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

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LITERATURE.

SPIRITS AND ANGELS.

Lonely musing in the twilight,
When the lengthening shadows fall,
Spirits bright and holy angels
Come obedient to my call.
Lost and loved ones gone before me—
Phantoms fair from memory won—
Seem to flit before my fancy,
Midway to the setting sun.

I can see them, robed in beauty,
Some rejoicing, some forlorn,
Friendly all, and sent to guide me
Out of darkness into morn.
On the chimes I hear their voices,
Whispering solace from the skies;—
Holy angels, hover near me!
Fit my soul for Paradise.

THOUGHTS AT PARTING.

We spoke of many a vanished scene,
Of what we once had thought and said,
Of what had been, and might have been,
And who was changed, and who was dead;

And all that fills the hearts of friends,
When first they feel, with secret pain,
Their lives thenceforth have separate ends,
And never can be one again.

The first slight swerving of the heart,
That words are powerless to express,
And leaves it still unsaid in part,
Or say it in too great excess.

The very bones in which we spake
Had something strange, I could but mark;
The leaves of memory seemed to make
A mournful rustling in the dark.

THE WITNESS.

IN THREE PARTS.—PART I.

I have nothing but what is small and commonplace to say of myself. Left an orphan at a very early age, I was educated to be a governess, and I began my career "in the nursery line," at scarcely seventeen, and with rather a meagre stock of acquirements I learned much by teaching; and at five-and-twenty I found myself well established in my vocation, and enabled to give "the highest and most satisfactory references." I have, therefore, no grievous descent in position or circumstances to narrate; no bitter regrets, nor heart-breaking recollections; I went on quietly, enacting the part for which I had long been prepared, and success in which was, in truth, the object of my humble ambition, and my lot as governess has not been at all interesting or adventurous. I was never almost starved, never nearly beaten—no elder or younger son fell madly in love with me, nor did their older relative tempt me to sin and shame. I passed along an ordinary course, often neglected, and sometimes ill used, but more frequently treated with consideration, kindness, and respect; and at fifty-two I am able to rest from my labors on a secure little income, the result of long savings and a small legacy, and to settle myself in a comfortable lodging near two very dear pupils. It is at their earnest request that I am about to relate some very strange circumstances which occurred in one of the families in which I have resided.

The scene of my terrible story was an enormous mass of irregular buildings of various dates, some of which reached back to the time of our earliest monasteries. It was called Greyfriars Abbey, and was situated near the coast in a very remote part of Cornwall. My pupils were the twin daughters of a retired East Indian officer, who had lost a young and beloved wife in India, and had come home in broken health and spirits to live, as he best could, on a small pension The only relation to whom he felt much attachment was a cousin, who, in the prime of her youth and beauty, had married a cross, gouty, old baronet of large fortune. At her earnest request, Captain Sinclair, with his two little girls, took lodgings in a village close to Greyfriars, where his cousin, Lady Dighton, and her very disagreeable husband, were residing at the time of his return to England. After repeatedly disproving the prophecies of his medical attendants, by rallying from violent attacks of the gout in his head and stomach, and after a paralytic seizure which rendered him nearly helpless, the miserable old baronet, a burden to himself, and a curse to all around him, was found one morning dead in his bed, about a year after Captain Sinclair became his neighbour. Lady Dighton's jointure was enormous; it had been secured to her by a cunning and unprincipled father; and the death of Sir Thomas put her in possession of Greyfriars Abbey, a noble modern mansion called Fairley Park, in Hampshire, and a yearly income of many thousands. To the latter residence, every one who knew her felt confident she would repair as soon as common decency permitted, and many foretold that she would speedily recommence the life of reckless gaiety into which she had plunged in the early days of her marriage. It was reported that she had been tricked into visiting Greyfriars by her jealous husband, and compelled to remain there. His paralytic seizure occurred about a twelvemonth after their arrival, and to the day of his death his unfortunate wife had been unceasingly the victim of his violent and capricious temper. Now, however, she was free.

