in the meantime, the wondrous scene before us."

"That I will with the greatest pleasure," she answered, and, bringing out her sketch book, she began drawing the outlines of the mountains, while I narrated the following story.

CHAPTER XI

THE BRIDE OF LUSS.*

IN that pretty little village that you see between the trees, at the mouth of a picturesque stream on the left bank of Loch Lomond, lived, once upon a time, many, many years ago, a young squire or laird, as they are called in Scotland. The entire village, consisting of a few cottages, an old parish church, and a large and, at that time, modern manor house, belonged to the laird of Luss, as James Colquhoun was called by his tenants and neighbours.

Since the time of his father's death, a few years previous to the commencement of my tale, his property had increased prodigiously, and prosperity and plenty were enjoyed by all his tenants.

Each time that the inhabitants of the glen raised their eyes to the manor house, which is situated on the slope of the Paps, a small range of hills culminating in Cruach Dubh, they blessed their kind and good landlord.

Why so many blessings, and so much affection? We shall soon learn this, if we listen to the conversation of Fanny and Jessie, two young country lasses,

* See Appendix, Note 11.

as they proceeded on their way to the neighbouring brook, where they are going for water.

"Let us go quickly," says the bonnie Fanny; "it will soon be twelve o'clock, for the sun is already nearly at the top of the kirk tower, and that husband of mine is furious if he does not find me at home when he comes from work."

Jessie blushes, and, quickening her pace, says, "And my father is also waiting, I forgot."

"My husband, when he is working for the laird, hardly takes time to eat, he is so anxious to return to his work."

"That is just the case with father."

"It is true, Jessie, darling, that Master Colquhoun is worthy of it all; for while he lives there will be no poor people in the village."

"You are right, Fanny; see how much he has done for us; last year we had not enough corn to pay the rent, and he not only forgave us that, but he even gave us corn to sow for the next harvest."

"He did the same for us, and for all the villagers."

"When this good master dies more angels will accompany him to heaven than there are stars to light the way."

"May the Lord grant him a long life; the day the laird dies heaven will dress in its best to receive him, while the earth will have to go into mourning."

"The minister said last Sunday that, great and small, we all have some stain upon our conscience; but I think Master Colquhoun's conscience must be

purser than the water of this burn, for his only desire is to make every body happy around him."

"How happy the lassie will be whom he marries."

"And, as he himself said the other day to father, when he marries it will not be a rich woman, but a bonnie Highland lassie."

"Well, Jessie, I think you are then the very one to suit him."

"What things you do say, Fanny!"

"Do not blush for that, lassie, for the king of Scotland would not be too good for our Highland darling."

"Why, the Master, so handsome, so good, and so rich! how could he ever think of me?"

"But he does, though, and not a little. The other day I was sitting at my door-step, sewing David's kilt, when he came, and was just talking to me, when you looked out of your window opposite, and he said, 'There is our bonnie Jessie Macgregor, the prettiest girl of the clan.'"

The village maiden became as red as a poppy, and her bright eyes sparkled like two stars, lighting up her beautiful face.

They soon arrived at the bottom of the hill, and Fanny began to fill her can with the fresh water of the brook that then, as to-day, fell in a cascade into the lake below.

While she was doing this, the village bells struck twelve with their merry clang in their well-known tone.

"'Tis twelve o'clock!" exclaimed Fanny. "Good

Lord ! and my husband at home waiting." And she began to run up the hill towards the village with her can, while her young friend was still filling hers.

When Jessie's can was in its turn full, she tried to place it upon her head, but she could not accomplish this.

For the third time she tried, but with the same ill success ; and, feeling her strength unequal to the task, she began to look towards the village to see if some one was coming who would help her, when all of a sudden she saw the Laird himself, who was coming from the mountain, whistling merrily as usual.

"You arrive in time, Laird," said the village beauty. "Would you be so good as to help me with this can, it is so heavy ? Will you kindly lend me a hand, Sir ?"

"There is nothing I would not do to please you, my bonnie Jessie."

"You are laughing at me, Sir,"

"No, I am not. Are you not the prettiest girl of Luss ?"

"To how many have you said that already, Master Colquhoun ?"

"Let us talk seriously, Jessie, my darling. I have often tried to see you alone, and, until to-day, I have always failed," said the Laird, changing his merry tone for a more serious and decided one.

Jessie cast her beautiful eyes on the running stream, and forgot all about the can of water, and her father, who was waiting for her in their little cottage.

"I," continued the young man, "am rich, and, in spite of this, I am not happy; because, although I have all that money can buy, I feel I want something more!"

"Oh! what can you want, Sir—you, of all men?"

"A heart that loves me."

"There is not one in the village that does not love their Laird."

"Well, that is gratifying, but it does not fill the void in my heart."

"I do not understand you, Sir."

"Jessie, my lass, that smile and that blush prove to me that you do understand me; but, in spite of this, I want to express to you what I really *do* feel. At night, when I am alone in my old library, when day closes, when silence begins to reign over the glen, and the sun disappears behind the distant hills of Loch Long; when the bells of the kirk call the faithful to the evening prayer, and when I see the stalwart Highlander leave his fields, his scythe, and his plough, to return to his home, where, full of love, his wife and his children are waiting for him; I feel in my heart a sadness which I cannot explain to myself.

"When I walk through the fields, so full of beauty; when I ride through the dark forests that lead to the head of the Loch; when I row upon the blue waters yonder; when the birdies sing; when the sky is blue; when everything becomes bright and beautiful at the breath of the Creator, who fills our fields with

blossoms and our groves with song,—I feel the same sadness, the same anxiety, the same discontent, that I cannot express, and which I can only compare with that felt by the bird who is seeking a companion who will make a nest for him. Jessie, darling, I need a heart that will sympathise with mine own. Do you understand me now, my bonnie Jessie?

"I have often watched you, Jessie; and I think that I have seen in you this same anxiety, sadness, and want of sympathy, or whatever it may be."

Jessie's eyes brightened. "I cannot express myself as you do, Master Colquhoun," she said; "but I also feel what you describe."

"And what is it, do you know?"

"Oh! I do not know, Sir. How can a poor country girl like me explain what passes in her heart?—but when one is young——"

"One must love!"

Jessie became even redder than she was before, and fixed her eyes more and more intently upon the brook that ran at her feet.

"You alone, Jessie, darling," said the young man, after a pause, "can fill the empty space that there is in my heart."

"Oh! no, never, Sir!——I am so poor!"

"But *I* am rich. Will you give me your love for my love and my riches?"

"I will," said the simple country girl, "if my father makes no objection——"

But she said no more, for the young squire took

her in his arms, and, pressing her to his heart, hushed the sound of her words to his ear, which, however, reached his heart, where they remained engraved for ever. But not a word more was said on either side for a long time.

A village girl who was coming to the burn for water put an end to this tender scene. The Laird helped Jessie to put her can upon her head, and she began to ascend the hill towards Luss.

But while helping her to replace her heavy burden, he had managed to say to the pretty Jessie, without the girl who came for water, hearing him, "To-morrow I will speak to your father—for I love you, Jessie!"

Was Jessie pleased with the conversation she had had with the young Laird by the brook?

The only thing that tradition has been able to retain is, that when she arrived home, she passed the rest of that day in singing, and that the old cottagers agreed that they had never seen her look so lovely and so happy before.

The next day the Laird sought out her father, who was cutting wood in the forest.

"Good day, Macgregor," he said.

"Ah! 'tis you, Master."

"Yes; I am going to that old castle beyond the forest, that I am thinking about buying."

"Do you intend moving to it, Sir?"

"No; I was thinking of turning it into a hospital for the poor people of the parish."

"Oh! how good you are, Squire. Now, who else

would have thought of such a thing? You must be the happiest man on earth, Master Colquhoun."

"You have my happiness in your hands, good Macgregor."

"In my hands! How so?"

"By giving me your daughter for my wife."

The end of the conversation thus begun was, that the old man and the young Laird fell into each other's arms.

Colquhoun tried to convince him that neither he nor his daughter ought to be in the least indebted to him, telling him that Jessie was worth more than all his estates put together. But all was in vain.

That night there was not a person in Luss who did not know that their Laird was going to be married to the bonnie Jessie Macgregor.

A whole year had passed since Colquhoun had asked of old Macgregor the hand of his daughter, and Jessie was still unmarried.

And yet the young Laird was fonder than ever of the lovely country girl.

Shortly after the scene I have been narrating, old Macgregor died; and Jessie, who was left alone and penniless in the world, did not want to marry the laird until the time of mourning had expired.

Colquhoun had also been very busy in two works of the greatest importance—the founding of a hospital, and the restoration of the parish kirk of Luss.

He wanted to add to the satisfaction that he would

experience the day of his marriage, that of having finished those two works; and he also particularly desired that the old village church, that was undergoing repairs at his expense, should be opened with the celebration of his marriage with Jessie Macgregor.

But in spite of these two great and holy reasons for delay, the villagers began to talk about the long forth-coming wedding of their laird.

Let us see what was the subject of the conversation amongst the people.

"But, lassie dear," said Fanny to Jessie one day, as they went together to the brook for water, "now that we are alone let us talk about your wedding, that we have been so long expecting to come off. Do you know that I should never have believed that the Laird would have acted as he is doing?"

"I do not understand you," said the poor girl, turning very pale.

"Why, Jessie, do you think it is right that, after having asked your hand more than a year ago, he has not yet married you?"

"If we are not married yet, it is because there are two good reasons for the delay."

"I do not say anything to the contrary, Jessie, my bonnie lass, and I should be the last person in the world to think badly of the Laird, but people will talk, and there are plenty who say that he never intends marrying you at all."

"But that is nonsense; he loves me more than ever,

and you will see how soon all those idle gossips will be convinced to the contrary."

"I think as you do, Jessie, darling, but you must allow that they who talk are not quite wrong in what they say, for when a rich and powerful laird makes love to a poor peasant girl, there is always plenty of evil to be said about it, even if the laird be a saint."

"Never mind what they say of us, Fanny; I cannot think badly of my poor James, for I know he loves me above all things."

"I also know it, Jessie, darling, and I am convinced of his goodness; but, in spite of that, I am not very well pleased with his conduct. We are all mortal, and imagine, my dear girl, if to-morrow the laird were to die, which I pray God will not happen, how would you be situated . . . now that your father is dead, and with nothing to depend on in the world? You will remain with a stain upon your name that nobody could remove."

"In that you are right, Fanny," said the poor young girl, while tears came to her eyes.

Days passed, and even weeks, and Jessie was gradually getting ill, for she could not forget what Fanny had told her the day they went together to the burn by the side of the wood.

One evening Colquhoun, who was going on the lake fishing, called upon his intended bride, and told her that in eight days the church would be finished, and that they could be married.

That night Jessie could not sleep for joy.

It was about eight o'clock the next morning, and Jessie began to wonder why her lover was so long in coming, for Colquhoun came every day at seven to the village, to superintend the repairs of the old kirk.

She was looking from her cottage window towards the manor house that was so soon to be her own, when she saw a servant of the laird, who was running as fast as he could to the village.

Jessie rushed to meet him, to ask him what was the matter, and she learnt with dismay that he was coming to call the priest and the doctor, for that morning they had found the poor laird insensible in the lake, and that he was now dying.

Jessie ran as fast as she could to the manor house, but she arrived too late.

Soon after, the Glen of Luss was a valley of tears, for its Laird *was dead!*

The sun had sunk below the horizon of the earth, but in heaven it still shone brightly. In the centre, in a realm of light and glory, was seen the unsleeping eye of God, which is as much as the most holy can see of the Almighty Creator. The multitude of angels without number were singing the glories of Diety, and Heaven rung with their perpetual hosannas.

To this region of supreme glory was introduced the now free spirit of James Colquhoun. He had no need to plead for himself, for the Lord knoweth what passes in every soul, and out of the throne of

light, where dwelleth the Invisible One, came a voice sweeter than the melodies of the angels, and more distinct than even the voice of his own conscience, which said,—

“Thou hast been a righteous man, thy prayers have been heard, and thou hast done good deeds upon earth, but into this region of eternal bliss none can enter but those who have no stain upon their souls, and thou hast left on earth below, a poor young maiden, friendless and alone, therefore thou mayest not come into the heaven of the pure, but he who chastises but from love will grant you a place in that region which men call purgatory, and which is but the porch of heaven. Go ! thy doom is cast.”

The angels went on singing the praises of God, and the trumpets sounded, and tempests were heard below on the earth, roaring.

The spirit of Colquhoun felt itself compelled by an invisible power to abandon the celestial sphere, and a moment after found itself stretched upon a rock overlooking a wild and horrible, but indescribable spot, not of earth, but rather of the realms of imagination.

Time has no influence over the immortal spirits, and he could not tell how long he had been there, though it seemed to him as if ages of everlasting torment had passed over his head when a vision of purity and of beauty appeared before his sight.

It was the blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, who was coming down to purgatory to console

the wretched spirits that were there, suffering the punishments of their earthly sins.

Our blessed Lady beheld the spirit of the brave Highlander chained to a rock, and the demons lying idly by, for his remorse and his anxiety about his earthly love was more bitter to him than all their torments.

The Virgin approached the spirit, and said in a sweet voice, which stilled his cry, for in what state are we indifferent to the pleasure derived from consolation? "Wherefore, oh son of earth, art thou so tormented by thy conscience, that thy sorrow is more intolerable to thee than all the punishments of this place of retribution?"

"Because, Holy Mother," answered the poor laird, I have left in my native Highland glen a virgin, pure and lovely, alone, and without protection, who once loved me truly, and who now must mourn incessantly my death, for I know with what agony I should have mourned *her* had she died instead."

The Holy Mary, who still felt in her breast the pure flame of the once earthly, though now divine love which she had felt when in the world for her son, took compassion upon him.

"Thou hast been good and merciful when on earth, James Colquhoun," she said, taking him by the hand, "thy only fault has been punished enough already by the moral suffering thou hast undergone, for the sins of love carry their punishment with them. Thou

mayest return with me to heaven, there to receive the reward due for thy good deeds."

And the blessed Virgin raised herself upon her aureal of glory, and gently ascended towards the bright point in the distance which marked the entrance of heaven, while the penitents below raised their voices, breathing blessings and prayers, which accompanied her to her celestial sphere.

The laird felt his chains drop from him, and he, too, ascended, without the least effort, to the celestial region.

Once more he was in paradise, once more he saw the ever-watching eye of God, surrounded by the crowds of angels. But not even this glorious scene was enough to make him forget his earthly love; while his beloved was unhappy, how could he be happy? And his constant cry was, "Jessie, Jessie, my darling, could I but see you again!"

The divine and loving nature of the Virgin was touched. "Can thy love be so great that not even paradise can efface it from thy mind? I also love, oh my son, and my glory is the part I take in the love of others, how can I minister to thy sorrow?"

The face of the spirit brightened up with joy. "Grant me one favour, oh suffer me, Holy Mother," he said, "to return to earth, and to bring hither with me the soul of my beloved Jessie."

Then the voice of the Almighty was heard to say: "Thou camest to my presence with a stain, that, though small, prevented my granting thee a place in

my kingdom, but thy love has saved thee, and thy prayer is granted. Return to the world and purify thyself there, with thy many virtues. Thy boon is to make the one thou hast left on earth, happy, live with her till the day of her death, and then thou mayest return with her to my presence, to dwell amongst the blessed for evermore."

Colquhoun suddenly felt himself plunged into the most profound darkness, and he thought he travelled through seemingly endless unknown regions. At last his wild flight ceased.

A tear fell upon his cold cheek, and he felt a hot lip upon his. Life came back all at once to his body, and he opened his eyes. Two cries of joy were raised at that moment to the throne of God in heaven above.

He was in his own room in the manor-house of Luss, and Jessie Macgregor was by his side.

The inconsolable maiden had gone into the chamber where they had told her the body of her lover lay, and when she had pressed her tender lips to those of the corpse, the dead man had come back to life again.

Colquhoun always believed that Jessie's love had restored him to life, but the world, and particularly the doctors, said that he had only been in a swoon, but that he had survived an accident that might very well have cost him his life.

Eight days after, the laird of Luss was married in

the church rebuilt by him, to the beautiful Jessie Macgregor. After the wedding, he told the priest who had united them, the wonderful story that I have been narrating.

"Son," said the priest, "all that you have told me has been a dream, the wanderings of a violent fever, for God is too high for there to be a comparison between the things of heaven and those of earth; but bless and thank Him who has sent you that dream, for with it he has given you a lesson which you must never forget. Who knows, if it had not been for it, perhaps you would never have married *her* who to-day is your wife, and if your dream might not have become a horrible reality!"

CHAPTER XII

TARBET.

"I LIKE that story," said Conchita, when I had finished my legend; "it proves to us the power of love and its constancy, and that dream, although rather fantastic, suits my imagination, and is quite in accordance with my faith."

"Why? for the very reason that it is so utterly fantastic and wonderful?"

"Nay, Walter, do not laugh at my faith; to the comprehension of the philosophers it is inexplicable how the voice of Jesus could have raised Lazarus out of his grave; for the world at large it may also be inexplicable how the kiss of a virgin could give life to a corpse. I thank God he has placed me in the region of belief, above both the philosophers and the world."

"You may believe whatever you like of my story; I have only repeated it as it was once told to me, for its truth, of course, I cannot vouch, but I tell you plainly, my darling, that it seems to me both absurd and impossible; for the ways of God cannot be the ways of man; but I accept it, because it proves to me that love can never die."

" With life all other passions fly,
 All others are but vanity.
 In heaven ambition cannot dwell,
 Nor avarice in the vaults of hell;
 Earthly, these passions are of earth,
 They perish where they have their birth :
 But love is indestructible.
 Its holy flame for ever burneth,
 From heaven it came, to heaven returneth.
 Too oft on earth a troubled guest,
 At times deceived, at times opprest,
 It here is tried and purified,
 Then hath in heaven its perfect rest :
 It soweth here with toil and care,
 But the harvest time of love is there." *

Soon afterwards we went down into the saloon to dinner, after which we hurried up again on deck, where a troop of Highlanders were singing the famous chorus of Sir Walter Scott's splendid lyric, "The Gathering of Clan-Gregor."

- " The moon's on the lake, and the mist's on the brae,
 And the clan has a name that is nameless by day ;
 Then gather, gather, gather, Gregalich !
 Our signal for fight, that from monarchs we drew,
 Must be heard but by night in our vengeful haloo.
 Then haloo, Gregalich ! haloo, Gregalich !
- " Glen Orchy's proud mountains, Coalchuirn and her towers,
 Glenstrae and Glenlyon no longer are ours ;
 We're landless, landless, landless, Gregalich !
 But, doom'd and devoted by vassal and lord,
 Macgregor has still both his heart and his sword !
 Then courage, courage, courage, Gregalich !
- " If they rob us of name and pursue us with beagles,
 Give their roofs to the flames and their flesh to the eagles !
 Then vengeance, vengeance, vengeance, Gregalich !

* Robert Southey—"The Curse of Kehama."

While there's leaves in the forest, or foam on the river,
 Macgregor, despite them, shall flourish for ever!
 Come then, Gregalich ! come then, Gregalich !

" Through the depths of Loch Katrine the steed shall career,
 O'er the peak of Ben Lomond the galley shall steer ;
 And the rocks of Craig-Royston like icicles melt,
 Ere our wrongs be forgot or our vengeance unfelt !
 Then gather, gather, gather, Gregalich ! "

This spirited song was followed by another, no less characteristic of the wild region in which we were at that moment.

" Hail to the chief, who in triumph advances !
 Honour'd and bleas'd be the ever-green pine !
 Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
 Flourish, the shelter and grace of our line !
 Heaven send it happy dew,
 Earth send it sap anew,
 Gaily to bourgeon, and broadly to grow,
 While every Highland glen
 Sends our shout back agen,
 Roderigh Vich Alpine Dhu, ho ! ieroe ! "

" Ours is no sapling, chance sown by the fountain,
 Blooming at Beltane, in winter to fade ;
 When the whirlwind has stripp'd every leaf on the mountain,
 The more shall Clan-Alpine exult in her shade.
 Moor'd in the rifted rock,
 Proof to the tempest's shock,
 Firmer the roots as ruder it blows ;
 Menteith and Breadalbane, then,
 Echo his praise agen,
 Roderigh Vich Alpine Dhu, ho ! ieroe ! "

" Proudly our pibroch has thrilled in Glen-Fruin,
 And Bannochar's groans to our slogan replied :
 Glen Luss and Roes-dhu, they are smoking in ruin,
 And the best of Loch Lomond lie dead on her side.
 Widow and Saxon maid,
 Long shall lament our raid,

Think of Clan Alpine with fear and with foe ;
 Lennox and Leven-Glen
 Shake when they hear agen,
 Roderigh Vich Alpine Dhu, ho ! ieroe !

“ Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands,
 Stretch to your oars, for the ever-green pine !
 O ! that the rose-bud that graces yon islands
 Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine !
 O that some seedling gem,
 Worthy such noble stem,
 Honour'd and blest in their shadow might grow ;
 Loud should Clan Alpine then
 Ring from the deepmost glen,
 Roderigh Vich Alpine Dhu, ho ! ieroe ! ”

“ What a glorious country this is,” exclaimed Conchita, when the song had finished, “ where the men are so brave and the scenery is so grand ! I should never have believed that in such a northern country, far away from the chivalry of Europe, so much patriotism and so much character would be found.”

The Highlanders then sang, at the unanimous request of the passengers, the well-known air of “ Bonnie Dundee.” When they came to the last verse,

“ Come fill up my cup, come fill up my can,
 Come saddle my horses, and call up my men ;
 Come open your gates, and let me gae free,
 I daurna stay langer in Bonnie Dundee,”

the whole company joined in chorus. There is something so true-hearted and so noble in those national lays, when one hears them amidst the picturesque scenery of their native home, it is impossible to control one's feelings, and the spirit of the least impressionable is carried away by them.

When the song had finished we stopped at the pier of Tarbet, our destination. We were all sorry to quit the steamer, but the sun that, at that moment, was disappearing behind the distant hills of Loch Long told us that it was time to land.

The Tarbet hotel is most beautifully situated in a little bay on the left bank of Loch Lomond, and from it one enjoys one of the most complete and striking views of the lake. In front of the hotel, on the other side of the water, rises Ben Lomond, the highest of the mountains of this lake, which—

“Through shrouding mists looks dimly down ;
For though, perchance, his piercing eye
Doth read the secrets of the sky,
His haughty bosom scorns to show
Those secrets to the world below.
Close-woven shades, with varying grace,
And crag and cavern mark his base.” *

* Sigourney.

CHAPTER XIII.

A MOONLIGHT WALK.

NIGHT was beginning to cover the landscape with her black and starry veil, and if the lake had seemed beautiful to us during the day, how much more so, did it now appear illuminated by countless millions of suns that shone upon it from distant spheres !

Night is the time for lovers ; its silent and solitary hours are by far the most enchanting, the sweetest and the happiest of our whole lives ; for in them our passionate hearts enjoy a more intimate communion with the being we most dearly love.

A fresh and pure breeze came to us over the peaceful waters of the lake, refreshing us after the heat of the day, with its perfumed air. Conchita looked at me for a moment, and then she said, in those sweet melodious tones which belonged to her only, " What a beautiful night, Walter. Would you not like to take a walk by the banks of Loch Lomond, and enjoy the silent charms of this hour in the open air ? "

I was, of course, delighted with her proposition, and in a short time we went out of the hotel arm in arm.

It would be impossible for me to describe the glorious spectacle that Loch Lomond offers during those peaceful hours of summer, when the full moon lights up with silvery rays each isle and each wave of this, the most enchanting of all lakes. Oh ! it would indeed be impossible for a contemplative soul not to admire so much beauty and so much poetry. The vault of heaven appears studded with millions of stars, that shine as so many islands of light upon an ocean suspended over our heads. Who can look upon them and then turn his eyes upon the earth without experiencing a melancholy sentiment, and without wishing for wings to direct one's flight towards them, and to mingle one's self with their eternal splendour ?

In front of us rose, as a giant, the colossal Ben Lomond surrounded by a thousand other mountains that, like courtiers, kneel before their king. The mist had now completely dispersed, and our curious looks could discover the farthest hills, that rise one above the other as a council of giants who are going to judge the world ; at our feet ran the waters of the lake, pure and crystal-like, reflecting each leaf, each crag, each mountain. A little farther we saw a green isle that brought back to our minds the fabulous island of Calypso. But this was an isle that Homer himself would have been at a loss to describe. For there is more poetry in nature than fable can imagine in its wildest dreams of fancy.

The silver moon of July illuminated this fairy-like

scene, adding the enchantment of mystery to its many charms, for the light of the moon is infinitely sweeter than that which proceeds from the bright star of day. Orb of meditation and of mystery, it has ever been destined to inspire thoughts of a purer and far more poetic nature than the gorgeous sun, who with his ardent rays, burns the earth which he illumines.

“Hail to thy cold and clouded beam,
Pale pilgrim of the troubled sky !
Hail, though the mists that o’er thee stream
Lend to thy brow their sullen dye !
How should thy pure and peaceful eye
Untroubled view our scenes below,
Or how a tearless beam supply,
To light a world of war and woe !

“Fair Queen ! I will not blame thee now,
As once by Greta’s fairy side ;
Each little cloud that dimmed thy brow
Did then an angel’s beauty hide.
And of the shades I then could chide,
Still are the thoughts to memory dear,
For, while a softer strain I tried,
They hid my blush, and calmed my fear.

“Then did I swear thy ray serene
Was formed to light some lonely dell,
By two fond lovers only seen,
Reflected from the crystal well,
Or sleeping on their mossy cell,
Or quivering on the lattice bright,
Or glancing on their couch, to tell
How swiftly wanes the summer night.”

“Yes,” said Conchita, when I had murmured those verses out of *Rokeby*. “Yes, the moon must have been formed to light some lonely shore ‘by two fond

lovers only seen.' How much poetry and sentiment there is in her pale, cloudless beam, as the poets call it; and yet, did not another poet tell us that

'The devil's in the moon for mischief;
 . . . There's not a day,
The longest, not the twenty-fourth of June,
Sees half the business in a wicked way
On which three single hours of moonlight smile,
And then she looks so modest all the while.' *

"Ah, the moon is very poetic, very sweet, but at the same time is so changeable, so inconstant! Does not this put you in mind, Walter, of our *honeymoon* that will so soon set upon our horizon?"

"*So soon! so soon!* Why, my Conchita, that moon which you have called of honey, will lighten our hearts for a whole eternity, and will continue to inspire us with constant love. Do you believe that our love could be so easily forgotten? It is true that the moon will leave us at the end of the month, but she will appear anew at the beginning of the next, and then, if she be no longer called the moon of honey, she will be the same moon that has presided over our happiness."

"How sublime, Oh night, is thy language!" exclaimed Conchita, seating herself upon some rocks washed by the silvery waters, and seemingly paying no attention to what I had said, "is it possible that there can be those who pass indifferent and careless under such marvels, and who do not even raise their eyes to admire them?"

* Lord Byron.

"If night were deprived of stars," I answered, "and earth had but one spot from which its numerous constellations and moons could be seen, the pilgrims to that wondrous sanctuary would know no bounds, and each palmer would come back praising its marvels and its wonders. But what we have constantly with us, loses its value in our eyes; custom calms the most excited imagination, and we easily forget the beauties of nature, in order to follow things which are scarcely worth our notice. That which is of real importance has but little charm for us. Earth has the power of luring us in such a way that we easily forget even heaven for it, for we are indeed of earth earthly, as the great apostle said."

"You are right, Walter, how often are we not carried away by what is but superficial, forgetting that which is of the utmost importance to our welfare? We put aside what should be most interesting to us, to abandon ourselves to that which in our innermost hearts we despise! We praise the day, and we reckon the course of our lives by that of the sun, but how much more does our existence depend on the night; and how much more magnificent is it to our eyes? The day has but one sun; night has millions, whose brightness guides our progress through space, and carries our spirit straight into the bosom of the Almighty."

"I am glad, Conchita, you think thus. Astronomy, of all sciences, is the one that teaches us our relative worth, showing us the relations that unite the earth

with the rest of creation. Without this science, as the past history of the ages shows us plainly, we find it impossible to know what we are, and where we are. Without it, we cannot establish an instructive comparison between the space we occupy in the heavens and the total of the universe. Without it, we ignore the true dimensions of our home, its nature, and even the order to which it belongs. Surrounded by the obscurity of ignorance, we cannot form the smallest idea of the general disposition of the universe. Darkness covers the limited horizon of our intelligence, and the human thought, incapable of elevating itself above the spectacle of every-day life, cannot, without science, overstep the small circumference drawn by the limits of the action of our senses. But when the torch of science lights up our path, the scene changes : the darkness that hid away from us the beauties of the horizon disappears, and the intelligent eye contemplates in all the majesty of a pure and cloudless sky, the immense work of the Creator. The earth appears as a globe turning upon its axis under the feet of man. Thousands of worlds like it move in space. The universe grows larger as the intensity of our look becomes more earnest, and the universal creation is then only appreciated in all its grandeur of design and beauty of detail. Science alone establishes the truth, and places before our very eyes the exact relation between the planet we inhabit, and the multitude of similar worlds which together compose the universe."

"Do you then believe that there is more than one world in the universe?"

"Of course, my darling Conchita, and all the modern astronomers have arrived at this conclusion. And it could not be otherwise. Life is universal, and the spiritual spark which constitutes our souls is to be found everywhere, just as much in the earth we tread, as in the air we breathe. If we analyse the smallest clod of earth, or the most microscopic grain of dust, we invariably find in them a small universe of life, a little world where everything lives, everything propagates itself; all the earth is populated with little organic beings which are not less real, because on account of their small size, they escape our sight.

"Even the air we breathe is full of little imperceptible animalculæ, as Professor Tyndall has recently demonstrated, and each of these insects, sporules, infusoria, siliceous or polygastric, as they have been called, according to their different natures, by the naturalists, is in itself a little system of vital evolutions, on whose minute bodies prey even smaller beings who live and die there, where the investigating eye of man will never reach to analyse them! For such is the profusion of life on this world, that all it contains is full of it!"

"Surely you must exaggerate," said my young wife, surprised by these statements, which she heard for the first time.

"Far from it. All that I have been telling you is

I.

P

perfect truth, and in order to prove it to you still more, I will give you undeniable and positive facts.

"Leuwenhœch, the immortal discoverer of the microscope, has assured us that a thousand millions of infusoria do not occupy more room than a grain of corn, and 1,111,500,000 of them are required to weigh a gramme.

"Camille Flammarion in his book *La pluralité des mondes habités* (L. iii. c. 11), says that in a square inch of chalk one can count more than 40,000,000 of fossil animalculæ, and 1,800,000,000 of fossil shells, and adds that one of these creatures could produce in four days 150,000,000 of its species.

"Sir John Herschel when he observed the little insects in the air, found that they could be counted by millions.

"Ehrenberg has discovered, also, that life is distributed with such profusion upon this earth, that even upon the infusoria of which I have been speaking to you, live, as parasites, other animalculæ of even smaller size.

"Sir John Herschel placed a drop of pure water upon a crystal, and viewing this through a microscope that gave this drop the apparent diameter of twelve feet, he was surprised to find that it contained a population of animals of all sizes, but such a compact population that in all this diameter of twelve feet it would have been impossible to place the point of a needle upon an unoccupied spot.

"Nothing is more marvellous than the organisation

of these invisible beings, and if the most attentive observations had not placed the facts beyond doubt, men might have been tempted to think, as you did, darling Conchita, that the accounts given by naturalists were pure fiction, or else audacious falsehoods.

“A single microzoon has, so to speak, no weight; placed in the most sensitive balance it does not impart to it the slightest oscillation. The whale, on the other hand, attains a length of one hundred feet, and a weight of two hundred tons—more than the weight of an army of three thousand men; and yet, the profusion of vital apparatus in the microsea sometimes exceeds that which is seen in these large creatures. There are some which possess fifteen to twenty stomachs, or even more, while man has only one, and the bull and the camel can boast of four or five. In addition, there is in some infusoria a curious mechanism appended to this superabundance of organs—one of the stomachs being furnished with teeth of extreme delicacy, which can be seen through the transparent body moving and crushing the food.

“Notwithstanding the extreme minuteness of these creatures, which remained unknown through so many ages, nature has expended the most watchful care upon them, and their different species fill all the earth, for they have been found among the ice of the Polar Seas at the seventy-eighth degree of south latitude, as in the regions of the equator.

“Near the poles, says Ehrenberg, there, where the large organisations could not subsist, is to be found,

however, a kind of life; extremely small, it is true, but which possesses a most wonderful organisation, almost invisible, but incessant. The microscopic animals found in the austral seas near the South Pole during the voyages of Sir James Ross, offer a most peculiar kind of organisation unknown till then, and which often present a most remarkable elegance. In the remote ice-bergs which float about the $79^{\circ} 10'$ of longitude there have been found species of siliceous polygastric still alive, which proves to us that these microscopic animals have been able to subsist in the coldest of climates. In the Gulf of Erebus, the plummet brought up, from a depth of between 403 to 526 yards, seventy-eight species of silicious microzoa; and they have been discovered at a depth of more than 12,000 feet, where they had to support the enormous pressure of 373 atmospheres—a pressure capable of bursting a cannon, but which the gelatinous body of a microscopic infusorium resists in some marvellous way.

“But it is not only in the animal kingdom that we find such a profusion of life, and such extraordinary means of propagation. The vegetable kingdom is still richer and larger, and it also has its extremes like the animal one.

“The vegetable kingdom is the emblem of diversity and harmony. While its extremes offer to us the most extraordinary contrasts, all its species are, however, so united by means of imperceptible links that they could almost be called one family. In some

species the size and the grandeur are pre-eminent; thus you have the oak, the cedar, and the palm tree, which cover the earth with their foliage; others attract our admiration by their beauty and the delicacy of their form and flowers, such as the ferns and the grasses. On one side we see robust forms modelled by the hands of giants, on the other the most delicate outlines traced by the fingers of fairies.

“What an immense contrast does there not exist between the ever-green palm-tree, that seems to pierce the clouds with its straight and never-bending column, and that grey lichen, a thin layer of moss, that creeps up our statues and walls! And yet even in the midst of this wondrous chaos, science reveals to us the order and the eternal wisdom which rules and directs everything.

“The vegetable kingdom covers with its innumerable families all the surface of the earth, and we find it the same in the regions of the far north as in the forests of the equator, the same on the high mountains as in the profound depths of the ocean. It propagates itself with a marvellous rapidity, and some of its species live during centuries and centuries, always fresh, and always green.*

* “There is a cypress tree, venerable patriarch of the vegetable kingdom, that has become celebrated on account of its size and of its antiquity. It grows in the road between Vera Cruz and Mexico, and, as Solis says in his “Conquest of Mexico,” it served as refuge to Hernan Cortes and all his army. Its base measures one hundred and seventeen feet in circumference, and De Candolle assures us that it must be at least 6000 years old, age which im-

"To prove to you, dear Conchita, the rapidity with which some plants are reproduced, I will give you the following statement, which is beyond doubt :— 'A single spotted orchid will have as many seeds in a year as would plant a field, the seeds of these orchids would cover the whole island of Anglesea, and the seeds of the orchids of the island of Anglesea would the following year cover forty-seven fiftieth parts of the whole earth.'* Such is the rapidity with which the vegetable kingdom is propagated upon our planet ! And this is not an exception ; almost all plants produce an immense number of seeds of which, if by far the greater part were not annually lost, we should soon see the whole earth covered.

"Rey counted 32,000 seeds in a poppy, and Linnaeus tells us that sometimes one single tobacco plant produces 40,000 seeds at a time. Moreover, Dodard assures us that an elm produces 529,000 in a year !

"Life is distributed throughout all the earth ; everything in it lives, and reproduces its existence for generations and generations ; each little insect that circulates through our blood, and each microscopic moss that grows over our houses, has its breath of life similar to that which gives us our being, and that like this, proceeds from the supreme Creator. Can it be possible that life which attains such a degree of development upon our globe, is only to be

plies it must have been a contemporary of Adam and Eve, if we believe in the Mosaic account."—(*Hist. Gen. des Voy.* T. XII., p. 389.

* Fertilization of the British Orchids, p. 344.

found on this earth ; and that all those bright stars that illuminate our nights could be deserted and uninhabited ? Oh no ! Great God ! this could not be the case. Let me not limit the many benefits thou hast distributed upon our earth, to the small circle of one planet. Oh, omnipotent Creator ! expand our intellectual vision to behold the many mansions we are told exist in thy kingdom, when we raise our eyes and see the myriads of worlds that, glittering, proclaim thy mighty power throughout thy glorious universe !

Conchita had listened to my long speech in utter astonishment. She could not understand so many marvels, and when I had finished she only had breath to murmur, " Oh my God, how great Thou art ! And is it possible that I, a poor, miserable sinner, may call myself Thy daughter ! "

I took her by the hand, and, showing her a bright star which glittered above our heads, I said, " Do you see that beautiful star, my darling, up yonder in the dark blue sky ? It is *Sirius*, the most beautiful and the most brilliant of the stars of heaven. Fifty-two trillions, one hundred and seventy-four thousand millions of leagues divide us from it ! and yet this enormous distance seems but a step when we compare it with the immensity of space !

" In order to traverse the space that divides that world from ours, light, which travels with the velocity of seventy thousand leagues a second, takes more than twenty-two years to arrive here. Thus the *Sirius* that you see to-day is not the *Sirius* of 1872, but the

Sirius of 1850, that is to say, that the luminous ray which at this moment we perceive is one which was shed by that star more than twenty-two years ago.

“The surface of the earth, that seems to us so large, and that some even pretend contains all the universe, is only 510,000,000 of square kilometers, while that of the sun is 1,407,187 times larger, and that little star which you see yonder is twelve times larger even than the sun, for its diameter is of no less than 4,500,000 of leagues!

“Oh Conchita! there is nothing that raises the soul so much towards its Creator as the study of the heavens. It is to it that we owe the wonderful and accurate science of astronomy, and it is to it that we also owe our present enlarged ideas of the immensity of the universe, and the omnipotence of God!

“How grand it is for man, a mere spiritual atom in a material atomic frame, to have penetrated the mysteries of the universe, and to have raised himself to the knowledge of these sublime truths! For could it be possible that those immense worlds, so beautiful, so perfect, have only been made for desolation and solitude? Could it be possible that the God who has so filled this world with life, and who has distributed organised existence with such profusion upon it, has also made worlds like Sirius, so much larger, so much more perfect, so much more inhabitable than ours, only to give light to the men of this little earth? This could not be; it would be against the economy which God has displayed in all His other works. Of

what use can the light, which comes from those distant suns, be to the inhabitants of this world, if the distance which divides them from it, and which, in most cases, takes thousands of years to traverse, makes that light appear so small that men cannot even read by it? Moreover, there are so many thousands of colossal suns, of which men will never have an idea! Of what use can the light, which proceeds from those suns, be to us if we can only perceive it by means of the strongest and most powerful telescopes, and even then only under certain circumstances?"

"Our church, however, tells us, Walter, that they were only created to give light upon earth; perhaps this is not verosimil, but it is actually the truth. And it seems to me that this proves to us more than anything else the grandeur and the power of the Almighty, who made such colossal suns, and who distributed them with such a profusion all over the heavens, only to give light and pleasure to man, His chief work."

"If you speak to me according to science, or according to reason or common sense, I shall be able to answer all your objections; but if, to prove the falsity of my theory, you bring in a dogma of the Church, I shall be obliged to close my mouth. If the Church chooses to declare false ideas to be dogmas, what can I do or say? I suppose we shall all have to believe that this lake is in America, instead of in Scotland, if the Church chooses to say so, even if we are convinced of the contrary!"

"You forget, Walter, that your theory is not as yet

a proved fact, or even recognised by science. The Church cannot teach what is not true."

"According to that, if the Church is right in holding as untrue everything that is not proved to be true, and thus put an end to all investigation and all discoveries, she was also right in asserting that the sun went round the earth, and she ought to be praised for making Galileo deny his wonderful discoveries. Neither was this a scientific truth *then*, and yet to-day it is recognised and admitted as such by all. To-morrow, very likely, the theory of the plurality of inhabited worlds will have a Galileo who will preach it, a Kepler who will demonstrate its truth, and a Newton who will establish its laws, and *then* we shall see if the Church *dare* to oppose it. But it seems to me that after the innumerable, profound, and most convincing works of Fontenelle, of Huygens, of Swedenborg, of Voltaire, of Charles Bonnet, of Guilmain, and, above all, of Flammarion, it is impossible to consider this doctrine any longer a *folly*, as some who think themselves very wise call it, or an *hallucination*, as the priests condescend to entitle it."

"I have never read any of the works of which you speak, and so I will not let myself be carried away by your enthusiasm. My father confessor has often told me that this is the only world, that there is no other in the universe, and I believe it; a priest of God could not be mistaken."

"And you believe rather in the opinions of a bigoted ignorant man, only because he is a priest, than

in the testimony of science, and in what common sense and philosophy teach us? Oh, Conchita! I will not oppose your superstitions, but it seems to me that you, who are so liberal and rational on every other subject, are most blind-folded and narrow-minded in everything that relates to religion."

"Oh, Walter! Walter!" exclaimed the young girl, throwing herself into my arms, and with her eyes full of tears, "can it be possible that you will always be offending my feelings and sentiments? you whom I love most in the world! Oh, if you love me as you say you do, do not speak to me again about religion. I may be superstitious, ignorant, illiberal, narrow-minded, anything you like, but I have been born a Catholic, and I will be one to the end of my life. . . ." She looked at me after she had said this, and then calming herself gradually she continued, showing me the moon which illuminated the lake at this moment with her silvery rays. "Is it possible that we must quarrel even before this pure and enchanting *honeymoon* has set upon the horizon of our lives!"

Those words went to my heart. It was a great trial for me, thus to make the being I loved so dearly, unhappy, and yet I could not restore her happiness without sacrificing my own convictions.

Conchita observed the struggle that was going on in my heart, and, taking my hand between hers, she said, in those sweet, melodious tones which only the voice of the woman one loves has for the ear:—"I

will try to forget, Walter, that the theory of the plurality of inhabited worlds has been condemned by our Holy Mother, the Church, and I want you simply to tell me the considerations which made you first adopt it, and the phenomena upon which you depend for its truth."

There was so much self-denial, such abnegation, in those words, that I at once began to hope in her conversion to my belief—I might say, to common sense; for when once you get a person to hear your arguments, half the battle is won. I tried my best, therefore, to prove to her the truth of this theory.

Among other things, I said:—

"Before all, my Conchita, I must impart to you the two fundamental truths, which, fortunately, are quite in accordance with the doctrines of our Church: these are, that God is just and wise in all His works, and that His empire is one of life, and not one of death.

"The world we inhabit is not a privileged earth, as some suppose; it is merely one of the eight planets which revolve round the sun. It forms no exception whatever among these, and it has not received the smallest privilege. On the contrary, it neither is the one nearest the sun, nor the one farthest away, nor even the centre one; it occupies the third place round this, and is one of the smallest; for without going out of our system, there are several others infinitely larger. Saturn, for instance, is seven hundred and thirty-four times larger, and Jupiter one thousand four hundred

and fourteen. If we compare the earth with those other planets, we find it decidedly an inferior world, under the most essential circumstances, from the geological and atmospheric conditions required for inhabitability, respecting which the earth is most badly situated to the fatal laws which rule life upon its surface. Some geologists have compared the earth to a very thin globe of glass of a yard in diameter, the inside of which is full of incandescent metals in fusion, which can burst when least expected. The weight of the earth, moreover, is tremendous, if we compare it with that of the other planets—Jupiter, for example, whose diameter is so much larger. The axis of the earth has also such an inclination, that this one-sided position causes its seasons to be so varied and its climates so changeable. This is, of course, a great disadvantage, from which other planets are free. In Jupiter, for instance, there are no seasons; all the year round it retains the same spring-like temperature.

“To pretend, therefore, that the earth is the best and most perfect of worlds, is utter nonsense. To those who live in it, and whose whole hopes and prospects are resting upon it, it may be the most important of all the universe; but, in reality, it is only one of the most insignificant planets of one of the smallest solar systems, of the millions which populate the heavens. Those beautiful stars which you see shining over your head, and of which the sky is so full, are quite ignorant of our existence, for the rays of our sun conceal us quite from their sight.

And even if it were not for this, they could not see us on account of our small size. Even among the planets of our own solar system, there are only four that can have any idea of our existence—Mercury, Venus, Mars, and Jupiter; and, for the last one, we remain the greater part of the time hidden by the rays of the sun.

“You see, Conchita, that the earth cannot possibly be a privileged world; and since the time when Kepler demonstrated that the innumerable stars that surround us are suns like ours, round which turn thousands of planets as large or larger than ours, we have been obliged to admit that those worlds must also be, like ours, inhabited. On these, as upon the earth, the generative rays of the sun give light and heat—in different proportions, it is true, but in equivalent ones; and this heat and this light, that make both plants and beings upon our earth germinate and grow, why should it not cause the same effect in those other worlds which are in nothing different from ours? In them, as in ours, the months and the days succeed each other; in them, as in ours, a transparent atmosphere encircles in a temperate and adequate climate the habitable surface. Over them, as over ours, vaporous clouds rise from the ocean, and are dispersed under the sky, melting away when needed in beneficial rain, or in pure dew, which fecundates their beautiful fields. And can anyone live who says that all those beautiful worlds are uninhabited? Oh! this great movement of life which circulates on our earth

cannot be circumscribed to this small earthlet ! The same causes should produce *there* the same effects as they do *here* ; and most of these worlds possess conditions infinitely more favourable to organised existence than the earth itself.

“ I really cannot understand how men of talent and scientific men can assert that stars so magnificent as those which surround us have been created with the only purpose of beautifying the nights of such an imperceptible and insignificant earthlet as this. You say, Conchita, that this proves to us the love of God towards man, and also His greatness ; but it seems to me that He would have proved this better if He had placed us at once in one of those perfect and radiant worlds of light. Moreover, the greatness of the Creator consists in his economy, not in his waste. And you yourself must allow that to create millions of suns of such colossal size, to illuminate a world 1,400,000 times smaller than the smallest of them, is utter waste and nothing else.

“ The absurdity of such an opinion becomes greater still when we learn that Venus is a planet of about the same dimensions as the earth, which has its mountains and its seas, its seasons and its years, its days and its nights, the same as this ; these two worlds are alike in everything, so that if Venus is uninhabited, the earth should also be uninhabited, and in the same way if the earth is inhabited Venus must also be inhabited. But what can we say when we observe worlds such as Jupiter and Saturn, of

such colossal dimensions, of such fertile soil with altogether infinitely better conditions for organised existence, where the seasons do not change, and which are surrounded by numerous satellites that illuminate their nights till the sun, our own sun, rises again upon their horizon ! Surely we cannot deny inhabitants to those privileged giants, if we allow them to exist in this little world which is one thousand four hundred and fourteen times smaller than they are ?

“ Of course it will be said that the natural conditions of some of those worlds are very different from those of ours ; this is true, but it does not imply that life cannot exist upon them, because this life must be different from ours. It is absurd to pretend that without a certain number of equivalents of oxygen and carbon, the all-powerful God could not create any kind of beings ; that the divine creation is divided into three kingdoms upon this earth, is not a reason that others may not exist under different conditions in other planets, incompatible with any of the forms known on ours, where yet diversity is so great that no two faces resemble each other.

“ And then this cannot be an objection to the theory, for even if we put aside the worlds different from ours, yet there remain thousands of others similar in every respect to our earth, upon which we could live with as great or even greater ease than we can on this. Why should they not be inhabited ?

“ To deny the plurality of inhabited worlds seems to me an impiety and an insult to the wisdom and

greatness of the creator. Oh! is it possible, my God, that any of thy children can thus limit thy powers, and believe thee only to be the father of the beings of this earth, when thou hast created all the universe!

“Ah! if the human eye were powerful enough to discover, there, where we only see points of light under the dark vault of heaven, the resplendent suns which gravitate in space and the glories of the worlds which, full of life, they illumine in their course through the ages; if we could embrace with one look those countless millions of solar systems, and if advancing with the velocity of thought, we could traverse this unlimited number of suns and spheres, of which there seems to be no end, for God’s greatness and mercy is infinite; if we could travel for centuries and centuries through this countless mass of worlds, and then look back towards that invisible speck of earth we call *the world*, we should certainly be confounded by the greatness of the scene, and uniting our voice to that of universal nature we would exclaim from the depth of our hearts—

“Great God! how short-sighted we are when we believe that there is nothing in the universe but that earth of ours, and that that initial and only temporary home of man has alone the privilege of reflecting thy greatness and thy power!”

My words, but more than all the beauty and grandeur of the scene before us, moved Conchita’s heart, and when I had finished she fell into my arms exclaiming: “Oh thou art right, my husband, in

believing in those grand views ; for God, the God who made thy heart must be infinite, omnipotent, wise, and good !”

Those were her last words, she leant on my arm, so close to my heart that I could hear every palpitation of hers, and thus, side by side, we walked by the silvery lake's side, until the moon set behind the mountains, when we entered the hotel for the night.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SUNRISE ON THE LAKE.

THE next morning we rose very early, in order to enjoy as much of the lake as possible ; we therefore directed our steps towards Loch Lomond, although it was as yet scarcely day. We traversed the gardens of the hotel till we arrived at the edge of the lake ; of course the pier was quite deserted at that early hour.

The first rays of light began to appear behind the mountains in the east, and this vague but rosy tint gave to the beautiful scene before us a mysterious character of the most enchanting nature.

“How much more delightful is this early hour, when we can walk alone by these beautiful shores, unobserved and free, than the middle of the day, when crowds of tourists and noisy travellers profane the solitude of this poetic lake, where only love and peace should dwell.” Thus said Conchita, as she fluttered like a butterfly among the flower beds of the garden. At last she arrived quite close to the shore of the lake, where several boats were tied to the pier, she paused for a moment, and then said, “Walter, do you see yonder green isle almost lost

amidst the tints of the early morning? I should so like to go there! Could we not take one of these boats and row towards it?"

I smiled, and, jumping into the nearest of them, assisted Conchita to embark. We soon found ourselves on the middle of the lake. I rowed, while she sat at the stern, steering our little bark towards the fairy-like isle in the distance.

"Won't you sing something, Walter," she said suddenly, "we only need music to make the charm of the scene complete."

Bending on my oars, and keeping time by their strokes upon the peaceful waters, I then sang:—

"Hurrah for the Highlands, the stern Scottish Highlands,
The home of the clansman, the brave, and the free,
Where the clouds love to rest on the ocean's rough breast,
Ere they traverse afar o'er the islandless sea.

"'Tis the land of deep shadow, of sunshine and shower,
Where the hurricane revels in madness on high,
For there it has might that can war with its power,
In the world's dizzy heights that are cleaving the sky.

"'Tis there where the cataract sings to the breeze,
As it dashes in foam like a spirit of light;
'Tis there the bold fisherman bounds o'er the sea,
In his flat tiny bark, through the perilous night.

"I have trod merry England, and dwelt on her charms,
I have wandered o'er Erin, that gem of the sea,
But the Highlands alone the true Scottish heart warms,
For her heather is blooming, her eagles are free.

"Then hurrah for the Highlands, the stern Scottish Highlands,
The home of the clansman, the brave, and the free,
Where the clouds love to rest on the ocean's rough breast,
Ere they travel afar o'er the islandless sea."

The little boat touched at last the fairy-like shore of the isle, and Conchita jumped upon the rock that surrounded it. The island, on which we had just landed, was one of the smallest of the archipelago which studs Loch Lomond, with its fresh verdure and its gray and picturesque rocks.

We left the boat, which had brought us thus far, tied to the trunk of an old tree which we found near the shore, and, after taking this necessary precaution, we begun to explore the little isle.

This was an exceedingly small one, and in less than five minutes we had surveyed it in all directions. Conchita was no little annoyed when she became aware of its size, for she had begun to be proud of her discovery ; but in spite of its small size we found a virgin grove of trees, from which it was impossible to see the shore, and in this peaceful dale, where the rays of the brightly beaming sun did not yet penetrate, we sat for a long time side by side, listening to the sweet morning song of the birds. My lovely bride was much moved by the beauty of the scene, so new and so enchanting for her ; her impressionable soul was open to all that was pure and lovely as herself, and I could see that this wild and solitary spot had made a great impression on her mind.

"Walter, Walter !" she exclaimed, bending her fair head upon my bosom, "why should we not pass our whole lives here, amidst this natural verdure and those sweet birds ; this lovely little isle belongs to us

by the right of discovery ? Here, away from the world, we could live the one for the other."

I took her in my arms, and, holding her to my heart, allowed a few minutes to elapse before answering her. During this pause we were so close to each other that I could feel her warm soothing breath upon my brow. At last I said, breaking the sweet spell,

"Would that be perfect happiness, Conchita, according to your idea ?"

"Yes, darling, by your side everything is happiness."

"Then, why retire far away from the homes of men to live as savages upon a desert island ?"

"Because that in the world all is so soon forgotten. Yes, forgotten like a dream ; even love may become indifference, and you will, perhaps, soon forget me, whom now you love so much, whilst here we could live for ever the same, the one for the other, and no stranger would come between us to disturb our felicity—to rob me, perhaps, of your love, Walter !"

"Oh, Conchita, my sweet one ! how little you are aware of the necessities of this life, and how little you know even your own heart ; that which to-day is a heaven to you, could very easily become to-morrow a hell. It is not the place that causes our happiness, but the state of our own hearts. Our minds need constant food, in order to remain in a continual state of happiness ; our hearts need to vary their sen-

sations to be for ever constant ; one idea alone cannot fill a whole existence, nor can even love fill a whole heart ; we need a succession of ideas and a succession of feelings in order to be perfectly happy, and to save ourselves from ennui, which would indeed be a foe to love. If we were to live here alone for ever, our love, apart from the rest of humanity, would soon come to an end ; in the world, among men and among their ideas and their pursuits, it will be renewed and prolonged. Everything in life produces a fortuitous succession of thoughts and ideas, over which we do not possess the smallest control. The phenomena of nature succeed each other incessantly, the same with our feelings. How well did the ancient philosopher know human nature when he said that *we lived from day to day !* Yes, my Conchita, as day succeeds to day, one event succeeds another, one idea and one affection gives place or assists to develop other ideas and other affections, whilst we, poor toys of nature, are at a loss to explain to our own selves the change that has taken place ; for in the human heart there is, without our knowing it, a perpetual succession of passions that cannot cease, so that the ruin of one is always the foundation of another. Love, like all other fires, cannot exist without perpetual fuel ; both cease to live as soon as they cease to hope, or to fear, and this succession of events and feelings is necessary for the education of our spirit, which is the only object of our earthly pilgrimage from early childhood through all the experiences of manhood.

“ How well St Paul knew the great truth he ex-

pressed in these words, 'When I was a child I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.' This happens to us all. I myself, when I draw a comparison between my present self and what I was only a few years ago, find that there is scarcely one point of similarity, and I could almost swear that I am quite a different being, if it were not for my memory, that reminds me of every phase and every experience through which my spirit has passed, and which has contributed to make it what it now is; but if some day I were to lose all memory of the past, I should at the same time lose my own identity, and yet I should still be the same being. What resemblance is there between the young Walter who played in Northumberland with his cousins, and the most intimate friends of his school-days, who have long ago forgotten him, and whom he also soon forgot, and the Walter whom you now see at your feet, happy because he can call himself thine?

"And yet I was also happy then, or at least I thought myself so, but how different is the happiness which I experience at this moment. Truly, my spirit must be quite changed, for it is the ideas and the feelings which constitute it, and they have undergone a total change.

"And my body, is it, perchance, the same? Surely not. The body of the boy Walter, must lie to-day changed into earth or into leaves in distant countries of the world, for it has long ago been proved that

every seven years we change our bodies completely, on account of the continual combustion which takes place in us. Thus, not an atom, not a particle remains of what I was only seven years ago; and my spirit, I may almost say, is also another, for the phenomena of nature produce different impressions upon it from what they produced only seven years ago, and all its tastes and feelings have undergone a total variation. Am I not, then, another in both body and soul?

"If I had died and been born again, I could not be more changed, and yet the world still calls me Lord Carlton!

"I do not know if this theory has ever before been expressed, but I have often thought about it, and I can hardly doubt of its truth, yet you know, my darling, that my motto is,—'*I deny nothing, and I assert nothing; I only speculate, and seek for truth.*'

"From this view I infer that as our spirit changes and progresses, or rather is developed, our thoughts are remoulded, our ideas unfold as we behold a vaster horizon; thus comes the ease with which we forget what at the beginning had such charms for us, but which delights us no longer, for, as la Rochefoucauld says, 'the duration of our passions is not more dependent upon us than the duration of our life.'"

"But if such be the case, Walter, what becomes of free-will? surely we are masters of our own hearts."

"Only to a certain point. Sometimes we should like to love, and yet we cannot; at others, we love whom we ought not to love. No man is free in this

world. We are all the creatures of circumstances, and of the various experiences which go to make up our lives, and which have made us what we are; our feelings change without our knowing it. It is true that one love can fill the whole of a human life, but to do this it must undergo certain variations and changes, even as human life itself is composed of a succession of changes.

"Thus, my own Conchita, the love which to-day I have for you is not the love with which you inspired me when, for the first time, I saw you in the convent of Seville. In reality, the first impressions have quite disappeared. I remember that love with pleasure, but I cannot feel it anew; to-day another passion fills my whole being, and yet you are still its object.

"When I first saw thee, Conchita, I loved thee on account of thy beauty, which surpassed all the dreams that, in my fancy, I had drawn of an ideal perfection. You were to me Murillo's Conception herself, stepping out of her frame in the holy temple, to take me with you to heaven, and I loved you with all my heart, and I imagined that this love would fill the whole of my existence, and yet this love soon vanished from my heart, but only to give place to another.

"I had known you for a week, and this short space of time was enough for your mind to efface your beauty from my heart. Oh! call me not inconstant, Conchita, if I forgot the latter to fill my whole existence with the former! But how different was

not even this love from that which to-day I feel for you. Then, I must confess, I was selfish, I wanted you to be mine, I wanted to be able to call myself thine, and I was desirous of possessing your love, for I felt the blindest passion for you. But the feeling with which to-day you inspire me is a passion infinitely more holy, more spiritual. I love you for yourself, and for what you are. Then I could have sacrificed you to a passion which I thought eternal; to-day you find me ready to sacrifice myself to your most simple wish. Then I wanted to make you mine, before God and before men; to-day I am happy, for I am thine, the world has nothing to do between us two, for we now are one, united in soul and sympathy."

"You are right, Walter," said Conchita, when I had finished. "You are right; I have felt the same, though I could not explain it to myself. I have often observed that my love towards you, my darling husband, was undergoing a change, although it still was as true and constant as ever. During our voyage from Spain, mamma often found me crying, and almost unhappy. "Don't you love Lord Carlton, Conchita," she used to say, "and I could not answer. I doubted myself. But do not accuse me for this, darling; you know that I live for you; if our love has changed, our hearts are still the same, and, as now we are so happy, why should we not forget the world and continue living in the same love to the end of our days? I am so happy . . . thus . . . in thy arms!" and the beautiful girl

put my arm round her heavenly form, which I pressed to my heart.

"Yes, my Conchita, this would, indeed, be perfect happiness, if we could stop the march of time; if we could say to eternity, as Joshua said to the sun, *stop*. But, unfortunately, this is impossible, unless we were to do as those famous lovers, who, thinking themselves one day so perfectly happy, killed themselves, so that not one minute should elapse after that moment of complete felicity. But if we are to remain in the world there is no standing still, we shall be obliged to change, for everything around us will continue to advance and progress."

"Fortuitously?"

"No: have I, perchance, used that horrible word? If I have, I correct it, for it is too materialistic, too atheistic, to be philosophical; no, fortuitously, perhaps it may seem for us who are ignorant of the laws of nature, for us, for whom everything seems casual, but not for the Supreme Creator, who has established the invariable laws which rule the universe.

"Yes, for every change must follow certain laws, for every effect of nature there exists a law created or developed at the same time. 'In prima institutione naturæ non quaeritur miraculum, sed quid natura rerum habeat, ut Augustinus dicit,' as your countryman St Thomas of Aquinas used to say. Yes, it is according to these laws that one step follows another, although they may seem to us only the effects of chance.

