THE EXAMINER:

A Weekly Journal of Politics, Literature, and News.

"This is true Liberty, when Freeborn Men, having to advise the Public, may speak free."---Euripides.

Vol. XII. Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, Monday, July 21, 1862. New Series.---No. 28.

LITERATURE.

THE SOLDIERS OF THE CROSS.

They tell us of the paladins, the knights of feudal times,
Who flashed their tempered sabres in the light of Asian climes:
Who fiercely smote the Saracen, or cleft the turbaned Turk,
And deemed that in their Master's sight they wrought a pleasing work.

Their standard was a cross of red upon a ground of white,
And 'neath its glow of flame and snow these warriors loved to fight:
And tho' their life-blood stained the plain, they counted it no loss
To die the gory battle death as "Soldiers of the Cross."

As champions of Christendom they longed to measure swords,
Each Paladin 'gainst Saladin and all his Paynim hordes,
And when the trump of battle gave the signal for the fray,
They gallopped on a countless foe as 'twere a gala day.

But days of steel-clad chivalry—of belted men and spurred,
Have vanished as a wreath of snow by Austral breathings stirred:—
The world has lost her men at arms and yet sustained no loss;
They've purer fame who bear their name as "Soldiers of the Cross."

Their loins are girt with truthfulness, their breasts are armed with right,
Salvation's helm and faith's broad shield secure them in the fight,
And while with sandel-wood of peace their feet are safely shod,
With iron clasp they ever grasp the Spirit sword of God.

And they, too, have a banner proud to cheer them in the strife,
They cluster 'neath its glorious folds to serve the Prince of life;
It bears upon a field of white a cross of ruby stain,
The white ground cries, "He righteous is!" the cross, "He once was slain!"

Their war shout is "Immanuel!" they never know defeat,
Nor ever hear the word of fear,the order to retreat;
Upon the grimy hosts of sin their dauntless legions pour,
As sweeps the thund'rous ocean surf upon a shelving shore.

Why, then, let knight and armor bright rest in their dust and rust,
For noble men are marching in the armies of the just:—
Of all that tinseled chivalry we've nothing left save dross,
But Death and Hell go down before these Soldiers of the Cross.

THE WITNESS.

IN THREE PARTS.—PART III.

(Concluded.)

It was not till several hours later, and when I was alone for the night, that I could attempt to recall with any accuracy the circumstances of our admission to that apartment, the scene of so much strange guilt and suffering. I heard, and saw, and acted like one in a dream; and it still seems to me like putting the fragments of a dream together when I endeavor to relate this portion of my story.

I entered, as I have said, behind Mr. Davis; he paused after a few steps,and drew me forward. The room was well lighted, and the first thing I observed was a low narrow bed, with its side against the wall opposite the door. Upon it sat a shapeless kind of figure in a silk dressing-gown, hanging loosely about her. The thin delicate child in the picture at the cottage was vividly present in my mind. I saw a heavy-looking creature with light hair, a large sallow face, and eyes swollen and scarcely visible. She was shaking from head to foot: she neither looked at us nor spoke to us. I took one of her hands, and it clasped mine—oh, so closely; and then she bowed her poor head upon it, and uttered a sound, something between a groan and a cry, such as I never before heard, and while I live can never forget. I pressed her hands to my bosom; I kissed her forehead; I tried to speak, but could not; and I thankfully heard Mr. Davis say: "My poor girl, fear nothing; you are safe, you are free, and with friends eager to help you; calm yourself and come with us." He then gave me a bonnet and shawl that we had brought with us. It was some time before I could attempt to put them on to her. She kept clinging to my hands, to my shoulder, to my dress; still without speaking a single word. Her breath grew shorter and shorter, and at length, with a loud and fearful scream, she went into violent hysterics. We had taken the precaution to bring hartshorn and restoratives with us, but for some time they were wholly without effect. At length, the worst paroxysm seemed passed; she became quieter, and we laid her gently on the bed. Her face was turned to the wall, and she uttered no sound, although every two or three minutes she was shaken all over by convulsive twitchings.

"We cannot attempt to move her in this state," I whispered to Mr. Davis.

"No," he answered. "Would you object to remaining with her while I go and explain to Dalton the cause of the delay?"