A pompous funeral conveyed the remains of Sir Thomas to the family-vault in the village church; his young and beautiful widow remained in decorous seclusion at Greyfriars during the whole of the ensuing twelvemonth, and the day after its termination, walked quietly, arm-in-arm with her cousin, Capt. Sinclair, to the same church, whence they returned husband and wife. About seven years after that event, I was recommended to them as governess to the twin Sinclair girls, then more than twelve years old. There were no younger children. Fairley Park was still uninhabited; and Lady Dighton, who had gradually become a confirmed invalid, had never, since her second marriage, quitted the gloomy and once bitterly hated walls of Greyfriars Abbey. Every luxury that money could procure surrounded me in my new abode; my salary was very liberal, my apartments the best in a modernised part of the abbey; my pupils were gentle and intelligent, and I invariably met with the kindest courtesy from their father. He was an amiable, indolent, and somewhat melancholy man, who felt warmly grateful to me as his preserver from the misery of sending his girls to schools. Numerous governesses had preceded me, and each in her turn had been worn out by the exceeding dulness and monotony of her life at Greyfriars; and when month after month went on, and the doating father found that I was perfectly contented, and that I never importuned him to consent to any schemes for the health and advantage of my pupils, which would have included pleasant plans and excursions for myself, I really believe his satisfaction and gratitude were unbounded.

On my first arrival, I saw for several days only Captain Sinclair, and the twins, Ellen and Janet. He made sundry confused and indistinct apologies for Lady Dighton, in which the words health, nerves, spirits, &c., were mingled and murmured without any specific mention of ill or ailment. Soon, however, I learned from the kind and sensible wife of the village vicar, the only lady who visited me, that it was strongly suspected the long trial of attendance on Sir Thomas had so greatly affected Lady Dighton, as to render her at times scarcely accountable for her many whims and eccentric proceedings. Mrs. Dalton described the change in her health and habits as very gradual. For some time after the death of her husband, she had appeared to enjoy her freedom from the outbursts of his maniacal temper, and her relief from a life of the most miserable subjection Up to the time of her second marriage, she went to church, walked and rode, or drove out as usual, and exhibited no particular variation in manner or spirits; but a few months afterwards, she gradually became weak in health and strangely nervous. Her complaint was called a nervous atrophy; her spirits were variable, and her behaviour capricious and strange. Although she ate voraciously, she grew more and more haggard in face and person, and resisted to the uttermost of her power every trial of the change of scene and air which was recommended as her best medicines. At length she consented to go for a few weeks to a watering-place within easy reach of Greyfriars. A house was taken, every luxury and comfort prepared for her, and the family arrived there one evening, with a host of servants and appendages. Before daybreak the next morning, Captain Sinclair roused the astonished household, and ordered the horses to be put to the carriages, and the whole party were again at Greyfriars long before their ordinary breakfast-hour. "From that day," continued my informant, "she never entered a carriage; her walks in the grounds became less and less frequent; and for more than the last twelve months she has never quitted her own apartments, which are the most ancient and the gloomiest in the abbey. Capt. Sinclair does not share them; she will not even allow a servant to sleep in her room; and they say she bars her door every night, as if she expected to be murdered."

"Does she see any one besides her own family?"

"No; not even a medical man. It is years since she has been to church, and since Mr. Dalton or I have spoken with her. Poor Captain Sinclair humours her in everything. They have now been married more than seven years, and I am sure he has never had as many months of anything like comfort in her society."

"How does he bear it?"

"Just as you see: plenty of lounging in very easy-chairs, and of sauntering about or riding with the children; plenty of cheroots, and innumerable books of light reading from London—everything around him that can make time pass smoothly."

"But he has no society?"

"Little that can be called such. He declines all dinner parties, and interference in county matters. He sees Mr. Dalton sometimes; and the doctors who formerly attended Lady Dighton occasionally visit him, hear how she is going on, and receive their fees in return for telling him that the case is hopeless. But I must not fail to tell you that he is a most affectionate father, a kind and indulgent master, and always ready to give the most liberal help to our poor. Mr. Dalton never makes a claim upon his purse in vain. He thinks him a very good man; but he firmly believes that his heart is buried with his young wife in India, and that he has never felt more than gratitude and cousinly regard towards Lady Dighton. "Moreover," continued Mrs. Dalton smiling, "if you can endure the Greyfriars life, which no other lady in your place has yet been able to do, I really believe that no possible limit can be put to the gratitude he will feel towards you."

"I am to be introduced to Lady Dighton this evening," said I; "we are to drink tea in her apartment."