"This beautiful island, that to-day smiles on us with its fresh verdure, will be in a few months covered with snow, and that blue lake will be changed into a hard frozen surface. Those birds that to-day greet the rising sun with their merry songs will be dead, or have disappeared; and we ourselves, in a very few years, shall have put on the wintry garments of age like the first, or like the latter shall have died—nay, rather, we, like the little birds, shall have flown away to inhabit milder and happier regions, nearer to the bright summer land, where our lives will be a perpetual dream of love."

"But for this, one must die! Walter, one must die!" repeated my young bride, while all the colour forsook her face. "Die, and with death comes separation and forgetfulness. . . ."

I took her by the hand, and I led her to the shore of the lake. "Who has told you that, Conchita? I have often assured you, my darling, that death, or rather the change you call by that name, is neither annihilation nor forgetfulness, and perhaps not even separation. It is only a change of state, not a change of being. I have just told you that if I had died two or three times during the short period of my life, and been born again, I could not be more changed than I am, and it is the truth; the day of death brings but a change in our way of being, a change of state, it is the birthday of the soul, nothing more. Do you believe our love to be so poor a thing, my darling, that death can make us forget one another? No; we may

forget what belonged to our body which remains upon the earth, but that which belongs to our spirit goes to heaven with it."

"And, how do you know that, Walter? Have you, perchance, seen some one after death who has told you his adventures in the other world?"

"Do not laugh at me, Conchita, because in my ignorance I want to picture to myself death and the after life. I know very well that hitherto this has not been generally known in the world, but yet there have always been certain intuitive things which our hearts tell us, and which all the cold philosophy of this world cannot silence or efface from our minds. But do not let us think any more on this subject, which seems so sad to you, although it fills my whole being and causes my happiness; forget it, and think only of our present felicity, and of the glorious spectacle before us."

"Look, yonder comes the powerful king of day,
Rejoicing in the east; the lessening cloud,
The kindling azure, and the mountain's brow
Illumed with fluid gold, his near approach
Betoken glad! Lo! now, apparent all,
Aslant the dew-bright earth and colour'd air,
He looks in boundless majesty abroad,
And sheds the shining day, that burnish'd plays
On rocks, and hills, and towers, and wandering streams,
High gleaming from afar. Prime cheerer light!
Of all material beings first and best!
Efflux divine! Nature's resplendent robe!
Without whose vesting beauty all were wrapt
In unessential gloom; and thou, O Sun!
Soul of surrounding worlds! in whom between
Shines out thy Maker, may I sing of thee?"

The sun had just appeared behind Ben Lomond, and the scene which it unfolded before our eyes was sublime. The mountain seemed as a giant of the abyss veiled in darkness which was struggling to the very last with the king of day to intercept his passage.

The rays of the sun did not, as yet, reach the peaceful and deep waters of the lake below, and while in heaven all was light, darkness yet prevailed over the earth, and a bluish mist covered the distant hills.

I observed this to Conchita, and then I said, "What you see at the present moment is precisely the image of what is actually passing in the world, light struggling with darkness, reason with ignorance, religion with materialism. The world as yet is in almost complete darkness, but the sun is rising in all its glory, and a new day will dawn for humanity, for before light darkness always flies."

Soon afterwards the sun rose high in the eastern sky, and the whole landscape became illuminated by its all-powerful rays.

There, before us, was Scotland, arrayed in all her beauty, and from this, the most beautiful spot of her loveliest lake, we could see her hills and her valleys, her highlands and her lakes, that have made her name famous throughout the whole world.

Carried away by the grandeur of the scene, I could not restrain myself from exclaiming,

"I salute thee, Scotland! from this, thy most

beautiful lake, which the rising sun illuminates with its golden rays, oh Scotland, I salute thee!

"Thy soil is damp, thy climate is bad, but thou, oh Scotland! knowest how to derive benefit from the one, and from the other to adorn thy beauty; mother of the lakes, daughter of the mountains, country of verdure, how poetical thou art! All in thee breathes love and poetry, all in thee are brave and grand. Thou, the most beautiful of the daughters of the north, thou unrivalled mother who didst adopt as thine own the sons of thy neighbour kingdom, when thou gavest thy Stuart king to thy sister of the south, thus happily cementing a peaceful union between two rival powers, henceforth to fight side by side, and share each other's dangers and glories for evermore.

"Oh, sweet and gentle Scotland, how many brave hard-working heroes hast thou nursed on thy bosom; hidden, unthought of by the rest of the universe? Other of thy sons have lived and fought, loved and died, but their noble deeds and their gallant actions belong to fame, who, like a faithful echo of the past, loudly and sweetly sings to-day their praises.

"They call thee *cold*! Ah! how little they know the hidden fire which burns in thee! Under the bosom which thou so modestly veileth with mists and clouds, vaporous as the spray of thy water-falls, there lie hidden hearts faithful and true. Yes, thou hast been the country of lovers such as Helen Douglas and Lucy Ashton, whose lives were filled entirely with

one sole, pure, all-consuming passion, thou hast suggested those loves, sweet, holy, constant, faithful, that are only felt in the north, where the shorter and more vehement passions of the south are unknown. Thou also wast the mother of heroes such as William Wallace and Robert the Bruce, who sacrificed their whole lives for thee; thou didst inspire their abnegation and their heroism, thou gavest them courage and perseverance. Martyrs found in thee the palm of martyrdom, as the sad history of thy beautiful and ill-fated Queen Mary, and of many others can attest. Great generals, great men of science and of learning, great poets and authors, hast thou produced in countless numbers. Who could enumerate them? To inventors thou hast also given birth—Watt, to whom the world is indebted for its commerce and its riches, owes to thee his life and his education.

“And thou, oh sun! that in thy ceaseless daily course hast beheld all these heroes of the past, risest again to-day, as thou didst then, to assist at new acts of heroism and abnegation. Thou, who art the emblem of progress, appearest to direct its course through the centuries; thou, like civilisation, risest in the east, reaching thy might in Europe, and disappearing behind the immense plains of the far west, whither our civilization seems to direct its steps, following in thy wake. At this moment thou dost illuminate with all thy splendour the rich and prosperous states of Europe, after having poured the noontide splendour over ancient orient cities and Egyptian monuments of the

past, that once basked in thy effulgence, the light of the earth, but thou wilt in turn abandon Europe to bestow thy beams on the as yet virgin regions of America.

"See this beautiful country, warmed and illumined by thy glorious rays, what success and glory has it not achieved? But what could man not do with the sure consciousness that the eye of his Maker is upon him?

"They are right, oh Scotland, who call thy capital the Athens of the north. Yes! Mid-Lothian is indeed of knowledge the throne, and of modern science the cradle! Edinburgh! thou, who hast beheld so many dramas; thou, whose soil was watered with the tears of the Stuarts; thou, who hast been so often the scene of heroism and crime, of virtue and of humiliation, of glory and of triumph; thou, who didst listen to the sermons of St Augustine, and of Knox; thou who didst stand so firm against Cæsar himself, deserved in very truth to be the capital of Scotland.

"And thou, oh Glasgow! city of riches, to whom, not so very long ago, was denied the name of the mere capital of a county, to-day, unaided and alone, thou hast arisen from the dust to glory and renown. City of gold, where every inhabitant owes what he is to-day to his work of yesterday; thou, who hast known how to enlarge thy river at the same time as thy commerce and thy industry; thou art indeed of Caledonia, the populous metropolis!

"Scotland! Scotland! . . . what words could

express all I feel for thee, and what song would be sweet or lofty enough to describe thy beauties, and to recount thy glories, could one individual judge a nation?

"This peaceful lake is a true portrait of thy greatness and of thy poetry. As in it, so in thee, are reflected all that the world contains that is grand and majestic, and the sun shines in his meridian splendour over thee as upon these waters, displaying all thy beauties and all thy charms.

"Conchita! Conchita! would it be possible to describe this enchanting scene? How could any one paint those vaporous clouds of golden gauze with which these mountains are modestly veiled? Those pure and serene waters which, illuminated by the rising sun, appear before our eyes now as a sheet of molten silver, now of rippling fire and flame? And those bold rocks that rise against the blue sky like the ruined battlements of some Gothic castle, and those promontories which rise out of the loch itself, and at whose base the white waters dash in foam and spray? And, high above all, Ben Lomond, the glory of thy highlands, who, as the monarch of those princely giants, presides over this inimitable spectacle?

"And those bright clear streams which come down with a leap, and a desire to lose themselves in the lake? And those dark burns that come trickling through passes and deep ravines to dash in waterfalls upon the waters below?

"And those deep, mysterious caves, where the peaceful waters of the lake are lost at every rising wave? And those silent far distant valleys, of which the eye just catches a glimpse between the mountains?

"And those transparent waters, where all these beauties are portrayed, upon which the clouds, the rocks, the crags, the mountain, the streams, the waterfall, the cave, and even the shadow of the passing bird is reflected?

"Ah! who could paint all this, who could even imagine them in all their beauty? How poor is language to give expression to what the eye takes in at a glance, and what so deeply touches the heart!"

Carried away by my poetical imagination, I had climbed up the rock which marked the shores of the little isle; and Conchita, moved by the grandeur and sublimity of the surrounding scene, had seated herself on those same rocks, and had her eyes fixed upon the now risen sun, as if she wished to learn from him some of the mysteries which he beholds in his daily course.

The day was advancing, and so was the heat, so we at last decided on returning to the hotel. It was with difficulty, however, that we tore ourselves away from this fairy-like scene—a scene that will never be blotted out of our minds!

CHAPTER XV.

LOCH KATRINE.

FROM Tarbet we proceeded by steamer to Inversnaid, where the Arklet, a picturesque little stream, descends from the mountains, dashing from rock to rock, and from crag to crag, with a beating hollow din. Here we took our seats in a sort of a waggonette, drawn by four horses, which took us through, or rather over, a wild mountain pass, bordering on Loch Arklet, to Stronachlachar, a distance of four or five miles.

In this primitive little highland village we found a fairy steamer, appropriately named 'The Lady of the Lake,' waiting to take us to the other side of Perthshire, through Loch Katrine.

The first view one obtains of this lovely lake from the Stronachlachar approach is most impressive.

Loch Katrine is smaller, and perhaps does not possess such grand and varied scenery as Loch Lomond, but its beauty is even softer, wilder, more compact, more picturesque. So true it is that one beauty succeeds and ever rivals another in this fairy land. "It is much prettier, much more seductive," we exclaimed, as our tiny steamer wound in and out, sometimes appearing perfectly land-locked amid its wooded

islands. The banks are thickly covered with the most luxuriant foliage, and every tree, and every flower is reflected upon the mirror-like surface of its calm still waters. Behind the trees, and above the ever-green meadows, rise the steep, dark, bold mountains of the Trossachs, with high Benvenue towering above all on the right.

“What a scene were here, . . .
 For princely pomp or churchman's pride.
 On this bold brow, a lordly tower ;
 In that soft vale, a lady's bower ;
 On yonder meadow, far away,
 The turrets of a cloister gray.
 How blithely might the bugle-horn
 Chide, on the lake, the lingering morn
 How sweet, at eve, the lover's lute
 Chime, when the groves are still and mute !
 And, when the midnight moon should lave
 Her forehead in the silver wave,
 How solemn on the ear would come
 The holy matin's distant hum,
 While the deep peal's commanding tone
 Should wake in yonder islet lone,
 A sainted hermit from his cell,
 To drop a bead with every knell—
 And bugle, lute, and bell, and all,
 Should each bewildered stranger call
 To friendly feast and lighted hall.”

Loch Katrine has been immortalised by Scott, and when one beholds its lovely shores, it is impossible not to think of the lovely Ellen Douglas steering her light bark with skilful oar from shore to isle, and to see the royal James casting wondering glances on the mysterious scene and the gentle pilot conducting

him to a safe haven in her hidden and mysterious home, and to remember the beautiful and graphic descriptions of the Scotch Minstrel. None else could paint so truthfully the highland scenes of the Trossachs in all their grandeur, none other could make one feel the majesty of the lake he has made so famous with his verses. I must therefore quote from his poem.

“ The summer down’s reflected hue
To purple changed Loch Katrine blue:
Mildly and soft the western breeze
Just kissed the lake, like maiden coy,
Trembled, but dimpled not for joy:
The mountain shadows on her breast
Were neither broken nor at rest ;
In bright uncertainty they lie,
Like future joys to fancy’s eye.
The water-lily to the light
Her chalice oped of silver bright ;
The doe awoke, and to the lawn
Begemmed with dew-drops, led’ her fawn ;
The gray mist left the mountain side,
The torrent showed its glittering pride ;
Invisible in flecked sky
The lark sent down her revelry ;
The blackbird and the speckled thrush
Good-morrow gave from brake and bush ;
In answer coo’d the cushat-dove,
Her notes of peace, and rest, and love.”

The steamer advanced gently along the surface of the peaceful water ; the scene became every moment more and more intensely lovely. In front of us we beheld Ellen’s Isle, so celebrated in the poem. We may be told that it is a mere fiction, the mere dream of a poetical brain, but is it so ? When one sees the lovely islet rock covered with verdure,

"Where for retreat in dangerous hour
Some chief had framed a rustic bower."

We cannot doubt of the truth of the romantic story of Ellen Douglas and the knight of Snowdon; the whole poem passes before us more like a reality than a dream, and every moment one expects to see the beautiful lady of the lake emerge from under an aged oak, and jump into the little boat that must lie concealed behind the luxuriant foliage.

At last we reached the other end of the lake, where we found a coach waiting our arrival, to take us to the Ardcheanochrochan hotel, which is situated on the banks of Loch Achray.

To get there we went through the pass of the Trossachs, so well described by Sir Walter Scott in the following verses:—

"The western waves of ebbing day
Rolled o'er the glen their level way:
Each purple peak, each flinty spire,
Was bathed in floods of living fire.
But not a setting beam could glow
Within the dark ravines below,
Where twined the path in shadow hid,
Round many a rocky pyramid,
Shooting abruptly from the dell
Its thunder-splintered pinnacle;
Round many an insulated mass,
The native bulwarks of the pass,
Huge as the tower which builders vain
Presumptuous piled on Shinar's plain,
Their rocky summits split and rent,
Formed turret, dome, or battlement,
Or seemed fantastically set
With cupola or minaret,

Wild crests as pagod ever decked,
Or mosque of Eastern architect.
Nor were these earth-born castles bare,
Nor lacked they many a banner fair ;
For, from their shivered brows displayed,
Far o'er the unfathomable glade,
All twinkling with the dew drop's sheen,
The brier-rose fell in streamers green,
And creeping shrubs of thousand dyes,
Waved in the west wind's summer sighs.
Boon Nature scattered, free and wild,
Each plant or flower, the mountain's child.
Here eglantine embalmed the air,
Hawthorn and hazel mingled there ;
The primrose pale, and violet flower,
Found in each cliff a narrow bower ;
Fox-glove and night-shade side by side,
Emblems of punishment and pride,
Grouped their dark hues with every stain
The weather-beaten crags retain.
With boughs that quaked at every breath,
Gray birch and aspen wept beneath ;
Aloft the ash and warrior oak
Cast anchor in the rifted rock ;
And higher yet the pine tree hung
His shattered trunk, and frequent flung,
Where seemed the cliffs to meet on high,
His boughs athwart the narrowed sky.
Highest of all, where white peaks glanced,
Where glist'ning streamers waved and danced,
The wanderer's eye could barely view
The summer heaven's delicious blue ;
So wondrous wild, the whole might seem
The scenery of a fairy dream."

Yes, indeed, the scenery was much more like a fairy dream than anything else. It would be impossible to describe this beautiful pass as we beheld it for the first time in all the glow of an autumn sunset.

It would be impossible to render justice to those wild and bold rocks hung over with rowan, hawthorn, and pine trees, all in their brightest autumn tints. It would be impossible to give an idea of the high and rugged mountains that surround the pass in all directions, and that awaken in the beholder a sense of over-powering grandeur of awe and mystery!

Wordsworth has so well expressed the emotions the Trossachs awaken in the mind of the traveller, that I cannot refrain from repeating his beautiful verses.

“There’s not a nook within this solemn pass
But were an apt confessional for one
Taught by his summer spent, his autumn gone,
That life is but a tale of morning grass
Withered at eve. From scenes of art which chase
That thought away, turn, and with watchful eyes
Feed it ‘mid Nature’s old festivities,
Rocks, rivers, and smooth lakes more clear than glass
Untouched, unbreathed upon. Thrice happy guest,
If from a golden perch of aspen spray
(October’s workmanship to rival May)
The pensive warbler of the ruddy breast
That moral sweeten by a heaven-taught lay,
Lulling the year, with all its cares, to rest!”

Early in the evening we reached the Trossachs hotel, which is situated in front of the little lake of Achray, in one of the most beautiful spots of this sublime pass.

After our dinner, Conchita and I went out for a walk, and amongst other things we visited the spot where the hermit monk foretold the doom of Roderick Dhu.

"How haunted all this district seems to be with the genius of Scott," said Conchita, seating herself upon some rocks that bounded the narrow ravine of Glenfinlass.

"Yes, my love, it costs us a sigh to doubt the truth of his wild romantic tales, when one closes the book after having read them at home in a comfortable drawing-room of modern times; but when one traverses this rugged pass, when one beholds this lovely smiling fairy-like isle on Loch Katrine, one can no longer deny the reality of his fantastic dreams, we are under the spell of his harp, and we *must* take as a reality the whole of his lay."

"Don't you know some romantic story, Walter, associated with this wild mountain pass? You know how fond I am of listening to your legends, and at the present moment anything associated with Scotland would have the greatest interest for me."

"I know an old legend of the feudal times of Scottish history, which, although it has nothing whatever to do with the beautiful glen in which we are at the present moment, may perhaps interest you."

I seated myself by her side among the blooming purple heather, and, with my arm supporting her beloved form, I began the following story.

END OF VOL. I.

THE HONEYMOON.

REMEMBRANCE OF A BRIDAL TOUR
THROUGH SCOTLAND.

BY THE

COUNT DE MEDINA POMAR.

AUTHOR OF "ESTUDIOS ACERCA DEL PROGRESO DEL ESPIRITU,"
"LA RELIGION MODERNA," ETC.

VOL. II.



LONDON:

TRÜBNER & CO., 57 AND 59 LUDGATE HILL.

1874.

[All Rights Reserved.]

251. b. 314.

" Perplex'd in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out ;
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

" He fought his doubts and gather'd strength ;
He would not make his judgment blind ;
He faced the spectres of the mind,
And laid them : thus he came at length

" To find a stronger faith his own ;
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

" But in the darkness and the cloud."—TENNYSON.

CONTENTS.

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| CHAPTER XVI. | |
| THE POWER OF LOVE: A ROMANCE OF SCOTTISH HISTORY, . | 1 |
| CHAPTER XVII. | |
| FROM THE TROSSACHS TO ABERFELDY, THROUGH LOCH TAY, | 23 |
| CHAPTER XVIII. | |
| THE VISION, | 38 |
| CHAPTER XIX. | |
| DISCUSSIONS ON THE VISION, | 55 |
| CHAPTER XX. | |
| THE RAILWAY JOURNEY TO PERTH, | 69 |
| CHAPTER XXI. | |
| PERTH, | 88 |
| CHAPTER XXII. | |
| LILY BELL AND MARY GRAY, | 93 |

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| CHAPTER XXIII. | |
| THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, | 102 |
| CHAPTER XXIV. | |
| EDINBURGH, | 114 |
| CHAPTER XXV. | |
| THE QUEEN'S PAGE : A ROMANCE OF THE REIGN OF QUEEN MARY, | 122 |
| CHAPTER XXVI. | |
| DR JOHN GRAY, | 140 |
| CHAPTER XXVII. | |
| THE FIRST LETTER—CONTAINING THE NEW REVELATION CONCERNING THE NATURE OF SPIRIT AND MATTER, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF BODIES OR MATERIAL FORMS, . | 153 |
| CHAPTER XXVIII. | |
| THE SECOND LETTER—CONTAINING THE NEW REVELATION CONCERNING THE REAL NATURE OR THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST, | 176 |
| CHAPTER XXIX. | |
| THE THIRD LETTER—CONTAINING THE NEW REVELATION CONCERNING THE REAL NATURE OF CHRIST (CONTINUED), AND THE ALLEGORICAL OR FIGURATIVE STYLE OF THE BIBLE, AND ALL EASTERN WRITINGS, | 195 |
| CHAPTER XXX. | |
| THE FOURTH LETTER—CONTAINING THE NEW REVELATION OF THE NATURE OF "GOOD" AND "EVIL," AND OF THE "FALL OF MAN," | 223 |

Contents.

vii

PAGE

CHAPTER XXXI.

| | |
|---|-----|
| THE FIFTH LETTER—ON THE "FALL" TO MATERIALITY, OR INCARNATION, AND CONSEQUENT LAW OF REGENERATION, | 256 |
|---|-----|

CHAPTER XXXII.

| | |
|---|-----|
| THE SIXTH LETTER—ON THE NECESSITY OF RE-INCARNATION, | 284 |
|---|-----|

CHAPTER XXXIII.

| | |
|--|-----|
| THE SEVENTH LETTER—PROOFS FROM SCRIPTURE CONTINUED, | 319 |
|--|-----|

CHAPTER THE LAST.

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| FAREWELL TO SCOTLAND, | 355 |
| APPENDIX, | 363 |

THE HONEYMOON.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE POWER OF LOVE : A ROMANCE OF SCOTTISH HISTORY.*

It was during the winter of 1512. The gallant army of Henry VIII. was before the old town of Terouenne, and the whole French nation was awe-stricken before the might and power of the English monarch. Paris was as agitated as one might suppose under the circumstances; both the town and the university were almost mad with rage, and the poor king, Louis XII., hardly dared to go out of his palace to meet the enraged populace.

In one of the most retired and secret rooms of the Louvre, whose windows overlooked the Seine and the old Isle de Paris, were seated in council, the King, the Queen, his wife, and his prime minister, Georges d'Amboise, Archbishop of Rouen.

The Queen, Anne Duchesse de Bretagne, was the widow of Charles VIII., and one of the handsomest women of which the French throne can boast. She was also one of the cleverest diplomatists of the epoch.

* See Appendix, Note III.

"We are lost, sire," said the archbishop, after a long silence. "Not only Guienne will be lost, but the whole realm will be ruined. It will be impossible for us to stand against the powerful league formed by his holiness, Julius II., with Ferdinand of Aragon, Maximilian, the Venetians, and the English monarch."

"We are indeed ruined, by Saint Louis!" said the king, lifting up his hand and letting it fall again heavily upon the table. "We are ruined; all the enemies of France prosper, while they are undermining our kingdom. Ferdinand of Aragon, by his marriage with Isabella of Castile, and by the conquest of Granada and the new world, has become the most powerful of all our rivals. The treacherous Emperor Maximilian has broken the league of Cambria, and has joined the hateful pontiff Julius against us. While Henry of England, in the hope of obtaining the title, which, by right belongs to us, of the most Christian King, invades our country, and while Ferdinand over-runs our kingdom of Navarre, his admiral, Edward Howard, devastates our coasts and gains the fatal battle of Brest, which, I must confess, was a total defeat for us. You are, indeed, right, d'Amboise, we are lost this time!"

"If your majesty had but followed my counsel, if we had not attempted the conquest of Naples, and thus adding that kingdom to the immense dominions of Spain, our fate would probably have been different; but perhaps my liege was right in what he did after all."

"No, I was not right, d'Amboise," said the irritable monarch. "I should never have carried on the schemes of Charles VIII. in Italy. That Italian campaign, although it added the duchy of Milan to our empire, was but the beginning of its ruin, and now this ruin is approaching, and Henry will march victorious through France, and will enter Paris! But, no . . . not while I live; I will fight him to the very end, and"

"Much good will your arms do, my liege," interrupted the queen, who had remained in silence until then. "Much good will your arms do against the Holy League, formed by the Pope against your majesty. Policy and money might do something, but your armies are of no use against the whole of Europe."

"How?" said the king, who had great faith in the talent of Anne de Bretagne, who now, for the second time, shared the throne of St Louis. "How?" he repeated, "does my beautiful Anne think that there is still a chance for France?"

"My courage never fails, sire," answered the beautiful queen. "France may still be saved, if my liege, the king, and his grace, the archbishop, only follow my counsel."

"We will, by Saint Louis!" said the king; "your majesty has only to command, we will obey, for we are too well aware of the talents and of the sense of honour of the Queen of France to be afraid that she will put our kingdom in any danger."

"On the contrary, my liege, I will save it, but you must let me do as I like; and, first of all, I want an ambassador to be sent to Scotland without loss of time."

"To Scotland!" exclaimed the king, surprised, "what can an insignificant nation like Scotland do to save us from the armies of our foes?"

"I have told you, my liege, not to question my proceedings. And remember, my royal Louis, that the mouse can sometimes be of the greatest service even to the lion, when he finds himself in a trap! I do not care whom you send as ambassador to Edinburgh, for one of my ladies of honour will accompany the embassy who will be charged with the business of this important mission. She will have my orders and my confidence, for this work must be carried on entirely by women, and with strictest secrecy."

The king agreed to send an ambassador to Scotland, and soon afterwards the council broke up.

Anne retired to her chamber, and bade her lady-in-waiting summon the Countess de la Tour Marie, one of the handsomest ladies of the court, to her presence. The queen had a long interview with the countess, and when at last the latter left the royal apartment, Anne de Bretagne exclaimed, as if a great weight had fallen from her shoulders,—

"Yes, France will be saved! . . . And by me!"

James IV. was one of the best monarchs Scotland had ever had, he was popular, and deserved his popu-

larity ; and, moreover, the long sustained peace he had held with England, since his marriage with Margaret the sister of Henry VIII., had left him time to improve his kingdom, that a long and continual series of civil strifes and wars with England had almost left bare ; and being a wise and sagacious monarch, he was desirous to repair, by a long interval of repose and quiet, the great damage which the country had sustained by these destructive and continuous wars. He was also active in the discharge of his royal duties, and his power was greater than that of any of the former kings of Scotland.

His court was one of the gayest and most enlightened of the times, and he spent the enormous wealth accumulated by his father, in a most generous and royal manner. He was, moreover, a brave knight, and he took great pride in his feats of arms, and in the victories he had won at the tournaments in Stirling.

It was his frequent custom to make proclamations throughout Scotland, that all lords and gentlemen who might desire to win honour, should come to Stirling and exercise themselves in tilting with the lance, fighting with the battle-axe, the two handed sword, or any other warlike contention, in which he often took part himself. For he liked to be considered by his subjects as the bravest and most gallant knight of the kingdom.

The fame of his victories had traversed the seas, and he flattered himself that they had won for him

the admiration and respect of the other monarchs of Europe.

When the French ambassador, De la Motte, and his numerous retinue arrived in Scotland, the king was residing in the royal castle of Edinburgh, where he received him with all the honour and ceremony due to the great king whom he represented. When the ambassadors had finished their interview with James, he was told that one of the queen's ladies had come with them who had matters of the utmost importance to confide to him.

The gallant king hastened to a private apartment in which he found the French lady awaiting him. When the door was opened for him to enter, he was struck by the unrivalled beauty and elegant carriage of the noble lady before him. Anne of Bretagne had indeed been happy in her choice of a messenger.

Childelberte de la Tour Marie was the most beautiful woman of the French court, so celebrated at all times for its beauty, grace, and wit. She was tall and slight, her face was fair as a lily, and the down of her cheeks tinted as the rose itself, the most graceful dark ringlets hung from her fair head, and her attire was arranged so as to add to her natural beauty, her grace and her manners were such as only a French woman has ever been able to achieve ; no wonder, therefore, that the young king should remain mute with admiration when he saw this beautiful lady for the first time.

She broke the silence by speaking first. " Have I

the great honour of addressing the king of Scotland," she said.

This breach of the established custom of the Scottish court, to speak to the king without being first spoken to, pleased the king. "The honour is mine," he said, "to receive such a beautiful lady in my court."

"I have been charged with a secret message from my mistress, Queen Anne de Bretagne, for your majesty."

"Ah, I thought so!" said the king, flattered in his vanity. "So my victories have reached the ear of the most beautiful princess in Christendom?"

"They have, my liege," said the lovely Childerbete. "And she has listened to the accounts of your majesty's gallantry, courage, accomplishments, and personal attractions with the greatest interest, so much so that she has sent me to your court to judge for her, and to tell her what I think myself of this brave knight that has so much occupied her attention and her thoughts."

"Indeed!" said the king. "This is more than I expected. But tell me first, very beautiful lady, before all my hopes fall to the ground, what answer will you give to the queen; you have seen me, you have judged for yourself, tell me truly, what do you think of me?"

"I hardly dare to tell your majesty my opinion, for fear he should think my words suggested by flattery or dictated by ambition," said the lovely French

lady, smiling at the king's vanity. "But I have seen your majesty, and only one answer can I give to my mistress" . . .

"Which is?"

"That all we have heard in Paris about the king of Scotland is true; and that his courage, his gallant bearing, and his majesty are even greater than she had imagined."

"You flatter me, by St Andrew!" said the king, better pleased than he cared to show. "To win the love of Anne de Bretagne will be more than I deserve, for I consider none brave and gallant enough to possess it. She is very handsome, is she not? You, no doubt, know her well, and can tell me better than any ambassador can, who, after all, are not always judges of female beauty and loveliness."

"I have brought a portrait that my queen herself gave me . . . telling me to give it to your majesty, if I found the description she had received of his person true and correct. But I hardly dare to offer it to you, my liege, it does her so little justice! But who on earth could paint her heavenly form?"

"She must be very beautiful, judging by her lady of honour, for none can even approach *her* in good looks in Scotland. Oh! what a place that Paris must be, where all are so beautiful, so graceful, so clever! . . . But give me the portrait."

Childelberte handed him the portrait of the queen, which was a very good and pleasing likeness of Anne, and with which the king was of course delighted.

"I have another treasure to give to your majesty," said the fascinating messenger after a pause, during which the king gazed fixedly on the miniature, "it is a ring from the queen's own finger."

James was so surprised at this news, that he almost let the portrait of his lady love drop to the ground, but he took it back and placed it near his heart.

The lady Childelberte produced the ring, which she gave to the king, who kissed it, exclaiming, "this is the most precious object I possess. I would rather give my kingdom than ever part with this ring!"

"And you would do right, my liege, for your royal admirer, as the beautiful queen of France takes pride in calling herself, is worthy of it all."

The king pressed the ring to his lips, in so doing he saw an inscription engraved in the inside of it, which he lost no time in reading; it ran thus,—

"Who ever loves me, must prove his love. I conjure you, bravest of knights, to march three miles upon English ground for my sake."*

"By St Andrew!" exclaimed the young king, when he had read those words over to himself, "I will do it! I see now what she means, the beautiful princess, the wife of two kings! She is insulted by Spain, her states are overrun by the English, Europe is jealous of her fame and her beauty, and I, her adorer, her chosen knight, lie idly here doing nothing."

* Those were indeed the very words that have since become historic.

to save her, and to destroy her enemies. How could I be so blind as not to see this before ! Ah, but she loves me ! and with her love I will conquer the whole world for her."

"Oh, my liege !" exclaimed the lady Childelberte, pleased to see that her mission had had such success, "You are, indeed, a brave, a gallant knight, and deserve all the love she has bestowed upon you ! But are you not afraid of the consequences ? think of the powerful armies of Spain and England ? think of the queen, your wife, who is the sister of Henry, what will the world say if you break the peace with England ?"

"Let the world say what it likes. I am the chosen knight of Anne de Bretagne, and I cannot know fear of any kind. No earthly reasons shall prevent me from deserving the love which the most beautiful princess of Europe has bestowed on me ! Could I refuse her the only demand she has ever made me ? No, James of Scotland cannot, in honour, forego her request."

The king kissed the beautiful hand of the lady Childelberte, "And for you, noble lady," he said, "what can I do ? how can I repay the happiness which you have brought me with this ring ?"

"What I have done, my liege, was only prompted by my desire of serving my queen. I need no other thanks than a smile from her heavenly mouth."

"I will take charge of your future, most beautiful lady. I will marry you to one of my

nobles, and you will be messenger between me and your royal lady. You will be the first lady of Scotland, for you are a friend of Anne de Bretagne?"

Great festivities followed this interview; tournaments were held in Edinburgh for the special amusement of the Lady Childelberte, and the king himself fought before her, to prove to her his courage and his experience in arms.

Amongst others, he fought with the young Earl of Caithness, one of the bravest knights of his court.

They met gallantly with their lances at full gallop, and broke their spears without doing each other further injury, for they were very well matched. The king wanted to begin again, but the Lady Childelberte threw her handkerchief upon the lists as a sign that the combat should cease. James went up to the balcony from whence the French lady had beheld the combat, upon which she said, "I had heard of your bravery and your courage, my liege, but I could never have imagined all your gallantry and strength." The king was so pleased with this speech, that he offered her the hand of his adversary, the Earl of Caithness, which she accepted.

The marriage was performed in the presence of the king himself, in the chapel of the castle.

I cannot tell you precisely if the young earl was pleased or in love with the beautiful Childelberte de la Tour Marie; but, undoubtedly, he felt very proud to carry away, from so many rich and noble champions,

this great prize of beauty and grace, the equal of whom had never before been seen in Scotland.

In the meantime, the king had not been idle ; he formed a secret alliance with Louis XII., and had sent a herald to the camp of King Henry of England before Terouenne, summoning him, in haughty terms, to abstain from aggressions against James' ally, the King of France, and upbraiding him, at the same time, with the detention of the legacy of Henry VII. to his daughter, the Scottish Queen.

Henry VIII. answered this letter, which he justly considered as a declaration of war, with equal bitterness, treating the King of Scots as a perjured man, because he was about to break the peace with England, which he had so solemnly sworn to observe. His summons he rejected with scorn. "The King of Scotland was not," he said, "of sufficient importance to determine the quarrel between England and France."

King James, contrary to the advice of his wisest counsellors, determined to invade England with a royal army. The parliament were unwilling to agree to the king's measures. The tranquillity and prosperity of the country ever since the peace with England must be taken into account, they said, and they all remembered how little was necessary to stir up the old animosity and hatred between the two kingdoms. The king, however, was so much liked that he at last obtained the consent of the parliament for this fatal and unjust war, but several of his nobles

revolted against him, among others, William, Earl of Caithness, the husband of Childelberte.

These rebel earls formed a council at Stirling, at which Lord Patrick Lindsay was made Chancellor. The noble lord opened the discussion by telling the council a parable of a rich merchant who would needs go to play at dice with a common hazarder or sharper, and stake a rose-noble of gold against a crooked half-penny. "You, my lords," he said, "will be as unwise as the merchant, if you risk your king, whom I compare to a precious rose-noble, against the English general, who is but an old crooked churl, lying in a chariot. Though the English lose the day, they lose nothing but this old churl and a parcel of mechanics; whereas so many of our common people have gone home, that few are left with us but the very prime of our nobility."

The Earl of Caithness approved of this, and he suggested that the king should withdraw from the army for safety, and he charged himself with recommending this plan to the king.

But James, who desired to gain fame by his own military skill and prowess, and who was most anxious to prove his love to the beautiful Queen of France, rejected this plan as if it had been an insult made to his royal person. "I will fight with the English," he said, "though you had all sworn the contrary. You may shame yourselves by flight, but you shall not shame me; as for Lord Patrick Lindsay, I vow that when I return to Scotland I will cause him to

be hanged over his own gate: and as for the Earl of Caithness, who has dared to propose to me this ignominious retreat, I forfeit all his estates and titles, and not even his beautiful wife shall save him."

Love was all-powerful with this rash monarch, and he was willing to sacrifice everything, his country, his honour, his friends, and even his own life, for this wild passion in his heart for a woman he had never seen.

While all this was going on, Childelberte had nourished a most passionate love for her husband, the Earl of Caithness. He was young, handsome, and brave, and his manly appearance and his gentle temper had won the heart of his French bride. He also loved her, for he thought her the handsomest and cleverest woman in all the world, and could never forget that she had chosen him among all the brave and gallant cavaliers of the Scottish court.

Childelberte had confided to her husband the truth of the secret mission she had come to fulfil near the young king. The whole truth dawned upon him at once. He now saw plainly that what the French queen was aiming at, with her pretended passion for James, was that he should divert the attention of the English from the town of Terouenne, by giving them battle in the north, and thus save France and her husband King Louis. He imparted his fears to the Earl of Angus, the chief of the Douglas, called Bell-the-Cat. This old nobleman charged the French ambassador, De la Motte, with being willing to sacrifice

the interests of Scotland to those of his own country, which required that the Scots and the English should fight at all hazards, to divide the enormous army with which the latter had invaded France. But neither of them dared to tell the king of the secret policy of the beautiful Anne, whom the King thought so much in love with him.

Childelberte, who now saw the meaning of the whole scheme she had been employed in working out, was, of course, very much displeased with herself, for she was a good woman, and did not at all like to ruin Scotland and kill its king. She accused herself of having been the principal agent of all this, and made herself most miserable.

One day her husband said to her, "My beautiful Childelberte, all this we owe to you, for it was you who first suggested this absurd passion to our king, but, if you like, you may still undo the evil you have done, and restore Scotland to her happy peace."

"And how?" exclaimed the lovely Lady Caithness.

"By telling the truth to the king; by assuring him that it has all been a farce; that the French queen is not at all in love with him, and that her message was only meant to save France from the imminent danger in which the armies of Ferdinand and Henry had placed it."

"This I cannot do, my lord and husband; the king will kill me in his rage, when he hears how villanously he has been cheated. Moreover, his love

is so great that passion blinds him, and he will not believe me."

"Have you no document, no secret paper entrusted to your care by the French queen, that could prove the truth of your words to this foolish lover?"

"No, none; the queen's instructions were given to me by herself verbally; I have no paper, nothing that can justify my words."

"Then we shall be lost, for the English will win the day, and Scotland will lose her liberty and her peace."

"I will try to do something to convince the king of his foolishness in fighting the English, if you, my lord, on your side, promise me, if my intercession proves to be useless, to go to the field and help king James against the English. For it is I who have done the harm, and we should certainly do something to help the poor king out of it."

The young nobleman promised this, and Childerbete set to work on her delicate mission.

She found out that the king's temper was tinged with a superstitious melancholy, which arose from the remorse which he felt on account of his having been accessory to his father's death. She therefore determined to appeal to his superstition, in order to awaken him from the illusion under which he laboured.

One day that James was at his devotions in the chapel at Linlithgow, she introduced herself secretly into the chancel, and concealed herself behind the altar until the king found himself quite alone, when

she appeared before him all of a sudden. She wore an azure-coloured robe, girt with a girdle of linen, having sandals on her feet, and all her beautiful tresses hanging around her.

She went straight to the desk at which the king was kneeling, and addressed him as follows :

"Oh, great king!" she said, in a commanding voice that thrilled through James's ear, "forbear the journey before you, abstain from fighting the English, for if thou dost not, thou and all thy people will be lost. Remember thy father's death!"

The king started up, but Childelberte put her hands upon him, and, with little reverence, continued, "The Queen of France *does not* love you; it has all been a plot to deliver France from her many enemies; thou hast been cheated, oh, king! villanously cheated! Anne loves her husband more even than she has pretended to love thee. If thou would'st not be ruined, abstain from invading England, for death awaits thee there, where thou wilt go in search of glory!"

"And what proof have you of all this?" said the king, much surprised by this curious address.

"I have only one," said the lady, "my face," and, saying this, she lifted the veil which concealed her countenance.

The king gave a cry of surprise, and covered his face with his hands. When he recovered from his stupefaction Childelberte had disappeared. He called his people, and tried to discover her hiding-place, but all was useless, and his courtiers always believed that

he had beheld a vision, in which a supernatural warning had been given to him not to cross the Scottish border.

But neither this artifice nor the advice of his parliament, nor the entreaties of his wife Margaret, could deter James from his unhappy expedition ; for he still loved Anne, and love is all powerful. He was so determined that, he soon assembled an army of 50,000 men, and on the 22d of August 1513 he crossed the Tweed and invaded England, as his supposed lady love, the queen of France, had bade him do.

Lady Caithness, seeing that her clever stratagem to dissuade the king from this foolish war had been of no avail, prevailed upon her husband to assemble all his clan and help the king out of the scrape. "Only one thing," she said, "remains for us to do, and that is to win the campaign, and save both France and Scotland. This, I think, might yet be done, the royal army consists of 50,000 men, and we might yet add a few hundreds more, while the English army only counts 26,000, and of this very few are knights."

The earl loved his wife so well that he at last consented to aid the king in the enterprise ; he therefore went to his castle in Caithness to call his clan to arms. Childelberte accompanied him, and promised to remain there until his return. The parting between the newly married pair was very touching, for they both felt that perhaps they might never see each other again.

In the meantime the Earl of Surrey, at the head of the English army, had advanced as far as Wooler, so that only four or five miles divided the two armies.

On the 9th of September was fought the fatal battle.

The Scottish army had fixed their camp upon a hill called Flodden, which rises to close in, as it were, the extensive flat called Millfield.

Before the battle the Scots set fire to their huts and the other refuse and litter of their camp. The smoke soon spread along the side of the hill, and through it they saw a numerous and gallant body of soldiers, dressed in the green tartan of the Sinclairs, advancing towards the camp. The king was much surprised, at first he thought they were enemies sent by Surrey to attack them, concealed by the clouds of smoke; but he soon saw that, instead of enemies, they were friends advancing, for he now beheld the Earl of Caithness marching at the head of his men, bearing the standard of the Sinclair clan.

The king was so much pleased with the gallantry of the young earl, and with the fine body of men he had brought to his assistance, that he immediately wrote out a removal of his forfeiture on a drumhead, as no other parchment could be found in the army, and forthwith dispatched one of the Sinclair soldiers with it to the lady Childelberte; so that, if anything should befall the brave knight, she might be still secured in her titles and lands.

The bearer of this charter was the only one of the Caithness corps that ever returned !

The fatal battle was fought. Surrey, in spite of his small numbers, obtained such a decisive victory that Scotland was completely lost. The king himself perished in the conflict. The victors had about five thousand men slain, the Scots twice that number at least. But the loss lay not so much in the numbers of the slain, as in their rank and quality. The English lost very few men of distinction. The Scots left on that bloody field, their king, two bishops, two mitred abbots, twelve earls, thirteen lords, and five eldest sons of peers. The number of gentlemen slain was beyond calculation ; there was scarcely one family in all Scotland who was not thrown into mourning by this unhappy war.

Such were the consequences of the insane passion of this foolish king. France was saved, it is true, but poor Scotland had to suffer instead, and then people will say that love is not all-powerful !

“ ’Twas a gloomy eve in autumn—
Clouds o’er heaven lay dense and still,
And the sun no smile shed round him,
As he sank behind the hill.

“ All without seemed full of sadness—
Not a sound on earth or sky,
Save the wild wave’s hollow murmur,
And the sea-fowl’s piercing cry.

“ In her tap’stried princely chamber,
Lonely, uttering not a word,
Pensive sat the lady Caithness,
Brooding o’er her absent lord.

The Power of Love.

21

- "For of him she'd heard no tidings,
Since the hour he marched away,
With his sprightly band to England,
Trimly clad in green array.
- "All the flower of Caithness with him,
Pipe and drum and banner bright—
To assist King James of Scotland,
In the anticipated fight.
- "With dark fears the lady's spirit,
Day by day was troubled sore;
Something whispered that she never
Would behold her husband more.
- "Thrice of late she dreamt she saw him,
Ghastly bleeding from the fight;
And she heard the death-watch beating,
By her bedside yester night.
- "As she sat and pondered, leaning
With her pale cheek on her hand,
She was told a youth would see her,
Newly come from England's strand.
- "From her reverie she started,
While her frame convulsive shook;
Hope and fear, in anxious struggle,
Deeply blended in her look.
- " 'Bring the stranger hither,' said she,
To her trusty seneschal;
And with graceful bow, a soldier
Slowly stepped into the hall.
- "But no sooner had he entered,
Travel-sore with weary pace,
Than she read the dismal tidings
In the expression of his face.
- " 'Speak brave soldier,' said the lady,
While her cheek grew ghastly white;
 'Bring'st thou not unto our castle,
Heavy news for me to-night?'

The Honeymoon.

- “ ‘ Oh ! for pity’s sake, conceal nought,
Tell me quickly all you know ;
By your looks I guess too truly
That my gallant lord lies low.
- “ ‘ Though your tale must rend my bosom,
I have strength to hear it all ;
Heaven will not forsake the widow,
In her lone deserted hall.’
- “ Then the youthful Highland soldier
Painfully, looked up to speak,
While the tear-drop, like a woman’s,
Trickled down his manly cheek.
- “ ‘ Sad the tale, indeed, my lady—
Wounds there are can ne’er be healed ;
King and nobles all have perished,
On dark Flodden’s bloody field.
- “ ‘ And, alas ! my honoured chieftain,
There, too, lies among the slain,
With his followers all around him,
Ne’er to cross the Ord again.
- “ ‘ I alone, the sole survivor
Of our brave lamented band,
Bear thee home this precious charter,
Written with the royal hand.
- “ ‘ It restores thee all thy titles,
Every privilege and right ;
’Twas the last deed of the monarch,
Ere the trumpet blew to fight.’
- “ ‘ Worthless now to me and empty,’
Said the lady, with a sigh,
‘ All the rank the world can give me—
All the honours ’neath the sky.’ ”
- “ Then withdrawing from the chamber,
Whelmed in sorrow passing deep,
To her widowed couch she hurried,
There in solitude to weep.”

CHAPTER XVII.

FROM THE TROSSACHS TO ABERFELDY, THROUGH
LOCH TAY.

"OH!" said Conchita, when I had finished my story, "surely you must have altered the facts, love could never have made such a fool of the poor king!"

"And why not?" we have the authority of La Rochefoucauld on this point, who said, "that passion often rendered the most clever man a fool."

"At all events," said Conchita, getting up, "I don't in the least admire your hero, and let me remind you that this is the second time that you have killed the king of Scotland in a battle; did all her kings die in the wars?"

"No, of course not, my Conchita, you must not laugh at my story, for I can assure you that almost the whole of it is perfectly true."

"Well, I take it on trust," she said, and we walked out of the picturesque and fairy-like Glenfinlass. The moon shone brightly upon the beautiful and flashing cascade, the waters of which were lost under some rocks at our feet, and the whole scene, owing perhaps to the thickets, which on every side clothe the rocks, presented an unparalleled spectacle to the eye unaccustomed to these beauties, so common in the Highland glens.

We passed the night in the inn at the Trossachs, called by the easy and high sounding name of *the Ardcheanochrochan*, and the next morning we took the coach to Callander, where we arrived in the afternoon.

This is a pretty Highland village, situated on the bank of the Teith, and at the opening of the celebrated Scottish glens.

From Callander we proceeded by coach to Aberfeldy. This was one of the most enjoyable drives we took during our tour through the Highlands. We passed Loch Tay, a lovely little lake, which gives birth to the great river of that name; near the banks of the lake is situated Taymouth Castle, the princely mansion of the Marquis of Breadalbane. The castle is built in a beautiful valley, and from the public road on the top of the hill one can enjoy one of the finest views in Scotland. Just under our feet we can see through the luxuriant woods the plain below, which is adorned with gigantic old trees; in its centre rises the castle surrounded by its gardens and extensive pleasure grounds, which form a striking combination of beauty and grandeur.

During this interesting drive Conchita and I had a discussion that, I think, influenced a great deal my young bride's impressionable mind. I shall try to give an outline of it as well as I can remember.

We were talking about the walk we had taken on the banks of Loch Lomond—that never-to-be-forgotten moonlight night—when she said, “I have been think-

ing much over all you told me during those two hours we passed in the sweet moonlight."

"And what is the result of your reflections, dear one?" I asked, taking her gentle hand in mine.

"Oh, Walter!"—and as she spoke her soft eyes were suffused with tears—"I am almost afraid of my thoughts. I sometimes fear I am wrong to indulge in them; but in vain do I try to think of other less serious subjects. The wonderful things you then told me of the greatness of God manifested in his wondrous works seem to occupy all my soul, and awaken unknown sensations in my heart."

"Do you feel worse for them, dear love?" I asked.

"I cannot think so," she answered, musingly, "because I seem to see God nearer than I ever did before. I have seen him through a telescope, and I seem to long for another look; but, at the same time, I fear that look might take me further away than I should dare to go from the teachings of my Church."

"The teachings of your Church, and those of all Churches, very much resemble the stone edifices in which they are expounded. They are stationary, immovable; they were raised by men of the past, who painted on their walls the portrait of God as he then appeared to them—jealous of his servants, employing himself in watching how often they bowed before and offered worship to him in words and in forms. We cannot know God, but we can know that the image they have presented is not like the original. They saw him with the naked eye, and were satisfied;

by-and-by some one saw him through a magnifying glass, and discovered features, which, to the unassisted vision, could not be revealed. Shall we be wise if we content ourselves with the first description given? By-and-by further discoveries are made; time and observation, like telescopes and microscopes, bring still more hidden beauties to view, which necessitate an entirely new description of the whole. The men who described first were perfectly honest, and their imperfect portrait resulted from causes over which they had no control; their unassisted vision was unable to penetrate through the veil, and we do not blame them for not seeing what no human eye, unaided by time and progress, has ever yet been able to discover, as all savage, uncultivated nations still testify. So with all nature: we know now what could never have entered into the dreams of our ancestors. The result is, that our ideas of God have enlarged, and differ wonderfully from those of earlier times; we have higher notions of his power, and goodness, and love; and he who is brave enough to stand forth and utter, at all hazards, what in his heart he believes to be the truth, worships God in spirit and in truth; for although he does not repeat forms of prayer, or sign the sign of the Cross, he does that which promotes the knowledge and love of God, and thus links himself with the cause of the Eternal."

My young wife was silent, so I continued:—"There is nothing that teaches us so well the grandeur of God's work and his eternal glory as the

heavens do in a mid-summer night. It is not, therefore, to be wondered at that men in their ignorance first worshipped the stars, and above all the sun, the giver of all blessings, the light of the world. For there is a sense of natural devotion in man that impels him to worship something. This may be dictated by fear, it may proceed from hope, or it may be the just instinct of gratitude, but something he must worship, and this worship must be in accordance with his capacity of comprehension, and with the extent of his intellect, so that his faith progresses as do the occupations of his daily life. All the religions of the world proceed from this; human reason is the basis of them all,—‘Therefore as man progresses, his creed will also progress.’”

“All that is very well,” said Conchita; “but, my dear Walter, I have always been taught just the contrary. Religion comes from heaven, and is, therefore, always the same, eternal and constant as God himself. Reasoning may be very good, but faith ought to be unmoved by it. How am I to arrive at the truth amidst such different and contradictory statements?”

“The Almighty has given you the torch that should enlighten your intelligence, reason, and common sense! Consult your own conscience and the pure depths of your heart, it will guide you by reason towards the truth.”

“Reason, always reason! How I do wish you could hear what I have been so often told about reason. Father Mathias has told me that we ought

to have faith in spite of reason, that the facts which science teaches may be true or false, but that its motive for teaching them is a wrong one, and that even to doubt the truth of our holy faith was a crime in the eyes of God."

"They spoke to you like that, Conchita, because you were a poor little girl shut up in a convent, but they would not use such arguments to a man of the world. Faith is all very well; nobody has so much faith as I have, but my faith is not theirs. Theirs is an orthodox faith, mine is a universal one. Let darkness encompass the men of darkness, and let *us* march towards the light. Where would man be to-day without science? Can you imagine to yourself a world without science, a people without civilization? Man would be little more than an animal, instinct would be his only guide. But this is not the case; he has intelligence, he can reason for himself. He is born naked, but he can make for himself clothes; he can make silks and velvets, and can dig up from the earth gold and jewels with which to adorn his bride. He finds the earth a desert, but he can plant trees and vegetables in it, and make a paradise of its dreary surface. He has no home, but he can build for himself palaces, and he can decorate them, if he likes, with the most perfect *chefs d'œuvres* of art. The ferocious animals may attack him, but he knows how to defend himself against them, and can even make use of some of them. At night darkness may surround him, but he can

create an artificial light inferior only to the sun itself in brilliancy. He finds walking a difficult and slow way of proceeding, so he makes the horse carry him from place to place ; even this he finds tedious and slow, but he discovers steam, and by its means he can travel quickly over land and sea. The telegraph, in which he employs the electricity of the atmosphere, affords him a new way of communication with his most distant friends as if they were sitting by his side.

"All this man owes to his own reason. Compare the savage, the primitive inhabitant of our world, with the man of to-day, and you will be better able to appreciate the difference. Faith is all very well, but with faith alone, man would never have become what he is to-day. God has put in us all the qualities and powers that we might need, but he meant us to develop them and bring them to their greatest state of perfection.

"Man has become what he now is through reasoning and making use of his imagination, for everything must exist in his mind before it really does exist in the outer world.

"Reasoning is, therefore, good ; do not think that speculations are only a play of the imagination—without speculation nothing would exist. Man speculates and discovers the truth, for the seeds of great discoveries are always floating around us, but they only take root and germinate in minds well prepared by reasoning to receive them.

"You may, perhaps, think that a time will come

when we shall speculate no more. Such a time would bring death to man, Those illusions, as you call them, make us believe in this world and hope for the next. The old man may say and repeat a thousand times that he has long ago lost all hope, but he is mistaken ; he is yet rich in hope, he is convinced that his end is as yet far away. The longer he lives, the longer he thinks he will live ; he prepares himself again and again for the fight ; he makes his nest as if he was to live for ever. It is the old men who reason most, the young leave it all to chance. The older we grow the more we speculate and think about the future, for it is strange how much stronger in old age than in youth is the tendency to live in the hereafter.

“ In youth we have our whole life before us, but in old age we have an eternity !

“ The longer we live, the more distant our end appears. Can it be, perhaps, because life is a circle, something like your rosary, Conchita ? You begin to count the beads and you go on for ever counting, the beads seem to have no end, you forget where you began, and the more you count the more there seem to be before you. In this endless succession the past becomes the future as the future most certainly must become the past. Could this, perchance, be the great secret of our existence ?

“ Sir Humphrey Davy himself remarks that ‘ there is a strong analogy for believing in an infinity of past existences, which must have had connection ; and human life may be regarded as a type of infinity and

immortal life, and its succession of sleep and dreams as a type of the changes of death and birth to which, from its nature, it is liable.* ‘Destruction of life is only a change of existence, and supposing the new existence a superior one, it is a gain. To the supreme Intelligence the death of a million of human beings is the mere circumstance of so many spiritual essences changing their habitation, and is analogous to the myriad millions of larvæ that leave their coats and shells behind them, and rise into the atmosphere as flies, in a summer day. When man measures the works of the divine mind by his own feeble combinations, he must wander in gross error; the infinite can never be understood by the finite.’†

“In that,” said Conchita, “I quite agree with the great philosopher. Man can never comprehend God. We may reason and speculate as much as we like, but we shall always be in ignorance respecting our divine Creator. For this reason religion must be revealed to us, man could never arrive at the truth unaided by God.”

“I believe in revelation, but in a different way from you, Conchita. I consider all discoveries of science, all advance in knowledge, as revelation. I do not pretend to say if there be a supernatural power mingled with it or not; most likely there is, for all that is good comes from God. Man has

* “Consolations in Travel, or the Last Days of a Philosopher.” Dialogue iv.

† Ibid, Dialogue ii.

always had some revelation or other given to him, but as nothing can be given that cannot be received, this revelation must be in accordance with the intellectual advancement of the men to whom it is given ; as man progresses he needs new revelations, therefore revelation must be multiform. I have no doubt that Christianity is a revealed religion, and that the Jewish one before it, was also a revelation of God to men,—a revelation of God adapted for the state of progress of those to whom it was addressed. But if we admit those two religions so opposed to one another, so different in every respect, to be equally *revelations*, why should we not allow all other religions to be also revealed by God himself ? It is true that in appearance and at first sight they may seem different, even contradictory ; but remember the men to whom they were given. How could a Brahmin of two thousand years ago comprehend the truths of Christianity such as they are now believed by us, even if they had been revealed to him by God ?

“ I will repeat to you again those verses of which I am so fond.

“ Thus you see that the truth of the present is but the truth of
the past,

But each phase is greater, and grander, and mightier than the
last—

That the past is ever prophetic of that which is yet to be,
And that God reveals his glory by slow and distinct degree.”

Conchita remained silent for some time, then she said, “ I do not believe in your views, and yet I cannot help liking them, they seem to me to give a much

grander and nobler idea of God and of his laws. You paint him so wonderful, so grand, so sublime, so divine in all his works, that I almost agree with you in many respects. It has always appeared to me inexplicable why the Christian dispensation should have been taught just eighteen centuries ago, and not before; surely they who lived before that time were in as much need of a Saviour as we ourselves could be. I know I am wrong in entertaining those misgivings, but it is your fault; you taught me to reason, and now I suffer the consequences.

"Reason is a telescope which strips the unknown of its fantasies, and brings life near, in utter nakedness; making the cold reality too real!"

"You cannot think how glad I am, Conchita, to see that you are beginning to use your reason respecting religion, as well as everything else, and that you intend in future to show your common-sense on this subject, as in all others. If men would only think for themselves, what different opinions would they not have concerning almost everything in this life! But, unfortunately, investigation is sometimes difficult, and thinking is decidedly an effort. Men have found it so from the beginning of the world; it is so much easier to take opinions ready-made! 'An ounce of custom,' as said Hommel, 'outweighs a ton of reason.' We are born to a certain creed, our parents take no end of trouble to teach us the truth of this creed, and no wonder when we grow up that our eyes are closed to everything else.

"I do not therefore blame you, Conchita, for your intolerance and superstition. You were but a mere child when the nuns took charge of your conscience. They and their priests taught you to believe in the Catholic Church as in the only true and infallible religion in this world; they even taught you to believe that men were demons, and the world a place of corruption and perdition, for they evidently destined you for the cloister. This sort of Catholic theological terrorism was brought into play in order to keep you firm in your faith, for they know very well that fear alone could make you believe in their creed.

"Now you are in the *world*, in that place of corruption and perdition, and you have beside you a *man*, a demon, as they, of course, say we all are out of the monastery. Do you still believe in what the nuns told you in your convent?"

"I hardly know what to say; it is true that they painted the world to me very different to what it is in reality, but then they knew no better, they had only seen it through the barred windows of their cells. They were honest in what they taught me; they really did believe what they taught. You certainly do not believe in their views, and, I must say, you who have lived in the world, and know its ways, ought to know it better than the poor nuns in their convent. I can hardly call you a demon, and yet you are precisely what they told me men were in this world; yet, I love you for all that! and, in spite of your doubts and your philosophy, you are very religious."

"I try to be so; it is because I am so religious that I want to possess the true religion; if I fail it is not the fault of my faith. I never deceive myself in that; it is my own ignorance and want of knowledge. Yet I pray that faith may come to me, but I pray alone. I pray in a temple made by God's own hands, and in which I believe God dwells, and dwells for my guidance and my good,—my heart. I believe most fervently in the efficacy of prayer, for with prayer comes hope, and hope brings peace and resignation; it also gives me strength, and I want that above all things. When I am afflicted and I pray, God's peace comes down into my heart, and I feel it is so, and then I know that my prayer is answered.

"I call myself a philosopher, and yet my philosophy is not that taught by the sophistries of the schools. I believe that a soul when yearning and aspiring towards God, opens itself to the influence of new light, strength, and peace, and that God's blessing flows into it, and the man becomes more perfect, more God-like. In this I firmly believe. And yet, if any one asked me *why*? I could not tell the reason. My views may, perhaps, not be really philosophical, but I cannot help believing in them. I say as Hamlet, that perhaps 'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.'