This was agreed upon. I cannot call it fear,but I must own to a very uncomfortable feeling when the door of that chamber was closed upon me. The poor creature continued perfectly still, except for the involuntary movements; these soon became less violent, and at length ceased, and I believed she had fallen asleep. I looked around me. The room was small, but lofty; and the outer air must have been in some degree admitted near the ceiling, as a lamp hanging from thence flared and burned unevenly, while the flame of a candle on a table in the middle of the room was still. There were two or three tables, and several chairs; shelves against the wall, on which there were many books; and doors to closets, that must have been made in the wall, as they did not project beyond it. One of these was open, and appeared to be filled with glass and crockery. At the further end of the room, an open door showed the interior of another lighted chamber; this, she told me afterwards, was the winter-room, one side of it being formed by the back of the great kitchen chimney, and consequently always warm. In that room, also, was a sink, and a pump of excellent water. In the angles of the wall of the kitchen chimney were closets in which the bed-linen, blankets, and coverlets were kept, and an extra mattress always aired and ready for use; and some contrivance in the ceiling admitted air into this chamber, but not so freely as in the other, which was called the summer-room. I am here briefly summing up much that I heard at different times afterwards; and I must not forget to mention that for the comfort, and to promote the health of the inhabitants of these chambers, there was admission from the inner room to a long passage running within the wall of the chapel, into which the outer air was freely admitted. It was only wide enough for one person, and was wholly unfurnished, and evidently contrived as a promenade for those concealed or imprisoned there. The mode of conveying air to all these places must have been exceedingly curious and circuitous, for in no part was there ever visible one single ray of light. That unhappy girl, from the moment in which she fell senseless by the side of her murdered father, never again beheld a glimpse of God's blessed daylight.

She still continued quiet and silent, and I remained anxiously watching by her. At length she said in a sort of hoarse whisper: "I am not asleep; I think I can move now."

I raised her up in my arms; I felt as if I knew not how to be kind enough to her, and I could not restrain my tears as I gently kissed her brow. She felt them falling on her face, and she said: "I believe you—I trust you;" and she laid her head on my shoulder and wept calmly—I might say sweetly, so much the tears seemed to soothe and relieve her. Very soon I was able to prepare her for her removal. She tied the bonnet herself, and helped me with the shawl. I saw plainly that her dress was one of Lady Dighton's silk wrapping-gowns, and it hung awkwardly upon her; but her head was very neat, and her hair nicely brushed and arranged. By this time, Mr. Davis again made his appearance, and I was greatly pleased to find her composed and ready to depart. I asked her if there was anything she wished to take away with her. She looked around, and shaking her head, said: "No—O no!" Mr. Davis then lowered the lamps, and extinguished them and put out the candle. We left the room by the light of a lantern we had brought with us. Mr. Davis fastened the door, and replaced the contrivances for concealment, and the silent chambers became tenantless, and returned to their original mysterious secrecy.

Mr. Dalton, in accordance with our arrangement, was in readiness with his chaise near the abbey. We helped the poor girl in, and I got in also, and sat beside her, putting my arm round her waist. I explained our plan to her as we drove on, and told her of the kind Mrs. Dalton who would receive and take care of her. By a circuitous route, Mr. Dalton reached the lane leading from the high London road to the rectory: I got out at the gate, and being joined by Mr. Davis, who had walked thither by a short-cut across some fields, we returned together to the abbey, and almost without speaking to each other, crept quietly to our bedrooms.

I believe that I have said before that I can never quite understand the effect which these strange events produced upon my mind while they were occurring. I scarcely thought of the frightful guilt of Lady Dighton, or of the peculiarly painful position of poor good kind Captain Sinclair. The sufferings and the feelings of Grace Wilson engrossed almost all my thoughts. When I went to bed, however, I slept soundly, for I was quite worn out by fatigue and anxiety. I awoke with a strange confusion of feeling and recollection, and hardly able to believe in the occurrences of the last twenty-four hours. I met my pupils at breakfast, and released them from any lessons for that day. They asked anxiously after their father, and then went off to some work of coloured papers, paste and pasteboard. Mr. Davis and Mr. M'Ilvar were engaged in looking through papers and letters for Captain Sinclair, from whom they had received a packet, giving them full powers to act for him, and requesting them to settle whatever was necessary with the steward and housekeeper.

Soon after breakfast, Mrs. Dalton came to me as we had previously agreed upon. She had not much to tell. She believed Grace had slept well, and she had induced her to stop in bed, and have the daylight very cautiously admitted to her chamber. All agitation had passed away; she lay quiet still, and spoke little. It appeared to Mrs. Dalton that her mind was profoundly occupied in endeavouring to realise the great change of circumstances around her. I returned to the rectory with Mrs. Dalton, and found her still silent and quiet. When I took her hand, she grasped mine strongly, and kissed it, but without speaking. She got up after dusk, and the next morning arose before breakfast. Mrs. Dalton had made a shade for her eyes, and in a few days she could endure the daylight very tolerably; but she continued to speak little, and appeared to be continually wrapped in a sort of heavy reverie. I had afterwards reason to think that much of this was habit, and that a great portion of her time in her prison-chamber had been passed in this manner, which frequently ended in a dozing kind of sleep. It was long before she would enter into anything like conversation, and very long before she would give any particulars of her sufferings during these eight long years of silence and solitude, when, shut up in two small chambers, she never heard a human voice,or caught a glimpse of daylight. Of the scene of the murder, she never could be induced to say more than a few whispering words, and no one who saw the dreadful expression of horror in her face if the slightest allusion were made to it, could persevere in pressing the subject upon her. Only once did she speak to me of her feelings and impressions when she recovered her senses in the secret chamber: she said she soon began to understand that she had been carried into some place of confinement, and she expected nothing but a cruel death from the same ruthless hand that had, before her eyes, destroyed her father. After a time, however, she perceived the strong inner fastenings to the door. She drew the bolts and fixed the bars in a kind of frenzy, and, seizing the light, she rushed about the rooms to see if there was any other entrance. When satisfied that she was so far secure, she said she kneeled down and said the Lord's Prayer, and then seated herself with her eyes fixed on the door, fully expecting to be starved to death, and deliberately preferring this fearful alternative, to any sort of communication with Lady Dighton. How long she would have persevered in this determination, had there been no means of conveying food to her, is probably very doubtful; but it is very likely that it might have continued till she was too weak to remove the heavy fastenings. It was evident that she never ceased to believe that her life would be sacrificed the moment she admitted her jailer.