"Oh, I know they do that sometimes," she answered; "and I have heard your predecessors lament over the custom. They said the girls got away as soon as possible after tea; that Captain Sinclair said little or nothing, and that they were left to listen to Lady Dighton's strange talk till the hour of their pupils' bedtime enabled them to escape."

"Strange talk!" I repeated.

"Yes, it is sometimes very strange. Little as I ever saw of her, I know she could talk very strangely even before she shut herself up. Her father was, I believe, an avowed infidel. I have heard from persons who knew him well that he was utterly devoid of religious principle. He lived entirely by his skill at cards and billiards and betting at races. Wretched man! he actually sold his beautiful young daughter to Sir Thomas The pin-money and jointure settled on her were extravagantly large. No doubt he expected to long survive the old gouty baronet, but an apoplectic seizure carried him off only a few months after the marriage, on the race course at Newmarket."

"But of what nature is her strange talk?"

"Why, her father was a furious democrat as well as an infidel," answered Mrs. Dalton. "He had been to France, and had intimate friends among some of the leaders of the Revolution. Three important years of his daughter's life, those from fourteen to seventeen, were the years from '90 to '93, and they were passed in Paris, in the very heart of the horrors of that period. Lady Dighton is as familiar with the guillotine as you are with your scissors, and she talks composedly, and even approvingly, of men and things which we are accustomed to hold in utter detestation."

It passed, however, better than I expected Lady Dighton's apartments were near the old chapel, and partly over the great monastic kitchen. Tradition appropriated them to the reigning abbots of the ancient brotherhood. Many small gloomy chambers were in that part of the abbey, abounding with intricate passages and unexpected little crooked stair-cases. She inhabited two chambers, one sitting, and the other a bed room, both looking to an inner quadrangle of the abbey. A labyrinthine sort of communication with the more modern structure brought us at length to a great heavy door opening into a sort of lobby; and through another great heavy door Captain Sinclair preceded me into a moderate-sized and very gloomy apartment. The next instant, I was introduced to Lady Dighton. She was tall and large-boned, but perfectly well made and proportioned; her features were high and handsome, a Roman nose, and large bright blue eyes, which seemed ready to start from her head, owing to the exceeding thinness of her face, the skin of which was stretched over her cheeks and nose so tightly as almost to give the idea that it must be painful to her. The complexion must have been originally delicately fair and blooming; it was now one uniform tint of pale yellow, except a bright crimson stain on each high cheekbone; thin and scarlet lips, never entirely covering the large, white, projecting upper teeth which were unpleasantly conspicuous when she spoke. A low forehead, lined and interlined with wrinkles, spreading into what are called crows-feet at the temples; eyebrows and eyelashes almost sandy coloured. A quantity of very light hair, mingled with gray, and with a natural wave all over it, but always so carelessly arranged that it looked frizzy and untidy, and was covered only by a black-lace half-handkerchief, tied in a loose knot under the chin. Her dress was a rich figured silk wrapping-gown, of a dark colour, open in front, but folded over so as not to show the petticoat; a magnificent shawl upon her shoulders, and two or three others lying about on the sofa on which she was seated. I never saw her in any other costume. There was a table before her with a few books and writing materials upon it. The rest of the furniture was old and heavy; and all around looked as if the inhabitant of the place cared neither for beauty nor order; and so it was. The pleasures of the eye, like every other pleasure, had passed away from the miserable woman for ever.

She rose to receive me with much courtesy. She spoke little during the evening; but her manners were those of a perfect gentlewoman, and there was nothing unusual in her conversation. Afterwards, however, as she became more familiar with me, I found an increasing change in her language and manner. She was fond of paradox and of making startling assertions, affecting the very vitals of morality and truth. It was often difficult to perceive how far she was in earnest, but too frequently there was a bitter sincerity in the vehemence with which she would maintain that there was no tangible reality in crime. The dreadful guillotine experience of which I had been told, could be clearly traced in her definitions of homicide, and even murder. According to her doctrine, that "kind of being, *Circumstance*," might cast over the most flagrant offences so softening a shade as to change their whole nature and appearance.