"I remember some verses, written by Mr S. C. Hall, the well-known English author, that although they sneer at poor philosophy in order to exalt faith,

and are consequently more in your way than mine, I will repeat to you, as they perhaps express my ideas better than I can myself! but remember, dear one, that mine is the philosophy of faith. Here are the verses,—

- “ All hail, philosophy ! light-giving light !
Light all its own, made by and for it, hail !
Making a dark obscure serenely bright,
By five unerring helps that cannot fail.
- “ What idle hopes and futile faith, are theirs,
Who yearn for painless homes beyond the sky,
(Of which they fondly fancy they are heirs,
Heirs of immortal life that cannot die !
- “ Absurd the dream, that death will not be death,
That earth-love can be heaven-love, that we part
To meet the dead again, and breathe the breath
Of life eternal ; heart rejoined to heart !
- “ Thus doting mothers think ! and friend of friend !
Even wives and husbands have this baseless trust,
They cannot see that hopes and loves will end,
When animated dust is only dust.
- “ Such dull delusions science can dispel ;
Such superstitions of an after-state,
The shallow thoughts that picture heaven and hell,
And give us providence in lieu of fate.
- “ So let the ‘ fools ’ who say there is no God,
No life but this, no heaven that can be won,
Poor sceptics who reject this staff and rod,
Joy in extinction after life is done.
- “ They limit the omnipotence, to acts
That science calls ‘ *the possible*, ’ and thus
Bounding the Infinite by rules and facts,
Explain the fable of the soul to us !

- "Then thousand thousand things exist, we know,
By science tested and by reason tried,
With no conclusive issue; save to show
How much we need a better light and guide.
- "Can science gauge the influence that draws
The needle to the magnet? Can it see
The perfume of the rose? or measure laws
By which the flower gives honey to the bee?
- "In spite of science and its five poor tests,
It may have been a part of nature's plan
To people other spheres with other guests—
Ascending, or descending, up from man.
- "And beings not of earth or mortal birth,
The first-born of creation, may have been,
And may be, ministers of love to earth,
A cloud of witnesses, though yet unseen.
- "And those we call 'the dead,' who are not dead,
Death was their herald to celestial life!
May soothe the aching hearts and weary heads
In pain, in toil, in sorrow, and in strife.
- "That is a part of every natural creed—
Instinctive teachings of another state,
When manacles of earth are loosed and freed,
Which science vainly strives to dissipate.
- "In tortuous paths, with prompters blind, we trust
One guide—to lead us forth and set us free—
Give us, Lord God! all merciful and just,
The *faith* that is but *confidence* in thee!
- "Oh Lord! in mercy give to those who grope
In darkness, light; to those whose human ties
Are strong, that anchor of the future . . . Hope.
The word that leads to life, that never dies.
- "(Give them a living faith, whose faith is dead;
A spirit right within their hearts renew;
Have patience with them, Lord! thou who hast said
'Forgive them! for they know not what they do!'"

CHAPTER XVIII

THE VISION.

CONCHITA was very much impressed by the conversation I have recorded in the last chapter. She had also begun to think,—this I could perceive, although I said nothing to her—her clear and intelligent mind began now to exert its reasoning powers, and I hoped would soon free itself from the superstitions, and preconceived ideas, with which it had been imbued and bound, by the priests and nuns, during her girlhood, in the Spanish convent.

She now began to reflect and to judge for herself, for the first time in her life, and although her faith remained unshaken, yet she could not help seeing that I was also right, and that there was much foundation for my misgivings; and, therefore, I perceived that she no longer opposed me with her former decision and energy.

And had no change come over my mind? It would be hard to say—but I certainly felt at times that the sweet reliant faith of my young wife had exercised a soothing influence upon me, and had made me less bitter against the existing creeds of mankind. I seemed to see them in another light, and began to

reflect that they had so far assisted man in his onward march through the ages. With their light to guide and their strength to support, humanity had reached its present stand-point, and if now, with the accumulated knowledge of so many centuries behind us, and the flood of light of the future which had burst upon us, with the scientific discoveries of this nineteenth century, our former light appeared dim and shadowy, we were not justified in reviling it, as I had but too often done, and that it was not only ungrateful of me to wish to extinguish it, because I had perceived the glorious light of a brighter day, but also imprudent to endeavour to do so, before that fast dawning light had reached a sufficient altitude, to be seen by all; when in the full tide of its noon-day splendour, it would naturally, and of itself, extinguish the waning and flickering light of the past, as that had before outshone its predecessor.

My sweet young wife fondly believed that her influence would lead my mind back to the former faith of its childhood; she did not know that there is no going backwards for the intelligence, and that *progress* is God's first law for the Spirit as for all created things.

She tried to convince me that philosophy was but a cold substitute for faith; and I let her think that her faith had revived mine, which, however, had never for a moment been extinguished; for I had never been a mere cold unbelieving philosopher, but a warm-hearted free Theist, *full* of faith and belief in the

perfect beauty and harmony of the universe, and in the supreme wisdom and goodness of the divine Creator. My dear wife thought she was now teaching me that philosophy alone could not take in our hearts the place of religion. But if religion means love to God, then was I religious, for that love I felt—deep, fervent, heartfelt, admiring, worshipping—in my inner soul, and overflowing, even in tears from my eyes, when I contemplated the marvellous fitness and beauty that I found everywhere spread out around me. I was not a mere admirer of nature, but a worshipper of nature's God.

I was, therefore, truly religious ; and I determined in my heart, that until my clearer and more elevated ideas of the Universal Father could be distinctly appreciated and comprehended by Conchita, that I would, so far, give her pleasure as to conform in all respects to the outward worship of the Catholic Church—which, after all, seemed to me to hold more truths, in a dim, shadowy sort of way, under the thickly shrouding veil of its so-called “mysteries,”—than I had found in all my long search amongst the other religions of the two great continents. I therefore determined to be what the world calls religious, and to attend regularly the ceremonies of Catholic worship. I should still hold my own opinions about the good sense of them, and therefore, whatever I might appear, I could never be orthodox ; for there is the greatest difference between religion and theological orthodoxy ; and I had been too free

an enquirer after truth, ever to be again what the church calls orthodox.

And after all, what is orthodoxy?

Religion is universal, but orthodoxy is exclusive. What is orthodox in Spain, for instance, is far from being orthodox in Scotland. Religion unites mankind, but theology divides it. Religion is love, theology is bigotry. The good the one performs in the world is undone by the other. And yet, I suppose, there can be no established religion without its theological orthodoxy; this is a great pity, for religion is light, and love, and virtue, and peace, but orthodoxy disunites men, and contradicts the doctrines preached by the religion.

That night, we arrived very late at Aberfeldy, where we put up at the Breadalbane Arms Inn. Conchita was very tired, so she immediately retired to her room. I was also weary, but my mind was too unsettled to allow me to sleep in peace, so I left the hotel, and began to ascend the hill opposite the railway station, that leads to the Falls of Moness.

I passed the first fall, which consists of a series of cascades, formed by a small tributary rivulet, and I crossed over some other falls, at least one hundred feet high, by a rustic bridge. Here the glen is deep, and so exceedingly confined, that the trees, in some places, unite their branches from opposite sides.

I then remembered Burns's verses :

The Honeymoon.

"The braes ascend like lofty wa's,
The foaming stream deep roaring fa's,
O'erhung wi' fragrant spreading shaws,
The Birks of Aberfeldy.

"The hoary cliffs are crown'd wi' flowers,
White o'er the linn the burnie pours,
And rising, wets, wi' misty showers,
The Birks of Aberfeldy.

In this retired and romantic spot I sat down upon a mossy bank beside the roaring water.

My mind was so full of the subjects we had discussed during the day, that I still continued to meditate on them. The train of ideas which had run through my head for the last few days, now flowed on with a vividness and force increased by the stillness and solitude of the scene.

"What can be the great mystery of our existence?" I exclaimed. "We see every day new men born and die; but we know not whence they came nor whither they go; and even *this* life is so uncertain, so changeable. Chance seems to be its only director, and yet some law or other must govern its perpetual changes. Life would be perfect if it would only last. But it will not last. I try to fancy to myself that Conchita, and I shall live here for ever together, happy the one for the other. But this is only a dream, it cannot be, life will not last; when we most enjoy it then it is taken away from us. I often hear people say, that this is only a preparatory state for another *and a truer life*. But it seems to me that if such were the case, men would only have

one thought, and one occupation in it, which would be to prepare themselves for this future life. But this is not the case; we live as if *this* were the true, the only life; and it is because we are ignorant of the future; if we only knew what was to be our future destiny, we should certainly spend our lives in quite a different way. 'I do not know,' said Pascal, 'who has put me in the world, nor what is the world, nor what I am myself. I am in complete ignorance of all things: I do not know what is my body, nor my soul, nor my senses; and this part of my being that is thus reasoning about itself, is as unknown to me as the rest.'*

"I called up reflections of this kind in my mind. 'We see,' I said, 'race after race of men come into the world, live therein, die, and then disappear, never more to be seen or heard of again; and yet, one race succeeds another so closely, and one family takes up the civilization left by the preceding one, in such a way that we might very easily be led to suppose that they all are one and the same.'"

My abstraction then became deeper, the full moon of July, shone in all her brilliancy between the trees, the waters seemed as molten silver running beneath my feet, little by little the light of the moon became more and more vague, the whole scene seemed to vanish before my sight, and to leave only the pale silvery rays of the moon. The roar of the waterfall was changed into a soft melodious music. I felt my-

* *Pensées de Pascal*, p. 39. Bibliothèque Nationale, vol. lxi.

self going to sleep. But it was not a natural sleep, it seemed more like a trance than anything else. I had never experienced this strange sensation before, and yet I suppose it must have been a dream.

I presently heard a sweet voice that seemed to come from the waters below me. I tried to open my eyes, but could not. The voice said in a distinct but low tone, "I am a spirit who was once a man ; and I know that though dead, I have never really died."

I tried to ask a question of this strange being whom I could not see, but it answered my thought, even before I could open my mouth to speak.

"You want to know," said the voice, "the object, and the plan of creation, the scheme of the universe ; you have the folly to believe that *you* could understand the laws of God if they were revealed to you ! Oh ! ignorant and vain mortal ! When millions of ages are necessary in order that a mere spirit may become an intelligence, you pretend to reach your final destination, the supreme goodness and the supreme knowledge, all at once, regardless of all the influences of space and time ! I am not a man, I am an intelligence, superior to man, but inferior to the angels of God. Yet I know a great deal that I can teach you. I will show you how ignorant you are. Submit your whole existence to me for the moment, part with your human life, and mingle yourself in mine, then I shall be able to carry you back through the past ages and show you

your past life ; *yes, your past life.* Yield your mind wholly to my influence."

The voice ceased. I felt pains all over me, as if my spirit was separating itself from my body. I felt freer and freer, at last I lost all consciousness. When I came back to my senses, I saw a wild, desolate scene before my eyes. It could not have been in this earth, for in it every thing seemed of one colour, a dim, hazy gray, such as we sometimes behold in the twilight of a misty morning. The whole country before me appeared covered with marshes. I saw wild animals of every description, among the most perfect of these I noticed one particularly, its shape was between that of a monkey and a man, he was, however, covered with hair. I looked at him closely, and suddenly I gave a cry of horror. . . . I had recognised myself in this horrible brute !

"You are frightened at your own self !" said the voice of my invisible guide, "just like man ! This is your first appearance upon the earth in the initial state of humanity, for the country, you see, is on your own earth, you have lately been developed out of the forces of nature ; those animals yonder were your predecessors, your human career begins." The sweet voiced ceased, I was again left in an unconscious state.

When the darkness vanished, the scene before my eyes was still the same ; but the sun was now beginning to throw a lurid glare over the marshes. I then saw forests of enormous trees, but the same wild animals as before. I saw myself—this time, a being

similar to the South African savages of the present day. I was naked, my skin was black ; I had in my hand a sharp pointed axe, made of a fish bone, with which I was trying to kill a poor little animal that the storm had placed in my path. I killed it at last, and to my horror, I began to eat it raw ! I shut my eyes.

When I again opened them, I beheld quite a different scene. The landscape before me was a wild one, which, however, possessed many natural beauties ; it was a scene such as I had often witnessed in the West Indies. The country seemed to be populated with men and women of all ages, who appeared to be in the earliest stage of civilization. I again saw myself, covered this time with skins of animals, kneeling before the rising sun, to which I was rendering worship.

"This was your first act of adoration," said the voice that still sounded in my ear as the murmur of the waters of Aberfeldy. "It is my purpose to show you, in a succession of visions, the progress you have made, both in your physical and your moral condition. I will show you the different civilization through which you have passed, and the different religions to which you have belonged. Showing you your past life, I intend to teach you that of humanity in general, whose history has been more or less like your own, for all men must pass through *every stage* of civilization before they can attain perfection. This is the first stage—man appears, for the first time, upon

the earth ; he is ignorant, and his physical as well as his moral condition is, as yet, in a state of infancy. He is little less than a savage ; he is ignorant of the causes that produce the phenomena which, to-day, seem so natural to him ; he is ignorant of the cause of the tempest ; the eclipses are, to him, incomprehensible marvels ; he attributes a supernatural cause to everything that is beyond his weak and uncultivated intelligence. Fear is also united to this strange feeling, and in his ignorance, he imagines that if he could win over the elements to his side, he might do better than the first inhabitants of the planet, who called supernatural, the causes which produced those phenomena that he could not understand. Those phenomena soon became gods, and man, in his ignorant terror of everything supernatural, worshipped successively, the earth, the sea, the sky. You behold, now, the first worship—that of the sun, the lord of the day. You see yourself advancing upon your knees over the ground ; see, you cut branches off the dead trees, and you place upon them a poor innocent lamb, you are going to perform a sacrifice, in order to obtain for yourself and yours the protection of the sun.

“But centuries pass, you die and are again born upon earth—that is to say that when your body is getting old and useless, you change it for another, and thus obtain new, soft, and more impressionable organs ; this you, in your ignorance, have called death and birth ; it is only the natural consequences of time and eternal progress.”

I now beheld another scene ; I saw myself again reaping and gleaning corn, and then making a sort of bread out of it. Upon a hill I saw a rude primitive kind of cottage, at the door of which a wooden altar sent a column of smoke towards the blue sky. The voice of the Genius said then, " Passing through the centuries you, or rather your race, have discovered that those phenomena you once worshipped were only the effects of unknown but superior causes. This discovery has changed your primitive fetichism into an ideal polytheism. Before this change every object had been deified, and each man worshipped a great multitude of fetiches or idols, to which he rendered sacrifices ; with time, however, those material objects were converted into ideas represented by symbols, thus you see before the door of your little cottage the altar on which you sacrifice, as did Abraham to Jehovah, to the God who has succeeded in your heart to the idols you worshipped in your former existences. But this change has not taken place all of a sudden, like all those other changes you see which take place in the religions of this world ; it was not effected in one day, but was the work of centuries, for it is only as we go on progressing, that we can admit new truths to take the place of the old ones in our hearts. Nothing in nature takes place on a sudden, things change but in such a way that it would be impossible for any one to draw a line between any two religions of those that have succeeded one another in this planet, and to say where one ends and the

other begins ; it would be impossible to tell the precise moment when a man abandons one opinion for another. The difference is only to be found in the centre, the outer extremities touch one another, whatever man may say to the contrary ; for in his ignorance he believes that everything takes place by means of catastrophes, he forgets that in nature everything goes on smoothly, that one thing grows naturally out of that which precedes it, and that we do not jump from one conclusion to another. So that he takes what in reality is only a single link of a grand chain of transitions, as *one great truth* that outweighs and eclipses the whole series of facts to which it belongs."

Again, another scene broke upon my vision. I saw a stately magnificent temple, a great crowd of men and women beautifully dressed in purple and gold, kneeling before the great altar. In one of the men I recognised myself, in one of the women—Conchita.

"The love which you have for your wife is not a new love," said the spirit ; "you have known her before, in other stages of existence, and you have loved her, she was then your wife, as she is now your bride, for love can never die, but you are too material yet, to comprehend the great laws that govern these things ; you know the effects, but you ignore the causes which produce them. In the scene before you you behold Greece in all her splendour ; as civilization goes on advancing, you will see human life more replete with power and activity ; paper and the art

of writing have been discovered, they have gradually arisen out of the hieroglyphics of the Egyptian civilization which preceded this ; steel has taken the place of iron, as iron took the place of bronze. Marble you see now employed in building instead of mud, and the primitive little cottage of your former existence has been converted into a magnificent palace, where you can enjoy all the privileges that this state of civilization can afford you. But you are far from being happy yet ; you are still ignorant and selfish. You do not abstain from crime, for you know not its consequences ; you love yourself better than your God, and you hate your fellow creatures ; it is necessary you should pass through another life before you can be brought to comprehend all this."

I again lost all consciousness ; another vision dawned before my eyes. It was Rome, the magnificent Rome of the Cæsars. I saw a great crowd of people, and in the midst of them a tall handsome man addressing the multitude. Some listened to him with pleasure, others laughed at him.

"The man you see before you," said the voice of my guide, "is Peter, the apostle of Christianity. The Pagan worship is being done away with. The world has grown too enlightened to believe still in the gods of mythology ; philosophy has altered the opinions of most men. Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras, have worked marvels ; but philosophy is not enough, men need something more tangible than mere ideas ; the learned few alone can receive those advanced doc-

trines ; the mass of the people need a new religion. Jesus came upon earth, and was the first to preach this new faith, but all men are not advanced enough to comprehend his beautiful religion. He becomes the first sacrifice to this new creed, for all pioneers must bear the brunt of the battle, and most reformers perish in behalf of their doctrines ; and his blood sanctified his teachings. With time, Rome, the mother of modern civilization, takes up this new faith ; the philosophy of Greece and Rome becomes embodied in the doctrines of the new church, the Rome of the Popes, succeeds that of the Cæsars, and under their influence sciences and art prosper. You, amongst others, adopt this new creed, and with its beautiful doctrines you become a new man. You have had now so many existences that you begin to comprehend the true meaning of an earthly life."

The scene again changed. Loch Lomond appeared before me in all its beauty ; the moon shone brightly upon two figures that were walking arm in arm by its shores. In them I recognised myself and Conchita. " You have now come to your present state of being ; the seeds you have sown in your past existences begin now to give their fruit, you and your love have become at last one ; your paths have lain for a long time side by side, but they have not merged into one till now. Compare your present condition with that which you presented the day you first appeared on this earth. Remember the uncultivated savage, and behold the modern philosopher ! Your

career has not been a very glorious one; it has been full of pains and sorrows, troubles and trials, but now you see that it has all been for your good, if it had not been for them you would never have been what you now are—suffering is a good thing; out of suffering arises all that is most pure, most holy, most perfect. Both moral and physical suffering exalt the soul—they raise the mind above surrounding objects and purify it. You are too material yet to understand the benefits derived from re-incarnation; know only that it is one of the laws of nature, that is enough for you now. I see you want to know if you will live again upon this earth.—I have shown you your past, you must now guess at your future.—You know now your destiny and the object of your life; to perfect yourself, to become as good as possible, as wise as possible, and, above all, to learn to love and to worship God in spirit and in truth. I see in your thought that you want to know which is the true religion. Oh, ignorant man! have you beheld the past history of humanity and not guessed this. All religions are true. The God of the savage is the God of the civilized European, only that the one worshipped him in the sun and the other in his mind. The Brahmin is right in sacrificing to Brahma, and you are right in worshipping God as a Catholic. As man goes on advancing his ideas change, but God does not change. Christianity is the most modern religion, and therefore the most suited to your present state of being. You also want to know why the law of a

succession of existences has not before been taught unto men? I answer you *it has*, many and many a time, but men were then not enough advanced to understand it. Buddha taught it in India, and his disciples laughed at it. Pythagoras tried to teach it in ancient Greece, but his followers misunderstood him, and some even killed themselves so as to be born again in a different state of society. Christ also preached this doctrine in Judea, but the world did not understand him. Even now you are hardly enough advanced to comprehend all its consequences, and it is for this reason that it has not been allowed to be believed in the world. Yet you know enough now to direct your course of life towards the truth. The better you are in this life, the happier you will be in the next, for God is just, and gives to all men what they deserve.

"I am also in a state of progression; but I am no longer a man. I have lived several times upon the earth, not precisely upon yours, for that was not created when I was in the human state of being, but in other worlds of a similar nature. Now I am an intelligence, I dwell in light, and know what you, in your ignorance, would call '*all things*,' but what, in reality, only shows me how little I do know. To obey and to love God I feel to be my duty. I know his laws, I admire his justice, I worship him in spirit and in truth; this is as much as any being can do, and I am happy, happier than you can have any idea of, for I know that God loves me."

The melodious voice of my invisible guide ceased.

I again heard the roar of the waterfall below me. I opened my eyes, I felt as if I had awakened from a long dream, the moon had disappeared, the scene was in perfect darkness. I got up and made my way, as best I could, to the hotel. As I walked, it seemed to me as if I heard the voice of the spirit, who still whispered in my ear, "*Progress is the law of God.*"

CHAPTER XIX.

DISCUSSIONS ON THE VISION.

THE next morning I told Conchita all about my vision near the falls of Moness, and the strange circumstances which had preceded it.

"It must have been a dream," said my young bride, when I had finished.

"It may," I answered, "but you must allow it to have been a most extraordinary one; and, after all, why should you call this vision of mine a dream, when you believe in the apparitions of saints, and in many visions infinitely more wonderful having taken place, for instance, those of St Ignatius of Loyola, of St Theresa, of St John, of Joan of Arc, and in so many other visions of saints and seers."

"I believe in the visions of the saints, because they were saints, and therefore good enough to be permitted to see them; but I cannot believe in every one who tells me he has had an extraordinary dream."

"Perhaps you are right, Conchita. It must have been only a dream, caused by the agitated state of my mind, and yet I cannot but admire its unity; and I think the doctrine it inculcated,

although perhaps rather startling at first sight, is most philosophical. I believe in the eternal progress of the spirit. I believe the eternal purification and advancement of the moral part of our being, to be the end and aim of the law which directs the course of humanity. God put in each of us, when he made us, a magnetic needle that directs our steps towards that eternal progress ; for the progress that has God for a point of attraction, is a progress without end.

“The only way to prevent the harm that would arise from material advancement, is to progress at the same time morally, for the destiny of man is not to be *happy in this world*, but to reach *perfection*, and this, of course, is not to be found on this earth.

“Material progress cannot be doubted. We have seen it in every age, and now witness it in modern discoveries, and in the ever-advancing steps of science. The conclusion that every one must come to, on comparing the civilization of the nineteenth century with that of the first, is that God’s great law is progress—ceaseless and eternal progress—surely we have ample proof of this. As far as this goes, therefore, my vision was right. I was first shown the world in its primitive, bare, uncultivated, uncivilized state, and gradually I saw it become more and more developed, more and more advanced, until it became what it now is. At the same time that I saw man progress, and improve in his material condition, I saw him gradually change from a savage into a civilized being, and I cannot deny the truth of this. Where there

is material progress, spiritual progress must accompany it. All that you can require me to prove is, that it is man individually, and not alone mankind in general, that progresses. And why should it not be both? Is it possible we can learn all the knowledge and goodness that is to be acquired, even in this little world, in the short space of one earthly life. I always maintain, in honour of the wisdom and goodness of the Almighty, that he has had some *object* in view in creating so many myriads of worlds; that it could not have been merely to please the eye, that he has expended such a vast amount of mathematics and of materials; besides, we see man was the ultimate of creation, and that, like a wise and prudent Father, he prepared a habitation and a home for his children, before he sent them on the earth as possessors of the soil; and the first command given to them was to labour and to till it, thus giving them their share of work in the labour of love and usefulness. Is it not therefore probable, that the earths in the universe were made as nurseries and school-houses for the education of the human race, their end and aim the development of spirit? Certainly the primitive and savage state is also proved to be the initial state of man, by the subsequent arrival of higher intellects on the earth; but to each has been given his task, his share in the labour, and according to his capabilities he has performed his work; the earliest and rudest labour or branch of study is still carried on, although the men who perform it are constantly

changing, new ones coming into the lower classes of the school-house, those in the lower classes passing up into the higher ones, and those in the higher ones having worked their way up from the lowest to the highest, leaving the school to pursue the course of their education in an institution of a higher order, namely, a planet of an earlier creation, consequently a more advanced planet than our own. Truth is never lost; like the sun, it only disappears to appear again with greater brilliancy the next day. You cannot deny that men are infinitely better, everything considered, both morally and physically, than they were two thousand years ago.

"Now allowing this eternal law of progress, is it possible that there can be men who say that this progress goes no further than this world, and that after our apparent death here, we cannot advance any more? They assure us that only those who are perfect in every respect can enter the kingdom of God, and at the same time they limit our means and opportunities of progression to one short and imperfect existence; can any one reach *perfection* in one short earthly life?

"The Catholics recognize an intermediary place between heaven and hell, in which we can repent of our earthly sins and prepare our souls, through suffering, before entering heaven. This seems to be very just. You, my dear Conchita, believe that there are very few wicked enough to go to hell. I am sure that there does not exist one. Even Dante thought

only the betrayers, Judas, Brutus and Cassius, wicked enough to inhabit the lowest hell. For even the worst of men has some redeeming points in his character. The greater part of the sins we commit in this world are often the effects of error and ignorance, and can be pardoned if we confess them, and fill our whole hearts with real contrition. It would therefore be very unjust on God's part if he did not give us the means and the time to repent and get them pardoned.

"I believe in purgatory, but not as the church has described it. Of what use would flames and torments, that is to say, material punishments, be to chastise a soul that is immaterial? I believe in purgatory as in a place of retribution and expiation, in which we suffer, morally of course, for the sins committed on this earth, a world like any one of those stars that shine so brilliantly over our heads. And, therefore, why should this very world not be a purgatory, in which we can not only expiate but make restitution to those we have offended, for our offences are generally against our fellow-creatures? Who, then, can say, when troubles and evils afflict us, we are not suffering the punishment due to some past existence of sin and wickedness? and that we are not brought together again with those we have injured and betrayed, until the injury is expiated, and the hate and persecution is turned into love.

"The progress of humanity, after all, is nothing else than the extension of the individual life into the life of a whole race. And our own individual life,

too, is but a succession of lives, our material body changing completely every seven years, and our soul also imperceptibly changing every day. 'The whole history of intellect,' said Sir Humphrey Davy, 'is a history of change according to a certain law; and we retain the memory only of those changes which may be useful to us. The child forgets what happened to it in the womb; the recollections of the infant, likewise, before two years are soon lost; yet many of the habits acquired in that age are retained through life. . . . Were man to be immortal with his present corporeal frame, this immortality would only belong to the machinery; and with respect to the acquisitions of the mind, he would virtually die every two or three hundred years, that is to say, only a certain quantity of ideas could be remembered, and the supposed immortal being would be, with respect to what had happened a thousand years ago, as the adult now is with respect to what happened in the first years of his life.' I see, therefore, no reason why we should not live several times upon the earth, renewing our material organs as the old ones get either worn out or too stiff for work, and so return and form for ourselves new and pliant organs which will carry us on through our next stage of progress, which naturally do not contain the recollection of *events*, in our past existences, but only the amount of knowledge and degree of purity acquired, which forms the *quality* of the new man. This is what I understand to be the meaning of *regeneration*, otherwise it is but a word without meaning.

You laugh, Conchita ! Do you think this theory new, or rather too old ? for it has been known ever since the beginning of human reason. Perchance you think it irreligious ? Oh no ! the great object of our existence must be to attain perfection, and all our steps lead us nearer and nearer to the Divine Creator ; then why should I not live as many times as would be necessary for me to acquire this divine perfection ? Do I learn so much in one existence that there is nothing left for me to acquire that would repay me the trouble of coming back ? One earthly existence is so little ! The church, with its doctrine of purgatory, admits that we can progress, and develop our faculties after death. Why should we not go on with that progress and that development in one of those innumerable worlds, that the Supreme hand of the Creator has scattered over the heavens in the same profusion with which he has covered our globe with plants and trees ? And if we admit this, why should we not verify this new existence, a mere complement of the first, in this very world of ours ! Why should I not return to this world to acquire fresh knowledge, fresh experience, and also to expiate in it the sins committed here in a former life ? After all, as Voltaire said, ‘ It is not more difficult to live twice than once.’ ”

Conchita looked at me fixedly for a long time, and I saw that my words had made an impression on her heart. “ What you say,” she replied after a while, “ seems to me to be very probable. I also believe that we shall live again. Some think that when the

spirit leaves the material body it becomes at once all-good and all-wise. But this is neither a logical supposition nor a doctrine admitted by our holy mother church. Death has not the power to convert the uncultivated spirit of a savage into the superior and intelligent spirit of a Newton or a Shakespeare, nor the wicked soul of a Lucrezia into the pure and saintlike soul of a Theresa.

"You suppose, Walter, that we live again after death. I do not doubt that, it seems to me very just, and quite in harmony with the divine laws of God. 'To enter the kingdom of God it is necessary to be pure, wise, and perfect, *perfect even as our Father who is in heaven.*'"

"Can one single life, my Conchita," I said, "be enough even to make us comprehend such perfection? And yet the standard was given!"

"The soul is immortal," she continued, "and therefore can live and progress until it reaches that perfection, if the weight of its sins do not plunge it into the abyss of hell, but it cannot return to earth until after the resurrection, which will take place on the last day, and when each soul will come back to earth in search of its own body."

"The resurrection," I said, interrupting her, "Oh, Conchita, what do you mean by that?"

"It is an article of our creed, you know very well, Walter, a dogma of our holy Church, nobody has a right to doubt it."

"I only doubt the interpretation given to it."

What St Athanasius meant by the resurrection of the flesh, was the resurrection *in* the flesh, that is to say, the new life in a new earthly body. What we are taught to believe in the creed of the apostles as a dogma of the church is this very doctrine of the re-incarnation. If some doctor or other has given a wrong interpretation to this article of the Christian creed, the fault does not lie with the doctrine, but with the interpreters, who could not comprehend its meaning. Since my vision last night, I am more and more convinced of the truth of this law, and it seems to me that the whole of the Christian religion is based upon this succession of existences. We have the very words of Christ, who said, '*Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*'* And when Nicodemus, surprised at his words, asked how could this thing be, Christ did not reprove him for giving a literal meaning to his words, but said, 'Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?'

"I have not sufficiently studied the holy Scriptures to be able to discuss with you what Jesus taught, or what He did not teach, but when the Church does not say a word about such a doctrine, I am convinced it must have been because Christ never taught it."

"But, my Conchita! if I have read it myself in the Bible!"

* St John iii, 5.

"You may be mistaken, but the church is infallible."

To this I could answer nothing, not precisely because I wanted arguments to prove to her the contrary, nor words to express my arguments, but only because I feared to wound the feelings of my young wife. I was also convinced of one thing, that no arguments are enough to change any one's preconceived opinions. Individual religion is a link that unites man with his Creator, and it should have nothing to do with the doubts and thoughts of the rest of humanity. I tried, therefore, to give a new turn to the conversation. "The whole of my vision last night," I said, "was based on the doctrine of the pre-existence. I suppose it is rather difficult to ascertain whether we have lived before or not."

"To have lived before birth! Oh no! if that were the case we should retain the memory of our past existence."

"You are right, Conchita, we forget our past when we enter this world, because we have *new material* organs, but do we not also forget our first years in this life? Moreover, if we do not retain during our earthly life a precise remembrance of what we have been, and of our past conduct, we have certain intuitions, and certain instinctive tendencies that philosophers have never been able to account for, and that perhaps might be attributed to a reminiscence of the past, and which *our conscience*, that very likely is but the consequence of the experience gained in

previous existences, tells us to abstain from and resist.

“ Besides, this vision of last night puts me now in mind of a very extraordinary feeling for which I have never been able to account. Does it not appear to you sometimes, Conchita, when you visit a place for the first time that you have seen it before? I often feel this. I cannot recollect in my whole life any sensation that could properly be called new to me. ‘When in a position of which I had certainly no former knowledge,’ said Whyte Melville, with much truth, ‘I have often felt a vague, dreamy consciousness that something of the same kind must have happened to me before. Can it be that my soul has existed previously, long ere it came to tenant this body that it is so soon about to quit? Can it be that its immortality stretches both ways, as into the future so into the past? May I not hope that in the infinity so fitly represented by a circle, the past may become the future, as the future most certainly must become the past, and the day that is dead, to which I now look back so mournfully, may rise again newer, fresher, brighter than ever, in the land of the morning, beyond that narrow, paltry gutter which we call the grave?’ That we forget our past lives cannot be a reason against this doctrine, for, what we *now* forget, for some unknown reason, need not necessarily be forgotten for ever. Oh, happy is it for me that I do forget. The recollection of my former condition would permit me to make only a bad use of the

present, would embitter my happiest moments, and would make me look back instead of forward to the divine perfection towards which we are directing our steps.”*

“You speak of your dream of last evening as if you thought it was all true; you seem quite to delight in the idea of coming back. I really do not see what there is you so much like in it; it seems to me that one life is quite enough. I would much rather die and go to heaven directly, without having to come back at all to this miserable world.”

“And do you think, Conchita, that God will ask your opinion and consult your wishes before arranging the universe? The question is, if the re-incarnation is

* Wordsworth, in his magnificent Ode to Immortality, says—

“Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting :
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar :
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy !
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy ;
The Youth, who daily farthest from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended ;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.”

really a law of nature or is it not ; if it is, never mind how you set your mind against it, you will be obliged to pass through it. God will not ask your permission. It seems to me as if I heard a sick man who says, 'I have suffered enough to-day ; to-morrow I will not suffer any more.' Notwithstanding his impatience, he will not suffer any the less the next day, nor on the following, till he be entirely recovered. Therefore, my darling Conchita, if we are to live again in the world we shall have to put up with it, like a child who does not want to go to school, or like a man condemned to prison ; we shall be obliged to content ourselves with our fate."

"You speak so lightly about it, Walter, anyone would think it did not concern you ; and yet, it is our own future you are discussing. How would you like to be separated from me, to live again in the world without your darling wife, the husband of another oh ! that would be more than hell for me. I do not deserve such a punishment !"

"And why should we be separated, my love ? In my vision, last night, I saw you always at my side, my wife since the beginning of our earthly career. 'Love can neither die nor be forgotten.'

" ' Hereafter, in that world where all are pure,
We two will meet before high God, and thou
Wilt spring to me and claim me thine, and know
I am thine husband.'

Moreover, the condition of this new existence will depend on our present one ; we shall either be happy

or unhappy, according to the life we lead this time."

I saw that this conversation did not please my young bride, so I let the subject drop, although the more I thought about it the more I believed it to be true. My vision might only have been a dream, but I must say it had given me quite a new train of ideas that now I could not easily forget.

That afternoon, we went by the railway to Perth, where we arrived in time for dinner. Strange to say, in that short railway journey, I met with one who, not only understood and sympathised with me in the new view of life that I had gained from the curious vision, but who threw a still clearer light upon it, and was the means of enabling me to study the subject that had taken such a firm hold of my thoughts, in a way I never had hoped or expected to do in my present life; and then we believe in chance! poor blind mortals that we are; if we would but look deeper than the surface—a thing we never do—we should see that chance is but a word, that in reality there is no such thing as a trifle; but that all which appears to us as such, is wisely brought about by those overruling and guiding spirits, who are fulfilling the will of him, who is guiding us on our way upwards to where he dwells in light and love.

CHAPTER XX.

THE RAILWAY JOURNEY TO PERTH.

WHEN we reached the branch station, we had to wait on the platform for the arrival of the train from Inverness going south. There were so many travellers in the same case as ourselves, that I saw it would be necessary to look sharp in order to secure a carriage as the train came up ; so telling my servants to do the same for themselves, I ran alongside of the approaching train till it stopped at last, and a friendly hand was extended to me from a saloon carriage, and a well-known voice saluted my ear with the kind words—"Come in here. Ah! you are not alone; Lady Carlton, I suppose; how lovely! come in, come in, without ceremony, I will give you seats. Indeed," she added, "I am quite alone in this big saloon carriage, for Lord C—— is on the engine of course; you know his love for all sorts of engines and machinery, and when you see him, he will be as black as the stoker; you will not know him by the time we arrive at Perth. Pray make me known to your lovely Spanish bride; does she speak English by-the-by?"

Thus ran on our kind benefactress who had so

opportunately offered us seats in her private saloon carriage to Perth.

The introduction was soon effected, and I saw Conchita was much struck by the manner and personal appearance of the Countess of C——.

"Do not tell Lord Carlton what you think of me, if it is not good for me to hear," said the lady; "not even in Spanish, for I should understand every word."

"Is it possible you speak Spanish," said Conchita, "this is more than I could have hoped for,—and, indeed, dear lady, you would have nothing to fear were I to speak to my husband even in Spanish; but have you ever been in Spain that you understand our noble language?"

"The Countess of C—— is a country-woman of your own, Concha mia," I said to her in that language, "and has only lived four or five years in England."

I saw that Conchita was quite happy and pleased to meet this lady, with whom she could converse so naturally in her own language, and they both seized the opportunity, and compared notes of all they had seen of the beauties of Scotland; our road lay through the most lovely tract of country, different from any we had seen yet, but quite as charming in its way, and perhaps as much celebrated in poetry and song as any we had seen in the Trossachs.

Lady C—— regretted we were returning to the south without having seen the famous, and as she said, wonderfully beautiful Pass of Killiecrankie,

through which she had just passed about two hours before.

"And you might have done it so easily," she said ; "if you will take my advice, you will stop now at Dunkeld, which is most worthy of a visit of at least a day, you will see how very beautiful it is even from the railroad ; then to-morrow you could go by the Pass of Killiecrankie to Blair-Athole, and back to Perth the next day."

We were turning this plan over in our minds, when the train stopped at Dunkeld, the sweetest spot imaginable it appeared to us ; but at that moment, our attention was diverted from the beauties of nature to the sorrows of humanity. A fair young widow was advancing to the train, leading her young son, a boy of about fourteen, by the hand, for he was blind,—"*born blind*," we heard her say to a lady who stood near her, and seemed interested in the pair, for she was assisting to help the poor young lad into the train ; he was not only blind, but deformed, and a cripple, and yet his face was lovely. There was a look of patient resignation in that pale young face that will haunt me for many a day ; it was a sweet intelligent countenance that might have served as a model for a painter. The large blue eyes were open, but they could not see ; the beautiful earth and sky were to him but mere names ; he could never realize them, never gaze upon their soothing loveliness, as we had done all our lives, as we had done so lately, as we could still hope to do.

This thought seemed to strike Conchita also, for she mutely pressed my hand as a tear of pity was hastily brushed from her own beautiful eyes.

"Born blind!" I exclaimed; "poor child, why should he be *born* blind? from no fault of his own then;"——but the sudden recollection of my vision rose to my mind, and I added, "Could he have sinned."

"The question was asked once before," said Lady C——; "it was asked of Jesus by his disciples, and you know how he answered them."

"With a miracle," said Conchita; "Brother, receive thy sight."

"He said other words before those, dear Lady Carlton," continued our friend, "and they ran thus:—*Neither did this man sin, nor his Fathers*, leaving them to understand that sin could be committed before birth, and punished by a life of suffering. Although, in this particular instance, his blindness had been brought about for the express purpose, "that they might behold the glory of God;" and then he added the words, "Brother, receive thy sight." An instance of how everything that happens to us is pre-ordained, and brought about by the over-rulers, who constantly guard and guide, and watch over us—and an illustration of other words of Christ,—that every hair on our head is numbered. What sort of men and women ought we not to be, when we come to think of the care that our dear heavenly Father takes of us," added Lady C——, with glowing cheek and tear-dimmed eye.

Of course, after this, we did not alight at Dunkeld : in the first place, the interest excited in our minds by the poor blind boy had caused us to lose the opportunity ; but now I saw an opportunity for something else, of far more importance, and I instantly seized it. The Countess evidently knew something of the new view of life that had been given to me in my vision. I longed to hear what she had to say about it, and therefore continued the conversation, in the course of which I related to her what I had seen. "Or rather dreamt," added Conchita ; "for of course it was only a dream."

"Perhaps not, dear lady," said our friend. "Your husband's whole mind and thoughts seem to be deeply interested in the search for *truth*—that is to say, for a higher and grander truth than any he has known hitherto ; for there is no standard for truth, meaning that truth never stands still ; it is progressive, and, like all that comes from God, must be meted out to us progressively, as we are able to receive it. Carlyle says 'that the eye only sees what the eye brings the power to see.' Some eyes are like telescopes, and can embrace a vast range of vision ; and some are very near-sighted indeed, and have a very limited range. I mean to say that they cannot see further than their noses. When Lord Carlton has been favoured with such a vision, so full of light and order, I should say his optic powers were very great, or rather, to leave the metaphor used by Carlyle, that his intellectual powers are large ; that he has, through a succession of

existences, arrived at that point of his spirit's education when he is capable of perceiving and comprehending a higher view of the providential government of the universe; and that therefore such a vista has been accorded to him."

"And do you too believe in this new doctrine of re-incarnation?" exclaimed Conchita.

"Most decidedly I do," said Lady C——; "but it is not a new doctrine; it is perhaps one of the oldest, but none the worse for that. Men were nearer to the higher state from which they have fallen, when they taught that doctrine; it has since been lost sight of with the endless variety of religions, and religious rites and ceremonies that mankind has amused itself with inventing, since the time of the grand old Druids, who lived ever in the presence of Nature, and of Nature's God."

"Did I understand you to say that you believed we had fallen from a higher state?" I asked.

"Yes," she continued, "that is my belief; but if you care to hear more about it, I will give you a short *resumé* of what that is, and how I came by it. I think myself it is worth hearing; for surely our religious views are of more importance than anything else that concerns us, because they serve to form and balance our characters and dispositions. And as man invariably makes God in his own image, such as we are, so we conceive our God to be: to the ancient Jew a hard taskmaster, a God of wrath and of swift anger, —a God of battle and of extermination; to the modern

.

Christian a God of—Love (?), a *Father*!—who yet is bent upon sending more than half of his children to the torments of hell-fire, which is to burn them for ever and ever, although no ultimate good is to result from it to them or to him, and although he is supposed to have accepted the sacrifice of his *only* son, who thus *bought* the salvation of the rest of his sons and daughters, and thus appeased his Jewish wrath.—If I did not think Lady Carlton would find me very tedious, I would explain to you what my views are.”

Conchita’s beaming face and eager eyes gave no sign of weariness, and she earnestly entreated our charming companion to continue.

“I must cut a long story very short, then,” said the countess, “or we shall be at Perth, where you intend to remain, before I am half through with all I have to say ; and to begin, I must rush back to sixteen years ago. I was residing in Madrid then, and, strange to say, was a great admirer and reader of the noble Swedish seer of the last century, *Swedenborg*. His works no doubt served to prepare my mind for what was to follow, for he certainly possessed and revealed a far higher truth than that taught by the churches, who have all been at a dead stand still, while the rest of the world has been moving on, and now finds itself in the latter half of the nineteenth century, which has been more fertile in scientific discoveries than all the former centuries put together. . . . Science aided by mechanical invention, instruments for gauging the heights and the depths ;

the skies above us, and the earth beneath !” said the lady thoughtfully ; and, after a pause, as if musing on the sublimity of the vision that she had pictured to herself as she proceeded.

“ Surely,” she said, “ we must have arrived at the times predicted, when men were to run to and fro, and knowledge was to be increased ; we travel now by steam and rail, and send our thoughts by electricity through the air ! But to return to Swedenborg ; if you have not read any of his works, and have time to spare, do so now, for they will give you many ennobling views of the *love, wisdom, and justice* of divine providence ; and many just ideas of *time and space* in the other world to which we are journeying ; and many a wonderful and curious glimpse into the world of spirits that surrounds and influences us far more than you would imagine. Swedenborg was my study, until I found a still higher truth (*truth to me* you will understand, for again I say there is no standpoint of truth, but the mind perceives what the mind brings the power of perceiving and appreciating, all outside the focus of our mental vision is still dark to us). Strange to say, my friend Swedenborg was the means of helping me to stumble upon that higher truth, for which my soul yearned. I had gone to the foreign bookseller to order another of his voluminous works from England, and while I waited my turn to be attended, I took hold of an octavo volume in a green cover, that proclaimed its French origin, it was *Le Livre des Esprits* of Allan Kardec ; I soon became

so deeply interested in my author, or rather in the information given by the spirits with whom he is conversing, that I purchased the book, and sat up half the night reading it.

"It interested me most deeply, but it was not until I had read several chapters, that I came to one that I must say alarmed and shocked me a great deal; and, upon examination, I found it to contain perhaps the fundamental doctrine of the whole book, for all our trials and our blessings, all the rewards and the punishments of *this* life appeared to depend upon the quality of our *last* existence.

"What! I thought, does he mean to say we have lived on this earth before, and that we return here again and again, each time with the whole amount of the knowledge, and of the qualities and defects we have acquired in our previous existences! That our ascent from the lowest and most savage state, to the highest on earth, to the most angelic and divine in heaven, is by the slow steps of an ascending ladder, up which we climb by our own effort, our own exertions; assisted only by the voice of our *conscience*, which is our inner self, the voice of the accumulated experiences of past existences; and the guiding, ever-watchful care of our guardian spirits?

"Does he mean to say that we are not the children of yesterday, born into this world for a few short years, knowing not whence we came, nor whither we go? Does he mean to say that *one* earth life is not sufficient for us to acquire all the knowledge and

goodness that is to be acquired on this planet, that he would send us here again and again for education, for expiation, for discipline? But if he would have us go up the steps of this ladder, and scale the skies by our own efforts, of what use was the death of Christ? Did he not do all that for us, and are we not *sure* of *grace* through him, though our sins be as scarlet shall they not be white as wool through his blood?

"It is true that even so, we must also be *elected*, and if we are not, even that horrible sacrifice will not save us from damnation; but, of course, I hope and suppose that I *am* one of the elected—and so—here goes with the book, which is a specious, wicked, deceiving devil, and I tossed him behind the other books on my shelves, not caring even to return it, lest the shopmen might smile at my having indulged in a peep into a naughty volume.—So much for first impressions!

"It was not so the second time I chanced upon the book. I say *chanced*, but it is a mere *façon de parler*, for I do not believe in chance. It was about six months afterwards, I had quite forgotten the existence of the book, when one day, in searching for something else, its bright green cover flashed again across my sight. I do not know what induced me to sit down with it again in my hand. I believe I was tired with my search, and sat down to rest, but the result was, that I read on for hours, that I took no account of time, that I forgot to dress for dinner,

and ended by carrying the book to my room to study more carefully day after day, and—by adopting every sentence of it.

“Yes, dear friends, the doctrines it advanced, and which at first sight had so startled me, that I had pronounced them to be impious doctrines, finished by grafting themselves on my mind, till they have formed a part of it. I then procured the sequel works by the same author, ‘*L’Evangile*’ and ‘*La Genèse*,’ which is sublime. Of course you will read them, and they cannot fail to make a deep impression on you; they are not yet to be had in English, though a friend of mine, Miss Anna Blackwell, is now engaged upon their translation.

“You can obtain them in Spanish,” she said, turning to Conchita, “and they have been translated also into German, Italian, Russian, Portuguese, and even into Chinese, but not into English! And yet there must be so many English minds that would comprehend and thoroughly enjoy them, particularly amongst the more cultivated and scientific classes.

“I know, dear Lord Carlton, that you will read them, and I can promise you a treat; for your mind is fully prepared to receive these views, which will become the religion of the future; and which, for this reason, are floating about in the atmosphere, ready to take root and germinate in minds prepared to receive them. You will find all the Continental literature of the day teeming with them, because, as I said, they are in the very air we breathe.”

"Yes," I answered, "you say truly, and I have come across many of the authors myself who believe and advocate them : Charles Bonnet, Dupont de Nemours, Jean Reynaud, Bouchet de Perthes, Pezzani, Pelletan, Lessing, Lavater, and I believe also Cavour and Massimo d'Azeglio, and a host more ; also the poet Thery, and the celebrated astronomer Camille Flammarion, who writes so beautifully."

"And Gautier and Louis Figuier, who wrote *Le Lendemain de la Mort*, which has been translated into English under the title of the *Day after Death* ; in fact, as I said before, the movement is in the air that surrounds us, and we naturally become inoculated with it. Then to the reasoning mind it offers so much satisfaction, explaining, as it does, much that until now has been a mystery to the deepest thinkers ; as, for instance, the difference in intellect, so apparent between even members of the same family ; the difference of taste, the extraordinary ability manifested by some quite young children in music, or painting, or acting, what does it imply ? That though so young they are *not novices* in the art in which they already excel, but have brought what is *called* intuition, and which *is* reminiscence, of former study and acquirements. Let any of us try to learn a language, or an instrument, no matter which, what up-hill work it is ; what constant attention does it require, what heart-aches and finger-aches, and headaches do we not suffer before we can master the very rudiments ; if we have perseverance we may get on in the course of

years; but is it almost disheartening to see a little chap of eight or ten sit down to the instrument and rattle away like a second Thalberg? Then we are told, 'Yes, but then he has genius!' And have I not genius, am I so very stupid at twenty, at thirty, that I am to be eclipsed by a baby, after all my hard work, my patience and perseverance, up early and to bed late? and I am but a beginner, I have scarcely mastered the scales and first exercises; he began at the same time as I did, with the same master, and he has played variations by Thalberg in the key of six flats, played it brilliantly and without a fault, happy boy!"

"There was 'another happy boy,' I suggested, who invented geometry at ten years old."

"Yes, Pascal; but what do these things prove? How account for them except with the help of this doctrine?"

"There is one other way," said Conchita, "and that is, that God has given diversity of gifts to His children."

"It is true, and amongst others the interpreting of dreams, and the discerning of spirits; but if I tell you that I have seen and spoken with more than one, you would laugh me to scorn; and then you must allow that some of the children have been treated very much like step-children, and had no gifts at all, but many hard slaps, and often feel the pains of cold and hunger; how wistfully they are looking in at the nice crisp bread at the baker's; how they devour the pastry-cook's tarts with their eyes. Poor little morsels

of humanity; surely their trials in life will be harder to bear than those of the little lady in rose-coloured silk, surrounded by clouds of white lace, who is sitting in the barouche at the door, also with eager eyes, because James the footman has gone in to bring her an ice cream. But this can be accounted for also with our new views of life. Probably the hungry little brothers will some day be as well fed and cared for as their little sister in the white lace, they will then have other kinds of temptation and discipline to go through, and be better prepared to meet it than they would be at present. If some one or other of them is already deserving, or, rather I should say, *capable* of a better position, depend upon it they will attain it, even in *this* earth life, by working their way up to it, as many have done, and are doing every day."

"Have you any Scripture proof of the views you are advancing?" I inquired, thoughtfully.

"Indeed, I have, if the time would but allow, I could give you so many. I never take up the New Testament without finding some proof or other of it in almost every chapter. To cite one of the most prominent that occurs to me; Christ says no less than *eighteen* times that John the Baptist was Elias: 'Verily, I say unto thee, this is he,' and he adds, 'if ye can understand this,' which, I suppose, at that early date they scarcely could; however, I have heard it said that it was a doctrine believed in by the sect called the Essenians, and that it was well-known to most of the Pharisees; hence the implied reproach of

Christ's words to Nicodemus, when he hesitated at Christ's assertion that we must be born again, '*Art thou a master in Israel and knowest not these things?*' and his suggestive query, 'If I have told you of earthly things, and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things?' Indeed, Christ often said to those that were with him, 'I have many other things to tell you, but you cannot bear them now.' And yet the churches seem to consider, and to teach, that God has said the *last word*, and that he is never to communicate with earth again," she said thoughtfully. "That he began to speak in Genesis, and that he stopped at Revelations. This cannot be possible, he could not have opened the door *once* and then closed it again! No, he left it open, of that I am sure, but men have closed it; they have choked it up with theology and rubbish, till they can no longer see or hear anything through it,—closed it against their God!

"But to return to our subject, I will tell you that the proofs given by the scriptures of the truth of my doctrines know no end. There is no denying that the disciples of Jesus knew them and even believed in them; if not, why did they answer when Christ asked them, 'Whom do men say that I am? Some say John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremiah, or one of the Prophets?'

"This you will find in Luke and in Mark. Then you have a further proof in the anxiety of King Herod with regard to Christ, which is also described

in the three first Evangelists in a manner quite in conformity to this point of view, for example thus,— ‘And King Herod heard these things, because his name had become known, and he said: John the Baptist is risen from the dead. . . . And the others said, it is Elias; others, again, said, it is a prophet, or one of the prophets.’ You see here, not only a general belief in all the people of Israel, but that Jesus also, when he heard it spoken of before him by his disciples, did not contradict it; on the contrary, he makes no remark whatever upon it, and speaks of something else.

“But not only did he treat it in that way, but when they asked him, who is John? he answered,— ‘Verily, verily, I say unto you, no man *born of a woman is greater* than John the Baptist, and, if you must know, this is Elias, who was to come. And after the transfiguration he taught again to his disciples the same thing. But I tell you Elias has already come, and they did not know him, and have done with him as they listed, and the Son of Man will suffer in like manner. Then the disciples understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptist.

“We have already spoken of the beggar who was *born blind*, although in that particular case not as a punishment for previous sin, but for a special reason, ‘that the glory of God should be manifested.’ Then you have Jacob and Esau, of whom Saint Paul tells us, while they were yet in the womb, or before they were

born,—‘It was written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.’ Terrible words for humanity, unless they can be explained by reason of their conduct in some previous existence; besides, God is supposed to say in some other passages that ‘he hated nothing that he had made,’ which would, of course, be a contradiction. To Jeremiah God says, ‘I knew thee before thou wert formed in the womb.’ And I could give you a hundred thousand proofs, but not, of course, from memory; and, besides, we are just at Perth. I hope, however, I have said enough to make you think it over, and read the scriptures *with this light* to guide you, and I am sure you will find them out for yourselves.”

The train was now visibly slackening speed; indeed, the houses of the town were in sight. Conchita looked annoyed and anxious, and said,—

“I want to know much more. I want to know whether you believe in Christ as I do, as the only Son of God?”

“That question involves a great deal more,” answered Lady C——. “It involves the whole history of the fall of man. It would take me an hour to tell you all I believe on that subject; and here we are at Perth.”

“Perth—Perth—Perth,” was shouted by the guard, as the long train drew up at the station of the “Fair City.”

“One single question more, dear Lady C——,” I begged, and that is, “Do you really believe in the *fall*

of man? Do you not rather think he was created *simple*, and *ignorant* of good and evil, and that in these preparatory school-houses of the planetary universe he receives the education that is to make of him a wise and good being, so that he can afterwards ascend to a higher state?"

"I believe in both parts of your question," she answered. "The fall, and the education, which is to enable him to rise again, but not in the way the churches believe in the fall. However, it is a long and most important subject."

"Would it be too much to ask you to send us a letter, and give us a general outline of your views?" I beseeched in a pleading tone.

"Yes, I will write, I promise to write; but here comes Lord C——; and, as I told you, looking as black as a stoker; but how he must have enjoyed our lovely drive."

"Not more than we have, dear Lady," said Conchita, with a sweet smile.

I was pleased to hear her say this, as it proved that her mind had become more open to receive new truths than it had been when we began our bridal tour, and I first spoke to her on these subjects.

"How d'ye do? how are you?" asked Lord C—— in a hearty tone. "By George, what a splendid run we have had; the day is lovely; and we have come along at a rattling pace. Introduce me to your wife, Carlton."

The introduction was soon accomplished; and then he continued,

"Why, you don't mean to say you are going to stop at Perth; better come on with us to Edinburgh. There's more to see there. When shall we see you in town, by-the-by?"

"Not yet, for some time," I answered. "We have still a great deal to see in the North before we go to London, which will probably not be before the season, but then I hope we shall meet often."

"And so do I," said Lady C——.

"And so do I," echoed Conchita.

"And so do I," I exclaimed heartily, and my last words, as I shook hands with our kind friends, were to beg Lady C—— not to forget her promise of writing to us. "We shall be so very anxious for your letter, you know."

CHAPTER XXI.

PERTH.

PERTH was in ancient times one of the most important of the cities of Scotland. The Romans called it the new Rome, and they compared its river, the Tay, to the Tiber, finding a great likeness between the two. For a long time it was the capital of Scotland, and the monarchs resided in the palace of Scone, where all the Scottish kings were crowned.

To-day Perth is quite an old-fashioned country town, with narrow and crooked streets, and a very fine but bare looking church, known as St John's Church. It is said that this was the first church that underwent the demolition of ecclesiastical architecture which accompanied the Reformation. But, strange to say, the violence of John Knox against the Roman Church is now being compensated for by the erection of even more beautiful temples for that worship; a splendid Catholic Church has just been built on Kin-noull Hill, that cost upwards of £30,000 a few years ago.

The Tay crosses the town, it is here a beautiful river full of boats, and a splendid old bridge of ten arches leads from one side to the other. From this

bridge there is a splendid view of the town and its surroundings, with the two Inches (extensive meadows or parks) at each end.

In this town, strange to say, I found my old college friend, Francis Harrington, who is now a Protestant clergyman in one of its churches. I brought him to our hotel and introduced him to my wife. When Conchita heard what he now was, she called him, of course, an apostate, and a heretic, but did not receive him less warmly for that. He was the third friend we had seen since our marriage.

On the Sunday following, he asked me to go and hear him preach, but Conchita would not let me do such a thing, and so we went together to the Catholic Church. It was the first time that I had heard mass with my young bride by my side. The house of God had never seemed to me so sacred and so mystic, the whole service impressed me as fervent and holy. I suppose it was all owing to the faith of my young companion, but I had never before been so struck with the holy sacrifice of the mass. However, the spell was broken when I heard the sermon. It was all about the fire of hell and the wrath of God, and the money one should give to the church in order to be saved; the whole thing seemed to me mean and mercenary, and when it was over, a man came round asking for money. The sermon had not been very convincing, in spite of the graphic description we heard of the torments of hell, and after all, he did not get much. As Conchita

did not understand a word, and had been busily praying during all the time the sermon lasted, I could not discuss it with her. She took for granted that it had been very good, and when she came out of the church, leaning on my arm, she looked the very picture of happiness. So I said nothing to her about it.

In the afternoon we went out for a drive in an open carriage, the weather was splendid.

We passed the old hunting tower anciently called the Castle of Ruthven, where the celebrated event known in Scottish history as the Raid of Ruthven took place.

Tradition states that the young King, James VI., while hunting with Lord Gowrie, Lord Mar, and Lord Lindsay, was surrounded by more than a thousand fighting men who were opposed to his present measures, headed by Gowrie himself. The king, affronted by this violent breach of hospitality, burst into tears, upon which Lord Glamis, who had suddenly entered the apartment, exclaimed, "Better bairns greet, than bearded men."

We afterwards passed through a very fine and picturesque country, and at last, when it was nearly nightfall, we reached Lynedoch Cottage.

We got out of the carriage while the men watered the horses, and we wandered among the woods on the banks of the Branchieburn, a lovely little stream that runs through a meadow thickly covered with yew trees. Here we discovered an iron railing, and

in the centre a grave, with the following words engraved upon it—

“ They lived—they loved—they died ! ”

“ How romantic ! ” exclaimed Conchita, seating herself on the green grass, “ I suppose that is the grave of two fond lovers, whom not even death could divide.”

“ No,” I said, “ if I remember rightly, this must be the grave of Lily Bell and Mary Gray, two young ladies of Perth.”

“ Two women ! ” said Conchita. “ How I should like to know their history ! ”

“ I remember a pathetic little ballad about them that begins :

“ O Lily Bell and Mary Gray,
They war twa bonnie lassies ;
They biggit a bower on yon burn side,
And theckit it ower wi’ rashes.
They theckit it ower wi’ rashes green,
They theckit it ower wi’ heather ;
But the pest cam frae the burrows town,
And slew them baith together.

They thocht to lie in Methven kirkyard,
Among their noble kin ;
But they mand lie on Lynedoch brae,
To beck forener the sun.
And Lily Bell and Mary Gray,
They war twa bonnie lassies ;
They biggit a bower on yon burn side,
And theckit it ower wi’ rashes.”

“ Oh how I should like to know their history ! ” exclaimed Conchita, leaning her fair head against me.

“Don’t you remember it, Walter? It is quite an age since you have told me a story, and you know how fond I am of them. Now, begin, I will have no excuse; your mind is too much pre-occupied with your vision of the other night, our conversation in the train, and your religious scruples. Let us think of something else now. Let us have a tale suited to this hour of repose and happiness. Let us speak of love, of the love of others, marred by suffering and strong even in death; speak to me of those two women, for woman’s love is the strongest after all.”

I collected my thoughts for a moment, and then I began the following tale :

CHAPTER XXII.