"But," said I, "did you not take hope from her regularly supplying you with food, linen, lights, and everything you could require?"

"Never," she answered. "I believed it was all done to entrap me, and because even her stony heart could not endure to leave me die without help. Many notes were written to me with entreaties, promises, even solemn oaths—but how could I trust her after what I had seen: my only friend, the only person who had ever loved me, helpless in his bed"——

And here she stopped, as she always did when she approached the subject of the murder. I wondered that the idea of poison seemed never to have occurred to her, but I afterwards found that it had been present with her during the whole of her imprisonment; but she had fortunately imbibed some ignorant notion that it could only be conveyed in liquids. She drank nothing but water and tea, which she had means of preparing for herself; and she said that there were dozens of wine, with which she had been supplied at different times, standing in one of the many closets in the chambers. She was regularly supplied with books, which she used to return when read; and one of her few amusements was to make extracts from them. She knitted stockings and mittens for herself; and having been furnished with a pack of cards, she played a great deal at a solitary game called Patience.

There was a singular sort of quietness in her disposition and habits, which must have been partly natural to her, though, of course, it had been greatly nourished and increased by the strange solitude of her life. A mind of any superior stamp could never have succumbed, as hers did, into the dead calm in which she appears to have spent the greater portion of her time; and one of only average energy and spirit would assuredly have resisted, in some measure, the numbing influences which surrounded her, and have gained as much as, under such cruel disadvantages, could be acquired from books, mental effort, and memory. On the other hand, a more sensitive and impulsive temperament would, no doubt, have suffered fearfully in mind and body, perhaps even to insanity or death. Grace Wilson had, however, a peculiar and decided stillness of character, most singularly suited to the extraordinary trial she was destined to undergo. She had good moderate abilities, and had so far profited by the education Sir Thomas had secured to her, that she could read and write very fairly; it was plain that she had not been either an idle or a stupid child up to the moment in which she was separated from all her fellow-beings; but it was equally evident that she had made little or no progress beyond that moment. As I knew her better, I perceived more and more that she had good common sense, a kind and grateful heart, and an honest and truthful nature; but she evinced no wish to improve herself, and was in many respects supine even to dulness. She had obediently, and probably very slowly, learned whatever had been taught her, and she carried the results of that teaching into her prison; if she added to them at all, it was done insensibly, and without any particular effort of her own. The quietude of her nature was, I suppose, physically a preservative to her, for, strange to say, her health never suffered, and although, as she got older, she grew fat and heavy, she had never needed, nor taken, any kind of medicine.

We spent several months together while Captain Sinclair was endeavouring to arrange the perplexing business that had fallen upon him, and to make up his mind as to the future. In accordance with the advice of Mr. Davis, to whom he turned almost helplessly for guidance, he requested me to go with Grace and my pupils to a distant town, where we were wholly unknown. Lady Dighton had left him a large fortune, but she was correct in her conviction that he would never profit by the bequest. However, in a letter that was found with her will, she stated that having ascertained that she could secure any legacies she might leave to Ellen and Janet, and their heirs, so that their father could have no power to reject them, she had accordingly directed the lawyer, with whom she had communicated by letter on the subject of her will, to divide twenty thousand pounds of her funded property between them, under stringent conditions in the hands of trustees. Except these legacies to his daughters, Captain Sinclair retained only a third ten thousand pounds, which he felt more than justified in settling upon Grace Wilson. The whole of the large remainder of Lady Dighton's settlement, after all necessary expenses had been defrayed, he paid over to the heir of the baronetcy and its hereditary estates. He had only two friends whom he could consult in his heavy trouble,and they were those who had been the unconscious agents in bringing them upon him. Both Mr. Davis and Mr. M'Ilvar, while they agreed in the propriety of his honourable resignation of Lady Dighton's bequest to himself, united in urging him to avail himself of an offer from the trustees of his children, of whom Mr. Dalton was one, to allow a large portion of the interest of their legacies for their board and education; and he ultimately yielded, in some measure, to their arguments, but it was with painful reluctance. Mr. M'Ilvar, feeling that he had brought so much suffering on a most amiable and high-principled man, exerted all his interest, which was considerable, to procure for him some situation under Government, and nothing could have accorded better with poor Captain Sinclair's wishes than the consulship offered to him at a port in the east of Europe. It removed him from England, which had become hateful to him, and from all possibility of intercourse with the few acquainted with Lady Dighton's story He never could be induced to see Grace Wilson, and he did not meet me again till he came only for a few hours after we had removed to a lodging recommended by the Daltons, in a distant village. He was a sadly changed man, and I could see in almost the first greeting that his manner was totally altered towards me. He was most grateful and liberal, and meant to be very kind, but he could not meet my eye, and seemed to dread every word I said to him. His plans were then unsettled, and soon afterwards came the offer from M'Ilvar of which I have just spoken. Mr. Davis told me that "it made another man of him." He brightened up from that moment, gave an immediate and most thankful answer in assent, and employed himself incessantly in preparations for a speedy departure to his official post.