LILY BELL AND MARY GRAY.*

A LONG, long time ago, there lived in the town of Perth, a gentleman called the Laird of Kinnaird, who had a most beautiful daughter, whose name was Lily Bell.

She was scarcely nineteen when my tale begins, but she was fairer than all the other young girls of the clan, and therefore much admired.

Her father, who was very expert and fond of all feats of arms and warlike exercises, conceived the idea of making her the prize of the bravest and most gallant knight of Perth.

He therefore made a proclamation throughout the land, that all lords and gentlemen who might desire to win his beautiful daughter's hand, should come to Perth to a great tournament he had arranged.

Many were the young and brave knights who came to Perth. The lists arranged just before the house of the warlike father, were full of people. The engagements were many, and well contested ; but at last, the honour of the day remained with one Sir Ronald Lee, a gentleman of Perth, son of one of its noblest houses.

* See Appendix, Note V.

The beautiful Lily Bell was much pleased with the happy victor, and she began to love him from the moment that, for her sake, he had conquered his numerous adversaries and rivals. But the marriage that seemed so near, was destined never to take place.

Sir Ronald had been, for a long time, previously in love with his cousin, the lovely Mary, daughter of Sir Alexander Gray of Lynedoch. For many years, people had thought they were engaged, and their surprise knew no bounds when they saw him fight with such ardour for the hand of Lily Bell.

He found himself in a very extraordinary position ; he loved Mary with all his heart, and at the same time, he felt himself attracted, against his will, by the beautiful and much-admired Lily Bell.

You might say, Conchita, that it is impossible for a man to love two women at once ; that he may deceive a hundred, but love only one. This may be very true, but the fact is, that my hero, Ronald, actually loved them both.

He had been engaged to his cousin Mary since his earliest youth ; he had learnt to love her through constantly being with her ; he thought that this love was part of his being, because it had grown with his growth, and he called it a passion.

But one day he had seen Lily—the beautiful bewitching Lily—and his heart had betrayed him ; he thought he had given it to one, and instead of that, it eluded his grasp to throw itself at the feet of another. He conceived a wild, all-consuming passion

for Lily, and this passion found an echo in the young girl's heart; he knew that she loved him, and he could not help loving her, and yet he would have given half of his life not to love her.

The truth of all this was, that he loved Lily passionately, and that he sacrificed Mary for her.

But in whom did he take the most interest? . . . in the one he thought of most in spite of himself; in Lily? No, for he said to himself, "I need not occupy myself with her, I love her, and she is happy; but the other, my poor Mary! she thinks I love her, and how unhappy she will be when she finds out the truth!" Therefore, all his attentions were for his cousin; "what can I do for her?" . . . "How can I make her think that I still love her?" Thus he loved Lily, because he could not help himself, and Mary, because he could not bring his heart to pain her.

When he heard of the tournament held at Perth in honour of Lily Bell, he could not resist the impulses of his heart; he had gone, he had fought for her sake, and he had conquered. Now, he could have her if he liked; he knew that her father was obliged to give her to him, as the prize due to his victory; and he also knew, but too well, that she loved him above all others. The interest she had taken in him, the attention with which she watched him in the lists, her joy when he had won, and above all, the loving look she cast upon him, told but too plainly that she was in love with him.

Poor Mary now saw clearly what was passing; she

noticed the great change that had taken place in her lover's heart ; she knew now, that it no longer belonged to her, but she loved him too well to pain him with her wounded jealous feelings, and for fear of making him unhappy, she tried to hide her grief in her heart.

Sir Ronald found himself in the most awkward and miserable position ; he, who had never been afraid of any foe, now felt himself shrink in the presence of his two lady loves ; he felt he was too weak for such a fight ! his conscience was opposed to his heart, and he did not know which might win. What torments did he not feel ! Not to be able to command one's heart ! To feel it go away from one's grasp against one's better sense ! To have given it away, loyally, and with all truth and honour, to one who was most worthy of it, and now to find it disposing otherwise of itself, and throwing itself at the feet of one who had done nothing to deserve it ! Not to be able to govern his inclination ; to feel a flame burning in his heart, and not to be able to extinguish it ! Such was the passion that poor Sir Ronald felt was consuming his life, and embittering his existence.

To make matters worse, Lily and Mary were the greatest friends ; he always saw them together, always arm in arm. This was unfortunate. He sat by his cousin's side for hours without saying a word, but with his eyes fixed upon the heavenly form of Lily Bell.

At last he decided on taking a most heroic step ;

he resolved never to see Lily again, and to devote himself wholly to Mary.

For the space of three weeks he abstained from seeing his love; but absence only served to increase his mad passion, and he felt himself every day more and more in love with the beautiful Lily.

Matters had reached this point, when the plague of 1666 broke out. Everybody flew away from Perth; and, to avoid infection, the two young ladies also left the town.

Lily and Mary were the greatest friends, and so they resolved to live together apart from the rest of the world. They settled themselves near Lynedoch, in a romantic and retired place called Burnbraes, where they built for themselves a bower covered with rushes and heather, as the ballad tells us.

Sir Ronald remained in the town, but every day went to their bower to carry them provisions. On these occasions he always saw his cousin Mary; for he had requested her never to tell Lily that it was *he* who brought over their provisions.

But, unfortunately, with the provisions, Sir Ronald brought also the fatal disease to the solitary dell, and Mary was taken ill. That day it was Lily who met him at the door of the cottage. Her astonishment knew no bounds when she saw that it was her lover who was taking care of them.

"You here, Ronald!" she exclaimed; "why, I thought that it was Mary's sweetheart who brought us our provisions?"

"Oh! Lily, can you ever forgive me?" said the young man, throwing himself at her feet; "can you ever forgive me? I am the sweetheart of Mary Gray—I—I—who, in spite of all, love *you*, love you above all things! But I was engaged to her. I tried to forget you, but it was all useless. I fought for you, I won you, and you are mine; but I do not belong to myself—I am Mary's!"

Lily grew suddenly faint, all the colour forsook her cheeks, and she was obliged to lean against the door of the bower to prevent herself from falling, so much shocked was she at this discovery.

"Yes, my adored Lily," he continued, "I love you to distraction; I can hide it no longer; but two passions rend my heart. If Mary knew this, she would die!"

"And yet you dare to tell it to me!"

"Yes, because I love you, Lily, and you know it. I need say nothing to you to prove this love; one look is sufficient for you to comprehend all that is passing in my heart; but to her——! to her who imagines I love her above all things——! to her I must lie—lie, yes—and tell her that I love her still!"

"Oh! do not speak thus, Ronald, when she is dying in yonder room; for the love you bear me, do not show yourself to her; one look, as you say, would tell her that you no longer love her, and that knowledge would certainly kill her; for your abnegation, your compassion, is not love. No! you love me, and

me alone. This I have known for a long time ; but she must never know it."

"Lily, Lily, how good you are ; you sacrifice yourself for your friend."

"Yes ; but it is because I know you love me ; and as I also know how a woman can love you, I am sorry for her."

A cry from the inner room of the hut put an end to this sad conversation, in which two noble souls were arranging to sacrifice themselves for a third.

Mary Gray lay in a dark and dismal apartment in the last stages of that horrible and fatal illness, the plague. She was dying, but she had heard Lily's last words, and now she understood it all. She called them to her side.

"I love you, Ronald, more than ever," she said ; "but I know too well you cannot love me. You have done your best, and I forgive you. But I love you still, and I want to see you happy. Soon, very soon, I shall be out of your way. To-morrow I shall no longer be an obstacle to your love for Lily ; I bless the plague, that will be the first step to your happiness !"

"Happiness without you !" exclaimed the poor Lily through her tears. "Happy, when you are dead, my dear friend ; oh, no, that could not be !"

"You will soon forget me in your love. When I am dead you will marry Ronald. He loves you as he once loved me, and that is enough to make any one happy for ever. Lily, darling, try to love him

as I loved him. Try to—be as good a wife to him as—I would have been—.”

Those were her last words. A heavenly smile of happiness shone upon her face, but it did not belong to this world.

“Mary, Mary!” said the young man, covering his face with both his hands. “What have I lost with thee! How cruel and unjust I have been!” Then turning to Lily, who lay upon the deathbed of her friend, her face almost as livid as Mary’s, he said, “The last words of our friend were that we should be married directly, will you not fulfil her commands?”

Lily Bell gave a start as if just awakened from a dream.

“I am yours, Ronald,” she said, “but, alas, I fear not for long. I, too, have the fever and I feel that I shall die!”

“To die when I love you so! To die now that we might be so happy! No; come, come, let us fly from this death scene, or you will get this dreadful disease!”

“And leave our friend! Oh Ronald, is it possible that you have so soon forgotten her who loved you so devotedly! I will not go. My place is here by her side.”

“Then I will go and call a priest, who will unite us here in this very bower built by your hands. I will wait no longer.”

Saying this he ran out of the hut, went to

Lynedoch, where he found a priest. He also saw Mary's father, Sir Alexander Gray, to whom he told the sorrowful tidings. When they returned to the bower they thought it was quite empty, till they discovered upon a bed the bodies of the two friends.

Sir Ronald took Lily in his arms thinking she had fainted, but, alas, she also was dead ! She, too, had fallen a victim of the plague brought into the bower by himself !

They were buried in this sequestered spot, and upon their grave Ronald engraved those words which still remain, and that first called your attention,

" They Lived—they Loved—they Died."

This is the history of this tombstone. As for the fate of the unhappy Ronald, history is silent, but it is to be supposed that he too must have died of the plague, or of a broken heart, for he could not have survived the two women he had so much loved.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

"THAT is indeed a sad story," murmured Conchita, as she rose up. "There is something in this grave that affects my spirits. The sorrowful end of those two poor girls reminds me of the inconstancy of man. Can it be possible that I, too, am in love with one?"

"You call Ronald's love inconstant, Conchita? It seems to me that, on the contrary, he was a true and faithful lover. It was not his fault if he could not love them both at the same time, yet he was so faithful to his first love that he tried to sacrifice to it even the love that he bore to Lily. This story proves to us, perhaps, more than anything else, the celebrated maxim of La Rochefoucauld,—*'The pleasure of love is in loving. We are happier in the passion we feel than in that we inspire.'*

"If *to be loved* were true happiness, surely Ronald would have been the happiest of mortals; but no, the happiness of love depends upon ourselves, as all other happiness does. We are happier in the passion we feel, than in that with which we inspire another."

"You know, Walter," said the lovely girl leaning on my arm, as we walked towards the carriage, "that

all those stories of yours only make me doubt of our love. Your heroes and heroines only attain the fulfilment of their hopes at the end of a long and painful ordeal; and some, as, for instance, King James, Childelberte, Ronald, and Lily, never attain it at all. Can it be possible that we should love one another, even as they did, and yet know no obstacles, no contre-temps to our love?"

I laughed at this innocent doubt. I was so sure of our love, that I did not even take the pains to dissipate her misgivings.

It was quite dark when we entered our carriage, and we did not arrive at Perth till long past nightfall.

The next morning Harrington came to know why I had not gone to hear him preach on Sunday morning. I told him that Conchita prevented me, and that she did not like me to attend the Protestant service.

"And you submit to her tyranny?" said he, much surprised. "You, who used to be so liberal? But I suppose this is only because you are just married. One could not expect anything else when the honeymoon is still on the horizon."

"You are mistaken, Harrington, it will always be the same. I am a Catholic. You know that very well; if I go to mass in preference to the Anglican service, it is because I like it better, not because Conchita wishes it."

"I thought you had long ago found out the faults and the weak points of Rome!"

"Of Rome, perhaps, but not of Catholicism. When I knew you at Oxford, I was seeking after truth. Seeking for truth, wherever found, on Christian or on Heathen ground. Now I have found it."

"In the Roman Catholic church?" asked my friend, much surprised.

"No, in my heart." Those words quite bewildered him. After a silence he began again.

"I also was a Catholic, as you know. I also was seeking for truth, and I also have found it, but in a very different place. I went to the fountain head. I went to the Bible, and God's word has at last taught me the truth. I could not abide the errors of Rome. I could neither put up with its indulgences nor its maledictions. The faith of the reformers fills my heart, and I, like them, protest against Popery!"

"To sink," I said, interrupting him, "into far worse errors, as you call them! I cannot deny the faults of some of the fathers of our church; *of some* only, mind; but you yourself must allow that the zeal of the reformers was a mistaken zeal. Calvin would have committed far more cruelties than Rome has ever done; and if Mary burnt the Protestants, how numerous were the executions in the reigns of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth? I am convinced, my dear fellow, that the fault was in the times, not in the religion."

"You have quite changed your opinions, I see, since your marriage. Your wife, I suppose, has taught you the lessons she received in her convent,

and you, Carlton, have sacrificed your common sense and your conscience to her love. If you would only come and hear me one Sunday, perhaps you would not be so firm in your present belief. You who are such a philosopher, how can you have faith in the doctrines of Rome?"

"For the same reason that I am a philosopher," I answered, "and cannot believe the doctrines of Luther and Calvin."

"But the Church of England is the church of our mother country!"

"And the Church of Rome is the church of my family; but that is neither a reason for nor against it. Because the generality of Englishmen are wrong should I also be justified in being wrong?"

"The Church of England is the church of the mind, the church of reason."

"And the Catholic Church is the church of the feelings, the church of the heart."

"But the Protestant Church was founded upon the Bible itself, upon the Word of God."

"My dear fellow, let me tell you that you are quite mistaken. The Church of England, if you remember, proceeded not from the zeal of the reformers, nor from the direct teachings of the Bible, but from the support that the Protestants needed from the State, and the State from the Protestants. Much was, therefore, given up on both sides, union was effected, and the fruit of this union was the Anglican Church.

"Archbishop Cranmer was the real founder of this

church, and he was, as we all know, much more of a courtier than of a divine. He was ready to sacrifice everything,—the Church, the Bible, the English nation, even his conscience, in order to flatter the vanity of his royal master. He, therefore, transferred the power, till then only exercised by Rome, into the hands of Henry, who, from his youth, had aspired to be the head of the Church.

“The English tyrant, in protesting against the Catholic Church, was anxious to preserve that organization which had during so many years so admirably served the purposes of the Bishops of Rome; and which now might be expected to serve equally well the purposes of his selfish and ambitious nature.

“Henry’s only thought when he established the new church in his realm, was to secure for himself that power which religious superstition and faith have over the minds of the people; he wished to reign over their consciences as well as over their actions. His own feelings were always, as his book proves to us, with the doctrines of Rome; but he helped the Protestants because it suited his policy better, and to this policy he sacrificed his conscience, and that of all his subjects.

“This conduct, it is true, created him eternal enemies, both amongst the Catholics and the Reformers. Knox and Fisher would have equally condemned his new religion; and yet this reform, mean and irreligious as it was, saved the English monarch.

"It made the king omnipotent, it made him the pope of his kingdom, the vicar of God, the expositor of Catholic verity, the only channel of sacramental graces. For he arrogated to himself the right of deciding, dogmatically, what was orthodox doctrine, and what was heresy; of imposing confessions of faith, and of giving religious instruction as well as laws to the nation.

"He made the clergy acknowledge him as the protector and supreme head of the church and clergy. He proclaimed that all jurisdiction, spiritual as well as temporal, was derived from him alone; and that it was in his power to confer episcopal authority, and to take it away. He ordered his seal to be put to the commission by which the bishops were appointed, who were to exercise their sacred functions only as his deputies, and during his pleasure.

"Another of the *holy* reasons that brought about the reformation, was the love Henry had for Anne Boleyn. The Pope refused to divorce him from his legitimate wife, Doña Catalina de Aragon; therefore, he threw over the Pope and his religion, and got the Protestants to marry him to his new passion.

"Those were the *holy* and *sacred* reasons upon which your church was founded. How can I, therefore, believe in its truth? By means of this system, Henry got rid of his enemies as easily and as quickly as possible, burning both Papist and Protestant without the least scruple. By those means only did he satisfy his two great passions—ambition and love;

and by those means only, the Royal Henry was able to rival in power the imperial Charles, and govern his realm and his household according to his pleasure."

When I had finished my rather lengthy speech, silence prevailed for a short time ; at last, Harrington said :

"I see, Carlton, that it is impossible just now to convince you of your error. Some day, perhaps, you will be more open to the truth."

"Let us talk of something else," I said ; "I am going to amuse you a little with a very extraordinary dream I had the other night." And I told him my vision of Aberfeldy, to which he listened with great attention ; when I had finished, he said :

"I suppose you believe that wonderful dream to have been a divine vision like those of your *saints*—St Theresa and Sister Patrocinio ?"

"Do not mix up the greatest imposition of the century, with the visions of the holy Santa Theresa. I do not pretend, like "*the bleeding nun*," to have had an interview with the Virgin or any of the angels ; I take my dream to be only what it appeared to be ; but you must allow, Harrington, that the doctrines disclosed in it are most philosophical and probable."

"Which do you mean ? The doctrine of the pre-existence and that of the re-incarnation, those two old theories long ago forgotten ?"

"And why should we laugh at this hypothesis ; merely because it is the oldest, merely because the human understanding, before the sophistries of the

schools had dissipated and debilitated it, settled upon it at once? This is not reasonable. Moreover, if re-incarnation is a law of nature, it is only natural that it should have been known from the very beginning of time.

“Pythagoras, as we all know, was not the author of the system of the metempsychosis ; he took it from the Egyptian and Indian philosophers, amongst whom it existed from the most remote times. The Vedas, the Baghavat Gita, the Laws of Menu, the Dhammapada, and thousands of other Brahmins and Buddhist Bibles, give us ample proof of this. The idea of the transmigration of souls was therefore a common belief, admitted by the most eminent men of antiquity. How did it ever come to them? was it by revelation or by intuition? We do not know; but, be it as it may, an idea could not thus have come down to us through so many ages, and would not have been accepted by so many intelligent men, had it not some foundation. The antiquity of this doctrine would be, therefore, rather a proof of its truth than otherwise.

“I should have thought, Carlton, you had been a great deal too much of a philosopher to have believed in the truth of the metempsychosis, a doctrine only in favour with the ancients.”

“You do not understand me. There is a great difference between the metempsychosis of Pythagoras, and the doctrine of the plurality of lives : the one was the dream of an age of ignorance and darkness, the other is a theory of the nineteenth century, and yet

both spring from the same natural source, in the way that the solar system of the Egyptians resembles the one discovered by Copernicus. The former taught that the sun went round the earth, but that the planets went round the sun, the latter shows that the earth and all the planets go round the sun. Both systems were based upon the same truth, and yet this truth could not be wholly comprehended, till after the wonderful discoveries of Galileo, Kepler, and Newton.

“The truth upon which the doctrine of the re-incarnation is based, is that of eternal progress. I believe in the plurality of existences as I believe in the plurality of inhabited worlds, but I absolutely deny the metempsychosis of the ancients, because, according to it, men can transmigrate into the bodies of animals, and this is against the laws of progress. I thus believe in the plurality of corporeal existences, renewing perhaps a doctrine which prevailed in the first ages of the world, and that has been preserved until our days in the recesses of the minds and thoughts of many persons; only that I present it now, under a new and much more philosophical form, more adapted to the progressive laws of nature and more in harmony with the wisdom of the Creator.”

We went on talking a long while on these metaphysical subjects, my friend of course did not approve of them, and I was not powerful enough to convince him of their truth. For I have come to the conclusion a long time ago that no amount of

talking and argument has ever changed anybody's pre-conceived opinions; unless, of course, the mind has reached a point, when it is able to perceive the vast horizon opened out to it by a new truth, when it will grasp it immediately.

His chief objection was that we lost the memory of our past lives, he assured me that he has never experienced any of those strange sensations at seeing a thing for the first time, that to me are such sure proofs of a previous existence. I thought everybody experienced them more or less.

Afterwards I asked him how it was that most men manifested such different aptitudes independently of those acquired by education? That he denied. Then I asked him, why some children were so much more clever than others; and why some others evinced such a wonderful instinct for good or evil? This he could not deny, but he could give no reason for it, he attributed it all to chance.

I reminded him of those extraordinary prodigies we sometimes see, of little children who possess such an ear for music, or such a wonderful natural genius, I called his attention to the well-known histories of Pascal, and of Paganini. I reminded him of how the one discovered geometry when he was only nine years old, and how well the other played upon the violin when a mere boy. "Those strange phenomena," I suggested, "might very easily be explained by the law of the re-incarnation. Pascal might have been a mathematician in a former life, and Mozart, who

composed almost in his infancy, a musician. Thus, and thus only, can one account for those natural inclinations, so different and yet so developed in some children."

"That seems to me," he answered, "a very poor argument. As you turn it, it may, perhaps, seem to be a proof of the doctrine of the re-incarnation, but in reality it only proves to us the power of God, who can create beings of such different character."

"It is true that God can create beings as he likes, but where is his justice when he creates a Newton and a cannibal on the same day? And after death, I should like to know, what is the respective position of those two men, created at the same instant of time, and yet so different? Can they both inhabit, after death, the same region? And would it not be more in accordance with the justice of the creator to give to all his children an equal chance of becoming good and wise?"

"God, who is good above all things, could not impose upon men the ordeal of enduring anew all the miseries and trials which he has gone through in his earthly life."

"But would it be good or just, my dear fellow, to condemn a man to eternal damnation for a few years of sin? Would it not be better to give him the means of repairing his faults? Take two builders, each of whom employs a workman; suppose those workmen are idle, and do their work badly. One of the builders discharges his workman in spite of all his entreaties, and the poor

man, who can find no work, dies of hunger. The other builder, more humane, says to his workman, 'You have done your work badly, you must do it again. If next time you are diligent and industrious, I will look over this fault, and will not send you away.' The grateful man sets to work with renewed energy, and dies rich and happy. Now, which of the two builders do you consider to be the most just?"

"The one who keeps his workman, and allows him to begin again his day's work, of course."

"And do you, as a minister of Christ, think that God would be less just than one of his creatures? Did not Christ teach us *to pardon* until seventy times seven?"

CHAPTER XXIV.

EDINBURGH.

ON Friday the 25th of July we arrived in Edinburgh. This beautiful city is said to be one of the finest in Europe, at all events it certainly is one of the most striking, and is called the Modern Athens.

Princes Street, a magnificent avenue more than one mile in length, divides the city in two parts—the old town and the new. The former rises upon a hill, on the top of which stands the ancient castle, that is separated from the street below by extensive and beautifully laid out pleasure-grounds. Through this sweet and once romantic valley now run the noisy trains of the railway.

Conchita was delighted with Edinburgh ; from her windows in the hotel she could see the castle, the old town, and Arthur's Seat in the distance.

“ True, Caledonia's queen is changed,
Since on her dusky summit ranged,
Within its steepy limits pent,
By bulwark, like, and battlement,
And flanking towers and laký flood,*
Guarded and garrisoned she stood,
Denýing entrance or resort,
Save at each tall embattled port ; †

* The hollow occupied to-day by Princes Street Gardens.

† The gates of Edinburgh are still termed ports.

Above whose arch, suspended, hung
Portcullis spiked with iron prong,
That long is gone,—but not so long,
Since, early closed, and opening late,
Jealous revolved the studded gate,
Whose task, from eve to morning tide,
A wicket churlishly supplied.
Stern then and steel girt was thy brow,
Dun-Edin! oh, how alter'd now,
When safe amid thy mountain court
Thou sit'st, like empress at her sport,
And liberal, unconfined, and free,
Flinging thy white arms to the sea ;
For thy dark cloud, with umber'd lour,
That hung o'er cliff, and lake, and tower,
Thou gleam'st against the western ray
Then thousand hues of brightest day.

[And] thou, fair city! disarray'd
Of battled wall, and rampart's aid,
As stately seem'st, but lovelier far,
Than in that panoply of war.
Nor deem that from thy fenceless throne
Strength and security are flown ;
Still, as of yore, queen of the north !
Still canst thou send thy children forth.
Ne'er readier at alarm-bell's call
Thy burghers rose to man thy wall,
Than now, in danger, shall be thine,
Thy dauntless voluntary line ;
For fosse and turret proud to stand,
Their breasts the bulwarks of the land.
Thy thousands, train'd to marshal toil,
Full red would stain their native soil,
Ere from thy mural crown there fell
The slightest knosp or pinnacle."

After this flowing description of Sir Walter Scott,
what can I say in praise of Edinburgh?

The day after our arrival I called upon my old

master, Doctor John Gray of the Edinburgh University. I found in him the same good old man, devoted to science and learning; he was very much interested in the description I gave him of my young bride, and he wanted to see her that very day. He proposed to me to be our *Cicerone* during the short time we intended remaining in the old capital; he said that, being the time of the long vacation, and having no family to claim his leisure, he could dedicate himself entirely to us.

That afternoon, then, we began our sight-seeing; we visited the castle, the cathedral, and the old town.

In the castle we were shown the window through which king James was lowered, when a baby, and the room of his unfortunate mother, Queen Mary, of immortal and romantic memory. We also saw the Scottish regalia, or crown jewels, consisting of a very poor sceptre, an old sword, and a crown. "Taking these articles in connection with the great historical events and personages that enter into the composition of their present value," says Chambers, in his 'Walks in Edinburgh,' p. 49, "it is impossible to look upon them without emotions of singular interest, while, at the same time, their essential littleness excites wonder at the mighty circumstances and destinies which have been determined by the possession, or the want of possession, of what they emblemize and represent.

"*For this* diadem did Bruce liberate his country; *with* it his son nearly occasioned its ruin. It purchased for Scotland the benefit of the mature sagacity

of Robert II. It did not save Robert III. from a death of grief; procured, perhaps, the assassination of James I.; instigated James IV. to successful rebellion against his father, whose violent death was expiated by his own on Flodden field. Its dignity was proudly increased by James V., who was yet more unfortunate, perhaps in his end, than a long list of unfortunate predecessors. It was worn by the devoted head of Mary, who found it the occasion of woes and calamities unnumbered and unexampled. It was placed upon the infant brow of her son, to the exclusion of herself from all its glories and advantages, but not the conclusion of the distresses in which it had involved her. Her unfortunate grandson, Charles I., for its sake visited Scotland, and had it placed upon his head with magnificent ceremonies; but the nation, whose sovereignty it gave him, was the first to rebel against his authority and work his destruction. The Presbyterian solemnity with which it was given to Charles II., was only a preface to the disasters of Worcester; and afterwards it was remembered by this monarch, little to the advantage of Scotland, that it had been placed upon his head with conditions and restrictions which wounded at once his pride and his conscience. It was worn by no other monarch, and the period of its disuse seems to have been the epoch from which we may reckon the happiness of our monarchs, and the revival of our national prosperity."

After leaving the castle we proceeded through the old town to Holyrood Palace, the house where Queen

Mary suffered so much ; we visited her apartments, in one of which we were shown Rizzio's blood upon the floor. Afterwards Conchita wanted to see the Abbey which joins the Palace, and where my mother is buried. I refused to go, saying, "She wakes in heaven for me, Conchita, whose body sleeps there ; and knowing where to find the jewel, my love, shall I linger over the empty casket ?"

She, however, would go, and, kneeling in that chapel where Mary Stuart had so often knelt, she placed a crown of flowers upon my mother's grave. When she joined me again in the Palace her eyes were full of tears. I took her by the hand and repeated to her the following consoling lines of Young's Night Thoughts :—

" And feel I, *Death* ! no joy from thought of thee ?
Death, the great councillor, who man inspires
 With every nobler thought, and fairer deed !
Death, the deliverer, who rescues man !
Death, the rewarder, who the rescued crowns !
Death, that absolves my birth, a curse without it !
 Rich *death*, that realises all my cares,
 Toils, virtues, hopes ; without it a chimera.
Death, of all pain the period, not of joy ;
 Joy's *source* and *subject*, still subsists unhurt ;
 One, in my soul ; and one, in her great sire ;
 Though the four winds were warring for my dust.
 Yes, and from winds, and waves, and central night,
 Though prison'd there, my dust, too, I reclaim,
 (To dust when drop proud nature's proudest spheres),
 And live *entire* : *Death* is the crown of life :
 Were death denied, poor man would live in vain ;
 Were death denied, e'en fools would wish to die.
 Death wounds to cure ; we fall, we rise, we reign !
 Spring from our fetters ; fasten in the skies ;

Where blooming Eden withers in our sight,
Death gives us more than was in Eden lost.
This king of terrors is the prince of peace.
When shall I die to vanity, pain, death ?
When shall I *die* ? When shall I live for ever ? ”

Late in the afternoon we drove to the Calton Hill, a small eminence which rises at the end of Princes Street.

The view one enjoys from this hill is indescribable. Edinburgh does indeed look like Athens from this point of view. Just in front of us stretches the long avenue of Princes Street. On its left rises the old town, with its high crowded buildings, some of which have as many as nine or ten stories, and over all this forest of house tops and spires rises up towards the blue sky, in the shape of a crown, the old tower of St Giles. On the other side the high rock of the Castle bounds the view, while beyond the long vista of Princes Street we perceive Donaldson's Hospital and the Corstorphine Hills. On the right side of Princes Street are the more regular but less picturesque streets of the new city, that extend nearly to the blue waters of the Northern Ocean, terminating by the sea-port of Leith, whose long piers jutt out into the Firth of Forth.

On the south are the beautiful and striking buildings of the High School, and the monument to Burns, all in the Greek style of architecture. Just below us stands the grey-stone jail, and, beyond, the Palace and Abbey of Holyrood, with its park, the

rugged Salisbury Crags and Arthur's Seat forming a fine background to the picture. On the north side the view is not less fine. The broad Forth divides the landscape in two; beyond its blue waters we see the coast of Fife and the Lomond and Ochil hills, with Ben Lomond to crown the horizon.

"Traced like a map the landscape lies
In enthroned beauty stretching wide;
There Pentland's green acclivities,
There ocean, with its azure tide;
There Arthur's Seat; and gleaming through
Thy southern wing, Dunedin blue!
While in the orient, Lammer's daughters,
A distant giant range, are seen,
North Berwick Law, with cone of green,
And Bass amid the waters."

Such was the scene before our eyes.

We sat down upon the classical ruins of the projected Parthenon, the mists of evening were advancing, and a cloud of vaporous smoke, from which the town has acquired the soubriquet of "Auld Reekie," began to spread over the grim assemblage of pointed roofs and gothic spires.

"I must have a legend," said Conchita, "about this beautiful old town. All day long we have been hearing the name of Mary Stuart. This city seems so full of her memory that one breathes her name at every turn; surely you know something of the history of that unfortunate woman; surely you can tell me some of her secret sorrows, her terrible sufferings, that it has not been the fortune of all to hear and criticise."

"If you will listen to me attentively, my darling Conchita, I will tell you a story that I just remember about her, connected with the old town that now lies before us, and that has never been read in print."

CHAPTER XXV.*

THE QUEEN'S PAGE : A ROMANCE OF THE REIGN OF QUEEN MARY.

NIGHT began to spread her starry veil over the royal city of Edinburgh, and the gatekeepers were just shutting the ports of the town, when three men on horseback arrived at full gallop, and entered the port at the end of the Canongate, just as the iron portcullis was lowered from the keep. They slackened not their pace as they proceeded through the deserted streets towards High Street, but they were obliged to proceed more slowly as they entered the busier parts of the town.

At last they arrived at the esplanade of the castle ; they gave the pass-word ; the drawbridge was lowered, and they entered the old citadel.

Queen Mary was then residing at Edinburgh Castle as the place of greatest security, for she was about to present the country with an heir to the throne.

But little time had elapsed since the murder of her Italian secretary, and favourite musician, Rizzio. Darnley was living at the castle, for it had been her own wish to have her husband near her when she

* See Appendix, Note VI.

was about to have her first child. However, love was now impossible between the royal pair, confidence between them appeared to be for ever destroyed, and enmity and distrust were the only feelings they could possibly entertain for each other. She could not help seeing in her husband an assassin, and this rankled too deeply in her heart ever to be eradicated by smooth words or pretended affection.

The three men we saw entering the Castle were soon afterwards admitted to the royal presence. Mary was sitting in the state chamber, (the same one we saw this morning, only that in the time of my story it was decorated in a truly magnificent and royal style).

"What does my lord the abbot of St. Mary's want with us to-day?" she said, as the three priests entered her apartment, "that brings him in such haste to our castle."

"Matters of the greatest importance, your majesty," answered the old abbot, the chief, as it seemed, of the three men. "You have at your court, if I am not mistaken, a young man called James Linlithgow."

"Yes," said the Queen "what of him? he is one of my pages."

"Well, your majesty must remember he is the next of kin to the Duke de Valladolid; his mother being that nobleman's niece."

"Yes, I remember all that. But what has it to do with me?"

"The Duke de Valladolid has just died, your

majesty, and all his enormous fortune, as well as his lands and his numerous estates belong now to Linlithgow ; he will be the richest and most powerful of your majesty's subjects."

"I shall lose nothing by this change of fortune, for he is devoted to me, and will doubtless be a faithful friend, he whose mother was for so many years attached to me, and who wished her son to be my loving page."

"The Queen is right," said the abbot, "but we must at all risk prevent him from entering into this enormous inheritance."

"But why, my lord abbot?"

"Because there is a clause in the old duke's will that can save the church of God, or ruin it for ever."

"How?"

"It is this,—that the duke leaves all his fortune to his nephew James Linlithgow on condition that he be a Roman Catholic, and also, that before two months have elapsed after the Duke's death he swear to become a protector of the church of Rome ; if not, he leaves all his fortune and estates to the newly formed society of Jesus. Your majesty sees now why we must prevent him from swearing fidelity to our faith ; for his not doing so before two months have elapsed will make us possessors of one of the largest fortunes in Europe."

The queen remained silent for a short time lost in meditation ; at last she said,

"This would not be right, Father John, the in-

heritance belongs to James Linlithgow, and he should have it."

"And the Church, your majesty? It would be an unpardonable sin before God to let this enormous fortune escape us, when we have it in our power to keep it. We ought to do all we can to prevent his getting it. The end will justify the means."

"We should, indeed, my Father," answered the queen, "do all that is in our power to increase the means of the Church, especially in these heretic times, and in this unfortunate country, so misled by the false doctrines of the reformers. But it would not be right to deprive one of the true faith of his inheritance. If he were only a Protestant? but James Linlithgow is a true Catholic, and will, of course, swear to defend the Church."

"His influence might do us some good, your majesty, but his money would do more. All that I ask your majesty to do, is to sign a warrant which will empower us to take him to one of our religious houses, the rest we will do ourselves."

After a long while spent in doubt and indecision, the cunning old abbot succeeded in persuading the queen to sign the warrant, and soon afterwards he left the castle.

That same evening, and in another chamber of the royal castle, a very different scene was taking place.

The maids of honour and the pages of the queen were talking gaily in one of the ante-rooms. Being the month of June all the windows were wide open,

and the merry sound of their voices could be heard distinctly from the outside.

In one of the recesses, formed by an old gothic window, stood, hidden by the heavy tapestry, two persons—a man and a woman.

“You quite forget me now, James,” said the lady, looking lovingly at the young and handsome page, “and yet,” she continued, “it is not so long ago since you swore to love me for ever, when we were at your father’s house. You loved me then, James, and I was so happy!”

“And don’t I love you now, Constance?” said the young man, interrupting her.

“No, James, you do not. You love the queen more than you do me.”

“She is my queen, Constance, why should I not love and admire her as every one else does? she is so good, so beautiful, so lovely!”

“There you are again, lost in admiration of her! Six months ago *I* was the only good and beautiful and lovely one in your eyes, but since you have come to the court you have quite forgotten your Constance Cameron!”

“And you, I dare say, have often forgotten your James Linlithgow?”

“How can you talk so, James? don’t you see you are breaking my heart? Oh, have compassion upon me! Why did you ever say you loved me, if you intended so soon to love another more.”

“It is not my fault, Constance. I could not help

it; indeed I loved you truly then, but I had not seen Queen Mary."

"You forget that she is married; you forget that she is the queen. . . ."

"Yes, when I see her I forget it all, except her heavenly countenance."

The entrance of the Earl of Murray, the queen's brother, into the apartment, put an end to this conversation.

Soon afterwards a messenger came to summon James Linlithgow to the queen's presence.

The young page's heart nearly burst with joy, for his head, like those of all the rest of the gentlemen who surrounded Queen Mary, had been turned by her grace and beauty; he thought her the most lovely, the most fascinating, and the most unfortunate of women, and his vanity led him to believe that she was rather partial to him.

He entered the royal chamber with a quick but firm step, and when he found himself before the queen he knelt at her feet.

"Rise, my young page," said Mary, giving him her hand to kiss. "I have some news for you to-night. Your uncle, the old Duke de Valladolid, is dead, and you are now a grandee of Spain and a duke. I am only sorry that you will have to quit our court for that of your new country. I envy my royal cousin, Philip, his new subject."

"This is, indeed, grand news," said the young page, gaining courage from the queen's words, and

feeling himself now quite of importance ; “ but at the same time it fills me with sorrow. I cannot accept those titles and honours, which must separate me from my queen.”

“ How ! What do you mean, Linlithgow ? ” exclaimed the surprised Queen. “ Do you mean to say that you refuse the title and the estates which now are yours by right of inheritance ? ”

“ I would rather live poor and unknown by the side of your majesty, than a wealthy nobleman away from Scotland ! ”

Queen Mary advanced a step forward ; and James, full of hope and love, threw himself once more at her feet, exclaiming, “ Oh, no ! I am wrong ; I had better fly away ; I cannot live in your presence ; I suffer too much ; I cannot see the heavenly face of my queen and remain untouched. . . . I had better leave you. . . . I cannot live any longer thus ! ”

The queen, more and more bewildered, took him by the hand and raised him up.

“ Are you mad, my brave page ? ” she said ; “ what do you mean ? Has the news of your good fortune turned your head ? ”

“ No, my queen. But your face has turned my heart ; does your majesty not guess my love ? Oh, lady ! forgive me . . . no, no, rather order my head to be cut off . . . for I love you. . . . Yes, I love you, and cannot live without you ! ”

A long silence succeeded this vehement declaration, he was so handsome, so brave, so noble, that the

queen did not know what to do or say ; she had known for a long time that her page loved her ; but were not all the young men of her court equally in love with her ? Besides, she never expected to have heard his confession.

" I love all my subjects," said the queen, letting his hand go, " and I want all my subjects to love me as a mother ; to love me more, is treason against me, and against the king my husband ; . . . nay, it is more than treason, . . . it is death ; remember David Rizzio ! "

The poor queen buried her head in her hands as she pronounced these last words.

" Yes, Linlithgow, all that love me are doomed to die, it is madness to think otherwise. I will forget your foolish words, I will try even to forget you ; but you must not forget that you have a friend in the queen of Scotland ! "

" Oh, my queen ! "

" You must not see me again, Linlithgow ; . . . but you will soon hear from me . . . farewell ! "

Linlithgow kissed her hand once more, and sadly left the apartment. When the heavy tapestry had closed behind him, poor Mary threw herself on a couch, and exclaimed through her tears,

" Oh, just God, why have I been born a queen ! "

Linlithgow sat down once more in the ante-room, with his eyes fixed on the silvery moon, that now alone illuminated the chamber, all the other pages

and courtiers had retired to their couches. He was dreaming of his beautiful queen when the door opened, and he heard his name called ; he started, it seemed a voice from the other world.

"In the name of the queen follow me," said the voice.

"Who are you?"

"The Abbot of St Mary's."

The page bowed his head ; and followed the priest.

They descended into the courtyard, crossed the drawbridge, and were soon lost in the darkness outside the Castle.

The next morning Constance Cameron came to dress her royal mistress about eight o'clock.

Queen Mary had not slept the whole night. The thought of her gallant page's love for her, and the idea that she was going to take away from him all his titles and estates, prevented her from finding on her couch, that rest that was so necessary to her in her present delicate state.

The maid of honour had not been ten minutes in her chamber, when Lord Darnley entered it, and Mary made her hide herself behind the curtains of the bed : for she knew that her husband always liked to see her alone.

The king had but little to say to his royal spouse, he had some complaint against the Lord High Admiral Bothwell, and some want of courtesy to complain of on the part of the Earl of Huntly ; these were his

chief grievances. Mary promised to speak to both earls about it, and to tell them that Darnley was the king there, with which promises this spoilt child left the apartment.

But he had not been gone two minutes when another knock at the door, came to stop anew the queen's toilet, and sent the maid-in-waiting once more to her hiding-place. Queen Mary hurried for a second time into her red velvet dressing-gown and opened the door.

The Abbot of St Mary's entered the apartment.

"Any important news, my father?" said the queen, kissing the hand of the prelate.

"Yes, your majesty, I have secured him. I have taken him to one of our religious houses, from which he cannot possibly escape; he is safer there, than in the deepest dungeon of this Castle."

"Secured whom?"

"James Linlithgow."

A low cry was heard from behind the curtains. The abbot turned round. "Is there any one listening to us?" he said.

"No one, my Father, go on," answered Queen Mary.

"We have him all safe now," continued the priest, when he had convinced himself that nobody was listening. "He cannot escape us; in one month we shall let him have his liberty, but it will then be too late. We are now at the 15th of May; the 4th of June is the day appointed for him to swear fidelity

to the holy church on pain of forfeiting his estates and titles. We may, therefore, almost count upon them as ours, and the holy society which is now being formed by the brave Ignatius of Loyola, will be powerful and rich ; with this money we shall soon triumph over our enemies and those of God, your majesty."

"And do you think that the Holy Ignatius will approve of this plan ?"

"We have no other ; without money not even Rome will recognise our society, which is the only one that can save our holy Church. The estates of Valladolid lie in the very heart of Spain, touching those of the king, it would be madness to let them go."

"Poor Linlithgow ! . . . poor Linlithgow !" murmured the queen. "Can it be possible that this is the way I am returning your love for me ! Oh my father," she continued aloud, "what would you say if I told you that I love that young man ; that I love him, and yet I am working his ruin !"

"Your majesty loves Linlithgow !" the prelate exclaimed in surprise ; but then recovering himself, he continued ; "he is now in our power, your majesty knows the house, you can come and see him when you like ; nobody will know anything about it, and the church will give you absolution if, by that means, we can enrich the holy society of Jesus."

"No, never," exclaimed the queen. "How dare you propose such a thing to the Queen of Scotland ! I am a married woman and know my duty. Your

absolution might save my soul, but it could not save the honour of Mary Stuart ! ”

“ Pardon me, your majesty,” said the Jesuit, after a long silence. “ Pardon me if I have mistaken your majesty’s feelings ; I thought you said you loved him ! ”

“ Nay, my lord, and so I do ; but before being a woman, I am a queen, and I shall soon be the mother of the heir of Scotland ; my affections must be smothered in my heart at their birth. But I cannot deprive that poor young man of his titles and estates ; listen to my orders, my lord abbot. If he willingly swears to defend the holy church, let him come into the full possession of his property ; if not . . . then you can do with it as you think proper ; let the will of the Duke de Valladolid be observed in every respect.”

The Jesuit trembled when he heard this ; he saw all his dreams vanish, all his hopes for the enrichment of the society fall to the ground ; he therefore thought it better to try a different method to make the queen enter into his plans.

“ And what would your majesty say if I told you that the said Linlithgow has been to hear John Knox preach last Sunday ? ” he said after a while.

“ Impossible ! ” exclaimed the queen.

“ Your majesty must remember that I am the Abbot of St Mary’s, and a member of the society of Jesus, and therefore cannot lie ? ”

“ Forgive me, Father. But go on, surely you are mistaken ? ”

"No, your majesty. He is a heretic, he will never defend the holy Church of Rome; if he swears to do so, it will only be to get the money, and afterwards he will employ it all in helping the enemies of God. This is the reason why I want to prevent his getting the property; this is why I want your majesty to give me a warrant to keep him prisoner until after the 4th of June."

"If he be a puritan, a heretic, I can do nothing; the glory of God must be our first thought."

"Then your majesty will promise never to mention to anybody what has happened, nor where he is confined?"

"I do, I swear it upon this crucifix!"

The abbot made a low bow to the poor queen, and left the apartment.

No sooner had he retired than Constance Cameron emerged from her hiding-place, and throwing herself at the queen's feet, burst into tears.

"What does this mean, my gentle Constance?"

"Is it possible, my queen," she said, "that you can love Linlithgow, and at the same time believe him capable of joining the heretics."

"How? you have been listening to us! you know all, Constance! . . . but what can it be to you?"

"More than your majesty thinks. I have loved him since he was a boy; we were brought up together; he once, before he had seen your majesty, swore to be my husband, and now you, for whom he has sacrificed so much, are going to throw him into

a prison, and deprive him of his rank and fortune, in order to enrich that enemy of mankind !”

“ You are right, Constance, I fear I was very weak ; when I gave that fatal warrant to the abbot of St Mary's, I thought that, for the very reason that I loved him, I ought to hide my love, and be cruel to him. . . . Oh, happy you, Constance, who can love whom you like !”

“ But there is no time to be lost. I must save him ; although he does not love me, still I am his promised wife ; your majesty must help me. Where is he confined ?”

“ Alas ! I cannot tell you. I have sworn upon that crucifix not to mention to any one what has just passed in this room. You have heard our conversation, it was not I who told you, I cannot add a word more. You know enough, though, to save him. Do what you can ; you have my full consent, but I cannot tell you more, no, not even if it were to save my unborn child's life,” and the unhappy queen burst again into tears.

Constance left the apartment. *She* did not cry ; she was vexed at the weakness of the queen, but she still entertained strong hopes of saving her lover.

“ There is one man in Edinburgh (she said to herself) more powerful than the queen herself : John Knox, I must go to him, he will be able to give me advice, he is one of the Reformers, a heretic, but what does it matter ? the life of my James is worth more than all their religious scruples.”

She therefore went to John Knox's house in the Canongate. She saw the great Reformer, and after telling him the whole story, finished by asking his advice.

"Find out where he is confined, my daughter," he said, "and I will save him."

This gave Constance new hope ; she went back to the castle, and asked the queen again and again to tell her where the house was in which Linlithgow was confined, but the superstitious Mary would not tell, yet she suffered very much, and begged the cunning Jesuit with tears, to absolve her from her fatal oath that was going to cause the ruin of the man she loved, but he was immovable.

Constance was determined to save him, and not even the indecision of the queen made her lose her hope of eventually doing so.

At last, a brilliant idea dawned upon the young maid of honour's mind. She disguised herself as a page, and, taking a lute, she went through the streets that evening singing a favourite air of Linlithgow's, which they had often sung together when in their native village. She thought that if he heard her, he would naturally make some sign of recognition. She walked, however, through several streets in vain. Sometimes an old woman would look out of a window and send the minstrel away, who would not let her sleep, with harsh words. Sometimes a young girl would appear behind a curtain, believing the page to be her expected lover. At other times the

sentinels of the ports would frighten the poor girl away, but it was all useless, nobody seemed to recognize her song.

She went down the High Street and up the Cowgate. She had crossed the Grassmarket and the West Port, and was about to give her enterprise up as a failure; when, out of the topmost window, in a tall and silent house in a retired and solitary byestreet, she heard a voice, that, to her great delight, sang the second verse of her song. Her joy knew no bounds, she had at last found out where her lover was!

The next morning, the 1st of June, she went again to the Canongate. She again saw John Knox, and told him the house where Linlithgow was imprisoned.

"Even if it were in the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, I would save him," he said, "fear nothing now, my brave young lady, your lover is saved through you, and to-morrow you shall be united to him in holy matrimony."

That morning at twelve, he came out at his window overlooking the High Street, the very window we saw this afternoon, and from which he used so often to preach. The street below was crowded with people who were anxiously waiting to hear their favourite preacher. When Knox appeared, a long acclamation greeted him.

"To-day I expect from you, my dear children," he said, "works and not promises. There is in this city a young man, who is the heir to immense estates and titles in the kingdom of Spain. The Papists and the

Jesuits have got hold of him, and have shut him up, so that he might not get that which by right belongs to him. He is one of us ; he is a citizen of Edinburgh, one of the Queen's pages ; we must save him."

Cries and shouts of approbation greeted this speech.

"Lead us to his prison and we will soon set him free," they cried in every direction. "Down with the Priests, down with the Papists ! Death to the tyrants and the Jesuits !"

John Knox came down into the street, put himself at the head of the populace, and conducted them to the house designed by Constance Cameron.

The old house was attacked, and although the Jesuits inside made a strong resistance, it was at last taken, and Constance found herself in the arms of her lover.

That very night, in John Knox's house, he said to her, "Constance, now I know what your love is worth. I was fascinated by the beauty of Queen Mary. I thought, too, that she loved me, but now I see that, instead of helping me, she gave orders to have me shut up in a lonely and solitary house, where I should have died if it had not been for you. You, Constance, are the only one I now love ; to you I owe my freedom. . . ."

"And to this good man," said Constance interrupting him. "It was *he* who saved you ; we owe him our happiness."

Linlithgow pressed the old man's hand. "I shall

be ever grateful to you, my Father, for what you have done. I used to think you an impostor and a heretic, but now I see that you are a much better Christian than all the members of this new society put together. I am only sorry that I cannot embrace your faith. I am a Catholic still, but I shall always think of you as my deliverer and my friend."

"I am sorry, my friend," said the great reformer, "that your mind is not yet enlightened enough to comprehend our beautiful doctrines. The time will come, though, when you will; perhaps some day you will come again to me for assistance. Now, I should advise you to keep your religion, for on this depends the title and estates you are going to inherit. But leave Scotland, go to Spain, and there, perhaps, amidst the pomps and vanities of the Roman Church, you will think again of John Knox."

Those were his last words. The next day the two lovers were married in the chapel of the Castle. Queen Mary did not assist at the ceremony, on account, she said, of her bad health, but sent a handsome present to the bride.

Two days after, the newly married pair left Leith in a vessel that was just starting for Spain, where the Duke de Valladolid took possession of his enormous estates and noble titles, and where he lived for many years, happy with his wife, a friend to the Pope, but an enemy to those who, calling themselves disciples of Christ, are aiming at the ruin of his children.

CHAPTER XXVI.

DR JOHN GRAY.

"I DO not like your story," said Conchita, when I had finished my narrative, "why should you make the society of Jesus so wicked and so unchristian—the society precisely that has done so much good, and made so many converts to our faith?"

"To show, my darling Conchita, that there is good and evil in everything. Because Ignatius of Loyola was a saint, is not a reason why all his disciples should be the same. I, myself, am a great friend of the Jesuits; I was brought up by them, and I have always found them just, and wise, good friends and excellent masters; but I dare say, there are a great many amongst them who carry their zeal for the prosperity of the church a little too far, and who, like the abbot of St Mary's, would not mind sacrificing a poor young man for the welfare of their society; but this in a certain way is also excusable; for some will say, that it is but just that the few should suffer for the benefit of the many."

"Neither do I like the picture you have drawn of queen Mary; of that unfortunate woman, so much loved and so much hated. You make her in love

with Linlithgow and at the same time you make her sign a warrant for his imprisonment, instead of doing all she possibly could to save him from the Jesuits. I should have thought that you knew the human heart better; no woman would be capable of such a thing."

"You forget, Conchita, that Mary was also a queen, and a wife, and as such she thought herself obliged to forget and smother the love she felt for others than her husband, the tragical death of Rizzio came perhaps to her mind. Moreover, besides being a queen and a wife; she was also a superstitious, bigoted and zealous Roman Catholic. To her, perhaps, the welfare of the church was more than the feelings of her own heart: altogether, she felt herself obliged to sacrifice her love to those numerous and, to her, important reasons."

The night had now quite set in, and the moon, in her last quarter, was shining from behind the clouds.

"Look at her silvery and silent light," said Conchita, "our honeymoon will soon be over. It has passed as a dream of joy in our lives. Oh! if I could stop thy course, bright star of our short married life, how happy I should be! but in this life everything comes and goes as in a dream; perchance it will come again in some future state. . . . Who knows? there perhaps may be more truth, Walter, in your vision of Aberfeldy than I should dare to hope. Life is so short, the future so uncertain! but love is immortal, this I know, or knowing not, believe in, as I believe in God. Can it be possible that the short

duration of one moon has made such a difference in my mind? Those silvery rays only one month ago shone upon a poor superstitious, ignorant girl, now they shine in all their glory upon the happy, loving, and free wife!"

"And they have changed me too, my Conchita. When I first met you I was a miserable being full of doubts, now I know what faith is. It is to you, Conchita, that I owe this. My doubts have ended, for now I know that the truth is only to be found in that celestial sphere from whence that heavenly orb shines upon us. We are but children here, learning our lesson. . . . Ah! how happy are they who like us feel sure of their destiny, and cherish a love that defies the grave!"

When we returned to the hotel we found Dr Gray, who had come to dine with us. After dinner we retired to our little sitting room, where we had a very interesting conversation that I shall relate here, in order to show my readers the change that had taken place in my ideas since my marriage with Conchita.

I was trying to prove to my old master the truth of the Christian faith; I wanted very much to know what he had to say against it, for I remembered very well the time when, from being a very good Catholic, he became all of a sudden an atheist.

"Your views," said he, "I see are very much changed; you are not enough of a philosopher, although you, in your vanity, call yourself one, to see all the faults of the doctrines in which you now believe."

"On the contrary, doctor," said I, "I know all their faults, and yet I believe them to be the best for our present necessities, and for our present state of civilization. You wish us to understand you do not believe in a God; but if you did you would be obliged to confess that He knows best what is good for his children, and that if He has caused us to be Christians, it is because He wants us to be such."

"Those very words prove your ignorance, my dear Carlton. What reasons have you for believing in the existence of a God at all? Only those doctrines taught by the churches. And they speak of a jealous God, who hates his children and sends them down to hell; who stops the course of the sun when he likes, and who affirms that the waters are above the clouds. I am a philosopher, and I can assure you that such a God does not exist. He could not exist. The universe is a unity, a fortuitous concourse of atoms, and there is no power beyond it. Your God cannot be in the universe. He can only exist in the imagination of fools, and priests. Science does not recognise his capricious and overwhelming power.

"You speak of your soul! I am a doctor. I have been through man with my scalpel and my microscope, and I have found no soul in him. I only saw blood, bones, bowels, and brains, but no spirit. You do not believe me? perhaps you take the soul to be in the brain! At home I have Arnoldi's most perfect map of that organ; you may look at it for years, you will find no such a thing as a soul there.

"Providence! do you believe in that? Things happen, but they certainly are not arranged beforehand; if they were, the universe would be very different from what it is.

"As there is no soul, there cannot possibly be a hereafter. You die and become dust; vegetables grow out of your dust, which are eaten by other men. If there was such a thing as immortality, it could not possibly be individual, for individuality ceases with this life; moreover, I have searched the sky, and I have found no heaven there. I know all its stars, and all its constellations, but I know no such place as a heaven amongst them. Ah, you look at me as if I was a heretic! you threaten me with hell, with that hell invented by Rome, and so graphically described by Dante! But where is that hell? where is it to be found? *Below*? which is '*Heaven above*' in twelve hours! I am a geologist; I have studied the formation of the earth; I know its strata and all its depths, and I know for certain that there is no hell there. What is the use of threatening me with a hell that does not exist? The Church can frighten fools with its supposed hell, but cannot frighten me."

"Ah!" said Conchita, citing Racine's beautiful verses,

"Oui, c'est un Dieu caché que le Dieu qu'il faut croire;
Mais tout caché qu'il est, pour révéler sa gloire,
Quels témoins éclatants devant moi rassemblés!
Répondez, cieux et mers; et vous, terre, parlez!"

"I can quite understand," I said, "my dear doctor,

that you do not agree with the doctrines of the Church : but to me it is inexplicable how you, a man of science, and such a good noble-hearted man, can for a moment doubt the existence of a God ; for it seems to me that a belief in God must necessarily be the basis of all systems of philosophy. Newton himself said that 'the thoughts that elevate us to God proceed from the domains of science, for they belong to it, being, as they are, derived from natural phenomena, and reaching to the very causes of those phenomena.' Science must recognise the supernatural action that directs the evolutions of nature ; and, if it is true that it rejects the attributes of that *Being* as we find them described in the Bible, it must allow that all those movements that work according to a certain and constant law cannot have their origin in mere mechanical forces. As Newton expresses it, 'this exquisite combination of sun, planets, and comets, could only have proceeded from the action of a *Being* at once intelligent, powerful, and good ; for a blind metaphorical necessity is at all times and in all places the same, and the *verity of things* could never have proceeded from it. This universal diversity, that we see fitted to serve *time* and *place*, can only have its origin in a being self-existing. This idea of God is taught to us by the very phenomena of nature, and is, accordingly, an essential part of natural philosophy.'

"Those, if my memory does not betray me, are the sentiments expressed by the greatest of modern philo-

sophers, to which I could add Bacon's words,—‘I would rather believe in all the fabulous legends of the Talmud and of the Koran than think this universe is without a soul. It is true that a little philosophy inclines the human reason towards atheism, but a profound study of it turns the soul towards religion; for when the human mind sees the secondary causes separately, it can very easily stop there, and go no further; but when it examines its marvellous unity, it must then believe in a Providence and in a God.’

“The true man of science must necessarily be religious. The more we study the works of God, the nearer we approach him. His existence, indeed, can only be comprehended by intelligences prepared to receive him. ‘The eyes can only see what is within their range of vision.’ Only he who has studied and observed the universe can understand the greatness of the creator. The untutored savage has a very low conception of God. The instruments discovered by Galileo and Leuwenhoeck have taught us more concerning the grandeur and power of the supreme being than all the philosophy and theology of the world. The truths, the wonderful truths, that we behold through those glasses, give us a much grander idea of God than all the descriptions given in the Vedas and Bibles, Eddas, and Zendavestas of the ancients. And then you can affirm that the idea of a God is against science, precisely when science gives us each day fresh proofs of his existence. ‘The doctrine

of a great first Cause, therefore, has nothing to fear from the most inexorable logic, or from the most minute investigations of Science, which will ever confirm its truth.' ”

“ I know all those objections by heart,” said Dr Gray, “ I have heard them over and over again, but they prove to me only this, that man thinks that he believes in a God, that is to say, in a supernatural being. This being is unnatural from the moment he becomes supernatural. This existence is in opposition to the laws of nature ; his power can only be a relative one, for he must work according to the natural laws. His goodness, his wisdom, and his justice are of the most doubtful nature, if we judge them from what we see happen every day around us ; or if we deduce them from what we read concerning his nature in the Jewish Bible, and the Fall of Man, who is his crowning work—so perfect that he fell at the very first temptation.

“ Nobody can really prove the existence of such a God ; even Pascal was obliged to confess that the idea he had of *his being* was only *hypothetical*. Men have an idea of a God, but the universe has nothing that can prove this idea. The idea of a God is, therefore, a human idea that has nothing in common with the nature of the universe. The theist doctrine lacks proofs. It is a mere whim, not a rational conclusion derived from the phenomena of nature.”

“ Ah, I see ! you believe in the old materialistic

system which taught that everything is the fortuitous concurrence of atoms. Let me tell you, my dear doctor, that that system is the most unphilosophical of all ; it seems to me to be the mere substitution of unknown words for an unknown cause."

"You forget, Carlton, when you call this doctrine unphilosophical, that it has been taught by philosophers of the order of Leucippus, Epicurus, Descartes, Gassendi, and many others."

"According to you," I continued, "God, Nature, or whatever you like to call the universal cause, is only the casual accumulation of all things. If this were true, this casual accumulation must be impersonal, and its actions must, of course, be unpremeditated and casual ; the result of them, therefore, must also be casual, due only to chance ; but as chance has no object, for, if it had an object, it would no longer be chance, everything according to this theory happens by chance. This we know is not true ; on the contrary, everything in nature has its object ; nothing therein takes place casually ; its constant laws direct the smallest movements of each of its parts. These laws are so exact that we can go back to the time of Thales, a great many years before Jesus, and calculate the moment in which the solar eclipse must have taken place, and afterwards search for the notice of its occurrence in the annals of history, where we find that it did take place, and in the very moment in which, according to our calculations, we supposed it to have occurred. Or we can advance

a week, a year, or a million of years, and calculate the same occurrence with equal exactitude; for there is nothing so exact as the celestial mathematics, as is proved by the law of Kepler, by means of which we can find out the distances of the planets, a law that was known in the time of Titus, and by the no less certain laws discovered by Newton concerning the attraction of the planetary bodies. All these laws are exact, and work in accordance with our calculations; thus, we can predict when a star, the least important of all, the B, for instance, of the unicorn, will pass through our meridian. We take the telescope, and at the very instant we expect it, it appears before us, as if we had directed its course by our will.

“If all these laws, so certain, so constant, that made Adams of Cambridge and Le Verrier discover, at the same time, although divided by the sea, one of the largest planets of our solar system, which had existed for some months previously, in the minds of those two great men, before its appearance came to confirm the exactitude of their calculations,—if all those laws, I ask you, were only casual, and established by the fortuitous concourse of atoms, as you pretend, do you believe that they would work with such exactitude and such constancy? Do you think that it is only chance that directs the phenomena of nature? Oh, this would be in my eyes even more absurd than to doubt of the existence of the laws themselves.”

“The arguments you have used,” answered the

doctor, "are those which are generally employed to prove the existence of certain laws by means of which the universe is worked, but they do not prove the existence of a God. I believe in those laws; who can do otherwise? but I deny that such laws imply the existence of a Supreme Being."

"But who made those laws then? The moment you allow that the universe is not a jumble of parts without system, that there is an order, a law that directs everything; the moment you allow that everything has a plan, a reason for being, you must admit the existence of the Mind which established those laws, and devised the order and the mode of operation. If not, you may just as well say that Homer wrote his *Iliad* by throwing the letters of the alphabet on the ground anyhow, without giving a thought to the action, or arranging them into words."

"You mistake my idea, Carlton. I *do* believe in those laws upon which you lay such a stress. I also believe that there is, obviously, an order in everything, a plan according to which the universe is worked; but I deny that there is such a thing as an all-powerful divinity who acts independently of laws and order, and whose sole purpose is the pleasure he derives from his own glory."

"If you believe that there is a mind that directs the universe according to certain laws, and following a certain plan, it is no use our talking any more about it, for then we both believe in the same thing, only we call it by a different name. I call it God;

you call it the fortuitous concourse of atoms. What is there in a name?"

"But what you call God is not precisely what I call nature. You believe in a power, independent of nature, which rules the universe. I hold that nature is the sole cause and the sole effect, that there exists nothing else ; for if it did, it would be unnatural."

"But that is nonsense," said Conchita, who had remained silent until then, listening to our discussion. "Begging your pardon, doctor, it seems to me that although Nature and God are two things as different as a watch and the man who made it, yet the one implies the other, for the watch must necessarily have been made by something independent of itself. This machine has its laws as well as the universe. You may just as well say that, as the watch has its laws, and goes by itself when it has been once wound up, that it made itself. I hold nature to be the sum of the things created, ruled by laws created at the same time, and which are the expression of the divine will. But those things could not have created themselves ; the fortuitous concourse of atoms, as you call it, could not create anything, for these atoms are the things themselves ; and we all know that neither man nor animal has been able to create itself."

"You speak very well, my dear Lady Carlton, but you must remember that you talk according to what the church has taught you, not according to your own judgment. Perhaps there exists something indepen-

dent of nature that governs and directs the universe, but I will never believe that that something is the God described in the Jewish Bible, or the one worshipped in the churches."

"Here comes our anxiously looked for letter from Lady C——," exclaimed Conchita, as the servant presented it to her on a silver salver; and seizing it, she tore open the envelope, saying, "It is very voluminous; how kind of her to write so much; I should so like Doctor Gray to hear what she says. Will you read it aloud, my dear Walter, it cannot fail to bear upon our present conversation, and comes most opportunely."

"Yes, indeed," I said, "and this is another proof that there is no such thing as chance, such a thing does not exist. Nor is there such a thing as a trifle; for the veriest one that we call such, may bring about the greatest results."

And as I turned up the lamp to have more light to read the letter, I could not help raising an inward prayer, that its contents might shed some light on the darkened mind of my good old tutor.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE FIRST LETTER.

CONTAINING THE NEW REVELATION CONCERNING THE NATURE OF
SPIRIT AND MATTER, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF BODIES OR
MATERIAL FORMS.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I have not forgotten my promise, although you perhaps have thought me very long in fulfilling it. I have undertaken a difficult task, but not for this reason will I shirk it, to give you in the small compass of a letter a general view of the noble doctrines I hold, and endeavour to advocate, convinced as I am, that they are destined to serve as the basis of the religion of the future. Start not at this expression, which may at first sight appear as a direct attack upon your faith. To assure you it is not so, I would say as one said of yore, "I come not to annul the Scriptures, but to *fulfil*." The same Scriptures you read to-day will be read in the future; but the light that will be brought to bear upon them will make many things clear that have till now been hidden from our sight, because, in its ignorance of natural law, the world was not prepared to understand and receive them, the same thing will happen still, with many whose minds will still adhere to the old

interpretation given by the churches, for they require authority on which to lean, and willingly surrender their right of judgment. Others, again, are not capable of judging for themselves, from want of education, intelligence, or opportunity; these also require the voice of authority and custom to be found in their various churches, and I much fear me that the churches will be the very last to enquire, and, consequently, be the last to change, contenting themselves with still adhering to the interpretation of one thousand five hundred years ago; for they have become sadly routinal; indeed, it is an integral part of church government to hold steadily on to "dogmas" and "articles," as they were framed in the far-off past—utterly oblivious that the rest of the world is not standing still, but moving on with gigantic strides through this nineteenth century; and that he on whose divine teachings their dogmas are founded, never let slip an opportunity of telling them that the doctrine he taught, beautiful and sublime as it was, *was not final*.

"Other things I have to tell ye, but ye cannot bear them now."

"And they understood none of these things."

"And this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken."

"And for this reason he spoke to them in parables, that seeing they might not perceive, and hearing they might not understand."

"And without a parable spoke he not unto them."

A strange method of teaching, surely, unless we can comprehend that a deeper meaning lay hidden in the very doctrines taught, that would some day become clear, as the human mind became capable of comprehending and receiving them.

And surely this is the *desideratum* to which all our endeavours should tend, in searching the Scriptures, to find out therein the true but hidden meaning of much that appears dark and fearful to minds of a higher calibre; and not, as but too many do, when they find that modern science, whose discoveries cannot be contradicted or put on one side, tends to contradict the *letter of the Word*, "content themselves with putting the Word itself on one side, as a mere collection of ancient fables, that cannot be reconciled with science and truth; forgetting that the letter killeth, but the spirit maketh alive." But the two are yet destined to be reconciled, and science will become the high priest of the religion of the future.

Let us, then, with the knowledge and light that we have acquired in these modern times, aided by the experience of past centuries, set to work and see if we cannot discern "the spirit" of the teaching which giveth life, lest we merit the reproach of "ye blind leaders of the blind," and all fall into the ditch together.

It is well known that the Scriptures have always required interpretation. Jesus taught in the temple, and explained passages from the book; there would have been no necessity for this, if it were so plain that

"those who run may read." But it is not so, in all cases we see but through a glass darkly, and who would dare to deny that we have but to open our eyes to be able now, to see deeper and clearer into the heights and depths than those to whom the word was first preached? Has not the microscope brought to our view even the delicate patterns painted on the tiniest deep sea shells; and revealed to us the minute and most beautiful universe of being, which has ever surrounded us, but of which we were profoundly ignorant through all those past centuries? Has not the telescope discovered to us innumerable worlds in the universe, amongst which this busy, striving, labouring, work-a-day world of ours, is steadily working its way onward towards the state of perfection to which others have doubtless attained? That it is so, we cannot doubt, when we compare the progress we have made, with the darker ages of the past through which we have struggled. "For the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together with birth pangs until now."

May we not, then, with our present superior and vaster knowledge, venture to lift a corner of that veil with which our greatest teacher, with such consummate skill, judged it expedient to envelope many of his revelations, so as to suit the age, and endeavour to see, with the light we have since acquired, as much of those hidden mysteries as it is yet possible for us to see? Future ages will see and understand more; but let us do our part, and bequeath them the

benefit of our own researches, as the primitive fathers of the church did for us to the best of their abilities. But let us not bind ourselves *for ever* to dogmas established by their councils, which were held by the dim rushlight of that distant past.

I will not enter at present into the subject of the doctrine of the re-incarnation, or resurrection *in the flesh*, as taught by Christ; for this we discussed, and, I think, agreed upon in our late conversation.

You both inquired whether I believed in *the fall of man*, and in the *divinity of Christ*, and I answered affirmatively to both those queries; but added, "*I believe, but not as the churches do.*"

You both looked at me inquiringly, as much as to say, can there then be *another* interpretation to those doctrines than that which has been blindly held for so many years, and which men throw overboard altogether when they have stepped over the boundary line, across which it no longer appears to them as a possible truth; for they have begun to learn by experience, and at the cost of deep study and ceaseless perseverance, that man was *not created perfect* from the first, but ignorant and helpless: that there is not, and never was, a royal road to learning, but that man by his own endeavours must work his way onwards and upwards, or remain for ever an ignorant savage, and the world he inhabits a barren wilderness, without cultivation or shelter, but that afforded by the natural caverns in the rocks. Where, then, on this earth was situated that paradisiacal garden of Eden

which was man's first abode? and what supreme knowledge did this perfect being possess when he was stated to be ignorant of *good and evil*, the very sum total of all the knowledge to be acquired by his utmost efforts, and the very end and object of all the trials of his earth life: the choice of good, after the bitter experience derived as the result of evil, constituting precisely the standard of, his perfection; for good is *wisdom*, being in other words conformity to the Divine plan, as evil is *ignorance*, or opposition to the Divine plan.

If man, then, was not all wise, nor all perfect, he must be a *progressive* being; and the knowledge and goodness ever before him must be endless, ever attainable, but never attained;—for the highest angel in heaven still sees an endless race of still superior beings a-head of him, to whose present stages he strives to attain, and only does so when those before him are still further advanced, a mysterious veil ever drawn between him and them, until, by his own exertions, he can penetrate to that state, which they will have already left behind them, because progress is infinite and eternal.

From whence, then, did man *fall*, if he is still so far from perfection, after all the ages that have passed? Could he have fallen from that angelic state? No, because that would be retrogression, and God's law is progress, and man is a *progressive* being, and yet a *fall* is distinctly alluded to.

The proper comprehension of the doctrine of the

"*Fall*" will help us far on our way to discover the answer to your other query, namely, the true nature of the divinity of Christ, for the two subjects are most closely connected ; and if from our present superior, but still most limited knowledge and experience, we can arrive at a more satisfactory explanation of the truth than that hidden under the flimsy veil of fable, which was given to the infancy of the human race, to suit their comprehension, in what is *still* the "Word of Truth," although a very *initial* expression of it, then surely we shall have taken a "*stumbling block*" out of the way of the philosophical and inquiring mind, and shall still leave it the comfort of a divine friend and guardian on whom to lean in times of trial and adversity. As he said, who knew our need, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Those who, in what they consider their superior knowledge, have pronounced Christ to be one like themselves, discarding the beautiful and comforting truth that they have a truly divine Friend and Brother, who is also a loving Lord and master, on whom to lean in sorrow and in joy ; have ignorantly thrown away the only real blessing and comfort of their existence ; and must henceforth wander *alone* through all the pains and trials of the mazes of an earthly life ; and will often find their cold mathematical philosophy fail them at the hour of need, when the soul awakens to find itself alone, like a frightened child in the dark.

I think, then, that I am justified in calling the

views I hold a noble doctrine, if they can reconcile science with the Word, and give comfort and support to the philosophical and scientific mind, who, because it has outgrown the rudimentary teachings of its infancy, has discarded, in but too many instances, not only the Christ of the New Testament, but the very Creator of the universe, whose stupendous marvels it prefers to attribute to the fortuitous combination of atoms; in other words, to blind chance, rather than to the wisdom of the divine mind, which it fails to perceive in the capricious and cruel tyrant they now see in the Jehovah of the old dispensation.

The "vision of God," to which each spirit will eventually attain, is simply the result of *the unfolding* of its own powers of seeing, its growth in *science* rendering visible to it more and more of the divine operation, and its growth in *purity* bringing it into more intimate sympathy with divine perfection.

It was not possible that the truth as perceived by the nineteenth century could have been inculcated into the infant mind of the first races of the earth; the little they were permitted to see was truth to them. But as it is always "the inspiration of the Almighty that giveth understanding," so all the religious beliefs of the earth must be admitted to have emanated from the same source; although the truths contained in them necessarily have been more or less clouded and perverted, by the ignorance and prejudices of the various eras in which they took

their rise ; and therefore all those specially Mediumistic writings which the world has spontaneously accepted as constituting its "inspired Scriptures," or "Sacred Books," inevitably abound in misconceptions and imperfect or erroneous statements, because they all partake more or less of the spirit of the particular character of the medium or channel through which they were given, as you will perceive by comparing the writings of Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, &c., &c. Yet as they have all proceeded from the *same source*, they all agree in certain fundamental teachings, and as we cannot suppose that the divine over-ruling would permit the inculcation of unmixed falsehood, while expecting to find the creeds of all ages overlaid with heaps of accumulated rubbish, we may also expect that the sifting of these will yield some grains of living seed that will justify the injunction of Christ, to "*search the scriptures.*"

As the latter Jewish writings, to which we have given the name of the "New Testament," were not written till long after his time, it is evident that he could not have alluded to *them* ; and it is also evident that Jesus, whose teachings invariably asserted the brotherhood of *all mankind*, could not have intended to restrict the term "Scriptures" only to the earlier Jewish writings, to which we have given the name of "Old Testament," but must have had in his mind the religious lore of all the earth, thus including the wonderfully beautiful bibles of the far-off East, and the mystic teachings of the North.

The eminent philosopher Ballanche says in regard to "Faith"—"I understand inspiration in a larger sense, as shining above all creeds, and I employ the word "Scriptures" to express the generality of human traditions, the "universal religion of the human race."

Saint Paul, when exalting the teaching of Christ, claims for it that it is a later wave of the *same* world-wide stream of spiritual influx through which the same divine wisdom had previously conveyed its instructions—"God, who at *sundry times* and in *divers places*," according, of course, to the needs and degrees of receptivity of those various times, the earlier generations of our common humanity. Saint Paul elsewhere emphatically declares, "The very same God who, in all ages, and under various forms, has been more or less ignorantly worshipped," &c.

That Christ intended to direct our attention to ALL the writings that could enlighten us in regard to the nature of immortality is indicated in the very form of his injunction. For in telling us to "search" the medianimic writings referred to, he distinctly implies that what we are to seek in them is something which, though really there, is nevertheless *hidden*, and can only be discovered by us, not through a blind and wholesale swallowing of those writings, which is fully as unwise as their blind and wholesale rejection, but through a careful, open-eyed ascertainment of their converged indications, a proving of all the various ideas contained in them, as a condition of the holding fast of that which, after this broad ex-

amination and comparison, shall commend itself to our best judgment as "good."

In order to give you some idea of the views beginning to be so generally held by the most developed and intelligent minds on the continent of Europe, and which are the result of their search through the "hidden things" of the world's Scriptures, I must borrow largely from the writings of the best of their expositors, and particularly from those of Miss Blackwell, as I consider her to be foremost amongst the searchers, and to have been most evidently guided in her search by a higher light than is often vouchsafed to mortal mind; and also because in her earnest desire to promulgate the noble and enlarged views she holds as the result of her labours, she will not grudge me one sentence that I quote from her published work, but will, on the contrary, rejoice deeply, should it prove useful in awakening one serious reflection on the profound and interesting subject to which we are both so earnestly devoted.

As I must necessarily limit myself very much, I can but put you on the track, and give you but a very limited glance of this vast subject, whose magnitude will astonish you, as its vista gradually opens out before your eyes; let me advise you to read for yourselves, "*Les quatre Evangiles expliqués en Esprit et en Vérité, ou Révélation de la Révélation*," published in Paris at the Librarie Centrale, by J. B. Roustaing; and Miss Blackwell's papers, in the pages of "*Human Nature*," a monthly journal of zoistic

science, published at the Progressive Library, 15 Southampton Row, which journal highly deserves to become very generally known and read. The papers I allude to are but the initiatory chapters to a far greater work this highly privileged lady is at present engaged upon, and which, as it has been said, will make of her the pioneer, or rather "The banner-bearer of the most advanced thought yet formulated in this planet." She is astonished herself at the grandeur of the subject, the deeper she goes into it, and her only prayer is to be allowed to complete the labour of love she knows herself to have been called upon to commence. She writes to me in these words, "When I feel discouraged at seeing the months and years slipping by without its being completed, I seem often to see a curtain rise, and the full majesty and beauty of this wonderful view of the universe stands before me in such glory, that I think I shall surely be enabled to work it out, so that those who are ready for it may have it brought before them in available form. When, after a gaze into the 'new heavens and the new earth in which dwelleth righteousness,' as I see them, I look back into the world around me, the crude follies, the monstrous errors, the fragmentary glimmerings of partially seen, isolated bits of truth, I think "surely I shall not be allowed to crumble away into decrepitude until my work is done."

The eager search after Spiritual phenomena now going on in all countries, and in all parts of the world, is evidently meant to open the way for the ultimate

reception of this magnificent revelation of the Spiritual side of nature, which alone can explain so much that can never be explained without it. Undoubtedly *the many* are not yet ready to accept these views, so widely opposed to common notions, yet so persistently inculcated *under veils* by every missionary who has ever been sent into the planet ; but a few are ready ; *they* will gradually accept, and from them the views will filter down into the minds of lower advancement ; for I am told, and can readily believe, that this new Revelation of the true laws of Being is destined to change the current of thought for England, as it has already begun to do for the Continent.

“ The Divine activity having created from all eternity, *matter* and *spirit* may be said to be eternal ; but all *spirits as individuals*, and all material forms as such, have been called into existence, at some definite epoch, by the action of the creative thought.

The distinctive attribute of the Divine Being is the creative power, in virtue of which, He is the cause, of which we and all created things are the effect ; and no effect can ever, by any exertion of power, or through any process of development, be made to become its own cause.

The creative process originating in the unimaginable self-existence of God, is necessarily quite beyond our comprehension ; the nearest idea we can form to ourselves of the nature of that process, is said to be, that the divine thought gradually assumes a state of

concretion, only to be remotely imagined by us as that of a fluid, of a subtlety absolutely inconceivable by our present organs of thought, and, in comparison to which, the light of the sun is immeasurably denser, darker, grosser, more inert, than are iron or granite compared with electricity.

This primordial fluid—matrix and generator of the universe—is not God, but is the first *substantiator* of the efflux of creative thought.

Its molecules, in their essence (quite out of reach of our observation or comprehension), are the substratum and continent of all the possible modes, forms, and attributes of derived existence that are to be progressively evolved from them through their successive combinations, condensations, and transformations, effected by the attractive and repellant interactions upon them of the vast arsenal of cosmic forces (derivations from the forces inherent in self-existent being). They are sometimes termed ‘Imponderables,’ or ‘Fluids,’ and are forces, for the most part, unknown to us, but with a few of whose modes of action we are beginning to make acquaintance, as light, caloric, magnetism, electricity, vitality, thought, &c.

That evolution gives rise to *three* orders or modes of “Substantiality,” namely, that of *Spirit*, or Psychic substance; that of *Matter*, or Corporeal substance; and that of *Magnetic Force*, or Dynamic substance, which is said to partake of the nature of both the other modes, and is the intermediary between them.

Let me *endeavour*, with the light of this *new* revelation, to explain the hitherto unexplainable, namely, *What is Spirit*, and *What is Matter*.*

Spirit is an immaterial entity, the substance of Derived Intelligence in its two modes of action, as Affection (or Will) and Thought. It is evolved from the most subtle elements of the Primordial Fluid, as it exists previously to that phase of concretion which produces the Cosmic matter; that is admitted by all modern astronomers to occupy Universal Space, and to contain, in a highly attenuated state, the constituents of all material forms.

It constitutes an order of entity independent of Space and Time, and is therefore *persistent* and *indestructible*. Destined to be individualized into 'souls,' its state, as it first exists in connection with matter, is analogous to diffusion: impersonal, and consequently without consciousness. The illimitable possibilities of its nature, which are susceptible of endless development through conjunction with matter, existing only in a state of catalepsy or latency, until gradually awakened to life and activity by the reactions of the material incorporations, which, through the formative and vitalizing energies of the Magnetic forces, it is made successively to accrete and animate, in the course of an education occupying periods so long as to be only vaguely imaginable by us.

* It is unfortunately difficult to condense such deep thought, and to find easy language in which to convey ideas on subjects hitherto considered unexplainable.

While thus intimately connected with Matter, on which it depends absolutely for individualization and manifestation, Spirit always remains essentially distinct from Matter, with which it can only enter into relation through the intermediary of the Magnetic forces, which are the instruments by which it attracts to itself the elements of the *ascending series* of material bodies which effect changes in its state, condensing, individualizing, educating, and refining it.

Matter is the ultimatum of the Primordial Fluid, under the form of atoms, into the phase of manifestation, or corporeality.

As the element of Form, it exists in *two states*, which give rise to two realms, namely, the "*Fluidic*," Imponderable, or Etherealized state in which it exists in inter-stellar space, and the "*Compact*," or Ponderable state in which it exists at the surface of planets.

The various states in which the elements of aqueous matter are known to exist on our globe—as ice, water, steam—and in the gaseous form—as oxygen and hydrogen—may help us to form some idea, though a very imperfect one, of all those susceptibilities of modification inherent in material substance in the ethereal state.

We know that all the materials of which our globe is composed were once in a state of fusion, result of the partial arrest, and consequent conversion into heat, of the original movement of the molecules of the Cosmic matter in the process of condensation,

which segregated that matter into the globular form ; and thus gave birth to our solar system, and to the other bodies of the Milky Way to which it belongs. We know that if the earth's motion should be arrested, the shock of its stoppage, by re-converting the sum of its movement into a corresponding sum of heat, would re-convert its entire substance into vapour.

As the most practical of our scientific men admit that the matter of which our globe is composed, is proved by geological research to have existed already in states very diverse from those in which we now find it, they must also admit that the material element may be susceptible of existing in other states than those yet known to us, and that the tremendous Forces existing, and active, in the interstices of Space, may be capable of constituting, "in heaven and earth," bases of sentient and active life in modes not hitherto "dreamt of in our philosophy."

The Magnetic Forces, which are intermediary between the Spiritual and Material elements, are also substantial entities, but of a nature utterly out of reach of our present means of analysis or comprehension.

They are declared to be intelligent, but in a mode that is yet more elementary than what we call *instinct*; for they are without self-consciousness, and consequently without power of choice or self-direction. They fill all space, and are perpetually active; their action is incessant, ubiquitous,

transcending the limitations of Space and Time, and constituting the normal and permanent magnetic net-work that holds planets to their suns, and suns to one another, throughout Immensity—determining also the varying proportions of atoms and interstices, of which the various densities and qualities of material bodies are the result.

The phenomena of existence can only be produced through the *conjunction* of Spirit and Matter; and these two elements can only be brought *into conjunction* by the Magnetic element.

The Spiritual (or Psychic) element is the constitutive and controlling principle which determines the formation, consequently the *class* and *quality*, of the various orders of *bodies* on which it is dependent for manifestations and for consciousness.

The Material element furnishes the inert atoms, which are thus grouped into form under the direction of Spirit.

The Magnetic Force, in its infinitely various modes and degrees, is the *agent* through whose instrumentality the Spiritual element produces from the Material element all the bodies of the universe, inorganic and organic.

Every state of the Spirit element determines corresponding vibrations of the Magnetic element, which, effecting corresponding aggregations of the atoms of the Material element, produce the 'form,' or 'body,' which is the outward and material expression of that particular state.

These 'bodies,' or 'moulds,' serve as the educators of the Spirit substance, to which they give temporary form, and by which they are *animated* during the *temporary conjunctions* of Spirit and Matter that produce the ascending series of the "natural reigns."

The Spirit element, in virtue of the *correspondence between moral states and physical qualities*, attracts, as the constituents of its 'body,' particles of matter more or less "*compact*," more or less "*fluidic*," according to *the degree of its moral and intellectual stage of advancement*.

It is now revealed to us that Cosmic Matter exists in the universe in *two states*, the *Fluidic* and the *Compact*.

The *Fluidic State* is declared to be the normal state of Matter, the *Compact State* being a result of the 'condensation' of those elements on the surface of Planets. But the difference between these two states of Matter—which it is said to be impossible to explain to us until we have discovered much more of the nature and action of the 'fluids' and 'forces' amidst which we live—is not simply one of density; for the vaporization of compact matter does not render it fluidic, and the "*fluidic sphere*" of our earth comprises a vast gradation of regions corresponding in density or levity to the backwardness or advancement of its inhabitants, some of whose bodies that we call Spiritual are almost as dense as our own.

The sole aim of the processes of Creation is, first, the individualization of Spiritual substance out of the

state analogous to diffusion, in which it originally exists in connection with Cosmic matter, into *conscious personalities*, endowed with the rudiments of all the mental, moral, and affective qualities ; and, next, the *education* of those personalities into correspondents, in the Finite mode, of the Divine Perfection ; and as these processes have always been going on, so there have always been hosts of spirits at all stages of development ; from the first dim glimmerings of self-consciousness, to the state of wisdom, purity, and power, in which, having freed ourselves from the ignorance and selfishness which place us in antagonism to the Divine Will, we attain to the state in which, according to the sublime foreshadowing of Christ, we "*have life in ourselves, as he has life in himself,*" by receiving directly, and without the necessity of a *Mediator* or intermediary, the influx of the Creative Thought : and are thus able, as he promised, "*to do the works that he does,*" having attained to be the more immediate depositaries and instruments of the Divine Volition.

That Volition creates in the fluidic mode all the elements of the universe, but leaves to the higher ranks of already educated spirits, the task of guiding and directing the formative action of the Magnetic element, and thus of conducting the education of each younger mass of Spirit, through conjunction with Matter, from the earliest point of its rudimental, pre-personal development, through its construction of the consecutive series of the 'bodies' of the Mineral,

Vegetable, and Animal reigns, up to its individualization into distinct personalities; and next, from that point of Spirit infancy, to the attainment of the *relative* "Perfection" which enables them to take, in their turn, a directing part in the constructive and educational evolutions of the universe.

"*A Spirit*" is a complex being, in which is a trinity, consisting of a soul, or inner principle of conscious and active selfhood; a permanent soul envelope (*Nephesch*), which I will call Perisprit,* composed of the "Dynamic substance," which is the substantiality of Magnetism and Electricity; and a *changeable outer envelope*, or "body," composed of particles of Matter, attracted and held together by the magnetic action of the said Perisprit, or Spirit Body, and that will fall apart from each other, and be resolved into their original elements on

* The Perisprit, or Spiritual body, spoken of by St Paul in these words, "*there is a spiritual body*" (1 Cor. xv. 44), is possessed by every living soul, or this soul could not be. To use a homely comparison, we could not have a glass of water without the glass; it must have a *container*. The Perisprit is the casket, or container of the soul; without it, the individualized soul (individualized from the elementary "mass") could not manifest itself, either in the flesh or out of the flesh. It is the real man. The man that we see, and touch with our material senses, is not the real man, but merely the material clothing, or outward body, formed of the material '*atoms*' that the Spiritual body has *magnetically* accreted to itself for the time being; which outward body, as we know, is ever changing, by the processes of digestion and respiration. When a limb has been amputated, or paralysed, the patient still feels that he can use his leg, or press the hand of his friend: endless instances are known in confirmation of this. It is that the Spirit body, or *real man*, ever exists, and is *indestructible*. Neither has death any power over it.

the cessation of the perispritic vibrations by which they were agglomerated into form ; as particles of iron, for instance, would be drawn into shape by the attractive vibrations of a magnet of any given form plunged into their midst ; as we are perpetually, although unconsciously, building up for ourselves a succession of new bodies, through the magnetic processes of digestion.

So that the Spirit element, in the highest as in the lowest 'reigns,' that make up the long series of its *progressive embodiments*, from the gas through the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human, to the angel and Elohim, does not *enter into, or take possession of*, the innumerable forms it temporarily animates, but *constructs those* forms by a correspondential grouping together of material atoms, according to its moral and intellectual states, through the instrumentality of the magnetic force of its Perisprit (or Spirit Body).

The ascending series that is constituted by the progressive forms of the lower reigns is therefore *not* the result of a *progressive development of lower into higher forms*. In other words, that which progresses is not the *material form* accreted by the action of the Spirit element, but *the Spirit element itself*.

For the moral and intellectual state of the soul decides the corresponding magnetic action of its *Perisprit*, and therefore decides the nature of the Material body which is formed by that action ; and as the nature of the Perisprit (or *Spiritual body*) which the soul thus

forms for itself decides the mode in which, through the instrumentality of that body, it acts upon, and is reacted upon, by the material elements around it, the state of the soul, at any given period of its existence, decides the character of the "world," or surroundings with which, through its outward and material body, it is brought into communication, as shadowed forth by the declaration of Christ, "The kingdom of heaven is *within you*."

However concise I have endeavoured to be, the magnitude of the subject renders it impossible for me to give you even the general outline of it in a single letter; and this is already so voluminous, that I will now come to a full stop, and send you the remainder in a few days. Trusting that it has interested you sufficiently to make you look forward to receiving it with some degree of interest, I remain, my dear friends, very sincerely yours,

M. C.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE SECOND LETTER.

CONTAINING THE NEW REVELATION CONCERNING THE REAL NATURE
OF THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST.

I NEED scarcely say that we were impatient for the arrival of the next letter, which was to continue a subject of such deep interest to all of us ; for this new theory of existence—this new view of creation, and of its aim and object, namely, the individualization and education of spirit through the various grades of material forms, or moulds, in each of which it was destined to learn the lesson appropriate to its degree of advancement, which alone could prepare it for understanding the lesson that was to follow it—appeared to us so plausible, so philosophic, that even Dr John Gray, the openly avowed atheist, declared, “that as far as he had read, it was the most satisfactory theory he had yet heard of the aim and object of existence, and also the only account he had ever been able to obtain of the nature of, and distinction between, spirit and matter ;” and he added,

“We have got an explanation of a third element into the bargain. I shall not easily forget the dynamic force theory—whose electricity and magne-

tism certainly fills the universe, and holds planets to their suns, and suns to one another throughout immensity. A tremendous fact only now beginning to be understood through the discoveries of modern science."

"Certainly your friend will have written to some purpose," he continued, "if she ends by making a believer of me; for when people have talked to me about spirit, I have always posed them by asking, What is spirit? And have sometimes received by way of answer, the question, 'What is matter?' and then my interlocutor and I have remained staring at each other like a couple of fools. But henceforth I shall look very wise, and slowly answer, '*My dear friend, matter is the ultimatum of the primordial fluid, under the form of atoms, into the phase of manifestation or corporeality.*' Your lady friend deals in long words," he added.

"And do not forget," I said, referring to the letter, "that spirit is evolved from the more subtle elements of the primordial fluid *previous* to the evolvment of matter, and that it is the substance of derived intelligence in its two modes of action, as *affection* (or *will*) and *thought*." The *intelligence* alluded to means, of course, our heavenly Father, whom we call 'God,' who has the essence in Himself of every good quality of which our spirits are partakers through the spark of the divine nature which animates us, and which we have received from Him because he is our Father. For God is love itself,

goodness itself, wisdom itself. The *qualities* alluded to in the letter, as evolved from the elements of the primordial fluid, previous to the concretion of cosmic matter, are *affection* and *thought*, which I can understand as the controlling principle that determines the *class* and *quality* of the various orders of bodies on which it is dependent for manifestation and consciousness. And as we cultivate and improve our ruling love or affection, which is our *will*, or, in other words, our very selves, for what a man loves that he wills, we must necessarily improve our very selves or spirits—which is the animating principle of every outward form. I can therefore understand that we are perpetually and for ever rising, or mounting, the ascending ladder of progress, or of ‘illimitable possibilities,’ as our friend calls it. As our ruling *affection*, *love*, or *will* improves, our thoughts must necessarily follow in its wake, and become higher and nobler; the *magnetic sphere that surrounds us* must improve, and its ceaseless vibrations must attract a higher order of material atoms with which to build up our bodies, which we know are changing every day. It is a philosophy in harmony with the advance of scientific discovery.”

“Dr Gray remarked that our friend, Lady C., deals in long words,” said Conchita; “but you must bear in mind the magnitude of the subject, the profundity and vastness of the views set forth, and that new ideas must require new words in which to express them; at all events it would be difficult to

explain them in every-day language, for when we are dwelling upon the greatness of the Creator of the universe, our thoughts become elevated, and our language will follow the elevation of our thoughts."

"At all events," said the doctor, "I can perceive, by what has already been set forth, that the new theory, or doctrine, which your friend says is so generally held on the Continent, contains thought enough to fill not only pages, but volumes; and I shall certainly obtain the writings she mentions, and study them with great attention; but, in the meantime, I hope you will not forget my interest in the views set forth, and will gratify my curiosity by sending me a peep of the promised letter as soon as you can spare it."

"You may be very sure we will do so, dear friend," I answered, and as some of my readers may feel as much interest and curiosity in continuing the subject, as did my worthy and beloved old tutor, I hasten to transcribe the letters which we subsequently received from our kind friend, Lady C——, on this truly sublime subject, *The Law of Progress*, which is the law of the universe, established by the Divine Wisdom from all eternity.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I left my first letter at a very Darwinian, or rather anti-Darwinian point of my subject; for, contrary to the hypothesis of that eminent observer, I stated that the ascending series of the lower reigns is *not* the result of a progressive development of lower into higher forms, for no such develop-

ment is possible to the unintelligent matter of which they are composed.

The material atoms which constitute those forms can neither progress nor change at all—the molecule of iron is still the molecule of iron, whether it form part of our blood, or whether it is incorporated in a rusty old nail.

The body, whether animal or human, is an association of molecules composed of atoms, but these atoms are inert and passive, although indestructible. They enter the organism through alimentation, through respiration, and are replaced by others, when they leave, to form parts of other organisms.

The human, like all other bodies, is renewed every few months, not a particle remaining of what had formed its blood and bone. The atmosphere is the great medium of circulation by which these atoms travel from one body to another. Present living organisms are formed from the ashes of the dead, every particle of our material composition has formed part of some other body either now living or dead; and were the dead to rise again in the manner that was once believed they literally were to do (a church dogma, remnant of a darker age, which still finds some believers amongst those who do not reflect upon the absurdity of such an impossibility, or believe in *St Paul's doctrine of a spiritual body*), the last comers would find many fragments wanting with which to complete their former earthly casket; for the molecules that had formed them have been absorbed

through the breath or the appetite of a thousand other living beings.

That which can never die, the indestructible and animating *spirit*, is that which rises again and again as it has ever risen, and will ever continue to rise, either in this planet or in a higher one, as it progresses, and will construct for itself an outward body from the inert material atoms of that planet—by the *correspondential* grouping together of material atoms (*corresponding* to its moral and intellectual states), through the instrumentality of the magnetic forces of its Perisprit (Spirit body), because each *form is the exact correspondential* result of some special action of the Spirit element at each definite point of its development.

The hypothesis arrived at by the eminent observer alluded to was a magnificent *approach* to the explanation now given by a new revelation to humanity: and that could only be arrived at through a broader generalization than could be attained from the standpoint of *merely human observation*.

This *new revelation* teaches us that the *self-development* of the spiritual element is begun at the *lowest stage of existence*, the earliest phase of the conjunction of spirit and matter being of an elemental character, only vaguely imaginable by us, as that of *extremest attenuation*.

Cosmic matter exists in a state of diffusion throughout space, and the Psychic or Spirit element, in magnetic relation with it, exists in a mode *analogous* to that diffusion.

When in the ultimatum in time of the Eternal purpose, a Sidereal Universe is to be formed in any region of space, the Spiritual and Material elements of which it is to be composed, and in which are inherent the laws that will regulate its formation, and the *Magnetic Forces* by which that formation will be accomplished, are brought *in situ* by analogous processes of condensation effected through the action of these forces, and are subjected to the attractions and repulsions that will result in the formation of the various orders of globes of which it will be composed, and of the *intelligencies* (with their spontaneously-accreted material forms) by which those globes will be peopled.

Each globe of every solar system is thus evolved from the elements furnished by the Creative Fluid, under the guidance of a vast host of spirits of an earlier creation* (who are still pursuing their education in the far higher state to which they have *attained*); among whom are distributed the various processes involved in the formation of a planet, and under whose superintendence the Spiritual substance, destined to animate its future inhabitants, is made to accomplish the *first phase* of its education, through conjunction with planetary matter in the incandescent and gaseous states of the Plutonic period. These Spirits all act under the supreme direction of "a Christ," or Presiding Spirit, who, having begun his existence at the same initial point at which we and all Spirits

* The "*Ministering Spirits doing His Will.*"

begin our career, has already *arrived* at the elevation of the Sidereal degree.

These glorious "anointed" ones, these stainless *unfallen* "Christs,"* the greatest, because the most advanced, of the spiritual beings of the universe, the "Elohim," who, as the immediate recipients and executors of the will of the Creator, "are *called* Gods," and to whom, as the *immediate* instruments of the Creator, "all power is given in heaven and in earth," *i.e.*, in the Fluidic and Material spheres of their respective planetary "kingdoms," are the representatives (the express image) of the splendour and perfection of the divinity, *to the humanities* over whose educational destiny they preside; and are thus really the *Mediators*, or intermediaries, between God and man.

The only conception we can arrive at in regard to the 'substance' of God, being that of Infinite Love, while the only conception that we can arrive at in regard to the 'Form' or 'Person' of God being that of Infinite Wisdom, and these great spirits having *attained* to a state in which they participate both in that love and wisdom, they may be said, not merely in the figurative language of oriental hyperbole, but in a certain real, though purely spiritual sense, to be, through the *love* with which they are animated, "the brightness of the glory" of God, and through the *wisdom* with which they are filled, to be "*the express image of his person*;" (expressed or manifested to human perceptions).†

* Christos, from the Greek verb *Chriô*, *to anoint*.

† As Christ said, "He who has seen me, has seen the Father."

But as Effect must necessarily remain eternally distinct from, and inferior to, its Cause, they are, and must for ever remain, absolutely distinct and apart from, and inferior to, the one, sole, unique, all-containing Creator, whose essential self-existence can never be communicated to, nor even understood by any, even the highest, the purest, the most luminous (with reflected light) of the creatures who, whatever the glory of their slowly attained elevation, are only a product of the Ineffable, Unspeakable, Unapproachable, Creative Thought.

The "Christs" of the universe are as numerous as the globes that occupy immensity, each one of which has its "*unfallen*," protecting and guiding Ruler. By this Ruler it was originally evolved from the incandescent fluids of the cosmic chaos; and, as an "Elder Brother," he will lead the humanity of his planet up to the point at which they also, through the same direct reception of the divine influx, will *have life in themselves*, and will acquire the capacity of doing in their turn the "*works*" that he had previously done. Ay! and the "*yet greater works*" that being successively accomplished by him, will also be afterwards accomplished by them, as they follow the example of his eternal progression, on the path of the *constantly expanding knowledge*, and inexhaustible possibilities of universal existence, continuing *for ever*, throughout the cycles of unending duration, to "*go to the Father*."

The inexhaustible, all-absorbing, and divinely

beautiful subject of the Presiding Spirits, or Christs of the universe; is the very highest and brightest that human thought or human pen can dwell upon, of all created beings, because they have already attained to the nearest degree of the divine perfection which human imagination can comprehend,—so much so, that in his utter ignorance of the *true* nature of the relations of derived existence, man has committed the sin, or rather the *error* (because it is a *sin of ignorance*), of confounding with, and of worshipping as deity, the Christ of our own planet.

It is stated that each Christ sharing the divine prescience in all that concerns the work he has undertaken, foresees every detail of the action of the humanity of his planet, in the spontaneous use they will make of their free-will; and knows before he forms that planet out of the incandescent nebula from which it is to be evolved, what will be their *besetting sin*; (stated to be in the case of the humanity of our planet the tendency to Polytheism, and belief in the efficacy of sacrificial “atonement,” of rites, ceremonies, and observances, and the intrinsic utility of ecclesiastical authority); and shapes his plans accordingly, for curing them of that general sin, and thus “redeeming” them, not from the *results* of their individual *sins*, which they will have to expiate; and the mischievous results of which, they will have to repair, *each one for himself*, in his own person, until he has cured himself of his own particular evil inclinations; but from the general tendency to sin,

by enabling them to get rid of the ignorance and impurity of which it is the outgrowth. For this purpose, it is said that every Christ finds it necessary to *descend himself* into the material sphere of his planet, at *various* periods of its development, and still oftener to employ the medianimically inspired utterances and action of certain chosen instruments, members of the humanities of his planet, or of the same solar system ; who demand to be allowed to incarnate themselves in his planet, in order more rapidly to advance their own progress through the impetus they may thus be enabled to give to its humanity in some branch of development.

Humanised spirits, who have worked their way up to a nearer approach towards the state of fluidity, from which they had lapsed, are often thus employed. All great discoveries in science, industry, and art, all *progressive* religious movements, are declared to be produced by the action of the more advanced spirits of a planet who, from to time, re-incarnate themselves in its humanity expressly to quicken some branch of its progress.

In considering the momentous subject of human progress, and of the agencies by which this progress is carried on under the direction of the presiding spirit or " Christ " of each planet : we have to bear in mind, in the first place, that it is actually impossible for the agents of the Supreme Intelligence, who are charged to assist our advancement, to act upon us otherwise than through the employment of means

adapted to our ignorance, and the false ideas we have formed as a consequence of that ignorance. And, in the next place, the *real aim* of our lives in the flesh being the development of our faculties, and the formation of our character, for the accomplishment of which the knowledge of facts is only a *means*; it would be an injury to the educational character of our lives, were we to be assisted to a knowledge of facts (supposing such a mechanical infusion of knowledge possible). Such knowledge, if it is to be of any real use in forming and developing our characters and faculties, must at least *seem* to come as the result of our own individual inquiry, or of the collective inquiry of the humanity to which we belong.

We are assured that, in the flesh, we never accomplish any work without the occult aid of our unseen guides; yet, as our *development* is the aim of these providentially appointed helpers, it is clearly necessary we must be left to *seem* to find out, through an advance in natural science, due ostensibly to *our own* efforts, the true meaning of appearances which often lead us to form very false conclusions—some of which last for many thousand years; as, for instance, that our small earth was the motionless centre of a revolving universe. For if a messenger from some higher (more advanced) planet had announced to us, in the earlier days of astronomic observation, the true motions of the heavenly bodies, we, not being then prepared for such an announcement, should not have believed him.

Or suppose, for argument's sake, that we had believed a statement contradicted by the evidence of our senses—as, for instance, that the earth moves—such an acceptance, *upon authority*, of an announcement which our general ignorance of natural science would have made it impossible for us to understand, would have been hurtful rather than beneficial; for it would have prevented the patient, laborious investigations of succeeding ages, to which we owe the discoveries of modern astronomy; or, in other words, of a course of mental training, whose results are incomparably greater than even the knowledge of the facts themselves. The advance which has been made by human thought, through the patient exertions man has had to make in his search after knowledge, has called his reasoning powers into action, and has developed his mental capacity in a manner that has been far more beneficial to his progress than even the knowledge of the facts themselves; an educational principle applicable to every branch of human inquiry, which explains why it is that our progress is so slow, and has to be achieved amidst so much that appears to be discrepant and contradictory.

It cannot, therefore, be too clearly borne in mind, in inquiring into the means which our presiding “Christ” has combined for our instruction, that the need of teaching implies *imperfection* in those who are to be taught, and that this imperfection *implies the necessity of a progressive* adaptation of means to

ends, in the educational processes by which that imperfection is to be removed.

The ore does not go at once into the hands of the goldsmith and the graver, but passes up to them through the various preparatory operations which, by separating the dross from the metal, gradually fits the gold for being worked up into the jewel and the crown.

On looking back upon the history of progress in our planet, we see that we have always learned in every branch of human enquiry,—as for instance, in our slowly-arrived-at comprehension of the rising and setting of the heavenly bodies just alluded to, —first by the observation of facts that fall under the perception of our senses, and the acceptance of the apparent surface meaning of those facts ; and next by the development (through the study of those facts) of a higher power of observation ; so that with every increase of our knowledge we have also acquired *an increase of mental power* far more valuable than even the knowledge itself.

The missions performed among the humanity of a planet, under the direction of its presiding “ Christ,” are therefore necessarily *proportioned to the various degrees of receptivity* of the different families of that humanity. They therefore reflect the imperfections and shortcomings of the times, and social states in which they take place, and with which it is necessary for them to harmonize sufficiently to ensure their acceptance by those whose advancement they are in-

tended to subserve.* First by an unreasoning acceptance, and next by the substitution of the higher conception of universal relations to which that earlier lesson will have been the means of leading them on.

Thus the same presiding wisdom which provides the grass for the sheep, the grain of seed for the bird, milk for the infant, and "strong meat" for the man, deposes a teacher of Fetish-worship to tribes incapable of assimilating any higher form of religious ideas, and sends a Confucius, a Pythagoras, a Zoroaster, a Buddha, a Moses, a Mahomet, to those nations whose special idiosyncrasy and degree of development each form of teaching is best adapted, and whose moral and intellectual progress will be advanced thereby.

This dispensing of the appropriate modicum of truth, in harmony with the receptivity of those to whom it is sent, unavoidably necessitates a subsequent sending from time to time of Reformers, charged to clear away the accumulation of false interpretations which have covered the germ of truth originally set forth. These are often a re-incarnation of the first promulgators, as, for instance, we know John the Baptist to have been Elias.

Hence the need of a succession of progressive "revelations," i.e., re-veilings, the replacing of one veil by another a little less opaque, as we become capable of understanding, and profiting by, a somewhat less obscured view of what is about us. Our *educable imperfection*

* As the simple, child-like, allegorical style of all early Scripture plainly testifies.

necessarily implying successive modifications of ourselves and our beliefs, as the sole condition of our advancement towards higher states, it is equally inevitable, as it is unimportant, that we can only receive, at any given point of our progress, the partial and consequently imperfect view of any truth which, corresponding to that point, must necessarily, when we reach a higher point, be *superseded by a broader view corresponding to that higher point*. And, therefore, while we have no more reason to despise or condemn the re-veilings of the primitive "faiths" that, with all their opacities, have helped us onward, than has the youth to be scornful of the bread and milk, and the picture-alphabet that aided him in his infancy. The attempt to *confine* the efforts of expanding thought *within those primitive formulas* is as evidently insensate as would be the corresponding endeavour to restrain the youth or the man to the food, the lessons, or the garments of his infancy.

Progress being infinite, it is evident that, as no formula can ever be an exhaustive expression of truth in any branch of knowledge, no formula can ever be final; and consequently that no formula can ever be anything more than a summing-up of the attainment of some given epoch of human thought, or can ever be useful except as a stimulus and stepping-stone to farther progress.

And this statement which, in the nature of things, must necessarily be true in regard to all other formulas, is emphatically true in regard to the

formulas which express our religious beliefs, because Religion—as the science and sentiment of the relations of Derived Existences to one another and to the self-existent Creator in whom they have their being, from whom they all proceed, and to whom they all tend—is only, and can only be, *the result* of our progress in every other department of knowledge and of life, and *must therefore change and expand* with every modification and expansion of our experience.

In another letter I will apply this principle of *gradual progression*, of whose action we have now taken a general view, to the elucidation of the subject of our successive lives in flesh, alluded to in the solemn declaration of Christ. “You *must* be born again,” as the providentially-appointed condition of the “regeneration” which is to enable all spirits who have become humanised, through the accretion of material bodies, *to regain* at length the fluidic (*i.e.*, highly spiritualised) level from which they have “*fallen*.”

I have endeavoured in this communication to condense some of the writings of Miss Blackwell, whose published papers* have assisted me to give you a general idea of the most advanced thought that has ever been formulated on this planet. This I most confidently assert, because, after much search and inquiry after truth, it is the only view that comes home to me as such. To you, dear friend, it will be

* *Vide the Monthly Journal*, “Human Nature,” for 1870, vol. iv.

the same, "*if ye can understand*," for *all* cannot now see the truth when presented to them, any more than when Christ so often pronounced those words, although he was the highest promulgator of truth that ever spoke on earth. He came from God, and yet many said "he hath a devil." As it was then, so it is now, and so it will ever be, because as every one is at a different stand-point, so there can be no *stand-point* for truth—it is only to be found in progression—which is the first law of creation.

Every human being must be his own revelator ; he interprets his own nature, and sees the Divine Being from the particular stand-point he has reached ; as he ascends higher, he will have a larger horizon, and must ever see more and more the higher he goes.

God is God from the creation ;

Truth alone is man's salvation :

But the God that now you worship, soon shall be your God
no more ;

For the soul, in its unfolding,

Evermore its thought remoulding,

Learns more truly, in its progress, how to love and to adore !

Therefore, if my truth is not true to you, you will be justified in its rejection.

Swedenborg says, that he received none of his doctrines from any spirit or angel, but from the Lord alone, and it is just as incumbent on every one to receive nothing on the mere authority of any man, spirit, or angel, but from the Lord alone. Indeed, there can be no other true reception of goodness and truth. Christ says of his disciples, "*they shall be all*

taught of God ; whosoever, therefore, hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." What an apostle, a spirit, or an angel teaches, may be true for him—and I hear him with all reverence speak what has been revealed to him—but it is not true for me until the time shall have arrived for God to make it plain to my comprehension.

Every successive truth lies hidden in our spirit waiting for development through experience, reflection, and progressive revelation, which, like rain or sunshine, in due season, develops the living germ implanted in the heart, and we become outwardly conscious of the living truth. God's *truth* is then known by us—and God's *will* is done by us, when that truth is established by action. "*On earth as it is heaven.*"

My earnest hope, dear friends, is that you may be able to identify truth, even in a crowd, or drest in a new garment, and not only to identify, but to take it by the hand and claim an intimate acquaintance with it, to take it to your hearts, and to hold it there *for ever*, in all the multiplicity of outward garments with which it will inevitably be presented to you throughout the progress of your spirits through the ages.—Your true friend,

M. C.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE THIRD LETTER.

CONTAINING THE NEW REVELATION CONCERNING THE REAL NATURE OF CHRIST (CONTINUED), AND THE ALLEGORICAL OR FIGURATIVE STYLE OF THE BIBLE, AND ALL EASTERN WRITINGS.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—In my last letter I endeavoured to give you an insight into the views we hold concerning the true nature of the Divinity of Christ.

I spoke of him as one of the Elohim, or *Anointed Ones*, of the universe, to which order of spirits the *formation* and *government* of planets is alone entrusted by the Almighty, of whose splendour they are, in the mode of the Finite, the “express image” and representative, and with whom they are often confounded, by the humanity of their planet, during the earlier phases of its educational career.

Every planet of every solar system throughout Infinity is evolved from the incandescent Cosmic Matter by one of these great viceregents of the universe.

These glorious “Anointed” ones, these stainless, *unfallen* “Christs,” the greatest because the most advanced of the spiritual beings of the universe, have been “made perfect through sufferings” (through the undergoing of the educational discipline of abnegation

and effort without having ever deviated from the line of simple rectitude.) They have "loved righteousness and hated iniquity," and are consequently "*anointed with the oil of gladness above their fellows.*"

They have been "tempted at all points like as we are, but have remained *without sin*"—they started on their career of self-development, in connection with the materiality of a planet of an earlier creation, *from the same initial point of elaboration* at which all spirits begin their career, viz., through the *magnetically-effected* construction of the various bodies of the MINERAL, VEGETABLE, and ANIMAL reigns of that planet. They have subsequently undergone the educational discipline of the progressive fluidic-spheres of spirit training, and have steadily progressed to the Sidereal Degree, without having ever deviated from the line of simple rectitude; and having thus attained to that Degree, without the slightest sully of their *immaculate innocence*, have consequently never been subjected to any mode of incarnation, or incorporation, in any material planet, and therefore, *though originally of exactly the same nature as ourselves, yet never having incurred the penalty of humanisation, through the accretion of a material human body, are not, never have been, and never will be, Men.** Spirits who, from the period of their

* When our beloved Guardian Ruler visited our earth, he was not *really* incarnated in material flesh, but adopted our earth garb from the material elements of the atmosphere, just as all spirits do when they appear to us—a fact which is now being proved by the materialisation of spirit bodies both here and in America, many of

individualisation into distinct personalities, though "tempted at all points like as we are," like as all spirits must be "tempted" in order that they may convert their *negative innocence* into *positive goodness*, have remained "without sin," have always "loved righteousness and hated iniquity," and are therefore said, in the metaphorical language of Jewish

which I have had the good fortune to witness. The spirit has formed its tangible appearance quite distinctly enough to be perfectly recognised by me and by others, and again dissolved itself into thin air before me. These spirits can make themselves perfectly tangible to the touch, as the spirit hands will testify which so many have witnessed through the mediumistic powers of Mr Home; they are, both to sight and touch, exactly like hands, of warm, solid flesh, the nails perfectly formed, like our own; but will dissolve and vanish from our grasp as Christ did, when in the midst of a crowd who were ready to stone him, he so mysteriously "*conveyed himself out of their midst*," or when he was missed by his parents and found in the Temple at Jerusalem with the doctors—also when, after his Crucifixion, he walked with two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus, and vanished from their sight. The spirit materialisations which are now being made patent amongst us by scientific enquiry, will perfectly explain the many seeming mysteries in the history of Christ, which have so long been a stumbling-block to those out of the Church, and could only be accepted as "*mysteries*" by her most faithful children, as for instance the Immaculate Conception, and the mysterious birth—the walking on the waves, the disappearance of his body from the Sepulchre, his appearance and disappearance amongst the disciples although the doors were closed, and a thousand other facts of his sojourn amongst us. All of which seeming mysteries, I trust, will very shortly be satisfactorily explained to the English mind by the publication in English of the very important and justly celebrated work of Roustaing, "*Les Quatre Evangiles*," which, with the five preceding works of the late Allan Kardec, I hope in the course of this year to place before the public, translated from the French by three as earnest workers as myself.

M. C.

medianimity, to have been "anointed" by the Creator "with the oil of gladness above their fellows," who, though they originally started from the same point, yet having wandered more or less widely from the path of innocence, will necessarily be longer in attaining to the same elevation, which, however,—as the Omnipotent Benevolence cannot "will, that any should perish," but, on the contrary, must necessarily "will," in virtue of Its own benevolent nature, that every spirit should come to the knowledge of the truth, that it can only attain to happiness through its self-identification with the Creative Plan,—*all* spirits will reach in course of time.

The Christs are "*the unfallen*" spirits of God's universe, Men are "*the fallen*." You see, therefore, how intimately connected and interwoven are these two subjects, believed in by us, but in a manner so different from the dogmas founded upon them by the churches.

According to these dogmas, which we are fast out-growing, the Infinite and Omnipotent God had performed his best work, and failed. The Creation of Man, his crowning work, had proved a gigantic failure; he had been made perfect and placed in a perfect world, had been tempted by a superior Power to that of his Creator, and, giving way to his evil inclinations, had fallen at the very first outset. God, therefore, was not Omnipotent, since there was a Power greater than his in the universe, a Power that could frustrate all his designs, and divert them from

their original purpose, take possession of his most perfect and crowning work, corrupt the very fountain from which future generations were to spring, take the souls of men out of the keeping of the Infinite Father, metamorphose them into his own offspring and thus alienate the whole human race from God, so much so, that it is only with the greatest difficulty that God can obtain a tithe of his own kingdom. "Ever since the Fall of Adam, Age has shaken the tree of human life, and the Devil has gathered the fruit into Hell."

The Churches state this Dogma to be incontrovertible truth.

My feeling is, that no greater blasphemy against God was ever uttered, and that their whole theory of the relation between God and the devil is a solemn mockery, full of the most glaring contradictions and absurdities, offensive to common-sense.

First and foremost we have the war in heaven,* which at the same time is declared to be the abode of peace; where sin, and pride, and ambition are unknown, because only those can enter there, who are pure, and holy, and above human passions, as those who have attained unto the heavenly state must be, or they could not *really* be there. The certainty of peace in heaven must rest upon the idea that warfare therein is impossible, at the same time they declare

* We suppose this conflict to mean the rebellion of each individualised spirit which occasions his fall from a fluidic to a material earth.

that there has already been a conflict there ; that pride and ambition prompted one who held his place nearest to the Almighty throne, to rebel, and that he succeeded in drawing after him a third of the angels of God, who, when defeated, were cast into a burning lake, which is now their abode, and that of all the descendants of Adam, whom they very speedily made their own, excepting the very few whom God is able to rescue from their clutches. In order to do this he hit upon many expedients. The descendants of fallen Adam had become so sinful that God resolved to rid the earth of them by drowning them all, reserving only one family—a good one—for its reproduction ; when all had been drowned, this family turned out to be no better than those that had been destroyed. God then resolved upon raising up unto himself a faithful nation, but again he was defeated ; for although he gave them laws, fought their battles, and went in and out of their camp, they were stiff-necked and did not believe in him. They went after other gods, and he was compelled to sell them into the hand of their enemies, to become the mocked of all nations.

To crown all, they go on to say that God now assumed the form of man, and came to earth to teach them ; but even God himself is not certain of resisting temptation from his powerful rival, for he was required to test his own powers of resistance, and was driven into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Then must this awful conclusion be admitted, that not even God himself is certain of resisting temptation?

If it be answered that it was Jesus in his human capacity, who was to be tried, then I answer, that if he were *divine* in the sense in which his divinity is held, and taught in the dogmas of the churches, there was no trial; there could be none. God never can be less than God.

I believe in the "fall of man," I believe in the divinity of Christ, but again I say, not in the way taught by the churches. It is impossible that I can find language in which to express my abhorrence of this doctrine, that Jesus was God. Is it not awful, is it not blasphemous, to think of him as such, to think of the agony and bloody sweat in the garden, and the prayer that the cup should pass from him, to think of the temptation—bear in mind that there were no witnesses to it, and that consequently it was not intended as a lesson to humanity, but it was simply intended to be a private trial of the divine powers of resistance!

Had he been God, he could not thus have suffered and prayed, and been tempted; had he been God, there was mockery in the prayer, for how could he thus solemnly pray to himself? It is easy to say that the divine may veil itself in human form, but the veiled nature cannot be changed or reduced to a negative condition, and consequently the divine power of resistance must have dwelt within the human flesh.

But even now, and after all this torture and ignominy, God is still said to be defeated ; for though he came personally to earth, assumed the form of man, was tempted, suffered, and died upon a cross, in order to render it possible that a remnant of those whom he had created with his own hand, *his children*, might be preserved for himself ; only one redeemed saint is now and then to be seen upon the road to heaven, the road to hell is still crowded by travellers. Evil and sin still hold their sway upon God's earth, and are not to be put down by the Divine endeavour or the Divine will ; consequently, God is not omnipotent, or God is not all goodness, since the devil still reigns and rules, and is permitted to do so.

I am utterly at a loss to understand how reasonable men, who believe in the almightiness of God, as in his love, wisdom, and goodness, can pretend a belief in the existence of a personal devil, as a matter of fact, and that his presumed power over mankind is still more almighty than that of the Almighty !

The whole theory, according to the form in which it is stated, and solemnly held in the creeds of the churches, is utterly inconceivable, contradictory, horrible, and abhorrent to common sense and reason.

I believe in a God who has not been defeated, who created the world and man for good purposes, which will be completely realised.

Were I to believe that he could be foiled and de-

feated, what hope could I entertain of the future life, or of the elevation of the human race ? .

It is generally alleged, that the popular orthodox ideas are derived from the "Bible," whereas, it would appear, they are more or less derived from "Paradise Lost" and from "The Pilgrim's Progress." If we turn to the Bible history of "creation and the fall," we find that it is very meagre—even more so in many points than the Persian history of creation by Ormuzd, and the fall through Ahriman, from which it is copied. The author of Genesis, with child-like simplicity, narrates the story without pretending, as the theologians do, to be in the council of God. He does not pretend to sound its depths, and does not speak of it as involving eternal consequences.

We are none of us within that council, and yet we may boldly repudiate the theory that the Eternal has ever failed in his work. What he intended, will be, and there is no power in the universe to turn it aside. It is this false assumption, that God was foiled in his purposes, which has done so much towards producing many of the theological doctrines now held, and which the discoveries of modern science are rendering impossible. Unfortunately, the human mind has always adopted a variety of theories, to explain what it did not understand; and these theories, being converted into *dogmas*, have been clung to with a childish degree of pertinacity. We have judged the actions of God through them, and, as in the case of the Ptolemaic system of the stars, theory

after theory has been added in order to keep our first theory in harmony with newly discovered facts ; but, as it happened with the various theories of astronomy, the whole must fall before the fact that God is the absolute Governor of the universe, who can neither be thwarted or diverted from his purposes. Start with that truth, and explore either the physical or the moral world, and all becomes clear and reasonable.