When all was completed, he came to fetch his daughters. He was much overcome when he parted from me; and Ellen and Janet were as sorry as such young girls could be with a prospect before them which their father had in his letters depicted in the most favourable colours. We parted; I felt that it was a final parting, and such it proved to be. His liberality towards me had been far beyond what I could expect or accept, and I believe he had a real regard and esteem for me; but I was not surprised when our intercourse by letter gradually died away. The girls wrote frequently and affectionately to me for a few months, but their letters became more and more brief and far between, and in less than two years ceased altogether. I have occasionally heard of them, and I believe that both are well married to foreigners. Their father is always spoken of with respect and esteem.

I had consented to remain with Grace Wilson for at least twelve months after Captain Sinclair's departure from England. We went on very quietly and very amicably together; and I have little to add to what I have already said of her,except that, owing, I suppose, to a more healthy and natural mode of life, she improved very considerably in her personal appearance. She lost much of her disfiguring fat, and her complexion became healthy looking, with a slight tinge of colour. Her eyes were larger and brighter, and she had no longer a heavy expression of countenance, nor a dragging, loitering way of walking and moving. Certainly, I could have made poor Grace a far more interesting personage if I were composing a tale, instead of narrating actual occurrences for the private perusal of a few friends. Nevertheless, the termination of her story is, under all the circumstances which render it so peculiar, sufficiently strange for any novel, and so little to be expected, that I feel half afraid to relate it.

The village in which we had fixed our temporary residence was in a very retired and agricultural part of the west of England. We there, in the course of a few months, became acquainted with a young man in whom I soon felt greatly interested. He was the only child of a very respectable small farmer, and had been deaf and and dumb from his birth. He had been well educated among others as unfortunate as himself. His manners were pleasing and gentle, and, notwithstanding his natural defects, he was reckoned a very clever farmer, and was popular among his father's labourers, who had established modes of communication with him which answered most of the purposes of ordinary conversation. We knew his mother, in the first instance, owing to her supplying us with milk and poultry. She was an excellent, sensible, well-mannered woman. The father was a rougher sort of person, but a truly good and kind-hearted man. Both doated on their unfortunate son, and I soon won their hearts by my knowledge of the finger alphabet. The son was anxious to improve himself in drawing, and I undertook to assist him; I lent him books, and found him quick, intelligent, and perfectly unpresuming. Our intimacy increased. Grace had learned the finger-alphabet, and she and the young man were a good deal together. One morning I was surprised by a visit from the father, and thoroughly puzzled by his making me a long and confused speech about his poor boy, as he called him, the object of which I could not for some time conceive, until at length, after many attempts, and much circumlocution, he blundered out the plain words, that he feared his poor boy was greatly taken with Miss Wilson. In a moment I perceived how very blind I had been; a thousand little circumstances came back to my recollection that I had scarcely noticed at the time of their occurrence, and foremost among them was so vivid a remembrance of Grace's unusual quickness and perseverance in acquiring the finger-alphabet, that I suspected there would be no reluctance on her part. This point was soon decided, as I had anticipated. Her fortune was a great surprise to her lover and his parents, as they had naturally supposed that she was dependent upon me. I explained it and her want of relatives by the simple truth that she was the illegitimate child of a deceased gentleman of large property. When Captain Sinclair made over the money to her, he stipulated only—and it was more an entreaty than a condition—that she would faithfully observe total silence on all points connected with his unhappy wife. I assured him that he might firmly depend on Grace's performance of the solemn promise which she then made to him through me. Everything relating to her sufferings at Greyfriars became more and more distressing and painful to her, and there was a security in the pledge he required of her which was evidently a relief to her mind. Could I part from my charge under more favourable auspices? A deaf and dumb husband, with no near relatives except an old father and mother, without a particle of suspicion, or even curiosity, in their nature. I had for some time begun to feel that I might be much fettered by the singular circumstances connected with my protection of this poor girl, and although I had become really much attached to her, I confess that a great burden was lifted from my mind when I saw her so happily married.

Her husband worshipped her, and thought himself the most fortunate of mankind. They had a pretty house and small farm very near the old homestead, and in due course of time were blessed with three children, none of whom inherited their misfortune. Grace writes to me two or three times a year, and I have twice visited them. A happier household I never saw, nor a more loving old grandfather and grandmother. I will only add to my story that I have lately heard that Greyfriars is levelled to the ground, and a new house is building nearly on the same site. I do not know whether the inevitable discovery of the concealed apartments created any sensation in the neighbourhood, for the Daltons are removed to another and far-distant living, and I have no communication whatever with the place itself. All the sin and suffering those walls contained may seem to have perished with them; but though sorrow may pass away, crime and its consequences cannot be crushed and extinguished. There is a nameless horror in every memory connected with Lady Dighton, whether dead or living. Mrs. Dalton told me that Captain Sinclair had added but three words to the name of his wife on the stone that covered her remains. These words are—"God is merciful!"

ENTRAPPING A MURDERER.

A SPECULATOR'S STORY.

In the year 1833 I went to the Red River country with a view of speculating in horses, lands, or anything that might give promise of a profitable return for a cash investment. Of course I carried a good deal of money with me, but knowing I was going among a wild, lawless class, of every grade and color—among half-civilized Indians, negroes, gamblers, thieves, robbers, murderers, and assassins—with perhaps a few settlers of some little claim to honor and honesty, if they could be sifted out from the mass—I thought it the safest plan not to seem well off in this world's goods. Accordingly I secured my money in a belt about my body, put on a very coarse, rough dress, which, by intentional carelessness, soon had a very mean, slovenly appearance, and allowed my hair and beard to manage matters their own way, without any troublesome interference of razor or comb. Thus prepared, and armed with two revolvers and a bowie-knife, I passed over some dangerous territory in comparative safety, and flattered myself that no one guessed my riches through my apparent poverty.

In fact, on two occasions I began to think it might have been to my advantage to have looked a little more respectable. The first of these was, when in travelling through the Choctaw nation, I found a drove of horses that pleased me very much, and was told by the owner, in reply to my questions as to what he would take a head for the entire lot, that he was not in the habit of naming his price to every wandering beggar that chose to satisfy an idle curiosity. I was disposed at first to put on some dignity and get indignant, but concluded, after a careful survey of my person, that the man had good cause for speaking as he did, and so merely assured him that I knew an individual who wished to buy horses, if he could get them at a fair price. The horse-owner, however, was not disposed to believe my statement, and so I passed him by, with the resolve that, if nothing better turned up, I would give him another call under a more advantageous appearance. As the second instance alluded to was similar to the first, it may be passed over without further notice.

But out of this same cause grew a very remarkable adventure, which it is my present purpose to relate.

While passing between two settlements, over a very lonely, gloomy horse-path, leading through a dark, hemlock wood, and while in the most solitary part, there suddenly came before me, leaping from a thicket on the right, a human figure of a most startling appearance. It was a man of medium height, but of a stout, powerful frame, all covered with dirty tatters, that he appeared to have worn and wallowed in for years. He had no covering for his head or feet, and his skin was so coated with grime that it was difficult at a first look to tell whether he belonged to the white race or not. His face, high up on his cheeks, was covered with a dirty brown beard, and his matted hair hung in wild profusion all around his head, except a little space before his swollen, blood-shot eyes, and altogether he looked like a madman or human devil. His hands held and swung a formidable club, and his attitude, as he leaped into the road before me, was one of fierce menace and defiance.

I stopped in alarm, and while fixing my eyes sharply upon his, quietly slid my hand into a convenient pocket, and grasped the butt of one of my revolvers, firmly determined to keep him at the short distance that divided us, or kill him if he advanced.

For perhaps half a minute we stood silently regarding and surveying each other, and then, resting one end of his club on the ground, and partly leaning forward on the other, he said, in a coarse, gruff tone, with a kind of chuckling laugh:

"Well, —— me! I's in hope I'd got a prize at last; but if you're much better off nor me, you don't show it, by——! Stranger who ar' you? and whar ar' you from?"

"Well," returned I, feeling highly complimented, of course, that I resembled such a villainous-looking object as himself, "some people call me beggar, and I know I don't pass for a genteel gentleman."

"I'll sw'ar to that—haw! haw! haw!" was his chuckling response. "The world haint made much of you, more'nt it has of me. I see steal in your face as plain as daylight. Say, what jail or penitentiary lost you last?"

"Never mind that!" said I; "probably neither of us have got our deserts."