A great deal, however, has been assumed, even in defiance of the *literal* wording of the Bible ; the exigencies of theological systems rendering such assumption necessary.

For instance, the assumption that man was intended to dwell on *this earth*, in a garden of Eden, is directly opposed to the text. "*God blessed them, and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it.*" Consequently it was not meant that they were to dwell only in one spot, but were to people and subdue the whole earth. The physical conformation of man indicates that he was intended for labour, and the command he received to subdue the earth would confirm the indication ; what else is subduing the earth than cultivating it and rendering it habitable, as men are still doing, and have ever done throughout the ages ? Without the incessant labour bestowed upon it by man, we know that the earth would not be habitable for civilised beings, and that without incessant labour and cultivation man himself would still be in a savage state. The garden of Eden could not, therefore, have

been upon this earth, and the Fall must have taken place elsewhere; even the *literal* meaning of the text would not indicate that labour was enjoined as a curse, because it is represented as being enjoined *with a blessing*, when man was in a state of innocence.

The assumption that evil came into the world through one man bequeathing his original sin to all his descendants, is in the same case. The proof that the Bible does not recognize this inherent depravity, is to be found in scores of passages, calling upon men to be good. Are we not told that we are to be perfect? "Be thou perfect." "Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord." "The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way." "Mark the perfect man." Thus not only that we must be perfect, but also that there were perfect men. The Old Testament abounds with passages and statements contrary to the idea that this action, this eating of the fruit of knowledge, brought universal depravity in its train. For instance, what is more frequently taught than this, that sin is inexcusable before God? But if sin is ours by inheritance, it would be excusable; and we are not responsible if we have not been free to choose. Sin is in us, not because it is an inheritance from our forefathers, but because we each, individually, sinned, when through the selfishness, pride, and rebellion of our hearts, we lost our first high estate in that allegorical garden of Eden to which we were first appointed innocent, because ignorant both of good and evil; and in which our labours in the path of progress would have been easy compared to what they now are.

But although compelled to repudiate the popular teaching, it does not follow that the men who created it were dishonest; they were, on the contrary, both earnest and honest, but they were not in a position to resolve the problem; they stood face to face with two great facts which could not be controverted: that God is good, and that man is sinful. Hence they argued that the good came from one fountain, the evil from another. There seemed to be no other way of explaining the observed facts of life; and hence this one was adopted from Eastern fable, (founded upon a fact they were then ignorant of), in order to account for the evil tendencies in human nature.

The problem was only to be solved by degrees, and made clearer by time; for man only obtains truth gradually, and as the result of continual labour. With this view he was originally constituted, and all his battles and victories over sin and evil (which is ignorance of good) are but the natural means employed in order to achieve the end God had in view in his creation, from which we shall not be diverted by any human or superhuman influences.

Each individualised spirit commences life in a state of innocence, and ignorance of good and evil, in a brighter world than this, symbolised by a garden. We taste of the tree of knowledge, and pass out of this condition; our eyes are opened to see our own nakedness, and henceforth, with the sweat of our brow, must we till the soil, of a material earth, for we are expelled from our abode of happy

innocence ; our eyes have been opened to the problem of material life, which we are called upon to solve ; we have been endowed with powers and faculties, which are for use to the highest ends ; and as we can no longer develop, or call them fully into play, without entering into the active conflict of life, we are compelled to conclude that he who gave, intended them to be so employed ; that we should learn what evil and sin are ; that we should grow strong through battle with them ; that we should tread them beneath our feet, and, having once conquered, shall never fall again under their oppression ; for we rise superior to them, and each victory gained, lifts us into a higher sphere of knowledge and purity, and nearer communion with the higher beings of other spheres. There is not a single discovery made which fails to raise us nearer to God, and enables us still nearer to approach the comprehension of all. While we remain in the state of ignorance, we all, so far as vital goodness is concerned, are still in the animal state ; but the more we learn, the more we pant to know, and the more painful becomes our consciousness of ignorance of what lies unexplored ; but still, each truth we have acquired lives in ourselves, as a means whereby we may press onwards to the comprehension of still higher truths—nearer and nearer to the Fountain of all Truth, nearer to God !

In the earliest ages, or childhood of the human race, when language had scarcely been invented, and mere words failed to express meaning, ideas were con-

veyed in a pictorial or dramatic form. The earliest mode of writing was by pictures and symbols. All early nations connected ideas with the living forms that would best represent the qualities they desired to express: hence the dove symbolised the idea of love; the lamb, of innocence; the fox, of cunning; the serpent, of the craft and subtilty of intellect.

The universal significance amongst oriental nations of the story of Creation and the Fall was this: A tree represented life; its fruit, knowledge; a garden, the fluidic world. A serpent signified the awakening intellect tempting the innocent soul to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. His material propensity tempts him to eat the fruit; he attains to the knowledge, and finds he has forfeited his Eden of unconscious, though ignorant, innocence; he becomes restless for more knowledge, is sent forth into the world, still paying the penalty of intellect. In a word, he realizes that henceforth his life's destiny is labour and pain. The whole history of man's fall from the state of innocence, and his consequent subjection to the cares, pains, and penalties that grow out of knowledge, is thus simply represented in picture writing, or that symbolical oriental mode in which the most early people of earth recorded their ideas.

We now comprehend the true purposes of this beautiful allegorical mode of representing the first condition of the spirit of man that came from the hands of our God, innocent and unconscious of evil; they had not

sinned, because they had not eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The very act of *eating* had its significance; for until he had eaten, he had not appropriated, had not made it part of himself. Lo, we have eaten of the fruit of the tree of material intellect, and, behold, the angel of progression stands, with a sword of adversity and pain, at the door of the paradise of our innocent childhood, and warns us onward, compelling us to use the sad knowledge we have gained in continual effort and spiritual warfare with good and evil; so that we may return again, through the discipline of earth life, and its struggles, back to paradise, not as we left it, ignorant and without knowledge, but purified, through the love acquired by wisdom, and our victory over evil, instructed by knowledge gained by bitter experience. This I believe to be the design which the ancient Eastern nations intended to represent through the pictorial allegory of the garden, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and the universal symbol of intellect and immortality, ever represented in the East by a serpent.*

* I have lately been told that a missionary (I believe now the Bishop of Southern India) gave an account, in a recent lecture, of what was doing in his district, in which he spoke of the brilliancy of the intelligence of the natives and their propensity to use flowery language, quoting some of their expressions. He wrote a little treatise on elementary education, and they told him it was of no use writing it in prose, so he gave it to a "moonshee" to put it into poetry, and in the preface he spoke of the missionary having offered them "the fruit that he had gathered from the tree of knowledge." Some of his flowers of speech ran thus:—

That great bugbear, the personal Devil, that has frightened poor humanity through so many ages, is represented as a distorted human being, which is a great truth ; for evil is nothing but opposition to the divine plan, and is therefore terrible and odious ; while good is precisely conformity to that plan, all beauty and harmony. The sacred books of India—as, for instance, the Vedas—abound in passages which illustrate this point ; so also does the poetry of Homer ; and hence we are quite justified in concluding that the Persian and Hebrew nations would do the same. Let us read Genesis in this light, and at once the mere persons die away, leaving behind them only the underlying thought, which is as true to us as it was to them, that all men commence life in a state of ignorance ; and what is there described is nothing more than a pictorial representation of that truth.

That it is so, I may here quote the authority of Origen, who said, “It is a thing avowed by all who

“As the bee speeds from flower to flower, extracts the honey, and deposits the sweet in its hive, so have I been among the flowers of literature—there have I gathered sweets, which I here present in this summary.” “That is not beauty, the beauty of the flowing hair, and the beauty of the dyed robe, and the beauty of the rouged cheek ; but the beauty of learning, this is beauty because it beautifies the mind—I here present you, then, with these leaves from the tree of knowledge.” “As one versed in flowers enters a garden, selects the choicest, and forms a garland ; so have I been in the garden of literature, there have I culled the choicest flowers, and here I present it to the student in this garland of grammatical rules.” “The store of Science is boundless, but the scholar’s days are few. Learn to discriminate the properties of things, and like the swan, to drink the milk and leave the water.”

have a little knowledge of the Scriptures, that everything in them is covered over with the veil of enigma and parable;" for otherwise, "what man of good sense will ever persuade himself that there were a first, a second, and a third day, and that those days had each their morning and their evening, without there yet existing either sun, moon, or stars? What man sufficiently simple to believe that God, acting the part of a gardener, planted a garden in the East?—that the tree of life was a real tree, evident to the senses, whose fruit had the virtue of preserving life, &c.?"

And Origen is not the only one who has thought thus. The Hebrew rabbis themselves, together with several Christian doctors, agree, that the books attributed to Moses were written in the allegorical style; and that their real sense is so different from that which the letter presents, that "we should hold ideas quite false and absurd of divinity, if, without penetrating to the kernel, we were to stop at the shell." Maimonides, the learned rabbi, thus expresses himself in regard to this subject: "One," he says, "ought not to understand, nor take according to the letter, that which is written in the book of the creation, nor have the ideas concerning it that most men have; otherwise, our ancient sages would not have recommended us to carefully conceal the sense of it, and on no account to raise *the allegorical veil which conceals the truths it contains*. Taken according to the letter," he continues, "this work gives the most absurd and extra-

vagant ideas of divinity ;" and he adds, " Whosoever shall discover the true sense of it, ought to be careful not to divulge it."

Even St Augustine, the greatest doctor of the Church, is obliged to admit that many people see in the history of Adam and Eve and the fall a mere fiction (' City of God '); and he avows that there are no means of preserving the literal sense of the three first chapters of Genesis, without offending piety, and attributing to God things unworthy of Him ; and that it is absolutely necessary, in order to save Moses and his history, to consider it to be an allegory (*Beausobre*).

Truth, under a veil of allegory, is evidently contained in the first books of the Mosaic revelation ; and if we take everything into consideration, it is not to be wondered at that this allegorical fable should have been believed to the letter by the ancients, who, ignorant and confiding, stood face to face with the bare fact, made still more horrible to their vivid imaginations by the very hideousness of the distorted deformity they had pictured to themselves, till it had become to them a reality.

We do not wonder at their believing in it, word for word ; but, standing as we do in the light of a clearer atmosphere, we cannot but regret the pertinacity with which the Churches still adhere to the theories of those early times, instead of keeping up with the advances of science and general knowledge, perceiving that truth is ever progressive, and teaching every new truth as it is proved to be such. It is,

indeed, to be regretted that they mistake theology for religion, when it is but despotism ; they do not perceive that it is neither religious in its nature, nor even moral in its tendencies ; for instead of assisting the progress of religion, it exercises the most powerful influence in retarding its growth.

That it is so, I have only to take up the first newspaper that comes to hand. To-day's *Standard* will do. What do I find ? Here we have news from America :—New York, Oct. 11th—"The burden of the sermons and papers deal with the question of the best method of meeting modern scepticism ; but the results do not appear to be very satisfactory. The process of decay in implicit adherence to old creeds is patent, and yet few can trace the process. Beliefs remain unassailed, but the creeds drop one by one of their points in the general heart of the believing world."

This is the latest news of the state of the religion of theology in America ; let us see if we can find some account of what is passing in England. I quote from the same paper.—the *Standard* of Saturday the 25th of October.

Here we have a charge from the Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol in his cathedral church. He is reviewing the past, the present, and the future of the Church. Let us see what he says about the present, for the past we know, and the future we shall be able to foresee from what he tells us of the present. Listen then, dear friends, to the bishop :—

"But though Church work has been great, let us not disguise from ourselves that world work has been greater. Consider the progress of free thought (infidelity) on one side, and enslaved thought (superstition) on the other, and observe how, by their very reactions, each has added strength to the other. The very worst form of unbelief—the denial of the personality of the God and Father of all, has manifested itself. One of the most cultivated of our literary men commits himself to that denial in a book which, from the pleasantness of its style and the pungency of its language, has secured to itself a wide circulation. In that book we are told that a 'sublime and eternal not ourselves,' whatever that may be, is all that is really meant by the one God of the Old and New Testament; while scorn and contempt are poured on those who, by their public words, have sought to maintain that fundamental and eternal truth. And this, be it remembered, is but one of many popular volumes—one only, 'of the noxious crop of sceptical books.' To use the strong but not undeserved language of a distinguished statesman, 'that was gathered in from the press of England in rank abundance during the past year.' Further, it is not only that books advocating these extreme opinions have multiplied and found ready reception, but that much of our lighter periodical literature has become influenced by the same prevailing tone of thought. Month after month views of life and life's problems are placed before our younger people, which (to use the most

guarded language) are utterly at variance with the plain teaching of the Book of Life."

The bishop then goes on to speak of the consequences that modern scepticism is producing in the Church; and, first of all, we have the ritualists, who, finding that all things are thus made shifting and opinionable, "make the truth more and more objective, and revert to practices and ritual that may seem to form the best standing protest to the doubts and scepticism of the times. Catholic truth, they urge, must now not only be preached, but seen and felt. The eye must influence the soul; the outward must suggest the reality of the inward; the trade of scepticism must be contrasted with the tangible realities of a half material worship; the negative and the novel must, for the very truth's sake, be contrasted with the affirmative and the traditional. Hence, almost step by step, as doubt and suspended belief have advanced during the last nine years, ritualism and ceremonialism—I fear I might even say superstition—have advanced in exactly the opposite direction. A settled materialistic form of worship which, on the one hand, claims to be considered a practical protest against the lawlessness of modern thought, and, on the other hand, is the symbol of that longed-for union with the Churches of the East and the West, which, as I ventured to point out some years ago, has always been a ruling principle of the ritualistic movement. But if there has been this development, observe what it involves. If scepticism has helped to stimulate this

attempted conformity in usages and ceremonials with at least all that is in common to the Greek and Roman Catholic Churches, what is now the final issue? Why, obviously direct antagonism to that earlier religious movement which either modified or abolished these usages—our own English Reformation. It is now no use disguising the fact. What is, or rather has been called the ritualistic movement, has now passed into a distinctly counter-reformation movement, and will, whenever sufficiently sustained by numbers and perfected organism, reveal its ultimate aims with clearness and decision. Such, then, in brief outline are the general tendencies of current thought, both on one side and the other; such the grave difficulties with which the loyal members of the Church of England have to contend. As it is, ethics are eliminating theology."

The bishop sees the grave difficulties with which the loyal members of the Church of England have to contend; and what is the remedy he suggests? What is the line of conduct he recommends the Church to pursue? He does not advise the clergy to examine the objections made by those who *dare* to think for themselves, and examine the reasons they put forth for venturing to differ from the obsolete dogmas established hundred of years ago; and whether reason may not, after all, be on the side of free thought, (which he dogmatically denominates "*infidelity*"); and whether it would not be possible to reconcile them to the Church by giving a new reading to the old subject.

As I said, in concluding my last letter, truth is always truth, and it ought to be easy to identify her even in the multiplicity of new garments which she will be called upon to adopt in her progress through the ages. But she *must* adopt them; it is perfectly absurd to dress her still in the worn-out, borrowed old clothes of men long dead that she now wears, and which make her appear so ridiculous, that no wonder she is often mistaken for error, and avoided accordingly by those who do not feel themselves obliged to bow to her, merely because they are ordered to do so by the authority of a Church, in which they see but a body of men like themselves.

The truth is, that there are more men now in every thousand who are capable of mastering the intricacies of any great question, and of judging for themselves, than there were in bygone ages, and this as a consequence of the wider diffusion of knowledge and of general culture. Doubtless the majority still follow after the superstitious ceremonies and creeds of their fathers, never troubling themselves to inquire very earnestly, if at all, into the foundations of the creed they profess, through the mere accident of birth and education, but are content to say and believe as their fathers did before them. But this is merely clinging to a form—it is scarcely a faith; and yet, while they are ready to die to uphold it, they do not trouble themselves to inquire into its foundations. What they have, they hold, as the pious child who clings to the shroud of a dead mother, and feels

agonised when any rude visitor speaks of the errors of the deceased ; so they cling to the deceased creed of the past, and will hear no critical inquiries.

The Bishop, therefore, providing for this majority, does not advise the clergy to examine the objections of the *thinkers*, but reminds them that "they have a *depositum fidei* ; to betray which, is to give up a solemn trust ; and that real unity is not secured by pseudo-liberal concessions ;" and tells them that "safety more than ever depends on the *calm maintenance of old principles*, and that the widening of our bases, or the simplification of our creeds, is a dream and a delusion, not only experience, but sober reason, being against it, recent events in connection with the Athanasian creed having clearly shown how attempts to simplify creeds would be attended with disaster, and precipitate schism."

Poor truth, then,—for there is a *great truth* underlying all their dogmas and all their creeds,—is destined still to go on wearing the worn-out old garments before alluded to, and will continue to look ridiculous, and to be mistaken for error, and to be shunned accordingly ; and the thinkers, left to their free thought, will wander further and further away, until some will lose sight of truth altogether, and will take up with error, whom they will clothe to look more like a reasonable being ; and all this because the men whose profession and whose duty it is to teach truth, are determined to set their faces against all thinking at all, taking their views ready made and second-hand

as a legacy from the dead and buried past. Each party thinks more of its own particular Church, than of the eternal truth ; and thus, when God gives the wings of genius to men, they clip them as close as they can, and do their best endeavour to keep them within the boundary of their creeds and dogmas.

It is a good thing that the same does not happen with science ; that Galileo turned his telescope to Venus, and learnt the fact of planetary revolution, in spite of all the persecution he met with from the Church ; that Kepler studied out the law of planetary relations ; that Newton meditated out the law of gravity, &c., &c. ; for had they followed upon the *theological* plan, the truths they discovered, and proved to be such, would still have been secrets of nature unknown to us.

It is absurd to suppose that we know all ; that God has nothing more to say ; that he said all he had to say at once, and that man comprehended it instantly, and has nothing more to learn. When St Paul said, " Prove all things," he recognised the fact that inquiry was a duty. There is no test too severe to which you can expose opinions before adopting them ; and you are bound thus severely to test all before you teach them to your fellow-men.

The men who thus dictate have never thought the matter out seriously for themselves : they are content to follow the routinal teaching of their colleges. Were they to inquire, they would be called *Free Thinkers*, and branded as heretics ; they would be

expulsed, and others more docile and obedient would soon step into their places. Reason, therefore, has been given to them for nothing; they may not use it, but must follow blindly the tests adopted in their schools and the dogmas established hundreds of years ago. They may adjure the Hindoo and the Mahometan to use their reason, but when it comes to the faith taught at home, then they must not exercise their own reason, but must accept the doctrines as they find them, and take the opinion of their ancestors in favour of their truth.

That is to say, the doctrines *their ancestors* decided should henceforth and for ever, be the saving faith of mankind; for they declare, "Except a man so believe he cannot be saved." As to opinion, it seems, the ancestors were not all of one mind, for though they teach the literal sense of the first chapters of Genesis, and "the fall" of man therein described, and make it the foundation of the whole superstructure, there were differences of opinion about the interpretation of it, even in those enlightened times, although they had not the benefit of the light of the nineteenth century. Saint Augustine, a father of the Church, as I said before, considered it an historical allegory. Philo, a Jewish writer of great celebrity, thought the same; and the greater part of his writings have no other object than the classing under the head of allegorical all the sacred books. He composed two treatises in particular, entitled the "*Allegories*," in which he refers to allegory, the "tree of life," the rivers of Paradise,

and the other symbols used in Genesis. Origen, again, as we have seen, exerting his reason, proves that the allegorical interpretation is not a new idea, but as ancient as it is necessary, and that many things in the Old Testament cannot have taken place as the sacred writer relates,—“that they are but fictions, under which are enveloped sacred truths.”

But I have an authority for the allegorical interpretation of still more importance, and one who has as much weight in the Protestant as in the Catholic Church. St Paul says “that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman, *which things are an allegory*; for these are the two covenants—the one from the Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all.” I am glad to find (*par parenthesis*) that the sad story of poor Hagar *is* an allegory, for I positively hated Abraham for his supposed cruel conduct to her and to his innocent child.

Again I repeat, St Paul tells us, to “prove all things,” consequently to use the reason God has given us to think them out, or how shall we prove them? We can only reason from what we know to be possible, and should not reason against our knowledge and our common-sense.

My reasoning,—and my reasons for the absolute necessity, and propriety of using our reason, in

order to come to a REASONABLE interpretation of the Bible account of "the fall of man," and of the mission of Christ in the universe,—has brought me, not to the end of my reasons, very far from it—but to the end of the possible limits of a letter; and therefore, dear friends, I must still inflict upon you another, in which I will endeavour to give you an idea of the wonderfully beautiful *new* revelation (for revelation it is) of the true nature of "the fall," as I have already done in this and the preceding letter, of the true nature of our dear Lord and Saviour, the beautiful, loving, stainless, glorious, "*unfallen*," governing and guiding spirit, of our particular planet.

Now farewell, and pray, believe in the sincere
friendship of yours cordially,

M. C.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE FOURTH LETTER.

CONTAINING THE NEW REVELATION OF THE NATURE OF "GOOD" AND
"EVIL," AND OF THE "FALL OF MAN."

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I am giving you a *new version* of the *old truth* concerning the "*fall of man*." Yes, dear friends, do not be startled by merely a change of garments. I think you agreed with what I said in my last letter about the absolute necessity of suiting our garments to the requirements of the age we live in, and that even beautiful, ever-lovely *truth* is made to appear absurd and ridiculous when presented in her worn-out, old-fashioned vestures of long ago. In very truth, it is not her spirit or principle, as it is not the spirit or life-giving principle of anything, whether a system or an individual, that perishes, but only her time-worn vesture. This may—nay, this *must*—wax old as doth a garment, to be replaced by another, and yet another, and a better. Thus truth is ever the same, ever young, fresh, and beautiful. Though as old as "old time" himself, she should look as fresh and vigorous, as graceful and beautiful to-day, as in the remotest of her primeval yesterdays.

The entire progress of truth through the ages is, and must be, a continuous *travestiment*—a continuous veiling and unveiling, a continuous revealing, or revealment of lower to higher, according to man's increasing capacity of comprehension. Always emerging in comparative strength and vigour, youth and beauty, from the effeteness of an exhausted past, into the force and freshness of a promising and expansive future ; and an ascent from the negative sphere of death, to the positive sphere of life.

It was impossible that the religion of truth could remain for ever in the dormant state, that I must call the lifeless condition, in which it seems to have been stagnating and flickering for some time past. Since conflict seems no longer called for, the Church appearing firmly established on the rock-like foundation of truth, cemented by the blood of so many willing and unwilling martyrs, her guardians and supporters think they may take their ease, and that she will stand firm as that rock, and that there is no longer any fear of her being shaken—forgetting that in God's universe *there is no standing still* ; that the sea of time, with its endless waves and rushing tides, is ever beating against that rock ; that there is nothing stationary, and that even rocks, though seemingly immovable, are gradually worn away by time, and constant friction, and therefore, that the edifice of truth built on it, may, nay *must* require repairs from time to time, or it might come to topple over altogether. I will therefore make no further excuse for sending

in my little contribution of new stones, which indeed I believe to be very precious ones, and have but to be seen in their proper light, to sparkle gloriously, and help to restore dear, beautiful, truth, to the bright pristine radiance she so much requires.

The advancement of science, and consequent march of intellect, now requires truth, not only to *be* truth, but to *appear* such. Men have seen, and studied, the marvellous works of the Creator, too closely, to believe the Divine Architect could be *baffled*, in any of his plans. They have perceived that man is a progressive being, and that his primeval state was a very low, and savage one; that nature itself, sublime and beautiful as it is, requires incessant labour, cultivation, and time, to bring it to perfection; that this beautiful earth was not prepared for the habitation of *perfect* man, and that it is absurd to imagine that "the beautiful garden" could have existed upon it, when it first emerged out of the gaseous nebula, from which it was evolved; that it required ages for it to become a solid earth, and ages more, before the incandescent mass permitted the growth of a blade of grass, much less of the full-grown "tree of knowledge of good and evil." Primeval man was a rude savage, lower even than the savage races that yet inhabit parts of this still most *imperfect*, but *progressive* planet; for we have no knowledge of any savages at present so low, that they do not sharpen their weapons by attrition, but the lowest stone age presents us examples of this want of sharpening. The implements found in the

post-tertiary, so far, are only flint, chipped to an edge on one side, and left unwrought on the other. From calculations based on the growth of peat, the flint arrows found in the valley of the Somme, in France, are one hundred and twenty thousand years old (M. Boucher de Perthes). And yet to this vast duration must be added the indeterminable period allowed for the formation of the gravel bed in which they are found. Human fossils are found in Sweden, at least twenty-seven thousand five hundred years old (estimated by Lyell's data of two feet and a half of coast elevation in a century). The investigations in the Delta of Egypt give certain evidence that man was sufficiently civilized to fashion bricks and pottery forty-one thousand years before the building of the Pyramids. Beneath this civilized state—for man has already made a great advance when he acquires the art of making pottery—lies the savage, or stone age, when he possessed only stone arrows and spears, such as the valley of the Somme has preserved. He dwelt in the midst of a dense wilderness, inhabited by colossal beasts, armed only with a rudely broken flint. For what length of time he had previously existed cannot be determined, but he had advanced from the rudest state, by a process slow and painful. The more enlightened a people, the more rapid their advancement. Savage tribes remain from age to age apparently without a change, so extremely slow is the awakening of their intellectual powers. The period of time from the flint age to that of bronze

must be extremely long, and still more vast that which stretches into the night of time to the unarmed hairy savage—the primeval man. All this vast duration lies far below the base of the hoary Pyramids, which of themselves are scarcely of historic time.* From the brutal savage, through the interminable duration of the ages of stone and bronze, man advanced into the uncertain light of tradition. Constantly developing his intellectual powers, he slowly and steadily ascended into civilization.

Has he ever fallen? He has been too low to fall. Could the savage, all of whose genius (after eating of the tree of knowledge), was comprised in the art of breaking a stone to a sharp edge, and using it in offence, or defence, fall? He could not well be more savage. But when we pass from the bronze to the iron age, we reach the dawn of history, which, century after century, records the accumulation of thought in unbroken advancement (Hudson Tuttle).

It is evident, then, that on this planet the law of man's destiny is *progressive development*. We may, therefore, positively assert that man *has not fallen* since he has *been on it*, but he fell in *coming to it at all*.

And now, I must again have recourse to Miss Blackwell, one of the few, who have as yet, been selected for the expounders of the beautiful new

* For the facts corroborating these statements, see the works of Sir John Lubbock, Sir Charles Lyell, and the linguistic researches of Max Müller.

version, of the old truths revealed to man (and *not even then for the first time*), in the allegorical chapters of Genesis. To do so, I again make some selections from her "Papers" in the monthly journal, "Human Nature," Vol. IV., for 1870.

Conjunction with matter, in its compact or ponderable state, is indispensable to the *pre-personal* elaboration of spirit, as undergone through the successive magnetically accreted *forms* of the mineral, vegetable, and animal degrees. Through the action of the various orders of bodies it has thus accreted, the spirit element (which can only be described *as a mass*, before it has been individualised into conscious entities, or personalities) has been made to develop in itself, the rudiments of all the intellectual, affectional, industrial, and social faculties, which, in the future phases of its educational career, will be progressively unfolded, purified, and enlarged.

This spirit element, while being slowly elaborated through its accretions of the various "forms" of the inorganic world, constitutes, as I have already stated, *a mass*. It has no individuality, its possibilities being merely latent; it has no consciousness, but merely *tendencies*, resulting from the play of the magnetic forces to which it is subjected, under the guiding action of the spirits charged with the direction of its education—tendencies, which, though scarcely more than mechanical, explain why one portion crystallises into one form, while another portion crystallises into another; why one becomes

granite, while another becomes marble; one gold, another lead, and so on.

As *all* souls are destined to possess *all* faculties, the spirit substance out of which they are evolved, is treated, in the preparatory stages of its education, as a *mass*. All the portions of that substance are thrown together, after each segregation in the temporary formations of the lower reigns, which formations are the result of the accretive action, which it is made by its guides to exert upon the inert, diffused, *material atoms*, of which it composes those forms. The various qualities and powers, primarily existing in the spiritual element, having been aroused, developed, and strengthened, by its construction of those material forms (through the instrumentality of the magnetic forces), are disseminated throughout the totality of *the mass*, and will therefore enter, as the *germs* of its future faculties, into the composition of each of the souls that will be eventually individualised out of it.

To use a homely illustration, spiritual substance, previous to its attainment of the *individualisation* which constitutes the personal degree, is dealt with somewhat as a baker deals with his flour; he does not put aside a special portion of flour to make each loaf, but carries his materials through certain processes, and when he has brought the whole of *the mass* of dough to a certain point of preparedness, he individualises it into loaves.

As the processes of telluric development go on,

preparing the condition of vegetable life, *the mass* of spiritual substance that has been educated into the rudiments of accretion, and of form, through its construction of the "forms" of the inorganic world, is made to accrete the lowest vegetable forms; passing up through those to the accretion of the higher ones, until it assumes the zoophytic forms that constitute the links between the vegetable and the animal worlds.

While animating vegetable forms, spiritual substance has gradually approached the qualities of animality. The plant lives, grows, and dies; it absorbs, assimilates, and rejects; it sleeps and awakens,* possesses a system of circulation, respiration, perspiration, and reproduction; has the rudiments of motility, sensibility, and contractility;† is susceptible of maladies and medical treatment; has acquired a dim sense of perceptive preference; can seek within narrow limits after the conditions it requires for healthy growth.

Having accomplished this new step of its progress, through the experiences of its successive vegetable and zoophytic lives, *the mass* of spirit substance is educated, through its accretion of the ascending series of forms of the animal world, into a still nearer approximation to the human state. In the forms of

* *Vide* Tamarinier, Val-Cordus de Linnæus, Candolle, &c.

† *Vide* Richard, *Botanique et Physiologie Végétale*, p. 238; also Ruysch, Musset, Pouchet, Von Martin, Tiedemann, Hedwig, Caradiori, Fossat, Dumas, Lucrezi, &c., &c.

the Animal Degree it still further developes all its prior acquisitions, and adds thereto, the faculties of locomotion and direction; it accretes organs so closely approximating to those of man, that most of the problems of human anatomy and medication receive valuable elucidation from the dissection of the bodies of animals, and study of their diseases. It acquires the rudiments of all the functions, attributes, activities, vices, and virtues, of the human state, but without the capacity of perceiving, retaining, and combining abstract ideas, which constitute educability, and is the distinctive apanage of the Personal Degree.

The preying of men upon animals, of animals upon one another, and of both upon the myriads of perfectly organized, active, sentient animalculæ everywhere existent—in the sap of plants, in the water we drink, and in the air we breathe—serves to hasten the accomplishment of the lower phases of spiritual development; the various forms thus serving as nourishment for one another, and the spirit element *set free* by the disaggregation of the “*forms*,” which thus serve as food, being immediately employed in the *accretion of “forms”* of a higher order. Thus, what seems to us, while looking at the phenomena of Nature only from our human point of view, to be merely a murderous inter-devouring of all the forms of life by one another, is seen, by the aid of the light now being thrown on these phenomena, by the higher intelligences with whom we are beginning to enter

into communication, to be an integral part of the grand and beneficent economy of things; an ordination which, by causing the various animal races of a planet to feed upon one another, practically amounts to the animating of the food of those various races, and of man, who, in so far as his bodily organisation is concerned, is one of them.

When any of the "forms" of material life have done their work, as educators of spiritual substance in its earliest stages of development, they are allowed to die out and disappear, as in the case of the earlier plants, reptiles, and animals of our globe, which we now only know have existed from their fossil remains. So also with regard to many of the aboriginal races of men, the relics of whose bodies and implements alone testify to the fact of their having lived; and so with regard to the inferior races that are now dying out of our planet. They are no longer needed for the development of the spiritual element of our earth, and they have therefore been allowed to disappear.

The action of the "ministering spirits doing his will," who are charged with the formation and education of spiritual substance, is direct, and constant, in the direct ratio of the incapacity of that substance to direct itself. In the preparatory phases of its development, it is the object of their incessant and unremitting care. Not that any particular spirit watches over the destiny of any special creature; but the mass of spiritual substance that is being elaborated at any time, in the different realms of

nature, is constantly superintended by the group of spirits charged with its development, until *the mass* has reached the point of preparedness previously alluded to, at which its elements are ready to condense into separate spirit germs, which, being individualised in a permanent spirit body, (or périsprit), are thenceforth susceptible of endless and indefinite development without further change of organisation.

Through the re-active influence upon itself, of the material forms it has accreted, under *the direction of its guides*, the substance of which those germs are composed, has developed *the rudiments* of all the intellectual, affectional, industrial, and social faculties, which, in the future education of those germs, will be progressively unfolded, purified, and enlarged.

Thus, as we have seen, through its experiences in the *mineral* world, it has developed the power of accretion, of resistance, of persistence, and a *tendency* towards geometrical proportions.

In the forms of the *vegetable* world its power of accretion has been developed into that of assimilation, and the rudiments of all the animal functions.

In those of the *animal* world, it has still further developed all its prior acquisitions, and has added thereto the faculties of locomotion, and direction, and has accreted organs, and acquired the *rudiments* of all the functions, attributes, vices, and virtues of the human state, but without the capacity of perceiving, retaining, and combining abstract ideas, which marks

the transformation of *instinct* into *reason*, constitutes educability, and is the distinctive apanage of the Personal Degree.

The latest phases of the animal incarnations take place in planets of a higher order than that to which our earth yet belongs; in which the education of spirit substance is carried to a still closer approximation to the faculties of the human race, than is found in any of the animals of this planet, before it accomplishes the final step of its long series of transformations, by the attainment of the permanently individualised degree.

To this end it is transported to worlds of another order, purely fluidic; where it enters upon a new series of elaborations, destined to prepare it for the individualisation into "souls," which has been the aim of its *pre*-personal elaboration. After undergoing this process (stated to occupy a lapse of time so long as only to be imaginable by us as "an eternity"), the spirit-substance is brought into an atmosphere of fluidic vapours, from which each portion of that substance, after being individualised (by the formation of its permanent magnetic envelope, or *périsprit*)* is made to accrete upon itself the *fluidic body* that constitutes it a "spirit" or *embodied soul*.

The accretion of this *soul-body* in the fluidic worlds, like that operated by spirits who incarnate themselves in the material worlds, is effected through the unconscious magnetic action of each soul upon the appropriate substantial atoms, under the direction of the

* See Note at page 173, First Letter.

fluidic intelligences charged with conducting the work of spirit-formation.

Each soul, when first constituted into a distinct entity, is likened, by our spirit-friends, to a faint luminous spark so dim that it can scarcely be distinguished from its fluidic envelope. Its consciousness is in abeyance, its faculties are in a state of catalepsy; the formation of its fluidic body going on, under the direction of more advanced spirits, in a manner analogous to the growth of the foetus in the human sphere—*i.e.*, by a gradual, unconscious attraction of appropriate material particles, but without the maternal aid, which is only needed to facilitate the more laborious accretion of matter in *the compact state*, on earths such as the globe we inhabit, and with which the *fluidic* mode of incorporation has nothing in common.

When this “embryonic” period of spirit-growth is completed, the soul, brought by its fluidic body into a world of relation appropriated to its condition, awakens to the life of that world in a state of innocence and ignorance analogous to infancy. In the tendencies and aptitudes it has developed through the experiences of the *pre-personal* phase of elaboration—*i.e.*, during its animal life—it possesses the *rudiments* of all the affective, mental, and moral qualities, but in a state of latency, from which they can only be gradually aroused, in the higher plane of activity which it has now reached, and this through its own efforts, under the fostering tutelage of its guides. It has no knowledge of facts or of principles, but only

the *mental faculties* that give it the capacity of learning; it has no vice, and no virtue, but only the *moral possibilities* that may become the one or the other. The unreasoning impulses which animated them in the lower reign they have quitted, remain *as latent tendencies in the temperaments of each individualised spirit*, and constitute, in conjunction with the reason it has acquired, through its perispritic organisation, the *dual* springs of action, which, through their opposite incitements, will furnish it, as the next step of its education, with the conditions of the struggle between good and evil (*i.e., conformity with, or opposition to*, the creative plan of the universe, and therefore inherent in the nature of things) which must be carried on for each spirit for itself, and in which its moral advancement, and consequent attainments of happiness, will be retarded or quickened, according as it follows the promptings of the selfish impulses derived from its animal experiences, or the counsels of its reason, enlightened by the instructions of the higher spirits who assist it with their influence and advice.

Now give attention to this. Conjunction with matter is indispensable to the *pre-personal* degrees of spiritual elaboration; but the *individualised* soul, having made in those lower degrees all the progress to which that conjunction is necessary, *should accomplish the remaining steps of its ascension to the sidereal degree, in the higher and happier order of existence proper to the FLUIDIC "WORLD."*

Those who are docile to instruction, and thus gra-

dually achieve the subordination of the selfish impulses, which bring the spirit into harmony with the plan of the universe—*i.e.*, choose right-doing or goodness—*do not incur the penalty of incarnation* in bodies of planetary matter, and consequently never become MEN. They have been “tempted at all points like as we are,” but have remained “*without sin* ;” and having thus been “made perfect through suffering” (undergoing) the discipline of abnegation and effort indispensable to spirit-education, without lapsing from the innocence of the normal (Fluidic) life, they constitute the glorious order of the “Elohim” (perfected souls), or “Christ’s” (*the anointed ones*), who have “loved righteousness and hated iniquity,” and are therefore “*anointed with the oil of gladness* above their fellows,” to which order of spirits, the formation and government of planets is alone entrusted by the Almighty.

On the other hand, the spirits who, rebellious to the training of the *normal* life, place themselves in opposition to the plan of the universe (*i.e.*, choose evil, or go wrong), by yielding to the temptations of selfishness, and thus *retrograde towards the instinctiveness of the animalised degree of spirit action*, bring upon themselves, through the inevitable magnetic correspondence between a *spirit’s mental and moral quality*, and the order of body which it must magnetically accrete, as the material result or expression of that quality, the stern, but beneficent penalty of exile, in a planet corresponding in the

compactness, or comparative fluidicity of its material constituents, to the degree of culpability which has caused its "*fall*," from the higher to the lower mode of existence.

This is *our* condition, *we have fallen* to a material planet.

Once *individualised*, no spirit can accrete any of the "bodies" which correspond to the states of the spirit "mass" in the *pre-personal* stages of its elaboration. It cannot, as taught by the early doctrine of metempsychosis, be condemned to assume the body of any animal, bird, or beast, and therefore the retrogradation or partial return of a spirit to the moral level of animality—described in the early Bible as "*the fall*"—produces that evident anomaly, *the human body*—an animal, and yet so clearly foreign to the animal reign, which, by subjecting the faulty soul to the strong compulsions and reactions of compact matter, will educate it back, through the vicissitudes of human life, to the point of development from which it has lapsed by its fault, and from which it will then resume, in the fluidic "Heaven," "that was about us in our infancy,"* the *normal* course of its progress towards the Sidereal Degree.

Thus we see that the whole conception, constitution, and arrangement of the universe, which is a derivation from the divine thought, regulated by laws which are inherent in the original plan, necessarily implies the fundamental dualism of Good and Evil.

* Wordsworth's "Ode to Immortality."

| GOOD. | EVIL. |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Wisdom. | Ignorance. |
| Conformity to the Divine will. | Opposition to the Divine will. |
| Right doing. | Wrong doing. |
| Produces happiness. | Produces unhappiness. |

Happiness, and unhappiness, are the necessary and correspondential results of the *conformity*, or *opposition* of the creature to the divine plan, or will of the Creator.

The conception of *good*, and *evil*, as being the *necessary consequence* of right and wrong doing, is an inevitable consequence of the existence of the creative plan. For if we admit the existence of a plan, of which the evolutions of the universe are the gradual, simultaneous development, it is evident that the ordinations of that plan must not only be the standard of duty, but must also be the rule of enlightened self-interest for the creatures who are the subjects of that plan; because, as all the arrangements of the universe are combined in subservience to those ordinations, the opposition of the creature can only result, in placing it in a position in which the tendency of those arrangements will be *against*, instead of *for* it; in other words, it will place him in the condition of rowing against the stream, and thereby turning to the production of its own unhappiness the action of the providentially established currents of the universe, which, were its position harmonious, instead of being antagonistic, to those currents, would be the instruments of its advancement and happiness.

Conflict with the temptation to evil, being the indispensable condition of the attainment of goodness by derived existences, the latter have no right to complain of any amount of suffering, or delay, in their attainment of happiness, which they may bring upon themselves, and upon one another, by their own wilfulness, provided they arrive at length, as the result of that suffering, at the state of happiness, which, had they been more docile and reasonable, they might have reached by a shorter and easier road, viz., in the fluidic or spiritualised worlds of the universe, without falling to the level of a material world, like our planet.

Infinite power in the Creator, being *one with infinite love*, is pledged to secure the *ultimate* attainment of happiness by all the creatures He has called into existence; for it would be insulting to the Creator to attribute to the finite will of the creature, a power of *resistance* superior to the *attractive* power of the infinite will that called it into being; and doubly insulting to attribute to the Absolute Justice, and the Absolute Goodness, an abuse of power, and a gratuitous cruelty, that would be the negation of itself; every intelligence possessed of a conscience, would be bound, in virtue of the perceptions of that conscience, to judge, and to execrate the malevolence that would have called a soul into existence, only to let it become the cause of its own eternal misery; but as there can be no proportion between any imaginable lapse of ages, and the unending duration we

have before us, no amount or prolongation of *terminable* sufferings, incurred by a spirit in the course of its education, can be considered as impairing the benevolence of the creative plan; for any terminable period of suffering, will be so immeasurably over-balanced by the endless succession of the joyful "eternities" of the fluidic life, that it will seem as nothing to the perfected spirit, from whose consciousness the suffering, of its educational period will have passed away, leaving only the power of better understanding and appreciating the happiness to which that suffering has led.

In the slow passage of the spirit essence, from the state of diffusion in which it originally exists, in conjunction with the universally diffused cosmic matter in the gaseous state, up to the point of its individualisation into distinct personalities, or *souls*, its latent possibilities have been developed into the *rudiments* of all the intellectual and passional aptitudes which become the faculties of soul. *Each material form* which it has accreted during the process of this slow development, has been the exact *material correspondence* or *visible image* of its degree of advancement. For, as I said before, spirit does not *enter into*, or *take possession* of, the forms it animates, but constructs those forms, by the appropriate grouping together of the material atoms subjected to its influence through the instrumentality of the magnetically-acting forces that serve as its intermediary. A stone, a plant, a fish, a bird, an animal,

expresses the entire sum of its progressive possibilities in the life of that form, which is only the material *correspondence* of its *particular degree of development*.

Swedenborg, in his "Doctrine of Correspondence," and Fouriér, in his "Principle of Analogy," were, therefore, on the track of the truth; for, as every material form, is the actual production, the *literal expression* to our outer senses, of some phase of spiritual development, in its two modes of affection, and thought, the *forms*, or *moulds*, of the material world, constitute a complete image-book of the spirit-life of the planet. The closeness with which those forms succeed each other, the links by which each series is connected with the series above and below it, attest the smallness of the successive steps, by which the education of the spirit element is accomplished, and show us that the phases of this education grow out of one another by almost imperceptible degrees, each elaborating the progressive embodiments which correspond to its progress.

The supposition, that, through any series of developments, a pebble can become a plant, a plant a fish, a fish a fowl, a fowl a beast, and a beast a man, has resulted from our ignorance of the *modus operandi* of nature, just as the improved writing in a child's copy-book is not due to any development of a page of better writing out of a page of inferior writing, but to the development of progressively higher degrees of ability in the writer.

Each category of forms in the lower reigns is *permanent*, because it is not any given form, but only the *spirit substance*, whose action evolves it, that is educable ; therefore the successive generations of animal races are identical with one another, and are susceptible of no educational advance. Thus a coral is always a coral, a fish a fish, a bird a bird, a beast a beast. There are also different degrees of advancement in instinct, which is the *initial* and rudimentary state or degree of future *intellect* in each of the animal races. Thus a dog is higher than a fox ; in fact, to follow up this fruitful theme would be to write a compendium of the natural history of the planet. If we study the habits and doings of any creature of the lower reigns, we shall find that it offers an exemplification of the rudimentary state of at least some one element of human life or labour ; so that by forming the races of the animal kingdom into a graduated scale, we should obtain a sort of rudimentary reflex, or shadow-picture, of the various phases of human society ; from the one-idea'd borers to the sagacious ant, and industrious bee, through each of whose experiences the spirit element has learnt the special lesson of sensation, and activity, peculiar to it. Thus as a coral it has learnt to agglomerate ; as a numulite to pile ; as a mole and a rabbit to burrow and to tunnel ; as a spider and as a silkworm to spin and to weave ; as a reptile and insect to protect itself with armour ; as an ant, a beaver, a bird, and a bee, to build and to roof ; and as the first and the last

of these, it has developed the earliest rudiments of domestic, and social polity.

Each category of forms in the lower reigns may be compared to the banks of a river, each point of which is permanent, while the stream itself (*the spirit substance*) is constantly changing as the particles of which it is composed flow on to the sea ; or to *the classes of a preparatory school*, each of which remains the same, and in each of which the same branch of study is *always* carried on, although the boys in each are constantly changing, new boys coming into the lowest class, those in the lower classes passing up into the higher ones, and those in the higher ones—having worked their way up from the lowest to the highest—leaving the school, to pursue the course of their education in an institution of a higher order. Thus while the school continues to exist, *each of its classes* will continue to represent *exactly the same degree of educational progress*, not because there are special *races* of boys corresponding to the educational *status* of each class, but because every boy at some period of his educational training, finds himself at the point of educational capability and need, corresponding to each of those classes, which, though constantly changing the scholars who compose them, and who are being educated in them, are *permanent as classes*.

What in the lower races we call instinct, is, therefore, not any special faculty, essentially distinct from human intelligence, but is the *initial* and *rudimentary*

state of the same intelligence, which, in the human degree, *has developed itself* into intellectuality.

It is to be especially remarked that not only the rudiments of all our appetites, activities, and industries, but also of all our *vices*, are to be found in the creatures of the lower reigns. One tribe of ants goes to war with another tribe, for the sole purpose of making slaves of as many of the latter as its warriors can carry off, after which the latter live idly and luxuriously on the labours of their captives. The spider expends a world of skill and patience in entrapping its unwary victims. The carnivoræ fight each other, and devour their prey alive; and the cat diverts herself by playing with the terrified mouse before she eats it. The elephant treasures up the memory of an injury or an affront, and revenges himself on the offender long afterwards, if opportunity occur. But in all these acts the animal does no wrong, because having no sense of moral fitness, it is clear of the essentiality of *wrong doing*—viz., *the voluntary return towards the action of a lower phase of development, through the violation of the inner law, by acting downwards below the present standard of conscience.*

The dog, when he fights with his fellow for a bone, does not know that he is selfish; he only knows that he wants the bone, and he takes it if he can, unconsciously that he is trespassing on another's right. If angered, he wreaks his anger just as innocently, because he has no perception that anger is an evil sentiment. If he steal, and get whipped for stealing,

he will remember the whipping, will associate it with the taking of what he wanted, and, if the dread of the whip will be stronger with him than the desire for what he would like to take, will abstain from taking it; but though he thus learns a lesson of prudence, he has no idea of its being wrong to steal. The tiger that tears its living prey to pieces is not cruel in the sense in which a human being is cruel who commits a murder, for it knows only the law of hunger, and has no sense of pity to stifle, no remonstrance of conscience to ignore.

Effort being the necessary condition of the *development* of the latent spiritual energies, and the law of *gradual growth* implying a lowest point of commencement for that development; it is evident that spiritual effort, in its earliest stages, must necessarily be limited to the satisfaction of the selfish bodily appetites, which are, as yet, its only modes of consciousness, and, consequently, its only springs of action. No nobler prompting than the desire of satisfying its bodily appetites, and defending itself from attack—*i.e.*, than the double stimulus of pleasure and pain—*can* be applied to the rousing of spiritual effort in the animal degree. Strife, though unlovely in itself, and productive of temporary pain to its victims, is therefore an indispensable condition of the awakening of those energies in the early stages of its educational progress; the opposite reactions of pleasure and pain, of satisfaction and disappointment, of desire and apprehension, of hope and fear, affording it the

means of acquiring impetuosity, and combining fierceness and gentleness, promptitude and perseverance, and, in fact, obtaining the *rudiments* of all other mental and affectional qualities.

The sufferings of the animal world are an inevitable necessity for the education of spirit substance, and though constituting a large sum in the aggregate, are very small in the case of each of the lower creatures, who, having no imagination, have not *reached the intellectual* possibility, of *forecasting* and *regretting*, which increases so enormously the sufferings of each individual in the human degree—therefore, to draw from them an argument against the benevolence of the creative plan is to misunderstand the nature, conditions, and intention of that plan, whose aim—in the IMPOSSIBILITY OF CREATING READY-MADE PERFECTION,—is the self-development of sentient intelligences, by their own persistent effort, from the lowest point of germination up to the noblest.

That vexed question, the MYSTERY OF PAIN, as seen in the apparently superfluous sufferings, and the inter-devouring of the lower animals, is thus satisfactorily explained. The solution of this mystery has tried many a Christian, and many an unbeliever too; the latter have said the world is full of pain and misery, because it is ill-made, and shows a want of power, or of wisdom in the Creator; the former have maintained that before Adam's fall there was no pain, and no death, and that "death came into the world by sin." This is true as far as *man* is concerned, as we have

seen ; for had the soul never sinned, it never would have come to this world at all. His fall subjected him to the discipline of a material body, which body is subject to the laws of compact matter, consequently to death. Therefore was it said, "the soul that *sins*, it shall surely die." But the law of disaggregation and death ruled on this planet before the advent of *man*, for every material form is but the expression of the particular stage of spirit advancement ; and as it progresses, it *must* change that form, and develop a higher one ; therefore vegetation died, and was succeeded by fresh vegetation ; and animals died, and destroyed each other as they now do, long before the advent of man on the earth. The very rocks under our feet are the graveyards of animals of past ages. God governs by laws, and not a single organic being has ever assumed its present form save by the law of spirit development acting upon it at every moment of its existence, ensuring its gradual growth and progress through its accretion of a succession of outward MATERIAL FORMS.

We have thus seen that all spirit substance begins the work of self-elaboration at the same *initial point*, and continues that elaboration and education through the same processes. So all spirits eventually individualized out of that substance into distinct personalities, begin their new life of relation on an *equal footing*. All contain the same elements—*i.e.*, the same latent faculties ; but these

faculties are diversely combined in each, thus ensuring the spontaneous development of the variety whose harmonious diversities constitute, in the characterial department, as in all other departments of nature, the unity of the creation.

The Divine plan includes the free, spontaneous, voluntary preference of good to evil on the part of the intelligences called into existence. Freedom of choice is secured to each newly-formed spirit by the state of equilibrium in which it is placed between the promptings of impulse and those of reason. If all spirits went continuously *right* from the beginning, such a result would imply a Providential weighting of the scales on the side of good ; while, if all went *wrong*, such a result would equally imply a corresponding weighting of the scales on the side of evil. But, the Divine plan including the *free* and voluntary preference of good, or evil, on the part of each spirit, no such weighting is permitted to occur, and the scales are maintained for each spirit in a position of absolute equilibrium.

The Divine justice excluding the possibility of partiality or favouritism, the passional and intellectual combinations which constitute the individual temperament of each spirit, though diverse in each, are equivalent for all spirits ; who consequently start on their career of ulterior advancement with *equivalent* possibilities of making direct and speedy progress, of lingering on the way, or of taking a wrong road, and having to *retrace their steps*, according to the wise or un-

wise use they voluntarily make, of the splendid, but most dangerous possession of free-will, upon the essay of whose tremendous possibilities they have now entered.

Contact with matter in its ponderable state, as undergone through the magnetically-accreted forms of the mineral, vegetable, and animal reigns, is declared, as previously stated, to be the indispensable, universal condition of the initial stage of spiritual development; but we are told that when this first necessary course of the mental and affectional development of the spirit element has thus been accomplished, that element—having acquired all that the contact with ponderable matter is intended to impart—*has no need* of any further conjunction with matter in its grosser state; but that each individualised soul, enshrined in its *périsprit*, (or spirit envelope), should thenceforward pass through the phases of spirit growth, analogous to those of infancy, childhood, and adolescence, in *the fluidic spheres*, appropriated to the early training of individualized intelligences, and pursue its career of *endless* and *indefinite progress*, in the progressive spheres of the fluidic world, to whose glories it is now introduced; and where, under the loving tutelage of its guides it is to “try its ‘prentice hand” at the simpler branches of the cosmic labours which constitute for the inhabitants of that world, an inexhaustible field of activity, usefulness, amusement, admiration, and delight.

The perception of the Divine Being as the sole life

of the universe, and of the Divine Law as the sole rule of action, and sole condition of happiness, being the all-embracing aim of the creation of derived existences,—the instructions given by their guides to spirits who are thus pursuing their career of education in the fluidic spheres—all tend to the elucidation of the problems involved in our relations to that Being, and of those laws as the key to the infinite complexities of universal life, and the condition of our attainment of the Sidereal Degree.

Religion—*i.e.*, the science and sentiment of our relations to one another, and to the Divine Creator, from whom we all proceed, and in whom we have our being—is not regarded as a matter of long-faced sanctimoniousness, a mystical abstraction, a something ascetically distinct and apart from life, but simply as the *essence and meaning* of all science—the vital, all-pervading reality of every department of existence and manifestation.

The action of the guides, which was direct, constant, irresistible, during the preparatory education of the spiritual element, is now only exercised indirectly, as that of affectionate counsellors, desirous to see them take the right path, but yet more desirous that the taking of that path should be the result of their own free choice, and consequently refraining from the exertion of any pressure on the minds and wills, whose earliest steps in the path of spontaneous effort they now assist with their advice.

Immeasurably happier and easier as are the condi-

tions of progress in the *fluidic world*, than in the *material world*, the work of learning and of progressing, even in the former, is declared to demand laborious application on the part of the newly individualised spirits, and to give constant occasion for the exercise by them of docility, and teachableness, towards their guides; of humility, in the sense of hierarchical subordination; of abnegation, in regard to the selfish impulses, whose opposition to the counsels of reason, and of conscience, constitute the necessary condition of a voluntary adoption of *right*, in preference to *wrong*, as the rule of conduct; of patient perseverance, as the slow and toilsome road to the attainment of the power and glory of the higher spirit ranks; and of charity, in its largest sense, as self-forgetfulness and universal serviceableness.

They therefore endeavour to prepare their pupils for passing safely through the inevitable ordeal of the temptation and trial, by awakening in their minds the sentiment of reverent and loving devotion towards the great unseen Creator who has called them into being, in order to render them supremely happy; and of affectionate good-will towards all creatures as united in the brotherhood of a common origin and destiny; and to impress them with the conviction, that, being endowed with reason, which is the appanage of personality, and also with the impulses which will furnish them with the occasions for choosing between good and evil, between *conformity with*, and *opposition to*, the instructions they receive—they have now the

power of judging, and consequently of directing, their actions, and of choosing their path.

They encourage them to persevere in the path of duty by assurances of the happiness to which they will thus attain. They dissuade them from wandering out of that path by showing them the consequences which such dereliction from duty will *necessarily* and *correspondentially* entail upon them, and the terrible penalty of wrong-doing—and, following the leadings of the selfish impulses, which, by assimilating the spirit's state to that of the animal, constitutes, on its part, a voluntary *return*, (as far as such return is possible, to a fully formed spirit), towards *the level of animality*.

It would then find itself exiled from the glorious fluidic world, whose harmony would be compromised by the presence of disorderly or malevolent spirits, and compelled to *re-commence* the work of its education, through contact with the grosser state of matter, in the NEAREST APPROACH TO ANIMALITY which is possible in the case of a spirit furnished with its permanent *Périsprit*, viz., that of incarnation in a HUMAN BODY, on the surface of a planet, corresponding, in point of moral backwardness, and of *consequent* hardship of physical conditions, to the degree of its culpability; and where, in conjunction with the gross, stultifying, pain-creating *material body*, which is at once the livery, the punishment, and the cure of sin, and surrounded by spirits, who, misled by the same selfishness, have incurred the same penalty; it will learn the practical

import of wrong-doing (*i.e.*, of making selfishness its guide, instead of conscience, and thus, by attempting to sever its interests from the well-being of the universe, placing itself in opposition to the creative plan).

It will thus have to suffer the bitter experience of the horrors and tribulations of human existence; until it has worked its way up to a point of amendment, at which it is permitted to acquire the knowledge of the meaning, and the uses of the hard conditions, of life in the flesh, by what necessarily appears to it, until its real nature is explained, as the most appalling of mysteries, *viz.*, the LAW of DEATH, under which it has brought itself through its conjunction *with the material body*, whose accretion is the correspondential result of its *voluntary return* towards the conditions of animality."

Such, then, is "THE FALL OF MAN;" and thus have we fallen, or we should not be on this earth at this moment, bearing the heavy burden of years and all the trials, pains, and sorrows they have brought in their train. We should be bright, radiant, aerial fluidic spirits, soaring on towards the light of the Sidereal Degree, instead of plodding on our way in this work-a-day world of care, bearing about our solid prison-walls of flesh, that are such a material impediment to the flight of the spirit, which so often longs to spread its (figurative) wings, and fly away to brighter regions, of which it seems, in many cases, still to retain some memory in the shape of intuition and longing aspiration.

Yes, dear friends, we have all sinned, and fallen, and therefore we are *here*; we have "to till the soil with the sweat of our brow," and work our way back to the "Heaven that was about us in our infancy," (Wordsworth, "Ode to Immortality"), back to the paradisiacal "garden of Eden" from which we have fallen, from which we have been expelled, because we wanted to be "wiser than the children of light," who obediently have followed the teaching of their spirit guides, preferring *good* (conformity to the divine law) to *evil* (which is opposition to that law).

We are here, of the earth, earthy, not because an allegorical Adam fell, but because we have each and all fallen from our original pure, innocent state, and must undergo our penal servitude in the animal body which we have magnetically accreted, as the *correspondential* result of our wrong-doing, until we have worked our way back again, to the happy fluidic spheres from which we have fallen; by our gradual growth in science, and in virtue, progressively overcoming our evil impulses and our tendency to materiality.

In another letter I will send you some extracts from other authorities on this vast, inexhaustible, and deeply interesting subject, "the fall of man," and consequent stern, but in the end beneficent and regenerative, *necessity* of incarnation and re-incarnation in fleshly bodies, through whose discipline we shall progressively overcome the evil that is in us, and never again incur the terrible penalty of exile from the higher life by falling to the level of animality.

I will endeavour to show you, that without this explanation now given of "the fall of man," as being our own individual fall from a higher state, to the penalties and probations of a purgatorial world, it is impossible to account for the inequalities of our respective positions, or to reconcile those inequalities with the justice of the Creator; neither is it possible to understand why some suffer so much more than others, for, if we all suffer for *Adam's* sin, we surely ought all to suffer equally, which is by no means the case, or why we should suffer at all for *Adam's* fault, if each soul is a *new* creation, and comes to this earth fresh from the hands of its Heavenly Father, which is also a popular belief.

Hoping I have interested you sufficiently, with the few selections I have made, to induce you to read Miss Blackwell's papers, and to make you desirous of receiving my other letters on the subject, I remain,
your sincere friend,

M. C.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE FIFTH LETTER.

ON THE "FALL" TO MATERIALITY, OR INCARNATION, AND CONSEQUENT
LAW OF REGENERATION.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I concluded my last letter with a promise that I would endeavour to give you a further insight into the law of regeneration, by which we are to work our way up again to the bright, happy, fluidic state from which we have fallen to the hard discipline of life on a material earth. Had we been good spirits, docile and obedient to the teachings of our spiritual guides, we should have continued our education, and have progressed to all eternity in that comparatively easy state; but we have seen how, through the craving after materiality acquired in the pre-personal elaboration and rudimentary education of our now individualised spirit, we fell away from that pure spiritual state, step by step, until our divinely appointed guides no longer having the power to exert any influence over us, we had become of the earth, earthly—until, banished from that fair "Garden of Eden," we find ourselves subjected to the hard conditions and severe discipline of life in a material planet, like this earth, in which our future education

will be continued, until we are sufficiently spiritualised to breathe again in that purer atmosphere; and then "there will be more joy there, over the one repentant sinner than over the ninety and nine just ones who have needed no repentance."

The individualised spirit cannot again return to animate any of the forms of the lower reigns, through which the spirit-substance has performed the preparatory steps of its elaboration. In this respect our new and higher revelation differs essentially from the early ideas of the Pythagorean philosophers, who supposed that the sinful soul underwent the punishment of its faults imprisoned in the body of an animal. They were evidently on the track, although, like many other of the earlier intuitions, it was destined for a later age and further revelation, consequent upon the gradual development of ideas, to give us the true interpretation of the fact. This theory is therefore no more a revival of that infantine hypothesis, than modern chemistry, or modern astronomy, are revivals of the misconceptions and superstitions of alchemy and astrology. It comes to us, like they do, as the natural explanation and connection of a deeply rooted intuition in the early human mind.

The fact then is, that the spirit who, by the misuse it makes of its free-will, in giving way to its self-love, and the craving after the materiality through which its preparatory education was accomplished, in the animal forms, incurs the punishment of a return to that animality in the nearest approach to it which

it is possible for an *individualised* spirit to assume. This is undoubtedly a punishment, and a very heavy one, although it is not so much arbitrarily imposed, as it is brought about by the natural results of its lapse from purity, by the correspondential magnetic accretion of materiality, enveloping it with a material body, which is no longer the garment adapted for a fluidic sphere, and occasions it to *fall* to a material and purgatorial one, like our earth. Henceforward its action will be limited to the scope of its material organs. For it must not be forgotten that our fleshly organs, which, while we are living in the daily use of them, we are apt to regard as the necessary and only instruments of perception, are really LIMITATIONS of the faculties of the soul.

Roustaing says, in *Les Quatre Evangiles*, that human incarnation is not a *necessity*; it is a *chastisement*, and chastisement cannot precede guilt. A spirit is only humanised when his first fault has rendered him subject to human incarnation, and compelled him to undergo the consequences of this subjection.

He continues: "The simplest common sense should suffice to show us that the prescience of God enables him to foresee that, among the number of those whom he creates simple, ignorant, fallible, and gifted with free-will, there will always be some who yield to their weakness, who will allow themselves to be drawn aside by the pride which results from ignorance, and leads to presumption, selfishness, and envy; and who

will "fall" because they misuse their free-will. But is it reasonable to think that God, the perfect type of all perfection, the absolute and eternal justice, creates fallible creatures for the *express purpose* of making them acquire strength in the pain of material trials?—that he creates them innocent, in order to teach them the practice of innocence through the murders, the butcheries, the basenesses, and innumerable vices of the primitive human incarnations?—vices that must, in that case, have been implanted purposely in the creature as it issued from the creative hand, and so deeply, that thousands of ages of suffering fail to root them out. For even now, at the dawn of the new day, how many are the horrors that still afflict humanity!

"According to this view, God must be supposed, in giving free-will to the spirit, to have made it a condition of this gift, that the spirit's free-will should be subjected to a uniform law, the law of sin; and to have subjected both the innocent and the guilty spirit to the same torture (human incarnation)—the spirit who, in the state of ignorance and innocence, follows with docility the teachings of the guides charged to lead and to develop it in the path of progress; and the spirit who, indocile, proud, presumptuous, selfish, envious, and rebellious, has misused its free-will, and has thus 'fallen' from its pristine innocence.

"No; God is great, just, kind, paternal. His children are born to life, with innocent hearts; they are endowed with freedom of choice and of action;

they misuse this freedom almost always, because God leaves to each spirit the use of its free-will. It is then that the spirit chooses its own path ; then, but then only, that it incurs the consequences of its choice.

“The prescience of God has enabled him to foresee, for all eternity, that nothing will ever be lacking to the general harmony, that there will always be spirits whose failure in the fluidic life will furnish the population of the worlds created by him to serve as the sphere of expiation and progress for those who ‘fall’ to their level, and who will work out their own amelioration and that of those worlds ; and also to foresee, in like manner, that there will always be spirits whose steady and gradual progress in the fluidic life, will furnish the population of the fluidic worlds appropriated to the intelligences who will inhabit them, and in which they will continue to progress in the fluidic state.

“All of them, pure, in the state of innocence, and ignorance, equally submitted to the spirits charged to lead and to develop them, possess freedom of action, and may thus advance in the fluidic world, and gradually arrive at the state of perfection ; doing like the scholar who, constantly docile and attentive to the voice and counsels, and the lessons of his masters, follows the regular course of the classes, and succeeds in obtaining his degrees. Or, on the other hand, he may do like the scholar who, indocile, disobedient, and rebellious, incurs the penalty of expulsion, and is

sent away to a penitentiary school, where he will be compelled to follow, in another sphere, and under other conditions, the course of his classes; and will also succeed, sooner or later, in taking his degrees.

“A great number of spirits ‘fall,’ for nearly all mis-use their free-will; a few docile to the higher spirits charged to lead and to develop them, follow steadily the path which is pointed out to them. Those who fall, undergo a punishment which they need not have incurred, and which they might have avoided; they are subjected to human incarnation, according to the degree of their culpability, and in the conditions appropriate to their needs of expiation, and of progress, either in primitive planets, or in other worlds more advanced. The spirits who, docile to the guides charged to lead and to conduct them, do not fail in the trials to which they are subjected, continue to progress in the fluidic state. The spirits who fail, and those who remain pure, work out their advancement by their intelligence and activity, and accomplish their providentially allotted tasks, in the grand unity of the creation in which there is reciprocity and solidarity of all spirits, in view of the general aim which is the elevation of each spirit towards God, according to the general laws of progress through wisdom, science, and love.

“The spirits who fail, exert their activity and their intelligence in the state of incarnation. They have

not only to provide for their life, and well-being, thereby ameliorating the material condition of the worlds they inhabit, which is the material portion of their mission ; but they also have to work out their moral and intellectual advancement, and as they progress themselves, to aid the moral and intellectual development of the less advanced humanities that people the material globes.

“To material incarnation, as a chastisement necessary to expiation and progress, succeed incarnations in progressively higher and higher worlds, and of a character less and less material (for matter ever follows the progress of spirit), becoming more and more fluidic ; until the spirit (through the elevation it has acquired, disengaged from all contact with flesh), returns to the higher regions of existence, passing through successive strata of air and of worlds, learning on the one hand, and instructing on the other.”

As we have seen, then, the soul will always find itself brought, by means of its perisprit, or magnetic body, into conjunction with matter of a degree of etheriality corresponding to its degree of purity ; and therefore after its “fall,” and consequent incarnation, it will always be provided, through perispritic attraction, with a material body in exact harmony with its state. Every soul, whether high or low, at all stages of its career, accretes its appropriate body, both during its brief sojourns in flesh, and during its much longer sojourns in the spirit zone of the planet, in

which it finds itself after the falling away of the material body which we call death.*

We are told that the worlds in the universe are infinitely numerous; that their multiplicity would bewilder us; nothing within the narrow limits of our present intelligence could give us an idea of their number; and that these worlds are at different degrees of advancement. Some only just emerging from the incandescent stage of formation through which our planet has passed, others at the degree of advancement at which our planet now is. Some are already so much more purified, and so much further advanced, that they may be called semi-fluidic; as Jupiter is supposed to be, in which, could we transport ourselves to it, we should find that what is perfectly tangible and solid for its inhabitants, would be like pure spirit to our coarse and heavy organs, which would probably only perceive light more or less intensified. We should require their more perfect and subtile perceptions to discern what to them is perfectly solid matter.

Roustaing, says in *Les Quatre Evangiles*, "By way of giving you, relative to the fluidic bodies of the higher planets, a comparison based on a form of matter which, under your own observation, may

* Those who would wish to study the nature of the spirit life of our planet, will find a most interesting account of it in the works of the late Allan Kardec, translated from the French by Miss Anna Blackwell and others, about to be published by Messrs Trübner & Co.

change its nature (though all comparison between the things of your earth, and those of higher worlds are necessarily defective), we will liken the human body of your earth to water, which seems to your eyes to be compact, and the bodies—also human—of certain other planets, to vapour; the latter being none the less *water*, but arrived at a state which allows of its rising into the air, and blending with the atmosphere, instead of remaining massive upon a fixed basis. In the successively higher incarnations which follow those accomplished on your earth, the body loses, little by little, its density, and becomes more and more capable of rising through the air. The feet are no longer rivetted to the ground, and an upright position is no longer a necessity. The regions occupied by these various planets, are provided with an atmosphere appropriated to the needs of each; and as the water of the sea, having a greater density than that of rivers, affords a stronger support to the bodies confided to it, so the air of those regions has a density greater than that of bodies of the mortals by whom they are inhabited."

Incarnation, then, in a material body, is the natural result, at the same time that it is the penalty for the spirit's lapse from innocence and purity,—it sinks again to animality, though no longer to the lower animal forms, which it has quitted for ever; but to the imprisonment in a material body, which is the nearest approach possible to that of the animals, without possessing the advantages enjoyed by these, which is

to be happy and contented in the perfect completeness of their degree and kind—obtaining their food without forethought or anxiety; and their clothing, by its spontaneous and natural growth.

The purgatorial and abnormal character of human existence is very clearly indicated by the contrast it offers in both these respects to that of all the lower reigns, the members of which, like the example given for our imitation by our greatest teacher, are each and all arrayed like the "*lilies of the field*," in a glory surpassing that of Solomon, although they neither "*toil nor spin*," and are fed like "*the fowls of the air*," although they neither "*sow nor reap*."

That this beautiful parable would be an absurdity, and a mockery, is also evident, unless Christ had intended to spur us on towards a return to that pure spiritual state from which we have fallen; and in which we shall again find ourselves in spontaneous possession of all the elements of our pre-personal life, and shall wrap ourselves with "*light as with a garment*," and adorn ourselves at pleasure, as do the pure spiritual inhabitants of the fluidic worlds, with spontaneous and beautiful raiment, luminous, resplendent, or glorious, as the correspondential expression of our mental and moral advancement—and find in the ether that surrounds us, all the elements necessary to the sustenance and well-being of the higher order of bodies, proper to that higher degree. (See Note as Appendix to Letters.)

Without this explanation, the parable would be

totally inapplicable to human life, for Christ did not mean to counsel us to return to the life of any *lower reign*, in which, like the lilies of the field, and the birds of the air, we should be arrayed in robes of spontaneous loveliness ; as he could not have meant us to relax our necessary efforts to obtain our daily bread, and to provide for the sustenance of our families ; for it will only become our lawful privilege to do so, when we shall have attained to the spontaneous magnificence and fulness of that glorious reign, in which, freed from these material cares and anxieties that are now our portion, we shall be at liberty to devote ourselves to the glorious aims and avocations of an existence in which material needs and selfish interests have no place.

Another proof of the fallen state of man, as far as raiment is concerned, is to be found in the suggestive allegory of the Book of Genesis ; the immediate result attendant upon the wrong-doing of the guilty pair, being the invention of substituted garments, borrowed from both the *vegetable* and *animal* degrees, and subsequent invention of the art of clothing by which man has pressed into his service, even the still lower *mineral* reign, to colour his borrowed raiment, and to lend him the bright radiance of its gem and stone to glitter on his breast, and vie with the pale glistening pearl which he has wrenched from the despised Mollusque in the ocean's depths ; thus borrowing all the *naturally acquired* garments of the lower reigns in order to supply this material deficiency.

Until man can rise
To his own bright skies,
And wear the clothes he wishes,
He'll his littleness deck
In the gaudy wreck,
Of birds, and beasts, and fishes.

Man's mental and moral superiority to the other animals is very apparent, whilst the inferiority of his condition is equally evident to the serious observer, which would lead him to conclude, even without the aid of a "Revelation," that the human race does *not* constitute a *normal* and necessary link in the chain of material development, and that man's vast superiority can only be the heritage of some far higher phase of development already attained and lost by him, in some higher realm of existence ; for it would seem to be contrary to the infinite love and wisdom of the all-merciful Creator who has provided so bountifully for the lilies of the field, and the fowls of the air, to have placed the noblest and highest work of his creation in a far less harmonious condition than he has done the lower reigns, whose material conditions fully satisfy their every need, everything being prepared for them. Whereas, man can only maintain his existence by waging war with the elements, without habitation, food, or clothing. but what he must labour hard to provide for himself: and his offspring, by constant battle with all the natural conditions, for all are hostile to him—the animals would devour him, the vegetation, if left to its natural growth, would overwhelm him, and the

very soil which affords them habitation, and food in abundance, must be tilled by him, before it will produce him wherewith to make a loaf of bread.

And yet man has requirements vastly larger and more imperative than theirs, which he has to provide for himself slowly and laboriously, out of this vast chaos of hostile forces, and no matter how hard he works, or how much he may improve the conditions of his life, he is never satisfied with it ; his aspirations ever tend beyond his present attainment, each new comfort or convenience he provides for himself awakens his desires, and sharpens his faculties of invention, each new discovery stimulates his thirst for knowledge, and he is ever striving after an ideal perfection that he never attains, for he is ever seeking for something beyond and out of his present capabilities.

No, the Book of Genesis is evidently right ; everything combines to prove that man is in a fallen state, that he is not in his proper element on a material earth, in the human form ; that it is an abnormal condition, in which everything is against him. He is undergoing a repetition of animal life, under conditions as to outward circumstances far less favourable, and yet endowed with far vaster faculties of intelligence, which only render those circumstances still more repellant, and still harder to endure, than when in the innocent ignorance of simple instinct, which was the happy sphere of his pre-personal stage of

- development, he had neither memory, apprehension, nor regret.

Man is, indeed, a grand noble spirit in whom are the germs of endless advancement ; but he is chained down to the earth by the gravitation of his material body—his free soul is imprisoned in massive walls of flesh and bone, which also confine him to the earth, and fetter down his spirit to a material sphere, from which nothing but death will set him free.

Death ! upon whom, in his ignorance and apprehension, he looks with fear and horror ! Death, the only liberator ! For who has not felt the weight of this prison-house of flesh, which binds us to the earth from which we would so naturally rise and soar, as our thought still can do, to brighter regions, quicker than the electric spark by which we communicate with the antipodes,—for, with all its swiftness, how poor it still is, contrasted with the flash of thought ! From this to the remotest star is but the flight of a second. Thought is still unconfined by any of the laws that fetter our material form, and it can spring aloft and soar away to the remotest regions, as our spirit will one day do, when freed from the bonds of a material body. Once let it undergo the discipline intended, and do the work of expiation and purification required to fit it again for more fluidic and etherial spheres, and it obtains its freedom, never again to be brought into a material external envelope or body, which, understand, it has accreted through its

own lapse from purity and consequent "fall" within the magnetic influence of materiality.

Once brought under that stern necessity, once become an Adam, or child of earth, then—to use the words of Christ to Nicodemus,—unless a man is born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is not whether he will, or whether he will not, but that the established law of God is the law of *Re-generation*.

Probably, if we were consulted about it, few of us would wish to return again to earth, to commence life over again, with all its up-hill work, and all the cares and sorrows that generally attend a man from his birth to the grave, for as it was said of yore, man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards, but out of much purifying, the metal comes out the purer. However, we are not consulted in the matter; if such is the order established by the Creator, the creature must submit to it, and go through it as he does through every other phase of his existence, without a murmur, as we have already done through so many other earth *lives*, before we have arrived at the point where we now are. And, moreover, say what we will about it, the law of re-incarnation is not so alarming as it would appear at first sight. Is it not infinitely preferable to undergo another earth life, even if the lowest, and the humblest, and to have this chance of expiating our faults, under the bright sun of heaven, surrounded by human love, (for, by the kind providence of God, the very meanest of

human beings has some one to love, and some one who loves him,) than to expiate his faults amidst the supposed burning fires of hell, surrounded by the orthodox devil and his angels, who, according to general belief, are demons who are to torture us for ever and ever? Such a punishment is supposed to be everlasting,—it is therefore not meant to improve us, but to punish for ever and ever; but the doctrine taught by Christ was to “forgive our enemies until seventy times seven,” and to pray for forgiveness “according as we have forgiven those who trespass against us;” and he also said “of those whom thou had given me, I have not lost one.” We may therefore believe that he gives them as many opportunities as they can require for repentance, expiation, and improvement; and to those who shrink so much from returning to all the weariness and hardships of an earth life, I would say *they have it in their power to elevate themselves too high in their present state, ever to fear a necessity of returning to it.* But let them seriously ask themselves the question whether they would not sooner go through a hundred earth lives, were they necessary for their purification, than suffer torments everlasting, which is the alternative held out to them by their creeds?

There is a feeling, or innate knowledge, in the human mind, that all does not end here. If, then, they believe in an hereafter, they cannot think it will be the same for all; for if the wicked would be as happy as the just, it would be an encouragement to

vice, and to the gratification of those evil passions, which, we all admit, we are in this world to control, and to endeavour to eradicate from our natures ; besides, we cannot imagine that the pure heaven we long for, where all is at last joy and peace, could be a place where sin and wrath and strife—pride, envy, hatred, and malice—could enter. It would then no longer be the heaven of our dreams. We must then admit that the future state cannot be the same for all, or what would be the use of striving after goodness ? We might as well give free rein to all our evil passions, and indulge all desires, even to the injury of our neighbours. We know that this future will be happy, or not, according to our lives in the flesh ; but we cannot flatter ourselves that these are perfect. Strive as we will, we shall always see some whom we must unhesitatingly pronounce to be better than we are ; and yet we cannot exactly see that we merit eternal punishment. Well, then, let us imagine that some one were to say to us, “ You are not as happy as you should be, whilst you see others more advanced, and happier. Would you like to be as they are ? ” You would naturally answer in the affirmative, although fully aware of all your short-comings and imperfections, you could not see your way to becoming like them ; but supposing that person were to say to you,—“ Well, begin your life over again, with your present experience ; avoid all you now know to be evil, and strive diligently after good,”—would you hesitate to accept the offer, or to follow the advice,

even if you were sure beforehand that you would have to go through great trials and many hardships? You would say, It will soon be over; it cannot last for ever, and then my happy and improved state awaits me, which will repay me for all. Supposing even that any one offered you an immense fortune, which you could obtain by a few days, or even were it by a whole week, of abject misery, and *hard* work, would you hesitate to accept the offer? You work hard for days, weeks, years, to better your earthly condition, to obtain a little competence, which may be snatched away from you in a moment by any accident, and which you are sure to lose at death. Now, what is a whole lifetime of work compared to an eternity of happiness!

I have heard people say that God is too good to require us to go through another trial—that he only requires *one* from us. Do they think there would be more goodness in condemning a man to an eternity of punishment than to give him the means to expiate and amend his faults? But, as I have said before, God does not ask our opinion; it is either one of his established laws, or it is not. Let us now examine the probabilities of the case from a purely philosophical point of view.

If re-incarnation is only an idea without foundation, it is plain that our present earth-life is the only one, and that a new soul is created at the birth of every individual who comes into the world. Here I would pause, and make an observation and an inquiry.

The souls that are sent into this little earth alone, which is admitted by all astronomers to be one of the most insignificant of the unending universe that surrounds us,* would be at the rate of seventy-two a minute. For this calculation I have taken the very

* The bright stars that we see in the firmament are suns; each one is surrounded by its planetary worlds. Immeasurable distances separate those solar systems from our own, and from one another—distances for which the human intellect has invented no numbers. Yet notwithstanding the inexpressible space that separates these suns from one another, their number is so immense, that it also surpasses all our means of enumeration. Thought, could it conceive, could not express the vast number of solar systems which exist in the universe, any more than it can calculate the distances which separate one from the other. Paralysed and confounded before this infinite multitude that no human language can express, it will only be able to admire the indescribable marvel in paralysed silence. Were it to transport itself for years, ages, myriads of periods, through the far-off realms of this boundless ocean, space and yet more space, worlds and yet more worlds, for ever and for ever will meet its bewildered sight; heaven will succeed to heaven, sphere to sphere, one populated desert to another, one immensity to another immensity; and then—after having travelled without ceasing during endless ages, with the rapidity of thought, which beggars the lightning's flash, were the soul's flight to be eternal—passing all the limits possible for human imagination to conceive—even then, the infinity of space would still remain unexplored before it, undiminished by the incalculable distances it had travelled in the eternity of its flight's duration; for the infinitude of space would succeed to the infinitude of time, without any limitation; and then the soul, overcome with immensity, finding itself only on the threshold of infinite creation, would sink down overpowered before having yet taken a single step in space! Yes, human imagination would stay its flight, palpitating, fainting, oppressed, utterly overcome and overwhelmed! Only He who has called them into existence, and who holds them, each one in its appointed place, can measure their distances, or count their myriad lights!

lowest statistical basis, that of France, and applied it to the population of the globe, over 1300 millions, and the result, as I have said, would be seventy-two a minute. The births in China alone, where the population is 500 millions, are calculated at the rate of thirty a minute! What, then, must the creation of new souls amount to every minute, for the myriads, and myriads upon myriads, of worlds without end, because God's universe, like himself, is INFINITE, or without end. Certainly my observation may be answered by another, that God's powers of creation are *infinite*. I cannot deny this; but I would only suggest the idea of the improbability of this incessant creation, considering that each soul is to last *for ever*. Is it not more probable it should for ever continue to go to the Father through those worlds, and thus ascend by degrees through the "many mansions" in His kingdom to those more brilliant habitations prepared for those who have freed themselves from the hard necessity of material existences! So much for my observation; now for my inquiry.

If a new soul is created at the birth of each individual, where would be the justice of punishing that innocent soul, fresh from the pure source of the Creative Power, for a sin committed by a first man, with whom he can have no tie of affinity or kindred whatever?

I will now continue my argument. If there is only one material existence, a new soul must be created for every one that comes into this world, and into

the others of the universe, at the enormous rate before mentioned. And the creator of the Universe is also engaged in watching over his creation, and his creatures, in the minutest particular, as Omnipresent, and Omniscient, and is at the same time employed in creating souls, at a rate faster than the collective pulsations a minute, of those creatures already in existence throughout the Universe; or, if to avoid this improbability, we admit the priority of the soul, then the question comes to be—what that soul was before its advent on this earth, and whether its previous state did not amount to an existence of some kind. There is no alternative, no middle course, either the soul existed or it did not exist before the body. If it existed, what was its state? It must have been a conscious existence, because an unconscious state would have been equivalent to non-existence.

You, dear friends, who have followed me through the previous letters, in which I have endeavoured to give you a slight idea of the grand view now being revealed to mankind, of the plan and purposes of creation, are perfectly aware of the procedence and antecedents of the spirit, and of the slow and sure education it has undergone through all the lower reigns, from the nebulous, through the gaseous, mineral, vegetable, and animal forms, or moulds; and of its subsequent *fall* from the bright fluidic quasi-heavenly state to which it had been appointed (assigned) on attaining its individualisation in its permanent perispit, (or spiritual body) from the

educated spirit mass, of which it had once formed a part. You know that, according to this most sublime and exalted view of creation ever yet vouchsafed to our planet, the fall of each individual spirit to a material earth has been brought about entirely by its own fault, and by its tendency to return to animality, or the material spheres of its earlier elaboration and education, and the consequent mis-use it has made of its newly acquired free-will. You know that the spirit (each individual spirit), that comes to this earth, clothing itself with a material body, through the influence of the magnetic forces, to whose control it has again become subject through its fall, is a fallen spirit, that it has fallen from a higher, purer, more fluidic state, in which the rest of its progressive education towards perfection would have been comparatively easy. You know, from what I have stated to you in my former letters, that that material body is the exact outward expression of its inward and spiritual state—and that each spirit, on coming to the earth in the human form, is a fallen spirit, not because a first Adam fell, but because Adam (or child of earth) is the generic name under which it is now classed—and that it is its own individual fall, its own individual sin, that brings it again, by the weight of its own material and earthly inclinations, to live again on earth, to toil and to till, and by the sweat of its brow to work its way up again to that brighter state, that allegorical Garden of Eden, it has so wilfully quitted.

My argument, therefore, dear friends, is almost useless, as far as you are concerned; but still, as it must confirm you still more in the truth of the sublime view I am endeavouring to elucidate, I will continue it from the point where I left off.

We are *supposing*, then, that the soul comes into being for the first time with the body. I would then be glad to understand the following questions. Why does the soul show such decided aptitudes and inclinations, often quite independent of either its position, or its education? From whence is derived the extraordinary talent and ability some children evince from the earliest age for some particular science or art, to which other children in the same family are quite indifferent all their lives? How is it that some children have precocious instincts of virtue or vices, innate sentiments of dignity, or of meanness, which contrast so strongly with the sphere in which they are born? Why is it that some men, apart from their education, are more advanced, have more talent, more genius than others?

Why are there savage nations as well as civilized men? Would it be possible to take one of these savages and to educate him into a Newton? Perhaps it will be said that the Hottentot is of an inferior race, but is the Hottentot a man or is he not? If he is a human being, why has God disinherited him from the privileges accorded to other races of men? If he is not a man, why try to convert him to Christianity?

You see our grand views are more noble than those

narrow ones. We do not believe that there are several different kinds of men, but that they are more or less advanced, and are all equally susceptible of progress. Is not this more in accordance with the goodness and justice of God ?

It would be both monstrous and immoral to say that our inclinations to vice or to virtue, our talents or our mediocrity, depend upon our material organism, for man would then be but a machine ; he would no longer be responsible for his acts, for he could lay all the blame upon his material organism. If God has made all equal, which one would naturally expect from his justice and impartiality, then why is one a Newton and the other a Hottentot, both having been born on the very same day ?

With the help of our wise and beautiful new unveiling of truth, all is satisfactorily explained. Men bring with them at their birth the intuition of all they have learned during the progress of their successive existences, and they are more or less advanced according to the number of those existences, and the uses they have made of them.

According to the state of its progression and advancement will also be the centre to which the spirit is appointed on his reincarnation, or resurrection in the flesh, which was formerly understood to be a resurrection of the flesh, since known to be a chemical impossibility. Our Newton will not reappear amongst the Hottentots, for then his genius would be utterly wasted, and the purpose of his existence also, because

he would then neither benefit others, nor advance himself. Neither will the low uneducated savage spirit be born in a civilised nation ; when he is, he only goes to swell the ranks of the criminals who satisfy their evil inclinations by the murder and butchery of some half dozen of their fellow creatures ; it is probable that had they been totally debarred from the advantages of being born in a civilised centre, they would not only have killed but also have eaten their victims—for the propensity to murder itself, is but a reminiscence of their former animal state, in which, perhaps, some larger dose of the tiger nature has predominated. In another earth life they will not be wholesale murderers, because they will have suffered the penalty, paid the price of that iniquity, and learnt the dreadful consequences of their sin. If they murder at all, they will probably have but one victim, and that not from the love of butchery, not from their former tiger propensity, but from the gratification of some other brutal passion still existing uneradicated from their nature, which they will again have to expiate by punishment and expiation, until, at last, the time will have arrived when they have learnt to look upon murder with horror, and would recoil from even setting foot upon a worm.

Thus men are more or less advanced according to the number of existences they have undergone ; just as would be the case amongst an assemblage of individuals of different ages, each one would be at a different stand-point, according to the number of

years he had lived in the world. Could we collect a hundred individuals together, from the child of one year old, to the aged man of ninety, and throwing a thick veil over the years that divide them, imagine, in our ignorance, that all were born on the same day, we should naturally wonder that one was large, another small; one old, another young; some instructed, and others ignorant; but all would be explained—when, upon withdrawing the impeding veil, we found that some were mere infants, and that others had lived many years.

God is just, and would not make some of his children less perfect than others; but, with our new revelation, all is made plain, and the apparent injustices that we behold amongst our brethren no longer exist—we thought we saw them, but it was only because we saw the present, and could not look upon the past, in which the true explanation was to be found.

Now, having seen the soul in its past, and in its present state, let us continue our argument while we examine the future that awaits it.

If our present existence is alone to decide our future state, what will be the respective future positions of the savage and the civilised man? Will they both be on the same level, or will one have distanced the other? Will the man who has worked hard all his life to improve his character and education, still be on the same level with the man who has been stationary, and is therefore his inferior; not

because he has been idle, but because he has neither had the time nor the opportunity to improve himself? What will be the fate of those poor unfortunates to whom the light of education and morality never came, because they died before it reached them? Will they be treated as reprobates? If not, what have they done to deserve to be placed in the same ranks as the others, who have worked hard and improved? And what will be the fate of children who die before they have done either good or evil? If they are amongst the elect, why should this favour be shown to them who have done nothing to deserve it? Why should they be spared and exempted from the trials and troubles of an earth life? Nothing has ever yet been taught, until now, on this mystery, that can by any means satisfy the inquiring mind; the explanations which the churches have endeavoured to give, have but served to harden the heart, and to make our heavenly Father appear a hard master, and a capricious tyrant. It was, indeed, time that our beautiful new revelation should appear to give us a rational explanation of such seeming mysteries, and to vindicate the character of our God. Not but what the solution already existed amongst us. Christ had declared, "*unless a man be born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God." But succeeding ages have so heaped over this plain-spoken truth, with theological dogmas, that it is commonly supposed to have meant a sprinkling of the waters of baptism on the forehead of a new-born

babe—a form, an outward and visible ceremony, which is considered to contain an inward and spiritual grace.

It is, indeed, the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual *truth*, as I hope to convince you in my next letter ; when I will also endeavour, by means of our magnificent new revelation, to answer the very pertinent questions with which, on account of its length, I must now conclude this ; begging you to believe me your very sincere friend. M. C.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE SIXTH LETTER.

ON THE NECESSITY OF RE-INCARNATION.

“Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—We cannot help pausing, sometimes, in the midst of the hurry and bustle of life, in the midst of its cares and anxieties, of its joys and its sorrows, to ask ourselves the question of what it all means? how we came here? why we are here? and whither we are going? Until quite modern times, men have not been allowed to answer this question for themselves; and even for comparatively slight differences of religious opinions, they have been sent to the other world to find for themselves the solution to the last inquiry. Those who held opposite views did not mourn their dreadful fate any the more, because they were convinced they had gone to everlasting torments. This cruel doctrine did not make human beings any more merciful towards each other, for they consented to send their fellow creatures to eternal perdition just the same, by depriving them of their earth life, the only one they could be quite sure they really knew anything

about—and this, merely for some really insignificant difference of opinion respecting some point of doctrine of the very same creed—since both held Christ to be the only begotten Son of God; very God, of very God. No, men did not dare to think for themselves, a short time ago, the penalty was too enormous, and it was better to take their creeds ready-made, and to conform to them without question; they were, therefore, Catholics or Protestants, according to the country and the family in which they happened to be born, religion was a mere question of geography. It is a time-honoured custom, certainly, and has lasted even until now, for the great majority still believe, because their fathers believed before them, and the last thing men find it easy to give up, are the earliest lessons of their childhood—they seem to have grown with our growth, and to have strengthened with our strength. To many, therefore, it is useless to endeavour to show them that they are really believing in doctrines of the most conflicting character; and that truth does not consist in its having been the earliest lesson we were taught.

Did Christ wish us to be contented with them, when he enjoined us so often to "*search the Scriptures?*" And he spoke for all time, because we shall always read the lesson therein, according to the light we bring to read it with,—and every succeeding age that has passed since it was written, has been the means of lifting higher and higher the veil that still covers so much of its meaning. That veil was the

veil of ignorance—ignorance of the laws of God, and of the universe, his creation ; hence men's religious beliefs have ever partaken of their state of intellectual advancement. The fables that have been presented to mankind have been of the most varied description, and of the most childish foundation, because invented in times when men were, comparatively speaking, children in intellect, and the subsequent elaboration of systems built upon these foundations, have been of the rudest kind ; many of them can only be likened to heaps of rubbish, which, however painful it may be at first sight to those who have long cherished the incongruous heap, as a legacy from their dead forefathers, the sooner it is cleared away the better, both for themselves and for future generations, otherwise the heap will only continue to grow larger and larger, and more incongruous, as new theories are built upon it, which, though certainly more presentable, as being founded on a longer and more careful observation of facts, unless they can stand the glare of the meridian sun of the future, will only go to augment the accumulation, of what, to our successors, will seem to be a still larger heap of rubbish, except, when as they search it bit by bit, they are able to perceive fragments of great truths here and there, and cleaning them from all the errors which surround them, are able to exhibit them again as shining bits of the one great truth which is destined to last for ever and ever.

Surely such searches are good, and should be made

from time to time, for they must be conducive to the health of the minds of men, as the cleansing and purifying of any accumulation of material rubbish-heap is good for the bodily health, producing as it does, a purer circulation of air.

I have said that the meridian sun of truth is now commencing to shed its bright effulgence on this planet; and from the purity, wisdom, and harmony, of the grand views I have endeavoured to give you some idea of, in the preceding letters, I think you must be convinced that I am justified in calling them such, particularly when you compare these magnificent theories, either in part, or as a whole, with any that have ever preceded them.

I must beg of you always to bear in mind that these glorious new views of which I have endeavoured to give you a slight insight (how very slight it is you will be able to judge when you examine them more deeply for yourselves, and see what an interminable horizon they open out before you), are not a mere theoretical structure built up and elaborated by the brain of man. Until within the last hundred years, men's religious creeds have been based upon a revelation entirely outside of themselves; and they cannot have forgotten that there exists a solemn promise held out to them by the same authority, that "the spirit of truth should come, and lead them into all truth."

If we look around us and see the signs of the times, we may safely indulge a hope that that blessed

time is now dawning upon the world, that is to usher in that spirit of truth divested of still more folds of the cumbrous veil that has hitherto shrouded it, than has ever yet been possible, on account of the ignorance of former ages, which modern science and discoveries have so much helped to enlighten.

Knowledge has indeed increased, and with help of electric wires and railroads, may be said to run to and fro. The great spread of modern spiritualism was certainly predicted also, for "men now see visions, and maidens dream dreams." Christ spoke of a blessed time when "*He would create a new heaven, and a new earth,*" which in Scripture was always predicated of a new church; when he said "*now is the end of all things,*" he spoke of the end of the visible church. At this day there is surely much need of a further removal of the veil, of a further revelation of Divine truth, for men are more than ever divided in their first principles of belief; whether God is Trinity or Unity, a God of love, or of wrath. The falling away in the churches seems indeed to be verified at the present time, for the old established religions shew signs of tottering at their very base; and "although men's hearts are failing them for fear," all that the faithful have done, and are doing for their re-establishment, amounts but to vain endeavours to patch them up that they may last a little longer.

However, I would not dwell on this sore subject, and merely point it out in passing; I would not sit and weep over the dying, but unfurl my bright

banner over the magnificent temple of the future ; a view of which has been granted to me so clearly ; its beauty, wisdom, and harmony, as I have before said, seem to have filled my very soul, and I feel bound in gratitude to those higher powers, who have thus led me on, to bear witness to my fellow-men of the bright view I have seen, and which I feel is destined to light the future of our planet. For this reason, I do not hesitate to do all in my power to proclaim this higher view—to be, in fact, one of the banner-bearers of what, I feel convinced, is destined to become the new religion of humanity, the religion of the future.

The message is alike to all—to Catholic ; to Protestant, with all its different sects ; to Unitarian, to Free Thinker—to all alike, it is a divine revelation of a higher truth addressed to the mind of man, because the time has now come when man's mind is supposed to be ready to receive it—the fulness of time predicted in Scripture, the time for “*a new heaven and a new earth*,” when, as Christ said, “Behold, I make all things new.”

With this motive, I am about to publish an English translation of the works in which these noble views have been elucidated, believing they will bring that hope and comfort to many which I have found in them ever since I was first led to their study, some twenty years ago, by the kind guiding spirits who ever surround us, each, and all. Those who have so nobly undertaken the work of translation are equally convinced of the truth of these grand views, and with

more justice may be called the real Banner-bearers of this new light of truth. We are equally convinced of the beauty and wisdom of the new Re-velation, and are all working for the same cause, and with the same devotion to it, animated by the same hope that it may benefit our fellow-men, those whom I supposed but now, pausing sometimes in the battle of life, to ask themselves what it all means? where we came from? and whither we are going?

In my last letter I indulged in an argument as to the past and present state of the soul; let us now continue our argument, while we examine the future that awaits it.

If our present existence is alone to decide our future fate, what will be the respective positions in the future of the savage and the civilized man? Will they both be on the same level? or will one have distanced the other? Will the man who has worked hard all his life to improve his character and education, still be on the same level with the man who has been stationary, and is therefore his inferior—not because he has been idle, but because he has neither had the time nor the opportunity to improve himself? What will be the fate of those poor unfortunates to whom the light of education and morality never came, because they were called away before it reached them; will they be treated as reprobates? If not, what have they done to deserve to be placed in the same ranks as the others who have worked hard, and improved? What will be the fate of children who die before they have

done either good or evil? If they are amongst the elect, why should this favour be shown to them, who have done nothing to deserve it? Why should they be exempted from the trials and troubles of an earth-life?

Now, for the sake of argument, let us admit a succession of earthly existences for the soul, according to the plain reading of the words of Christ, as Nicodemus understood them, and then all the seeming mysteries and incongruities will be explained, and the wisdom of God will be made apparent. What we have not been able to accomplish in one existence, we work out in another. By this means every one comes under the universal law of progress; each one will be rewarded according to his *real* merits, and not one will eventually be excluded from the Father's kingdom, in spite of all the obstacles and the difficulties he may meet with on the road.

Christ's declaration that he *has not lost, and will not lose, one of those that were given to him*, will be verified to the letter; for I never lose sight of the beautiful new revelation that has been granted me to see, and to receive, that Christ is our Guiding Spirit, the Formative Ruler and Governor of this planet; that he has undertaken the mission to bring it to perfection, together with the humanity that belongs to it, after having first slowly evolved it from the very primitive elements given to him to elaborate, and that he has surely promised "to lead us to the Father."

If I am told that this doctrine is not a church

doctrine, I answer you, that sooner or later it will become a church doctrine, because the new and glorious light that is now dawning upon Christianity will make all things clear. Let us not forget Christ's words, *that he would send the spirit of truth to guide us into all truth.* His teaching, then, was not final, and no teaching ever can be final ; it must ever grow with our growth, and expand to suit our expanding intellect. The Church cannot fail to bear in mind those significant words of Christ, and is naturally ever on the *look-out* for the advent of the promised spirit of truth.

It may not accept its teachings at first sight, because we must remember that what we call "the Church" is composed of a body of men who have, one and all, received a dogmatic education that has fitted them to swear to keep to certain articles of faith, and never to see beyond them ; for this reason "the Church" has ever been the last to receive any new truth that has dawned upon the world ; as witness that of the movement of the earth, and of the six days of creation.

After the evidence had once been generally accepted by men of learning and science, and by the universal fiat of common sense, then the Church has invariably shown its common sense by also adopting the evidence. What would have become of "the Church" had it obstinately held out against universal opinion and the testimony of science ; had it continued to anathematize and excommunicate all those who would persist

in believing that the earth moved, and that the universe had not been made in six days, or that a general resurrection of the flesh was a chemical impossibility—one man demanding of another his arm or his leg, which the other had eaten and digested ages ago, having been digested himself since, through the inter-devouring of a thousand other vegetable and animal bodies?

What respect or belief could the Church have expected or merited, what authority would she have been able to exercise over the minds of enlightened people, what would have become of the religion she represents, if that religion were *still* founded upon manifest errors, presented as articles of faith?

If it be proved, as Christ taught, and as Nicodemus, as a ruler of Israel, understood him to mean, that the spirit of a man must literally be born again—a resurrection *IN* the flesh, and not *OF* the flesh, being the divine plan to insure the eternal progress of the spirit; if it is proved that, without this succession of lives, certain facts of existence and certain points of doctrine cannot be explained, then this view will be admitted by the Church; and it will then be seen that her antagonism to this doctrine does not really exist, and that it is more apparent than real. Perhaps later on we shall be able to perceive that the Church is not in reality so much opposed to this view as would appear, and that she will not suffer by it any more than she suffered from the discovery of the movement of the earth, the geological periods, and the modern

discoveries of chemistry, which at first sight seemed to contradict the letter of the Scripture. As far as that goes, however, the truth of the doctrine of regeneration (or resurrection *in the flesh*) is made most apparent by many passages of Scripture, wherein it is inculcated in the most explicit and literal manner, as we shall presently see.

So far, we have been examining the question entirely from a logical point of view, and without allowing ourselves to be influenced by Scripture proofs. If, therefore, my argument has had any weight with you, its first credential, its first title to credence in your eyes, will be that the doctrine is strictly logical and reasonable. When you examine it more closely, you will find it to possess another, and that is, that it is corroborated and confirmed by facts—positive and material facts. When these facts came to be attentively and perseveringly examined, doubt will no longer be possible; and when they have become generally known, like those of the foundation of the earth, their opponents will have to bow their heads.

Let us now see what proofs we can gather from Scripture of the law of regeneration. No fact is brought forward so frequently by all the four Evangelists as the identity of John the Baptist with Elias, or “Elijah.” Nothing can be more explicit than the declaration of the angel to Zacharias, than that his son would be the spirit of Elias, and “he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias” (Luke i.

17), and the claims to identity put forth by him at the circumcision of the child, when he applied to him the prophecy of Malachi (chap. iv. 5). Christ explicitly, emphatically, repeatedly, affirmed the same declaration. "*This is he* of whom it is written, Behold I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee." And "if ye will receive it, if ye can understand, *this is Elias*, who was to come; *he that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*" And, emphasising the declaration still further, he added, "This is he that was spoken of by Isaias the prophet, saying: A voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord." "And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then do the Scribes say that Elias must come first? But he, answering, said to them, Elias indeed shall come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, that Elias is already come, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatever they had a mind. Then the disciples understood that he had spoken to them of John the Baptist" (Mark ix. 10, 11, 12). "And they asked him, saying, Why do the Pharisees and Scribes say that Elias must come first? . . . I say unto you that Elias has come, and they have done to him whatsoever they would, as it is written of him" (Mark ix. 10, 11, 12).

That John himself, when questioned in regard to this identity, should have denied being Elias (John i. 21) proves nothing against the words of Christ. Even if it could be shown that he was ignorant of the past,

that his soul had previously been incarnated as "Elias," his forgetfulness of that former incarnation would only imply the temporary suspension of memory of a past life, which is a necessary condition for the well-being and happiness of the present; and if, having passed through the figurative waters of Lethe, we do not remember *who* we were, nor the faults we committed in a past existence, we are always aware of the tendencies that we have brought away from it, and can judge whether we are improving or not. It is not *who* we were, but *what* we were, which is to decide what we are, and what we should endeavour to be. That the MAN John the Baptist still had the character and tastes of the MAN Elias, cannot be doubted; he evinced the same asceticism, the same austerity in dress and manner; his abode was the desert, his garment of camel's-hair, with a leathern girdle; his food the locusts and wild honey. His speech was severe: "Ye brood of vipers," "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." Compare this with the denunciations of Elijah. Of all the prophets, Elijah was held in the most profound reverence by the descendants of Israel. A mysterious intimation had closed the hallowed volume of the prophetic writings, announcing, from the lips of Malachi, on which the fire of prophecy expired, a second coming of Elijah—"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Malachi iv. 5). And where, at what time, and in what form was he so likely to appear as in the desert,

by the shore of the very Jordan which we are told he smote with his mantle, and divided, previous to being taken up into heaven in a chariot of fire (2 Kings ii. 6-15), at so fearful a crisis in the national destinies, and in the wild garb, and with the mortified demeanour so frequent among the ancient seers? We are told of the personal appearance of Elijah, that he was a hairy man, girt with a girdle of leather about his loins (2 Kings i. 8). The nature of the *spirit* of Elias had not changed, for the language of the Baptist took the bold, severe, and uncompromising tone of those delegates of the Most High. On both the great religious factions he denounced the same maledictions, from both demanded the same complete and immediate reformation. But that which no doubt drew the whole population in such crowds to the desert-shores of the Jordan was the mysterious, yet distinct, assertion that "the kingdom of heaven was at hand,"—that kingdom of which the belief was as universal as of the personal coming of the Messiah, who was thus to assume a dominion which was to commence, and to endure for ever, when the law was to be fully restored. All anticipated the establishment of an earthly sovereignty. Of course, in its higher sense, it assumed the moral dominion to be exercised by Christ, the Guardian Ruler and Guiding Spirit of this planet—therefore truly our Sovereign Lord. The very prophecy that announced the previous appearance of Elijah spoke of the "great and dreadful day of the Lord;" the inheritors of his kingdom were to

emerge from their obscurity ; their theocracy to be re-established in its new and more enduring form ; the dead—at least those who were to share in the first resurrection—their own ancestors, were to rise ; the solemn judgment was to be held (Milman's *History of Christianity*).

But connected with the name of Elias we find another Scripture proof of the truth of re-incarnation, and an indication that the doctrine was held by many at the time of Christ. Herod was in doubt whether Christ himself might not be another incarnation of John, or of one of the prophets. "Now Herod the Tetrarch heard of all these things that were done by him, and he was in a doubt, because it was said by some that John was risen from the dead ; but by others, that Elias had appeared, and by others, that one of the old prophets was risen again" (St. Luke ix. 8, 9). "And Herod said to his servants, this is John the Baptist ; he is risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works shew forth themselves in him" (St. Matthew xiv. 2). "And King Herod said, John the Baptist is risen again from the dead, and others said it is Elias, but others said it is a prophet, or one of the prophets. Which Herod hearing said, John whom I beheaded, he is risen again from the dead" (St. Mark vi. 14, 15, 16). Thus we see that a belief in re-incarnation must have been prevalent, when they thought Jesus himself might be one of the old prophets returned to the earth. And Jesus himself did not ignore this doctrine, when he inquired of his

disciples "whom do men say, that I, the son of man, am?" (*whom*, not *what*), and they said, some say John the Baptist, and others Elias, and other Jeremias, or one of the prophets" (Matthew xvi. 13, 14). "And he asked his disciples, saying, whom do men say that I am? who answered him saying, John the Baptist, and some Elias, and others one of the prophets" (Mark viii. 27, 28).

He always inquired *whom* do men say that I am; never *what* do men say that I am.

Connected with John the Baptist, we have also a proof of the truth of the new revelation concerning the fluidic nature of our Great Ruler and Guardian Spirit, Christ, and that the body temporarily assumed by him, was an example of the Spirit's power of voluntarily modifying its external envelope,* when we recall to mind his own words to his disciples, "*I say unto you, there hath not risen among them that are born of women a greater than John the Baptist, yet he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he*" (Matthew xi. 10, 11, and Luke viii. 28). Thus excluding himself, and indicating that when he had taken upon himself "*the likeness*," but not the nature of man, his own birth was merely an apparent assumption of the flesh, and thus he walked upon the water and made himself invisible at pleasure (John x. 17, 18), and says of himself, "*I lay down my life of myself; no man taketh it from*

* See note to the Third Letter, page 196.

me, I lay it down, and I take it again" (John x. 17, 18).

A high sinless soul of the sidereal degree as Christ is, could not accrete to itself *material* flesh, as he said often, "Ye are of the *earth, earthy*, I am *from above*," and "*above all*." "Made not after the law of a *carnal commandment*, but after the *power of an endless life*" (Hebrews vii. 16). Born not according to the law of fleshly generation, but by the power he possesses, through his perfect command of the various fluids and forces of our solar system to elaborate a visible and tangible corporeal envelope with which to enact the educational parable of his appearance amongst us, in order to lead us back to the higher life from which we have fallen, "He took upon himself the *form* of a servant, and was made in the *likeness* of men ; and being *formed in fashion as a man*, he humbled himself" (Philippians ii. 7, 8).

As you see, he quite excluded himself as having been born like other men, through the organisation of a mother, when he declared that of those born of women a greater had not arisen than John ; and yet, he who was least among the pure fluidic beings, who had never fallen to a material earth, was greater than John. Here we have two proofs in one sentence ; first of the true nature of Christ ; secondly, of the purity of the heavenly or fluidic beings, who have never fallen, and who are therefore greater than the *spirit* whom we know to have been incarnated as Elias, and as John.

But the words of John the Baptist will furnish us with proof on yet another point of the truth of the doctrines we advocate. When repudiating the claims of those who rested their sole title to the favours of God on their descent from the chosen race, he announced the necessity of a complete moral change, and that a long delay on the road by a wilful rejection of his teachings, and neglect of repentance and amendment, would enable the younger mass, of spirit substance now arrived at the *stone-making*, or *mineral* phase of development, to overtake and pass them on the road of progress. "Say not unto yourselves that you have Abraham for your father, for God is able of these *stones* to raise up children unto Abraham."

This is corroborated by the words of Christ on another occasion, when he said that if the men of that day refused to recognise the validity of his claims, "the very *stones* would cry out." Thus presenting under another form, his warning, that, under certain circumstances, "*the last shall be first, and the first last.*"

Upon looking over the New Testament, I find proofs bearing upon every point of this doctrine so abundant, that I am puzzled which to choose. I will take them, then, as they come, on turning over the leaves—feeling sure that henceforward when you read the sacred volume with this light to guide you, they will strike you on every page. You will be convinced that re-generation or re-incarnation was

one of the fundamental beliefs of the Jews, under the name of re-surrection, and that to doubt of its truth, would be to doubt the words of Christ.

"They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more, for they are equal to the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, for he is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living; for all live unto him" (Luke xx. 35-38).

The text is not, "neither can they die again," but "neither can they die *any more*," implying that they have previously died many times, and having become the children of *God* (the children of the *resurrection*), are equal to the angels (meaning to the non-humanised spirits), having regained the purity which restores them to the normal fluidic life. "Those who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world (a *result* of the long succession of progressive existences, summed up in the resurrection), are called the children of God being the children of the resurrection."

"Be ye *perfect*, even as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew v. 48).

Is a declaration of our being destined to progress eternally, and of the impossibility of our ever attaining a *state of fixity*; for as we can never reach the

standard given, it necessarily supposes our attainment of higher and higher states *for ever*.

"Cut off the offending hand or foot, or pluck out the offending eye." "It is better to *enter into life* maimed, rather than having two hands, or two feet, or two eyes, to incur the purification of hell-fire" (Matthew xviii. 7, 8, 9; Mark ix. 45).

This *cannot* apply to the present life, upon which we have *entered already*, so that the counsel *can* only be followed by us, as a preparation for some future earth-life upon which *we have yet to enter*.

"They that take the sword *shall perish with the sword*" (Matthew xxvi. 52), confirmed, Rev. xiii. 10.

Therefore in a fleshly body.

"All who have lost relatives, friends, lands, for conscience sake, shall not only receive a hundredfold more in this present time, brethren, children, houses, and lands, but in the world to come, life everlasting" (Luke xviii. 30; Mark x. 30).

A promise which, if we lived but once, would be very much at variance with fact.

"What if I will that he tarry till I come?" (John xxi. 22).

"*This generation* shall not pass away *until* all be fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 32).

"Lo I am with you *always* even unto the end of the world" (Matthew xxviii. 30).

"There be some standing here that shall not taste of death till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark ix. 1).

All these passages declare our continued connection with this earth, and that some would not quit the sphere of this planet until they have seen the kingdom of God come with power. It also involves the idea that there are others who *will quit it* previous to that renovation, the length of our connection with any planet being determined by our progress in purity, goodness, and knowledge; the emulation of the Divine Perfection which Christ holds up to us as the aim towards which we are to tend for *ever*, implying for each individual spirit the acquisition of all virtue and all science. We are not told to excel in one, but in all. Is one earth-life sufficient to acquire thoroughly any one of the numerous branches of knowledge? Newton confessed to having only picked up a pebble on the sea-shore, the immense ocean still lay before him. A Plato, a Galileo, a Shakespeare, may profitably return to this earth to acquire excellence in other lines than the one in which they excelled. We all feel conscious of possessing aptitudes lying dormant that have never been called into activity in our present life; they may be the result of the prior education of certain faculties, or an indication of others we are yet to cultivate in some future incarnation. And let a man live the longest life on earth, he always feels that he has to leave it before having done a tithe of what lies before him still to do.

When we think of all that there is to be learnt, and that to be perfect we must learn *everything*, we then see how very little we do know, and that it would

be folly and irreverence to imagine that we are to go at once, in this imperfect state, from the low sphere of our present attainments to the "supreme dwelling-place," "to heaven," "rushing in where angels fear to tread," "to the highest room," as set forth in the parable of the man at the wedding, who having got into a 'room' which he is not entitled to enter, is met by the rebuke, 'Friend, go down lower !' and thereupon begins with shame to take the lowest room" (Luke xiv. 17).

The man who goes to the wedding feast without having on the *wedding garment* (i.e., the spirit who attempts to get into a world, or phase of existence for which it has not acquired the appropriate corporeal garment), of him who "begins to build without counting the cost," of him "who goes to war without having counted his forces," &c., all point to the impossibility of our attaining to any state for which we have not acquired the necessary fitness and qualifications."

"In my Father's *house* (the universe) are many mansions (the planets of the solar systems) (John xiv. 2), each presided over, in the language of St Paul, by its 'Christ, as a son over his own house,' in each of which there must necessarily be many rooms (temporary residences of the soul), all furnished with 'doors,' for ingress and egress, and 'windows,' to give us a new outlook on the world around us, and all being specially fitted for the learning of some lesson, the performance of some duty, through which

alone we can fit ourselves for admission into a higher one.

"Repenting in sackcloth and ashes" (Matt. ii. 21, Luke x. 13), an allusion to our repentance through the discipline of the earthly life; sackcloth, a *garment of penitence*, and ashes, a symbol of *death*. The assertion that "*death* came into the world by *sin*," which, as death is the inevitable doom of *all* bodies composed of matter in the compact state, can only allude to the fact of our *fall* from a higher or fluidic state, which has brought us again under the "*law of death*," or "*the wages of sin*." "In the day thou eatest of it, thou shalt surely *die*," shall become subject to a material, and therefore perishable, body. The assertion, that "*the last enemy that shall be overcome is death*," that "*death is to be swallowed up in victory*," alludes, in the same way, to our *moral rehabilitation*, and the substitution of the "*fluidic*" for the material incorporation, when, of course, we shall die no more. For salvation is always declared to be the attainment of "*everlasting life*," when we shall "*build up*" for ourselves "*a body like unto his glorious body*," being raised in "*his image*" at "*the last day*" of our respective educational career; for the nature of the outward body is always the correspondential expression of the inward state of the soul.

"As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthly: and as *is* the heavenly, such *are* they also that are heavenly."

"The first man is of the earth earthy."

But he will gradually "put away earthly things," for "flesh and blood cannot enter the kingdom of God," he will become less material, consequently more spiritual, and better able to rise again towards his native skies—until, as a purely fluidic being, he can again soar to higher and brighter regions ; and, as he "has borne the image of the earthy, he shall also bear the image of the heavenly," and leaving the corruptible on earth "will put on incorruption and immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

"Neither can he die any more."

"For he is alive for evermore."

The expression, "neither can he die *any more*," implies very distinctly that he may previously have died many times, otherwise the words would have been, neither can he die again.

"For he is alive for evermore."

The souls who have freed themselves from the imperfections which drag them down to the earth sphere of materiality, *can* no longer accrete the kind of bodies which subject them to the condition of humanised existence, the magnetic vibrations of their purified *perispirit* are no longer of the kind that are capable of elaborating material fleshly bodies, for these must always follow and exactly correspond with the moral state of the soul, and when this has become pure and holy, "they are equal to the angels, and are the children of God, being the *children of the resurrection*."

in other words, have regained the purity of their first estate, which restores them to the normal fluidic life; henceforward, although they can take upon themselves the *likeness* of man, and make themselves visible to him if necessary, they cannot take upon themselves his nature, therefore they "*cannot die any more.*"

The rebellious, but repentant son, who was *dead* but is *alive again*, who was *lost* but is found, in the beautiful parable of the Prodigal Son, symbolises the souls who have wandered away from their plenteous home in the happy fluidic worlds to which they were originally appointed, having indulged their selfish and rebellious inclinations, and their craving after the materiality of the animal degree, amongst the pleasures of material existence, proper only for the unreasoning beings of the lower reigns, therefore symbolised by "filling *their belly* with the *husks* left by the *swine.*" *Husks*, because although food for those for whom it had been provided, and who had therefore eaten (appropriated) it, was no longer *food* for the beings of a higher category, and therefore could only furnish the individualised soul with *husks*, which could never satisfy its higher requirements, when convinced of which it had repented, and *arising* had returned to the Father.

"When he came to himself he said, I will *arise* and go to my Father." "And he *arose* and came to his Father."

The declaration, "Ye shall not come out from

thence *until* ye have paid the uttermost farthing," like many similar passages to the same effect, implies that *when we have paid our debt* to the Divine justice, by learning the lesson intended to be taught by the punishment we have brought upon ourselves, we *shall* come out from thence ; and proves that suffering is not eternal, but will terminate with the just and strict payment of the debt incurred, and that our being compelled to undergo that punishment is for our own education and improvement, notwithstanding the seeming appearance of revenge given to it by the letter of the Jewish Scriptures.

Christ frequently indicated that suffering and infirmity was a punishment for some anterior sin, the chastisement of sins of which the soul has been guilty, it matters not whether in this or in some previous life—our sin will always find us out—because it is in our very nature, until completely eradicated, wiped out, and purified ; the doom which we shall never escape, were we small enough to enter the depths of the earth, were we great enough to reach the sky. "The finding of us out by our sin," from which neither heaven, hell, the wings of the morning, the uttermost parts of the sea, nor night itself, can "hide us ;" in other words, the subjection of the soul to the penal consequences of its wrong-doing, and its eventual deliverance from the love of evil through its experience of the painful consequences of that love. To the "impotent man," whom he had cured of an infirmity that had lasted for thirty-eight

years, Christ says, "*Sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto thee*" (John v. 14), thus plainly affirming that his infirmity (which must have dated from a very early age, if not from birth) *was* a punishment of some anterior "sin" (the expiation of which must have been then completed, or the punishment would not have been removed).

"Christ expressly attributes the illness of the woman who had been bent double for eighteen years, to her having been '*bound by Satan*' (Luke xiii. 16), or, in other words, '*by sin*,' 'bound by the bonds of iniquity,' which, 'like cords that none can break,' bind the penalty of evil-doing to its author."

Suffering is expiatory and remedial, and is never inflicted without a stern necessity as the chastisement of sins, of which the soul has been guilty in its previous lives ; in other words, it is the subjection of the soul to the penal consequences of its wrong-doing, and the result of its stern discipline is the eventual deliverance of that soul from the love of evil, through its experience of the painful consequences of that love.

"Visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children, till the third and fourth generation," would be a gratuitous cruelty, unless the children of the third and fourth generation were still the very same spirits who had sinned ; and this is really the case, for we certainly are the children of our works, because our elevation or our degradation is the result of our right or wrong doing.

"The phrases, 'child of,' or 'son of,' are metaphorical expressions common to all tongues, but especially to Oriental ones, by which anything that is the result of some other thing, is represented as being the child, or the son of that other thing; as, for instance, 'the son of peace' (Luke x. 6), the 'son of perdition,' 'the son of the morning,' the 'son of the soil,' the 'children of light,' *children* of the devil, *children* of the bride-chamber. But we may, still more emphatically, be styled the children of our former lives, for what we now are, is the result of what we then were, and thought, and did, and therefore we must inevitably suffer for, or be visited upon by, the sins of those fathers until the third and fourth generation."

That our literal forefathers or progenitors are not here alluded to is proved by many passages of Scripture, as for instance, "*The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father*" (Ezek. xviii. 20).

"Every man *shall bear his own burden*" (Gal. vi. 5).

"Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." *Perish*, as a punishment of their sins, if they did not repent and amend them in time.

From many passages of Scripture it is evident that human suffering is often a direct retribution for the wrong-doing in this life, or in some former life; of course it is also frequently brought about as the general result of human ignorance and imperfection, but from all the foregoing passages of Scripture we must infer that it is more frequently both expiatory and retributive, while it is brought about by natural

means, as the exact correspondential result and consequence of our particular sin or wrong-doing. Christ tacitly allows this interpretation to be put upon it, by not reproving or contradicting the assumption of his disciples, when they asked him—

“ Master, who did sin, *this man*, or his parents, that he *was born blind* ? ” (John ix. 2.)