"Well, if you'd been decent drest, looked like you had five dollars about you, I'd have knocked your brains out!" pursued the villain, with a broad grin. "As it is you can pass—for I can sw'ar you haint got a red!"

"Much obliged for your candor, anyhow!" rejoined I.

He still stood before me, looking straight into my eye, and now seemed to be pondering some new idea. Presently he muttered, as if to himself:

"I think he might do." Then a moment after, he said to me, "I say, old fellow, how'd you like to make a raise?"

"How would I like to eat when hungry?" I answered, thinking it not unlikely that the scoundrel had some dark project in view, which, by seeming to chime in with him, I might discover.

"Well I've got a plan," he said, throwing down his club, as if to assure me of his pacific intentions toward myself, and quietly advancing to my side—"I've got a plan that will give us both a heap of money, and it'll take just two to carry it out. I've been wanting a pal, and if you'll join in I'll go your halves."

"If there's any chance to turn a penny, I'm your man!" said I.

"Good!" returned he; "you look like a trump, and I'll bet high on you. I don't know," he added, eyeing me sharply, "but I may be deceived; but I think I'll risk it. If you go for to play any game on me, you'd better look out for yourself, that's all".

"Do I look like such a scamp as that?" returned I, in an indignant tone.

"Well, let's take a seat, and talk it over."

We found an old log and sat down; and after some preliminary conversation, my new and interesting acquaintance unfolded to me a most damnable scheme, the substance of which was as follows:

He knew the country well for miles around, and the exact position and condition of every settler. One man, living in a rather lonely quarter, about five miles distant, was a speculator in horses and cattle, which he sometimes bought up and drove to a distant market. He had a good deal of money, which it was supposed he kept secreted in his dwelling; and to get possession of this money was of course the object in view. The trouble was, that the man himself was a brave, determined fellow, who always went well armed, and also had, besides his wife, two grown up sons and a daughter, which was a force too great for any one individual to encounter. About a mile from him lived a poor widow, who had nothing worth stealing except her clothes, which would be valuable for carrying out our plan. This plan was to rob the widow first of her clothing, dress me up in them, and have me seek lodging at the speculator's house. Then in the night, when all the family should be asleep, I was to unbolt the door, let in my confederate, and we two were to attempt the murder of the inmates—the robbery and burning of the house to follow and be the concluding scene.

I secretly shuddered at the atrocity of the contemplated crime, but appeared to receive the disclosure with the business air of the most hardened wretch, inquiring as to the amount of money we should thus probably obtain, and objecting to nothing but the great risk we should have to run, both before and after the accomplishment of our purpose. I permitted my eager companion to gradually quiet my fears, and at last consented to act.

When everything had thus become settled, we struck off into the fields to avoid being seen, and, just before dark, came in sight of the widow's house. As my companion was acquainted with the premises, I insisted that he should procure the female garments—but solemnly warned him that if he harmed the poor woman in the least, I would have nothing further to do with the affair.

As good luck would have it, the widow was not at home, and my murderous friend managed to break in and get the necessary clothing without doing any further damage. The widow being a large woman, I had no trouble in arranging the dress so as to pass in a dim light as a tolerably respectable female; and then, having agreed upon the story I was to tell, how I would manage matters, and the signal that would assure my accomplice of all being right, we went forward together, till we came in sight of the house to be robbed, when I made my nearest way to the road, and continued on alone, reaching the dwelling about an hour after dark, and just as the family were about concluding their evening meal.

Had my design been really what I had led my villainous companion to believe, I certainly could never have gone forward with such confident boldness, but feeling my conscience all right, and knowing I was acting from a good motive, I kept up a wonderful assurance, feeling curious to see how well I could play my part, and to what extent I could carry the deception.

I asked for lodging for the night, and something to eat, and was kindly and hospitably received. The first thing that sent the blush to my cheeks, was the coming forward of the young lady, about eighteen, beautiful as an houri, and in a sweet, gentle tone, asking me if I had walked far, if I was much fatigued, offering to take my hood, and telling me I should soon be refreshed with a hot cup of tea. This was a little too much for my equanimity. I could have got along with the rest, without being especially disturbed; but I was then a young, unmarried man, and, though not particularly susceptible to female attractions in general, I thought I had never looked upon so lovely and interesting a creature before. I stammered out some unintelligible replies, kept my hood well drawn over my face, and asked to be permitted to have a few minutes' private conversation with the master of the house.

Of course this request caused considerable surprize—but it was granted—and as soon as we were alone together, I told him in a few words who and what I was, the strange adventure I had met with, and disclosed in full the plot of my road-acquaintance to murder and rob him. He turned pale at the recital, and seemed much astounded, but begged me not to mention the design to his wife and daughter. He then called his two sons—strong, determined fellows—recounted the plot to them, and arranged to have everything go forward as if the scheme were being carried out as its vile author designed.