He says not one word against the supposition that the man's blindness was a punishment for sin, either of his own in a previous existence, or of his parents, who were thus punished in their pride and in their affection. Nor against the assumption, that the blind man had *lived before*, and had therefore sinned in a *previous* life (previously to having been born blind) ; he lets both these assumptions pass without contradiction, as he invariably does whenever the subject of regeneration was alluded to in his presence, treating it as a known and admitted fact ; and restricting his answer to *this particular case*, he replies that the blindness of “ *this man* ” was not a punishment of any wrong-doing, either on the part of the man himself, or of his parents ; declaring that the man had been born blind as a carrying out of arrangements that must therefore have been made previously to his birth ; thus most clearly declaring the pre-existence of this man, and therefore of all other men ; for the whole of his reply shows, not only that the blind man had *lived before*, but that his spirit *had accepted* the long privation of sight as an act of devotion.

"That the works of God should be made manifest in him."

An act of devotion that would be largely recompensed by the spiritual advancement that naturally results from the subordination of self-love to the love of God and of God's creatures, who would be improved by this manifestation of His power.

When Christ tells us that we must receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, that of such is the kingdom of heaven, and quoting the statement of the Psalmist (Ps. viii.), says, "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise," he can only refer to the *results* of the reformatory action exerted upon the soul, by its repeated returns to the infancy which ushers it into a new earthly life. The use, also of the term "*perfected* praise," conveys the idea of *adolescence* and of *growth*; it is simply impossible that he could have meant anything else than our real and actual return to the state of childhood, through our being "born again," in conjunction with a new earthly body, into a new earthly life, which is the appointed way to that "kingdom" which Christ has defined to be for each of us, *an emulation of the Divine perfection, implying our possession of all science, all purity, all power, all devotion, and which, as such, is the antithesis of the ignorance, imperfection, weakness, and selfishness of childhood, and therefore could not be symbolised by it.* For that which is employed as a symbol must necessarily

correspond by analogy or similarity to that which it is employed to symbolise.

“Regeneration, a ‘new birth.’ If the soul were created with its body, its birth would not be a progression from one state to another, and therefore could not symbolise the progressive stages implied in amelioration; and also because, in the second place, birth being a single event, occurring but once in a life time, and not susceptible of being repeated in that life time, there is nothing in the act of *being born* to suggest the idea of *being born again*, and, consequently, nothing to justify or even suggest the expressions ‘*regeneration*,’ ‘*new birth*,’ as metaphors implying *amelioration*. The mere fact that we have adopted those expressions as synonyms of moral and spiritual amelioration, is therefore evidence of the fact that this amelioration is a result of our repeated subjection to the life of flesh. For if it were not so, there *would be no such thing in human life as ‘regeneration,’ or new birth*, and consequently there would be no reason why such metaphors should ever have been invented, their invention would have been as gratuitous as their employment would be irrelevant and void of meaning.” (“The Testimony of the Ages,” Miss Blackwell.)

The length of this letter warns me to take my leave of you for the present, and to conclude it here. I will continue the same subject in my next, trusting that you follow me with the interest which the great importance of that subject demands; and only wish-

ing it were possible for the capabilities of my mind and my pen to give you a better, more concise, and more simple explanation of the glorious new view of the old truths, revealed to man in a crude way so many ages ago, and of which his increasing powers of intellectual vision have enabled him to catch so many different glimpses through the thickly shrouding veils which have been so gradually raised for him through the course of the ages; each time revealing more and more of the sublime and dazzling vision of the wisdom and goodness of God, as his mind became capable of receiving and comprehending the revelation; for truth is not only felt in man's heart, but should be reasoned out in his mind, speaking as it does to both his heart and his understanding.

The comprehension of God grows in our mind, as those minds become more enlarged by the contemplation of His works. We are already far away from that limited view which could only see in our little earth, the centre of the universe, and principal work of God, and in its inhabitants the only objects of His solicitude. In a few more ages, men will be surprised that a religion, whose aim was to glorify God, should have limited His power to such mean proportions, and should ever have attributed to the invention of the spirit of evil, all discoveries destined to augment our admiration of His omnipotence, by initiating us into the grand mysteries of creation. And say not this custom has passed away, for any

new revelation that does not exactly coincide, and fit in with men's preconceived opinions in the present day, will still meet with the same headstrong opposition. We have ample evidence that this exists, and is still rampant both in the Church and in society, for just as the first discoverers of the pathway of the starry heavens were persecuted and maligned in former times, so do the discoverers of the existence and ceaseless employment of spiritual beings in our midst, meet with persecution, ridicule, and opprobrium in our own day. It is a well known fact, that all pioneers are destined to bear the brunt of the battle, and therefore they should be brave and courageous ; and in this case must arm themselves with great moral courage, for the poisoned shafts of ridicule of the present day are almost harder to bear than the autos-de-fé of sterner times, for there was nothing ignominious to die for a truth, although it is a great trial to live to be laughed to scorn by short-sighted ignorance.

That this, like all other great truths, must make its way in time, in spite of every opposing obstacle, has been proved by the experience of the past. Truth is always truth, but it can only be received gradually by the human mind ; for this reason the veils that conceal its meridian splendour are raised by slow degrees. I shall esteem myself truly happy, dear friends, if my humble and sincere endeavours to raise for you that corner of the veil which has been gradually lifted for me, should enable you to obtain

the same view, and to form from it an idea of the vast horizon that still lies beyond this present unveiling of God's eternal truths.

Believe me, your sincere friend and well wisher,

M. C.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE SEVENTH LETTER.

PROOFS FROM SCRIPTURE CONTINUED.

3. "VERILY, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

4. "Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"

5. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

6. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

7. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

8. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

9. "Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be?"

10. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"

11. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness."

12. "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?"

13. "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John iii.).

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—Nothing can be clearer than this declaration of Christ. It is most definite, and yet many theologians who take the Bible account of creation and the fall of man in its purely literal sense, and believe that the humanity of this earth is to be born in sin, as long as it holds its place in the universe, in consequence of the disobedience of a first man, who had bequeathed his individual and personal sin to all his race, prefer to see an allegory in these plain-spoken words of Christ, and to believe that he meant, except a man receive the initiatory rite of baptism he cannot see the kingdom of God. Few, indeed, would be the list of the saved if the receiving of this rite were to be the necessary passport. We do not hear that Mary or Joseph ever received it; and most certainly neither Abraham, Isaac, nor Jacob ever did.

Had Christ intended to indicate the necessity of baptism as necessary to salvation, surely nothing would have been easier for him than to have said so, and to have undeceived Nicodemus, and put him right, particularly when he saw that the latter understood his words in their plain literal sense. We cannot imagine he would have misled an earnest inquirer who had thus timidly come to him for some explanation that would set his mind at rest, on such

an intensely important subject as the eternal salvation of his soul. What would have been simpler for Christ than to have said, "*I speak to thee of baptism*;" instead of saying with surprise, "*Art thou a master in Israel, and knowest not these things?*" For the doctrine of the plurality of lives being one of the sacred mysteries, or secret teachings, possessed by all ancient religions, since in the second chapter of Genesis the original text ran, "God breathed into his nostrils the breath of *lives*" (*lives*, in the plural), was not only distinctly taught amongst the Essenians, but also in all the secret teaching of the Jews, and was therefore well known to most of the Pharisees.*

* The principal of the "ancient mysteries," or secret teachings of antiquity, namely, the Hermetic, the Orphic, the Eleusinian, and the Kabalistic, taught substantially the same three great doctrines. Those three doctrines thus made known to the initiated from the earliest ages of the world were,—

First, The unity of the Supreme Being, and the fact that the pretended gods of the temples were only representations of the divine attributes, symbolised for the use of the unlearned, who were considered to be incapable of appreciating abstract ideas.

Secondly, The plurality of inhabited worlds, and the true motion of the planets round the sun, as subsequently demonstrated by Copernicus and Galileo.

Thirdly, The anteriority of the soul to the body, and its gradual education and purification through the trials and discipline of a succession of earthly lives in this globe and in other planets, until freed from the need of any further contact with planetary matter.—From Dollinger's *Judaism and Paganism*.

From the earliest times the initiated have known the unity, infinity, and perfection of God; the infinity of inhabited worlds, and our successive lives in them. As it is absurd to suppose that

Christ thus expressed his astonishment that, as a master in Israel, Nicodemus did not understand these things, and continued : "*If I have told you earthly things and you believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things ?*" Intending to imply that this great law of *re-generation* was evidently beyond the actual grasp of his intellectual vision, when, as a master of Israel, and consequently a student of the sacred lore, he had failed to understand how changes of state and of sphere are accomplished, of what use would it have been for Christ to have endeavoured to explain the relation between the moral state of the soul and the order of body which it would correspondentially accrete to itself through the magnetic attraction of its spirit-body or perispirit?

blessings and sorrows are the result of chance, we must believe them to be a consequence of our right doing or wrong doing in previous lives.—Delormel.

Cicero and Plutarch exalt the teachings of the mysteries. Aristophanes says, " Their adepts lead an innocent, tranquil, and holy life ; they die counting upon the light of the Elysian fields, while others look only for eternal darkness." The grave and serious Sophocles, a glory of the Athenian stage, styles the teachings of the mysteries " the hopes of death." But though these views were thus handed down from generation to generation among the learned, their public promulgation was forbidden lest they should lead the common people to throw off the yoke of the priests, to addict themselves to the practice of magic, or even—disgusted with the ills of earthly life—to commit suicide in the hope of finding themselves in a happier state of existence ; as did the pupils of Hegesias at Cyrene, after listening to his eloquent discourse on immortality, when, impatient to enter on the enjoyment of the felicity he had described, they all killed themselves in a body.—A. Blackwell, *The Testimony of the Ages*.

Of what use would it have been to have explained to him the processes by which the spirit gradually frees itself from the animality of earthly things, which weighs it down to a material planet, imprisoning the otherwise free soul in solid walls of flesh, impeding its flight to its native skies, to the "heaven that was about it in its infancy;" if his acknowledged ignorance of natural law, would render it impossible for him to comprehend that the purification of the soul, through a succession of earthly trials, expiations, and disciplines, would gradually free it from the garments of earth, and enable it to soar again to more fluidic regions.

5. "I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

Amongst the ancient Hebrews, water represented the germ of matter, that which we now call the *universal fluid*, thus, in the first chapter of Genesis, we read:

2. "And the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

6. "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the *waters*, and let it divide the waters from the waters."

7. "And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the *waters* which were above the firmament."

8. "And God called the firmament heaven." . . .

9. "And God said, Let the *waters* under the heaven be

gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear."

Thus *water* evidently represents the *universal fluid*, from which all things were made. We constantly read of "*the waters of life*," "*a river of living waters*," of which those who drink shall "*thirst no more*." The cessation of *thirst* (need of material bodies), indicating the acquirement of the more ethereal bodies of higher planets.

In all ancient Scriptures the same symbol is used as the synonyme of matter. In the oldest of these, the Vedas of ancient India, "*Indra*" (the lord of light or intelligence), and *Agni* (lord of heat), are said to have sprung from "*water*." In a hymn occurs the prayer, "*Waters! take away whatever sin is found in me!*" In another, "*Ambaya* (a word meaning equally *waters* and *mothers*), take away sin." In the book of *Hermes* it is said that "*Darkness* was boundless in the abyss; but *water* and a subtle spirit existed in chaos. Over all this the holy light broke forth, and the elements were produced among the sands of a *watery* essence." In the theology of the ancient Greeks, the passing of the soul through *Lethe* the *river* or *water* of forgetfulness), symbolised both the continuance of our connection with matter, and the temporary loss of memory attendant on our changes of outward envelope or body. The learned Hellenist, Dr Louis Mesnard, thus sums up the Greek idea of the changes of existence undergone by the human spirit: "The souls of the dead seek out a

new destiny, and re-enter through Lethe, into the movement of universal life, from which they come down again upon the earth ; some to repair the faults of an anterior life, and to purify themselves by new struggles ; others, to win back to virtue those who are going wrong, and thus still farther advance their own improvement." The Koran contains various traces of the great doctrine of the fluidic life, of the plurality and progressiveness of inhabited worlds, of the progressive development of the planetary reigns, stating that all animals are created out of *water*.

There is no doubt the ancient belief was that water was the first or primitive element, the generator of all others. You will observe that Moses does not speak of the creation of this universal fluid—which would seem to have been already in existence ; he merely says, " And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

It is proved that the body of an average man, weighing one hundred and fifty pounds, consists of about one hundred and sixteen parts of water.

When the imprisoned soul is set free by the death (disaggregation) of the material body, which it had accreted to itself, through the magnetic vibrations of its perispit, that body returns again to its original elements ; that is to say, one hundred and sixteen parts return to water. Is it then to be wondered at that water, the great purifier, the synonyme of the earthly bodies, through whose vicissitudes the soul is to be purified, and to receive a *new name*,

each time it is re-generated or born again, should be used as the symbol of purification ; or the outward and visible sign, or form in baptism, the rite by which is signified that very inward and spiritual grace of death unto sin, and new birth unto righteousness, which the new birth into the material body is intended to effect, and at which ceremony a new name is conferred ? Thus indicating the change of character that is to be accomplished by the newly incarnated spirit through its new conjunction with matter.

When in Revelations we are told "*there shall be no more death,*" namely, no further necessity for conjunction with the material element, which conjunction must ever conclude with *death*, or the disaggregation of the material body ; we are also told, "*there shall be no more sea.*"

That Christ employed the term *water* as synonymous with *flesh*, is apparent by reference to the sixth verse, where he says, "*That which is born of the FLESH is FLESH, and that which is born of the SPIRIT is SPIRIT.*" Showing clearly that he employed the antithesis of flesh and spirit as the *equivalent* and *explanation* of the antithesis of *water* and *spirit*, the two expressions completing and confirming each other.

7. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

8. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and

whither it goeth : so is every one that is born of the Spirit."

His employment of a word (rendered by *pneuma*), signifying both *wind* and *soul*, and saying, "*as pneuma the wind cometh and goeth, so pneuma the soul also comes and goes,*" constitutes a positive assertion that it was *not* created with its material body, but *comes from* some other region—you know not whence, just as you know not the "path of the wind," so you know not whence comes your soul, nor whither it goes.

7. "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

Still Nicodemus continued to marvel, and answered, saying unto him,

9. "How can these things be?"

Now, it is very evident that Nicodemus did not understand that Jesus intended to allude to the rite or ceremony of baptism, as Jesus most certainly did *not* intend to allude to it; for nothing would have been easier, or safer, under the circumstances, than to have said so, and thus to have enlightened Nicodemus, remove his perplexity, and set his mind at rest.

The meaning he did intend to convey was the necessity of the real baptism, not the rite that symbolises it—the necessity of regeneration, or new birth in material bodies, *symbolised* by the material fluid, *water*—the outward and visible sign of that inward and spiritual grace.

And therefore he answered and said unto him,

10. "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"

11. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness."

12. "If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?"

13. "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."

No *man* hath ascended up to heaven—this saying is a still further affirmation of the same fact, that in using the word *water*, Jesus alluded to the material fluid of which the fleshy body is composed; for a *man* is a complex being, formed of spirit and matter, and we have already heard from St Paul, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, therefore it is very certain that no *man* has ascended there. This verse is also another proof of the fluidic nature of the body of Christ, for he could not have ascended there in an earthly body; besides, he speaks of himself as still being there, "*even the Son of man which is in heaven*," although he was then speaking to Nicodemus.

I will not recapitulate, but this verse bears so strongly on what I have already stated concerning the real nature of Christ, and that his birth was as different to that of other men, as Scripture truly states

it to have been, that again I beg to refer you to the note in my third letter, page 196.

A high fluidic, or rather *sidereal* spirit, such as Christ the guardian ruler of our planet, could not assume flesh and blood, although he could assume the *appearance* from the material elements in the atmosphere, and take upon himself the "*likeness*," but not the nature of man ; for, reversing the saying of St Paul, "Incorruption cannot put on corruption," but *being* the heavenly, he could *bear the image* of the earthly at pleasure, for the time being, and could disappear and convey himself away from their midst and from the sepulchre, which could not contain his *incorruptible* body. "*Made not after the law of a carnal commandment* (fleshly generation), *but after the power of an endless life.*" We are "*of the earth earthy*," he was "from above" and "above all," and says of himself, "*I lay down my life of myself, no man taketh it from me : I lay it down, and I take it again*" (John x. 17, 18).

I will not weary you with Scripture proofs of the truth of the views I have endeavoured to give you an outline of. I feel sure now that you are upon the track, you will easily find them for yourselves. Were I to continue, it would but be to make a running commentary upon them from one end to the other.

I have taken the passages as they came, and only from the New Testament. Perhaps they do not

abound as much in the Old Testament, because it was an earlier revelation, and the men to whom it was given were not prepared to receive more ; but I believe many proofs are to be found therein which would well repay the search, by bearing strong evidence and testimony to the truth of the new light now given, and only waiting to be viewed by it, to stand forth as bright fragmentary glimmerings of the great truths which are now being more fully revealed ; the time having arrived when such a further *unveiling* has become not only possible, but necessary, in order to clear away an accumulation of false theories and errors which have been deduced from, and grown up around, the primitive teachings, and to satisfy the more advanced minds of earnest enquirers and seekers after the true key, to the hitherto unsolved enigma of the mystery of Life and Death.

I will merely mention one or two conspicuous proofs from the Old Testament that I retain in my memory, believing that we are agreed respecting the allegorical style of the Mosaic account of creation.

You will observe, then, that the first and second chapters of Genesis contain each a separate and distinct account of the creation of man, which to me is most significative. But let us begin before that, and we shall see that the same sequence is observed as taught by the new un-veiling.

“The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

No mention is made of the *creation* of water, which was supposed to be already in existence as the universal fluid, and generator of all things.

"And God said, Let there be light; and there was light. And God divided the light from the darkness: and God called the light day, and the darkness he called night: and the evening and the morning were the first day."

"*The first day*," this is the Mosaic description of the nebulous and gaseous state of a planet in course of formation, as described by modern astronomers.

One of the points that have been most criticised in the Mosaic account, is that of the creation of the sun after the light; but Moses was quite justified in his assertion, for the sun is not the cause of universal light, but the concentration of light-element at one point. The fluid which is the source of light would naturally precede the creation of our great luminary, which is but an effect. The sun is the cause of the light which it diffuses, being at the same time the effect of the light it has received.

If you light a candle in a dark room you form a little sun. How have you lighted the candle? by developing the light properties of the luminous fluid at one particular point; if the light principle had not existed before your candle, you would not have been able to light it.

The Persians have a more scientific account of this. We read in the "Dictionary of Universal Mythology," "I created the light, which lighted the sun, the moon, and the stars."

It is generally supposed that Moses alludes to the creation of our little earth when he opens his account by saying, in the very first verse of the first chapter of Genesis—

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis i. 1).

And he has naturally been much criticised in our scientific day for such an assertion, particularly as he ascribes the account to the Great Creator himself. It has therefore been said, “Either God was mistaken in the account he gave to Moses of his work, or the account is not of Divine Revelation. As of course the first supposition is not admissible, we must conclude that Moses only gave his own ideas.”

But it strikes me that our little planet is not alluded to at all in the first verse, and that Moses intended to begin at the very beginning of all things—if we can imagine that they ever had a beginning; which, as we cannot, I would merely suggest that he wished to describe the universe before we were called into existence. Then, instead of reading, “In the beginning God created the *heaven* and the *earth*,” we should read, “In the beginning God created *spirit* and *matter*,”—or rather, the universal primordial fluid, generator of all things in heaven and on earth. *Fluidic* in the heavenly state, *compact* on the surface of planets; which is exactly the account given to us by the New Un-veiling, or New Revelation, which I have attempted to give you some idea of in my first

letter, page 166, as follows :—"This primordial fluid, matrix and generator of the universe, is not God, but is the first *substantiator* of the efflux of creative thought," &c., &c.

This explanation would, I think, entirely vindicate the Mosaic account from the accusation of ignorance which, at first sight, has been lightly ascribed to it by science. The statement I have just alluded to as having been so much criticised, namely, that the sun was created *after* "God said, Let there be light : and there was light ;" and the apparently total omission of any mention of the creation of water, will, I think, quite justify me in my view of the case, and confirms me in the idea that Moses did not allude to our earth at all in the first verse of Genesis, but to the creation of the primordial fluid. The supposition that he did so probably arose from the erroneous idea that existed during so many ages, that creation began with our earth, and that the sun was the source of light. We know now that before our sun and our earth millions of suns and myriads of earths must have existed in God's universe, enjoying the blessing of light.

6. "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters."

7. "And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament." [A further proof!] "And it was so. 8. And God called the firmament heaven,

and the evening and the morning were the second day. 9. And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry *land* appear: and it was so. 10. And God called the dry *land* earth, and the gathering together of the waters called he seas; and God saw that it was good."

Here at last we distinctly have the creation of our particular planet.

11. "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth: and it was so."

12. "And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself after his kind: and God saw that it was good."

13. "And the evening and the morning were the third day."

This is the description of the creation of the vegetable world on this planet, through the consecutive series of whose innumerable bodies the spiritual element may be said to continue the education commenced in the still lower earthly, or mineral state, by developing its powers of assimilation and acquiring the rudiments of all the animal functions, fitting it to continue its course of educational progress through the innumerable bodies of the animal world, whose creation is described by the author of Genesis after the six following verses, which are dedicated to the work of the "*fourth day*," namely,

to the creation of the lights in the firmament, the sun, moon, and stars, to rule over the day and over the night. Although these existed before, yet their creation, as far as our earth is concerned, may be said to have taken place at the time mentioned; for the thick and impenetrable atmosphere of the newly formed planet, still almost in an incandescent state, and constantly vomiting forth dense volumes of smoke, would prevent their light from penetrating to its surface.

The next four verses contain the account of the calling into existence of the next degree in ascension of God's creation, the *moving* creatures in the water that have life, and the fowl that fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. Verse 23. And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

The twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth verses continue the account of the creation of the living things of the earth—cattle after their kind, and the beasts of the earth—through whose organisation the spiritual element is destined to finish its preparatory education, developing all its previous acquisitions, and adding thereto the faculties of locomotion and direction, accreting organs, and acquiring the *rudiments* of all the functions, attributes, vices, and virtues of the human state, fitting it for that next great step in advance which will transform its simple *instinct* into *reason* and *intelligence*, as I have endeavoured to explain in my fourth letter.

The twenty-sixth verse begins a new sentence—

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him, male and female created he them. And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."

Here ends the first chapter. The account of the whole six days, or epochs, into which the Mosaic account of the creation is divided, is contained and completed therein by the creation of *man*, the crowning work of the Creator; for he is made in the image of his maker—"male and female created he them"—therefore *complete*, the masculine qualities of the manly character being softened and graced by the feminine attributes of woman, made after the likeness of God, who is the combination of Wisdom itself, and of Love itself, in one Being. Only in one have they ever been perfectly united on earth, and that was in the person of Christ, who was stern, manly, and energetic in reproof, and inexpressibly sweet, tender, and feminine in his love for mankind. Let us not forget that we were originally created in *his* image, but that we have fallen from our high estate to be children of the *earth*, earthy. Christ, who had never fallen, was a high sidereal spirit, and therefore "*far above, and above all,*" one of the Elohim,* or anointed ones of the first chapter of

* The word Elohim is employed throughout in the original of the first chapter of Genesis, and always with a plural verb and adjective, a sufficient proof that it was understood to imply the plural number.

According to the original of the book of Genesis, the world was

Genesis, to whom the formation and guidance of a planet is entrusted. We are told that every planet of every solar system throughout Infinity is evolved from the incandescent cosmic matter by one of these vice-regents of the universe, and that Christ is the particular Eloha, or guardian, and guiding spirit of this earth. We also know that he has promised of those that have been given to him, *not to lose one*.

Thus the creation was complete, and the second chapter begins with the declaration to that effect.

1. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and the host of them. 2. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. 3. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in

created by the Elohim. In the English version the words ELoHIM are replaced by "God," and IeHOuaH, or Jehovah, is substituted by "Lord."—*Luke Burke*; also *De Wette*.

The supposition that this form was merely employed as a plural for majesty will not meet the difficulty created by the modern version, more especially as this was never adopted by the Hebrews, with the far loftier name of Jehovah, in Exodus ix. 30, in opposition to the Egyptian gods. It appears to indicate that Jehovah is the God of these gods, and is exalted above them. Also in Samuel vii. 22, for David, after extolling the works of God, with the title of Lord God, adds these words—"Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God (Jehovah Elohim)"; for there is none like unto thee, neither is there any god (Elohim) beside thee." In these passages, and in many others, Jehovah is made superior to the Elohim; and, as Schumann says, the author certainly intends to show, by the contrast of the names, that Jehovah is greater than the Elohim, and not the same who had just before been mentioned as the Creator of the world. Von Bohler says, "The meaning is undoubtedly, therefore, God of gods; in Psalm lxxx. 8 we have the expression, God of hosts."

it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

And yet after this explicit declaration we find a still further and a different account of the creation of man;* in the seventh verse of the second chapter we read—

7. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives, and man became a living soul.

By this he no longer appears to be formed in the image of God, but of the dust of the ground. Surely he had then forfeited his first high fluidic state, when he had become so material as to be formed with the material element the *dust of the ground*, and called his name Adam, or child of the earth. Man properly bore the name of an earthly being, "*Adam*," when he was formed of the dust of the ground, and now the woman had to be recreated from the rib of man, although *male and female* had been already created, *blessed*, and placed as lords over the creation.

I have not hesitated to vary the text of the English translation in the words "the breath of *lives*," for upon repeated inquiry I find that the original text is invariably in the *plural*, and that therefore it is stated that God breathed into man's nostrils the

* Although all hypotheses have hitherto exhausted themselves in vain speculations, we cannot purposely shut our eyes to two quite different narratives.—See Stahelin, *Kritische, Untersuch (Critical Examination of Genesis*, p. 20), Rosenmüller, Ewald, Von Bohlen (*Illustrations of first part of Genesis*), Nott and Gliddon (*Types of Mankind*).

breath of lives—not *life* in the singular, as in the English version. Thus, man after being formed of the material element was destined for re-generation, or re-incarnation, the purifying processes of which would enable him to “*ARISE and go to his Father,*” and be received back again, having become as the angels of heaven, “and the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.”

In the Psalms of David there are many passages that will bear upon our new views. I will particularly call your attention to the beautiful 90th psalm, beginning—

“Lord thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God. Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, again, ye children of men, for a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.”

And also the 148th Psalm,

“Praise ye the Lord. Praise him, all his angels, ye sun and moon, all ye stars of light, ye waters that be above the heavens, mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars, beasts and cattle, creeping things, and flying fowl, kings of the earth, and all people—young men and maidens, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the Lord.”

How can they do so? How can the fruit trees and the cedars, the beasts, or the cattle, or the flying fowl lift up their hearts and their eyes to praise the Lord for all his goodness, unless they are destined to

comprehend that goodness, and to feel the love and gratitude which will cause them to do so, by the elevation of their animal *instinct* into the faculty of reason, and intelligence. We have heard before that God is able, of the stones, to raise up children unto Abraham, and these, of the vegetable and animal degree, are already further upon that road which the spirit element is destined to travel before it is individualised and becomes a responsible being—responsible of the sin and wrong-doing that has caused it to fall, and to be fashioned *again* from the *dust of the earth* in the human form.

Another proof I recall to mind from the Old Testament is the wrestling of Jacob and Esau in the womb of their mother, of whom Saint Paul tells us, before they were born, it was written, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," which would not have been the case unless the previous conduct of Esau had excited the hatred, for we are told that God hated nothing that he had made.

To Jeremiah, God says, "I knew thee before thou wert formed in the womb."

In the very ancient poem of the Book of Job, we have several indications of the truth of the doctrine of regeneration, as, for instance, the following—"How often is the candle of the wicked put out! and how oft cometh their destruction upon them." And again, "All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God is in my nostrils." "I know that though after my skin worms destroy *this* body, yet, in my flesh

shall I see God." A conviction based on his knowledge of the special property and function of the *Perisprit*, as the magnetic agent by which the soul agglomerates the material particles of which it constructs its *body*, or external envelope; and implying that he used the word "flesh" for "body" or external envelope of soul. For there are different orders of *bodies* for the progressing soul in all the planets it may successively inhabit.

"If a man die, he shall live again, all the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands."

These words explain very clearly the second re-generation of the spirit. After the death of man his spirit will live, and after the days of his appointed time upon earth it will wait, that is to say in the spiritual state, until called to live again.

Had we time to examine others of the sacred writings that have exercised so wide an influence on this planet, I am told we should find in them endless indications of the great law of our progress through successive existences; "the mystery" which, though always indicated, has yet been, until now, Providentially "kept secret from the foundation of the world," the time not having before arrived for it to become generally known, although, as we have seen, from the earliest times the initiated few have known the three great doctrines which were ever most jealously guarded and preserved as sacred mysteries,

and consisted,—*First*, Of the unity of God; *Secondly*, The Plurality of Inhabited Worlds; and, *Thirdly*, The succession of incarnations for the soul in this and other planets.

The oldest of the Bibles of this earth, and those which are still the oracles of the greatest number of its inhabitants, are the Ancient Hindu Scriptures; they are pointed out, as the source whence Pythagoras and Plato drew the elements of their philosophy. All these most ancient of the world's Scriptures proclaim the soul to be anterior to the bodies it successively assumes, in the course of its education and purification; and the necessity of the repeated descents from the spirit world into the life of flesh, for the purposes of education, expiation and advancement. The Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, Rig-Veda, Bhagevat-Gita, Ramayana, &c., &c., are full of sublime thoughts and spiritual ideas, such as the power of the higher spirits to clothe themselves in a luminous ether and appear to mortals. The great linguist Müller says, every "learned man knows that the *Hebrew* was not, as Jerome and other Church Fathers taught, the oldest or primitive language of mankind." The Sanscrit of the old Hindoos was a much more ancient and a far more perfect language. This was in its full glory more than five thousand years ago. The Rev. Mr Maurice thinks the Bahagavat-Gita (so marvellously rich in thought relating to the immortality of the soul, and its pre-existence) was written over four thousand years ago. A celebrated American author

says, "Long before the patriarchs pitched their tents under Syrian skies, long before Moses saw the tables of stone on the mount, long before the oldest Hebrew Prophets were inspired to sound the alarm in Judean mountains, there were millions of spiritualists, prophets, sages, seers, and mediums in India." Higgins, in the "*Anacalypsis*," proves Abraham himself to have been without the least doubt a *Brahmin*. Terah, the Father of *Abraham*, came from an Eastern country called Ur. Higgins proves that this Ur of the Chaldees was in India, that portion of the country, lying on the river Jumna, and now called Uri or Ur. Abraham emigrated from Ur, in India, to Haran in Assyria; from thence to Phœnicia, and finally to Egypt, nearly 2000 years before Christ, in consequence of a terrible famine, in all his journeyings he took with him the belief in, and practice of the mysteries of Spirit Communion he had learnt in India. Therefore he read that "the Lord (a spiritual being) appeared unto him on the Plains of Mamre; also when he sat in the door of his tent, he lifted up his eyes, and lo, *three men* stood before him; and when he saw them, that is, these three spirits, he bowed himself towards the ground."

The natives of the three provinces of Biscay, in the North of Spain, claim for their language (the Basque) the honour of being the oldest in existence, they call it "the language of Adam," or of the first inhabitants of the earth, they also claim to be descended from the ancient Phœnicians. Strange to say, some Bis-

cayan words have been found on the ancient stones of ruined Mexican cities, at Chapultepec for example, and also at Palenque. The ancient city of Mexico itself was called Anhanac, which in Biscayan means the "place of waters" or "meeting of the waters," a name which corresponds exactly with the locality of that city. Every word in the Biscayan carries its meaning with it, thus, the sun is signified by a word expressing "the light of day," the moon "that which illumines the night," &c., &c. When Hernan Cortes and his soldiers reached the ancient City of Mexico it is recorded that they found images in the temples which exactly represented the "Virgin and Child." Another indication that the same event has occurred more than once on our planet.

But to return from this sudden journey to America, to the ancient scriptures of India, from which I was led away by the mention of the ancient Phœnicians; the French *savant* Panthier, says of them:—"If ever human thought received the inspiration of the Deity, assuredly the Vedas more than any other record have the stamp of that inspiration. Never did the religious sentiment attain to so high a pitch of conception, never did it reveal to mankind sublimer symbols. The Abbé Dubois states that the Hindoos, in their earliest times, worshipped the *one God*, as divinity in duality, positive and negative, father and mother.

All these most ancient of the world's writings proclaim the soul to be anterior to the bodies it successively assumes in the course of its education and

purification. The necessity for these repeated returns to the life of flesh is thus explained :—The recompense acquired by good or evil deeds is like the waves of the sea, whose working none can hinder ; it is like a cord which binds them to their author, and which none can break. . . . For the education of our preceding life influences us in the life that follows. . . . If a man have done the works that lead to the world of the moon, he goes to the world of the moon. . . . If a man have done the works that lead to the world of the sun, he goes to the world of the sun ; if a man have done the works that lead to the world of the Creator, he goes to the world of the Creator. Thus the soul goes to the world to which its works belong. What, then, is the use of giving oneself up to the gratification of sensual desires ? Abandon yourself to the satisfactions of sense, and all you will have got from this indulgence will be to have forged for yourself at death the chains that will link you to other (material) bodies, and to other (material) worlds. There is no other source of peace, or of usefulness, than the knowledge of the Creator. . . . The soul on returning to the earth profits by its previous acquirements, and thus, through a long succession of gradual advancements, . . . and only after many new births, . . . the soul that has become pure and wise is at length enfranchised from the necessity of coming back to this earth, and goes to the pure ; ” in other words, passes into a world of a higher degree than ours. “ When these great souls have attained to perfection,”

continues 'the Holy One,' "they return no more to the perishable life of earth, sojourn of sorrows. . . . The love of virtue is the Supreme Path, those who have attained to that elevation undergo no more births, but take on luminous bodies ;" in other words, the purely fluidic bodies of the sidereal degree, the glorified or celestial bodies of the Apostle Paul, in reference to which Christ says, "The righteous shall shine like the sun in the firmament of heaven."

Ignorance of this law of progress is declared by "the Holy One" to be a sign of human inferiority. It is only the "sage," who has already accomplished a large portion of his return towards the glorious home of "Supreme Purity," that is made aware of the fact of his having assumed a great number of bodies during the earlier and lower phases of his educational career."

In the Bhagavat-Gita we read that this "Holy One," when speaking to a prince, Arjuna, on the eve of a battle, thus expresses himself:—"The wise grieve not for the dead or living. Never, at any period, did I, or thou, or these kings of men, not exist ; nor shall any of us henceforth cease to exist. As the soul, in its present body, undergoes the changes of childhood, manhood, and old age, so, hereafter, it obtains a new body. He who believes that the spirit can kill, and he who believes that it can be killed, are both of them wrong in their judgment. It neither kills nor is killed. Unborn, changeless, eternal, both as to future and past time, it is not slain when the body is killed. As a man quits worn-

out clothes, and puts on new clothes, so the soul quits its worn-out bodies, and clothes itself with new bodies. Weapons cannot cleave it; fire cannot burn it. It is impenetrable, incombustible, and insusceptible of moisture; it is invisible, incomprehensible, immutable. Therefore, knowing it to be such, thou art not right to grieve for it. For to everything that is born death is certain; to everything dead regeneration is certain.”}

“I have had many births, and thou also, Arjuna,” says the heavenly messenger; “I know them all, but thou, hero ! knowest them not.”

Until we attain to a very high and purified state it is not permitted to us to remember our past lives, probably because such remembrance would only be very painful and embarrassing to us, and could not possibly be of any use; our return to earth life being the necessary means of our purification and advancement, we are to look forward to the future, and not backwards to the past. Very often to remember *who* we had been, or what we were in a past existence, would fetter us in the present. We should, perhaps, look back with regret, which would only serve to nurse sickly fancies instead of nerving us with energy for the onward struggle; or we might look back with horror and disgust to a past that we had much better forget, but whose discipline has made us what we are; for, although we do not and cannot recollect the incidents of our former lives, many people retain of them a vague recollection that sometimes flashes across their memory, and is gone again before they can

seize or examine it. Many feel on first visiting a place that they have seen it before, and as they cannot tell when, say, "it must have been in a dream." Others feel drawn by a strange sympathy they cannot account for, to some one whom they meet for the first time, being wholly unconscious of ever having met before; this sympathy is sometimes so strong that it is called love at first sight. Sometimes instead of sympathy it is an unaccountable aversion that makes some of our fellow-creatures, whom we meet for the first time, quite repellent to us; could we see our past, both the sympathy and the antipathy would probably be easy to account for, but having mercifully passed through 'the waters of Lethe,' the events of our past are obliterated for the time being, and we have begun our new life, with a clean page on which to inscribe it.

We have seen that the passing through the waters of Lethe, or of oblivion, was a poetical illustration of a new descent into the sphere of the earthly life, or the re-clothing of our spirit with matter, which, on the surface of planets, is a particular, condensed, or rather compact, state of the *primordial fluid*, and has therefore ever been symbolized by water; and most appropriately so, as it is only by the purifying effects of the trials and experience of an earth-life that our souls can be cleansed from their faults, as those outward bodies are by the washing in water.* It was

* Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John iii. 5, 6).

therefore adopted as the outward and visible sign in baptism, a rite which is enjoined upon us as typical of the new life we enter upon—a *re-generation*, in fact—and which naturally confers upon us a new name, although we never cease to be the same spirit. This new birth, or regeneration, necessitates the acquisition of an entirely new set of organs, as the means of sensation and action in our new life. We have, then, first to learn how to make use of these new organs, which is the work of the first years of our early life, during which time the spirit is in a state of abeyance. It is, as it were, imprisoned, and at first is quite unable to make use of the new organism it has acquired, and only by very slow degrees it is able to do so, the gradual acquirement of which power is a work of time and patience both for parents and child; but it comes at last, and then, in about fourteen or fifteen years, the imprisoned spirit begins to awake more fully, and, as it were, to take possession of the faculties which, until then, had only appeared as aptitudes or preferences for certain pursuits over others.

The young animals of the lower reigns come almost at once, comparatively speaking, into the fulness of their life—an observation which had always puzzled me whenever I had reflected upon it, until the mystery was explained to me by this new view of human life, as being an abnormal condition for the individualized spirit. Since then I have often sat and studied the solemn face of a little baby—for solemn it is when its attention is not called away by

the caresses of its young mother, or by the snapping of its loving father's fingers right in its face. Do not disturb it, but sit and watch it for half-an-hour, it will afford you a complete study; its wide-open eyes will wander round the room and up to the ceiling, and then steadily fix themselves for some time on each individual separately, as if endeavouring to comprehend them, or trying to remember something that had gone before. You will not see one smile, unless, of course, you disturb it in its study. Baby is far too much absorbed in its own reflections to enter into your fun, unless you determine to scatter and disperse all its train of thought by poking it in the side, and chirruping to it like a bird; then, of course, all its thoughts are set to flight for the time being, and it tries to correspond to your attentions; but the moment you are called away, it resumes its solemn look, and the little head begins wool-gathering again; the little baby's thoughts are again far away, endeavouring to recal to mind some former scenes of its past, and trying to comprehend its present. It is a futile effort, for each day it will be able to remember less and less, as the present will, day by day, take the place of the past, and by the time it has learnt to make use of its new organ of speech, it can tell us nothing of what we should all like to know, namely, the great mystery of where it came from, as *Pneuma*, "for the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth; so is every one that is

born of (*Pneuma*) the spirit." Only now and then, in early life, that spirit will have those sudden flashes of remembrance we have all experienced, which come and are gone in a moment, and which, try as we may, we never can retain for a second, either to analyse or to endeavour to co-ordinate—a sensation Mrs Hemans has well described in one of her lovely poems—

"The power that dwelleth in sweet sounds to waken
Vague yearnings, like the sailors for the shore,
And dim remembrances, whose views seem taken
From some bright former state, our own no more;
Is not this all a mystery? Who shall say
Whence are these thoughts, and whither tends their way?

"The sudden images of vanished things
That o'er the spirit flash, we know not why;
Tones from some broken harp's deserted strings,
Warm sunset hues of summers long gone bye,
A rippling wave, the dashing of an oar,
A flower scent floating past our parents' door!"

I used to wonder, when I reflected on all this, and that our early years were so much more helpless than those of the young lambs of the field, but I now perceive the necessity of this period of stagnation, to enable the newly-imprisoned soul not only to forget its past, which, whether it be a necessity or not, is certainly a most merciful dispensation of Providence; and to enable that soul to begin again a further step in advance with a new elastic brain, as a clear page on which to record its new impressions; a new flexible organism wherewith to accomplish the onward step in its progress, surrounded by new loves and

affections—new ties, and social relations that will help to draw out, strengthen, and develop the germs of virtues it already possesses, exercising its charity, benevolence, patience, fortitude, and all the other social virtues, at the same time that it is destined, by the experience and suffering it will inevitably have to go through, to draw out, soften, and finally eradicate every tendency to evil, vice, or wrong-doing; and to punish and expiate the wrong it may already have done, for repentance alone is not sufficient, unless it is fortified and confirmed by expiation; and expiation is not complete without restitution—Christ has told us. *We shall not come out until we have paid the uttermost farthing*; the soul, therefore, is brought again and again into contact with those it has injured in former lives, and is thus enabled to atone for former wrong-doing, until the consequent enmity between the two is totally obliterated, and love reigns supreme, uniting those who had been divided by injury, envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness.

Yes, dear Friends, we have a work to do in this earth life, let us endeavour to accomplish it while it is yet day, and agree with our adversaries quickly while we are in the *way* with them, otherwise it will occasion the necessity of our having to be brought together again on the dusty highway of earth, and yet another imprisonment in a material body, consequently a still longer exile from our far happier normal spirit state. Let us endeavour to pay off all our debts, and, while we are here, to live in love and charity with all men.

It seems to me easy for each of us to know exactly on what step of the ladder we are standing—that ladder whose ascending steps are to lead us nearer to God, consequently to happiness, and to the heavenly state. Our own conscience is our guide, and will enable each of us to feel our own pulse, and to know exactly what is necessary for us to do to enable us to ascend the next step of the ladder; if we will strictly follow its dictates we shall do all that is required of us, for it is the voice of that past experience we so long to know something about, which is speaking in our hearts.

I know that our oblivion of the details of that experience will be one of the first objections advanced, before admitting that Christ really meant what he said, when he stated that we must be born again, that regeneration really means re-generation, and that the established law of progress throughout the universe is through a succession of progressive existences.

But although the acquisition of new material organs symbolised by the ancients as a passing through the *waters of Lethe*, and by Christ as being born of *water*, the emblem of the universal fluid, would naturally occasion an oblivion of the material things inscribed on those material organs, still the general result is retained, for it has made the Spirit what it is, and I know of many cases where recollection is not so entirely dormant as it would appear at first sight. I have myself undeveloped reminiscences

of things which have certainly never happened to me in this life; and I know many who have flashes of vague remembrance of some distant past. I will give you the particulars of these most interesting proofs of anterior existence in my following letters; * hoping you follow me with sufficient interest in the subject to make you desirous of reading them, believe me affectionately yours,

M. C.

* See Appendix to "Honeymoon," Note VII.

CHAPTER THE LAST.

FAREWELL TO SCOTLAND.

It was the second of August—a month had elapsed since our marriage, and our honeymoon was drawing to a close.

The interesting journey we had so much enjoyed in this romantic country of the North, and the happy honeymoon that had so united our beings as to make of two souls one, in sympathy and in thought, was soon going to be one of the dear recollections of our past. For nothing in this life can last; and this is the reason why I have endeavoured to give it a form, whilst renewing its recollections, by recording them in these pages; for I should like all the world to participate in our happiness.

Conchita left Scotland with tears in her eyes; but she was not unhappy, for she carried her happiness with her.

And here I must draw the curtain; our after-life can have no interest for the unfeeling public; it belongs solely to ourselves.

But, before finishing, I must also draw a conclusion from the contents of these pages—a conclusion which, I think, all will agree with, even those who have been

most shocked by the perusal of my religious scruples which, thanks to God, are now at an end.

And this is the conclusion I have come to, that philosophy and faith have need of each other ; neither of them can, alone, make us happy, or teach us a better life. I began by doubting everything. I had faith in God, but in nothing else ; I lacked belief. My young and beautiful bride brought me this, and now I hold the *true religion*. If you ask me, gentle reader, which this is, I will tell you plainly, *yours*—whichever that may be ; for we are not all equally adapted to believe in the same creed.

From the beginning of humanity there has been a progressive development of religion ; that is to say, of the higher faculties which connect man with his Creator. This progress appears in the rise, decline, and fall of the different forms of religion that have appeared upon the earth. They all came from God, therefore they all are true and holy.

The light of religion, like that of the coming day, dawned upon the first inhabitants of this planet in the East, over the immense table-land of Central Asia ; westward it moved, following the course of the rising sun. On it went, as time passed and humanity progressed, lighting up the populous cities of Asia, the shrines of Siam, and the temples of Burmah and Benares, where the primitive fetichism became the powerful religion of Brahma, until the development of the human mind needed a nobler form. When the tops of the Himalayas reflected

the first rays of coming day, out of their midst sprang up Buddha, the prophet and the saviour, whose religious teachings soon illuminated the world. Brighter and brighter then spread the effulgence upon the mind of the ancient Hindoo; and wide did the teachings of Buddha spread on every land, until savage village and learned city, primitive hut and heathen temple, were flooded with the light of this grand religion. But, like its prototype, the sun, *it cannot stop in its glorious course.* Onward still it moves over Affghanistan and Persia, where the mighty and inspired mind of Zoroaster adds glory to its glory, truth to its truth. Brighter and yet brighter grows the light of day, from Asiatic city to the African desert, until it is reflected on the sand where the temples of Egypt rise, and a new race of men take up the religious progress in its course. The Mosaic revelation, based upon the ancient lore and science of these people, comprises all that had before been taught, and at last the glory of Zion outshines the theology of India and the learning of ancient Egypt. Onward still religious progress advances on its ceaseless march, illuminating the marble cities of Greece and Rome, bursting upon the classic shores of the blue Mediterranean. Modern Europe at last attains pre-eminence; Christianity, with mid-day splendour, lights this earth with a torch mightier in the brightness of its glory than any that has yet preceded it, illuminating the winding rivers of central Europe, the fertile valleys of Italy, the

noble cathedrals of Spain, the gay towns and cities of lovely France, the sweet hamlets and uprising spires of fair, rural England, and of brave, bonnie Scotland.

Onward still it goes, this eternal progress, following the course of the sun across the broad Atlantic to the plains of the new continent beyond the sea. Having lighted up the old, westward it moves to spread its bright effulgence over a new world; and America takes up the progress of religion, continuing its glorious career; for to say, "So far shalt thou go, and no farther," would be as idle as to endeavour to stop the course of the sun, and, like Joshua, to bid him stand still. No; as the sun will continue to rise day after day over this eternally revolving planet, and will shed its light on each generation of earth, so each generation will also receive its corresponding share of religious light *according to its capabilities* of comprehension, thus verifying the divine law of *religious progress round the world.*

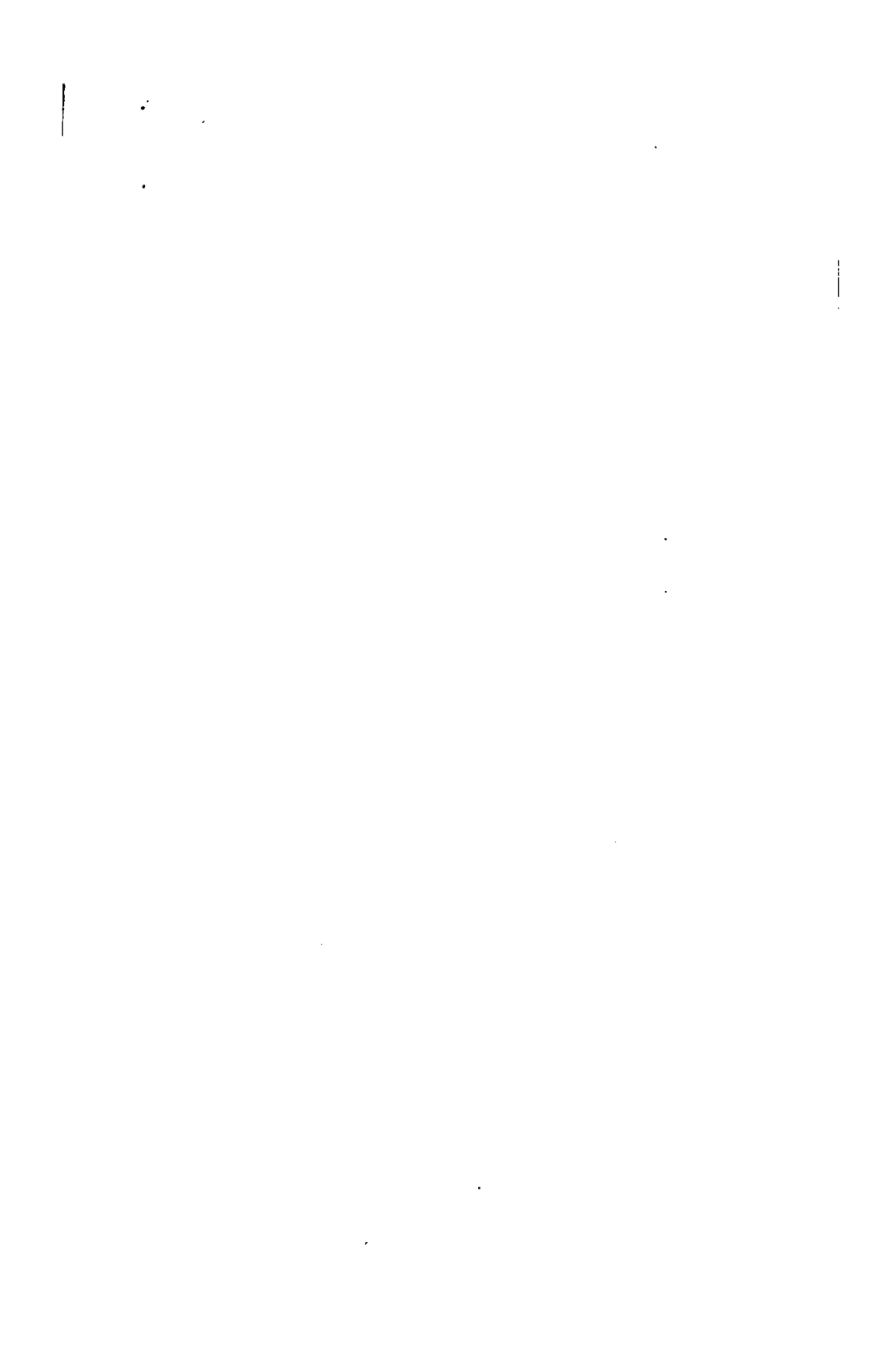
"For I doubt not through the ages
One increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened
With the progress of the suns."

This is why I tell you, oh! my reader, that *your* form of religion, whatever that may be, is the best,—the best for *you*—at all events, at your present stand-point.

I am a Catholic, because I consider this faith to be the best for *me*, the most adapted to my character,

the most in accordance with my ideas and sympathies ;
for—

“ All theories are thought forms—that the mind
Creates from its own knowledge, or its guess.
God never yet revealed himself in full,
And never will. No intellectual form
Is able to receive the Deity,
Save as a crystal draws the solar light.
This is my faith, that God reveals himself
To every man according to his state,
Higher to highest minds ; so lessening down
To the dim verge of reason. I believe
That there are faculties in man that are
Mind-organs for the Infinite to fill ;
And that these may unfold without an end,
And multiply without an end ; and all,
Inter-pervaded by one common life,
Inform the soul for ever. This I know,
Or, knowing not, believe in as in God ;
But still my thought is circumscribed ; my faith
Being the sum of all my added thoughts,
And those the measure of the active mind.



APPENDIX.

1

.

|

.

.

APPENDIX.

NOTES.

I.

THE PUNISHMENT OF PRIDE.

THE chief incident of this story really took place in an old castle of England. In the ancient chronicles of this castle we read of a young lady, who, on account of the house being full at the time, was put into an apartment that had been long unused. During the night a madman managed to get into her chamber by the chimney, and so frightened the young lady, that her hair turned white with fright, and the next morning she looked quite an old woman.

From this strange adventure I have drawn the legend of "The Punishment of Pride," which I now present to my readers for the first time.

II.

THE BRIDE OF LUSS.—(CHAP. XI.)

THIS story is, of course, a pure fiction. It may be suggested that it has nothing in common with the Scotch customs or

1

APPENDIX.

"We sometimes, in sleep, lose the beginning and end of a dream, and recollect the middle of it; and one dream has no connexion with another, and yet we are conscious of an infinite variety of dreams; and there is a strong analogy for believing in an infinity of past existences, which must have had connexion, and human life may be regarded as a type of infinite and immortal life, and its succession of sleep and dreams as a type of the changes of death and birth to which, from its nature, it is liable. That the ideas belonging to the mind were originally gained from those classes of sensations called organs it is impossible to deny, as it is impossible to deny that mathematical truths depend upon the signs which express them; but these signs are not themselves the truths, nor are the organs the mind. The whole history of intellect is a history of change according to a certain law, and we retain the memory only of those changes which may be useful to us; the child forgets what happened to it in the womb; the recollections of the infant likewise before two years are soon lost; yet many of the habits acquired in that age are retained through life. The sentient principle gains thoughts by material instruments, and its sensations change as those instruments change; and, in old age, the mind, as it were, falls asleep to awake to a new existence. With its present organisation, the intellect of man is naturally limited and imperfect, but this depends upon its material machinery; and in a higher organised form it may be imagined to possess infinitely higher powers. Were man to be immortal with his present corporeal frame, this immortality would only belong to the machinery; and with respect to acquisitions of mind, he would virtually die every two or three hundred years, that is to say, a certain quantity of ideas only could be remembered, and the supposed immortal being would be, with respect to what had happened a thousand years ago, as the adult now is with re-

spect to what happened in the first year of his life. . . .
"Conscience, indeed, seems to have some undefined source, and may bear relation to a former state of being."

"The desire of glory, of honour, of immortal fame and of constant knowledge, so usual in young persons of well-constituted minds, cannot, I think, be other than symptoms of the infinite and progressive nature of intellect—hopes which, as they cannot be gratified here, belong to a frame of mind united to a nobler state of existence.

"This influence outlives all earthly enjoyments, and becomes stronger as the organs decay and the frame dissolves. It appears as that evening star of light in the horizon of life, which, we are sure, is to become in another season a morning star; and it throws its radiance through the gloom and shadow of death."

"If a peculiar principle be supposed necessary to intelligence, it must exist throughout animated nature. The elephant approaches nearer to man in intellectual power than the oyster does to the elephant; and a link of sensitive nature may be traced from the polypus to the philosopher."—*Dialogue the Fourth—The Proteus, or Immortality.*

"Spiritual natures are eternal and indivisible, but their modes of being are infinitely varied as the forms of matter. They have no relation to space, and, in their transitions, no dependence upon time, so that they can pass from one part of the universe to another by laws entirely independent of their motion. The quantity or the number of spiritual essences, like the quantity or number of the atoms of the material world, are always the same, but their arrangements

like those of the materials which they are destined to guide or govern, are infinitely diversified ; they are, in fact, parts more or less inferior of the infinite mind, and in the planetary systems—to one of which this globe you inhabit belongs—are in a state of probation, continually aiming at, and generally rising to, a higher state of existence. Were it permitted me to extend your vision to the fates of individual existences, I could show you the same spirit which, in the form of Socrates, developed the foundations of moral and social virtue, in the Czar Peter possessed of supreme power and enjoying exalted felicity in improving a rude people. I would show you the monad or spirit which, with the organs of Newton, displayed an intelligence almost above humanity, now in a higher and better state of planetary existence, drinking intellectual light from a purer source, and approaching nearer to the infinite and divine mind.

“But with the higher natures finer and more ethereal kinds of matter are employed in organisations, substances that bear the same analogy to common matter that the refined or most subtile gases do to common solids and fluids. The universe is everywhere full of life, but the modes of this life are infinitely diversified, and yet every form of it must be enjoyed and known by every spiritual nature before the consummation of all things.

“Those beings so grand, so glorious, with functions to you incomprehensible, once belonged to the earth ; their spiritual natures have risen through different stages of planetary life, leaving their dust behind them, carrying with them only their intellectual power. You ask me if they have any knowledge or reminiscence of their transi-
tions ; tell me of your own recollections in the womb of your mother and I will answer you. It is the law of

divine wisdom that no spirit carries with it into another state and being any habit or mental qualities except those which may be connected with its new merits or enjoyments; and knowledge relating to the earth would be no more useful to those glorified beings than their earthly system of organised dust, which would be instantly resolved into its ultimate atoms at such a temperature; even on the earth the butterfly does not transport with it into the air the organ or the appetites of the crawling worm from which it sprung. There is, however, one sentiment or passion which the monad or spiritual essence carries with it into all its stages of being, and which in these happy and elevated creatures is continually exalted, the love of knowledge or of intellectual power, which is in fact in its ultimate and most perfect development the love of infinite wisdom and unbounded power, or the love of God. Even in the imperfect life that belongs to the earth this passion exists in a considerable degree, increases even with the age, outlives the perfection of the corporeal faculties, and at the moment of death is felt by the conscious being, and its future destinies depend upon the manner in which it has been exercised and exalted. When it has been misapplied, and assumes the form of vague curiosity, restless ambition, vain-glory, pride, or oppression, the being is degraded, it sinks in the scale of existence and still belongs to the earth or an inferior system, still its errors are corrected by painful discipline. When, on the contrary, the love of intellectual power has been exercised on its noblest objects, in discovering and in contemplating the properties of created forms, and in applying them to useful and benevolent purposes, in developing and admiring the laws of the eternal intelligence, the destinies of the sentient principle are of a nobler kind, it rises to a higher planetary world."—*Dialogue the First—The Vision.*

V.

LILY BELL AND MARY GRAY.—(CHAP. XXI.)

THIS is a very old and well-known Scottish romance. "The common tradition is, that Bessie Bell and Mary Gray were the daughters of two country gentlemen in the neighbourhood of Perth, and an intimate friendship subsisted between them. Bessie Bell,* daughter of the Laird of Kinnaird, happened to be on a visit to Mary Gray, at her father's house of Lynedoch, when the plague of 1666 broke out. To avoid the infection, the two young ladies built themselves a bower in a very retired and romantic spot called the Burnbraes, about three-quarters of a mile westward from Lynedoch House, where they resided for some time, supplied with food, it is said, by a young gentleman of Perth, who was in love with them both. The disease was unfortunately communicated to them by their lover, and proved fatal, when, according to custom in cases of the plague, they were not buried in the ordinary parochial place of sepulture, but in a sequestered spot called Dronach Haugh, at the foot of a brae of the same name upon the banks of the river Almond. The late Lord Lynedoch put an iron railing round the grave, and planted some yew trees beside it."—*Black's Picturesque Tourist of Scotland*, eighth edition.

VI.

THE QUEEN'S PAGE.—(CHAP. XXIV.)

THIS legend was written more to give an idea of the times, than to describe any particular character.

* I have turned the name into Lily Bell, thinking it prettier than Bessie.

So much has been written and said about Queen Mary, that I think I am not called upon to do more than give this little explanation, and to say that this story, good or bad, is entirely my own.

VII.

THESE letters are from the pen of my dear mother. They were written to some friends in America, and were not intended for publication; but, at my request, she has consented to allow me to insert some of them in the present work. The whole series would be too voluminous for that purpose; therefore, in order that the views they advocate may not lose from the series not being complete, the subsequent letters will be found in a separate volume, entitled

OLD TRUTHS IN A NEW LIGHT.

A SERIES OF LETTERS.

BY THE COUNTESS OF CAITHNESS.

Published by Messrs. Trübner & Co.

THE END.

TURNBULL AND SPEARS, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.