It took some shrewd management to keep me to my part without letting the females into the secret; but it was effected; and before midnight I cautiously opened the door and looked out. There was my man, ready and waiting.

"Is all right?" he whispered.

"Yes, come in!"

As he crossed the threshold, the father and sons sprung upon him. But the fellow was strong and desperate, and perhaps had some slight suspicion of the truth. With a wild yell he cleared their united grasps at a bound, leaving a large portion of his rags in their hands. The next moment the whole four of us were in chase of the villain, as he ran across the road to gain the cover of a wood about twenty rods distant.

"Fire!" shouted the father; "shoot down the scoundrel!"

We were all armed and prepared,and at the word four revolvers began to crack behind him. But he seemed to lead a charmed life, and still ran on, keeping a short distance ahead of us. Once I fancied I saw him stagger; but he gained the wood and disappeared, and we reluctantly and with deep chagrin gave up the chase.

When we returned to the house, the wife and daughter were both up and terribly alarmed. Of course an explanation followed—the host being disappointed in making the capture, as he intended, without exciting their fears. There was no more sleep in that house that night.

The next morning we went out to the wood and discovered a trail of blood. We followed on for a mile and found the ruffian lying dead, face downward, his hands firmly clinched upon some bushes. One of the sons recognized him as a suspected murderer who had a couple of years before left that part of the country. He was buried with little ceremony. I was warmly thanked for the part I had played to save the family; but from no other did the words sound so sweet to me as from the lips of the beautiful maiden.

The family pressed me to stay with them for a while, and I stayed—long enough to lose my heart and win another. Strange as it appears in looking back to it, the event of that villain leaping into the road before me, changed my whole fortune; and sometimes, when I gaze fondly upon my lovely wife, I am tempted to bless the dark and wicked design that providentially led me to so much happiness.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE ARMIES IN FRONT OF RICHMOND.

It has so generally been the policy of the Confederates, since the fig'ht at Bull Run, to retire before their assailants, except when there was a certainty of a battle being fought on equal terms, that it is just probable that at the very moment when the people in these parts are expecting to hear of a battle, the announcement may be made public that Richmond has been quietly evacuated. This was actually the position of affairs both at Yorktown and Corinth. People everywhere expected that at both of the places named, a severe contest would take place. Few of those uninitiated in military science imagined that, after so much toil, and the expenditure of large sums of money in the erection of fortifications for defence, they would be evacuated without the occurrence of severe and sanguinary struggles. They were, nevertheless, evacuated, and with such secrecy that the Federals had no knowledge of the position of affairs until after the thing had been actually accomplished. To have held those positions longer in the face of much superior forces, in conjunction with other disadvantages, would, it is thought by men learned in military strategy, have been perfect madness. Perceiving the untenableness of their position and the probable capture of their entire armies, if they prolonged their stay, the Confederate Generals doubtless acted wisely in thus withdrawing their forces, even at a sacrifice of treasure and territory. These evacuations, while preserving the Confederate armies, enabled them to concentrate more effectually, and it may be that a determined stand, in consequence, will be made at Richmond. Already have portions of the opposing forces in front of Richmond met in more than one terrific encounter; but the end is not yet. The battle which all expected would have followed these severe struggles has been delayed by the heavy rains which flooded the valleys and marches. Now, however, that the roads have become passible, the Confederates seem anxious to renew the strife, and they have so far manifested an energy which it was thought they would be scarcely capable of exerting, a vigor which a "demoralized" horde would find it impossible to exert. These movements have been pronounced, even by their opponents, as extensive, and of a character worthy of being considered profoundly mysterious. Since this announcement was made, reports of skirmishes have been current, the particulars of which it is difficult to ascertain, with any degree of certainty. The prospects of the grand army of the Potomac are not nearly so bright now as they were some weeks ago. It is just possible that so soon as sufficient reinforcements are received, Gen. McClellan will urge on his army with redoubled energy, dispelling the gloom which now hangs over the scene, and not resting until he is in undisputed possession of the Confederate stronghold. If the Confederates pursue the policy hitherto adopted, McClellan may gain Richmond without much loss of life; but if they determine to change their tactics, and are willing to hazard a general battle, his army will never march into Richmond unless it be over the corpses of thousands of his opponents. The surrender of Richmond, whether quietly or by force, will be a great blow to the Southern Confederacy. All Virginia will be at the mercy of the Federals. The Confederate forces may be concentrated at some point further South, but they can never assume that formidable character which they now present at Richmond. A knowledge of this fact may perhaps induce the Confederates to hazard a battle, and to make up by desperate energy that which they may lack in strength of numbers. If a contest between the contending armies before Richmond should result disastrously to the Federal arms, the independence of the Southern Confederacy may be regarded as accomplished. The Federals know well how important it is that the grand army in front of Richmond should succeed: and hence it is that Gen. McClellan is extremely unwilling to run the risk of a defeat by any bold movement. It is quite evident that he will not hazard a battle until his forces are largely augmented. If the Confederates force him to fight ere reinforcements arrive, it is impossible to say who may come off victorious.

SHAM RELIGION.

The real objections entertained to the religious world are,that the whole way of living, and talking, and thinking which they adopt is such a very poor, paltry affair. Religion is something so very twaddling, so little, so unaspiring, if this is what it is to come to. It is the mere catching of a peculiar way of talking, very trivial, very easily caught, and as it appears to outsiders, singularly inapplicable to the facts of life and society. It seems as if Christianity, which was once swelling in volumes big enough to fill the civilized world, had been at last confined, by some skilful artist, in a very little glass bottle. It has somehow, all at once, got rid of art, and ethics, and metaphysics,and history, and this is thought a great mercy and improvement. Perhaps it is; but some little disappointment is pardonable in those who have somehow got to think otherwise. There is, too, an uncertainty about it all which is not very attractive. This especially peeps out in children. They exhibit, with their usual amiable frankness, their real nature and their assumed nature. They mix up prattle and religious talk. They may not do what they ought, or behave well, or keep themselves clean, or show consideration for others, but they have got the regulation phrases by heart. There are two facts with regard to the children of good people which we do not exactly pretend to account for, but which are arrested by general experience. The one is, that religious little boys are deceitful; and the other is, that the daughters of religious people quarrel with their mothers. There are also faults of a grave kind to which good people are exceedingly prone,and which incontestably raise a prejudice against them. In the first place, they do not care about truth. This is quite different from saying that they knowingly and wilfully tell falsehoods. They shrink from the very name of a lie. But they are accustomed to talk a hazy language, and they are also accustomed to back up a cause. They have always some rival to crush, or some project to introduce, or some little difficulty to conceal; and they choose their words accordingly. They are often, also, grossly unjust. Justice is the one virtue which they cannot even conceive the meaning of. They do not even wish to be fair. They want to do the best they can for themselves, and their party, and their cause; and they have nothing to do with other people's parties and causes. They must back their friends, and they do it so heartily that they learn to do it quite unconsciously. In all these respects the goodish people of the world have a conspicuous advantage over the good. There are quantities of people who lead outwardly the same life as the good, who force grapes, and are very particular whom they know, and support charities, and help the poor, and are decent, comfortable, church-going Christians. The only thing is that they are not in the religious world, and do not wish to be—do not care about its preachers, eschew its meetings, cannot talk its language, do not train their children to talk piously. But they take an interest in most of the pursuits of mankind, look with a lenient eye on pagans, and with an admiring eye on a vast collection of worldly people. They occupy their minds with art, or history, or some other terrestrial occupation They whip their boys if they will not behave well, and bring their daughters to their senses if they try to be impertinent. They wish to be fair and honest, and if they think a person unjustly treated,they stick up for him. Such people, as compared with good people, are often sadly attractive. It is like getting out of a hot atmosphere to get to them. They are serene, comforting, and comfortable. It is this contrast that really weighs upon thousands of minds, and not the contrast between vice and virtue, religion and irreligion. Theoretically, it may be acknowledged, the religious world has hit on truth; but practically it seems somehow to fail. It does not really appear so good as something else which it affects to despise and avoid. — *Saturday Review.*

THE PRINCE AND THE JEWS AT JERUSALEM.—Ten days after the arrival of the Prince in the Holy City he met by appointment, at the western wall of the temple, the Chief Rabbi and others of the heads of the Jewish community of Jerusalem. The Chief Rabbi appeared in his full robes, and with the insignia of his office as Hacham Bashi, which, being an appointment by the Sultan, confers on him great civil powers and authority. The Prince received the deputation in a most gracious manner, and after the ordinary formalities entered freely into conversation with the Chief Rabbi; of whom he inquired if he believed the massive wall by which they stood to be a portion of the great master work of King Solomon. The Chief Rabbi's explanatory remarks in answering this question in the affirmative evidently impressed the Prince for he raised the covering from his head in token of the sincere veneration which he felt for the sacredness of the spot; and who can tell what associations of thought crowded on him at that moment, for he immediately requested the Chief Rabbi to offer up a prayer for his "mother, the Queen of England!" The Chief Rabbi then prayed aloud in Hebrew for the health of "Queen Victoria, and with great fervency that she might long continue to reign, and with wisdom like unto that of Solomon. At the conclusion. all the deputation ejaculated, "Amen, Amen." The prayer being interpreted to the Prince, he was greately moved, and even more so when the Chief Rabbi followed this prayer with an invocation to the King of kings that the soul of the late Prince Consort might rest in peace in the realms of eternal bliss.

The Prince, accompanied by the Chief Rabbi, then visited the synagogues, which were brilliantly lighted up and decorated as on a festival, and were crowded to excess. Prayers were then offered up for the Prince, Prince Alfred, and all the Royal family. At