Captain Sinclair always seemed to be as much annoyed as his quiet nature permitted, when she thus expressed her wild opinions to me. The girls always got away as soon as possible after tea; and when the conversation took any turn that displeased their father, it was his custom to rise from his seat, and walk up and down the room; and I well knew that, as he drew near the door for about the third or fourth time, he would slink out of our company in a somewhat cowardly manner. I did not like to argue with her, but as I could not without incivility leave her till the bedtime of the children, it was sometimes impossible to avoid argument, and even remonstrance. This she bore wonderfully well, though often with an air of silent superiority and compassion for the obstinacy of my prejudices; but there were moments, few and far between, when she was evidently impressed and softened, especially, strange to say, when I almost involuntary quoted a few words from the Holy Book she affected to despise. It was indeed strange to see how they would seem to tell upon her, and then, for a brief moment or two, an expression of such utter and helpless misery would pass over her poor haggard face, that I could hardly bear to look at her; but it was only pity that I felt, and a confused state of curiosity, for she never attracted or attached me.

I had been at Greyfriars about a twelvemonth, when one evening—the last we ever spent together—she was more than usually disposed to enter into conversation. Something was said of the likeness of the twins to each other, and we both agreed that it was not more, nor even so much, as is often seen between sisters of different ages. "I once," said she, "saw a most wonderful likeness: it was under peculiar circumstances; I shall never forget it. When I was in Paris with my father in the year '92, our lodgings were in a street that led from one of the prisons to the guillotine. Our rooms were in the *entresol*, and we often saw the carts full of condemned prisoners pass close by our windows. It used to interest me to observe their various expressions of countenance, and to fancy how each would enact his last scene in this world. Sullenness and pride seemed to me their most common emotion. I could sometimes trace, also, a heroism that I admired, and a terror that I despised. One morning, when Santerre and the huge and hideous Danton were breakfasting with us, I heard the well-known sound of the cart approaching: no one moved, however, till a crash and an outcry drew us all to the windows. Something was wrong about one of the wheels, and as it had happened just before our house, we saw the persons in the cart as plainly as if they had been in the room with us. They were eight in number, and of ordinary appearance, except a very young girl, who sat directly opposite to our windows. My father and his friends, the moment they saw her, uttered exclamations, and I was at first puzzled; I knew the face so well. I fancied I knew the girl, yet I was sure she was a stranger to me, and it was some minutes before I discovered that I was looking at a fac-simile of myself. I was thought pretty then," continued she, with one of her ghastly smiles, "and this girl was certainly very handsome. She had complexion, hair, features, figure, all so like my own, that I seemed to be looking into a mirror, and as there was no painful expression in her face, there was nothing to disturb the resemblance. We gazed fixedly at each other; and when the wheel was adjusted, and the cart began to move again, she smiled, and made a kind of farewell sign to me with her long white hand. I stood there full of life, health, and youthful spirit, and she was in a few moments to lay her young head, with its redundant fair ringlets, on the block, and pass away for ever! I remember feeling a natural sort of exultation that our fates were as different as our persons were strangely similar. How often, since, have I thought of that poor girl!—how often wished that I had been in her place in the fatal cart, and on the scaffold!"

She paused, and that expression of hopeless misery of which I have before spoken passed strangely into her face, and I was tempted to say: "Ah, if we could see the future, life would be intolerable; it is mercy that hides it from us."

In a moment, the sad, and, I may say, human expression was gone, and that of hard and proud defiance lighted up her great bright eyes as she answered contemptuously: "Mercy! where is it? What stuff is it made of? It is idle to foul our tongues with words that have no meaning. Mercy! where is it found? Not on earth, where every creature preys upon some other; not in heaven, looking down, cold and pitiless, on the unutterable misery of earth. To live is to suffer!" Very thankful was I that the entrance of a servant compelled her to pause, and that at the same moment the old clock of the abbey struck the hour of my leave-taking. Lady Dighton had made me more than usually uncomfortable that evening, and I sat for some time in my own room thinking of her before I joined the children. She was the only cloud that shadowed my present mode of life. Comforts and luxuries surrounded me; my pupils were intelligent and affectionate: and even the very servants, copying their kind and courteous master, behaved to me with a pleasant civility that I had never before met with. My salary would enable me to lay by largely for old age or sickness every year that I continued at Greyfriars, and I saw no definite termination to my engagement; for Captain Sinclair had not scrupled to say more than once of late, that he should be most thankful if I could remain permanently with his girls, and superintend their introduction into society. It was true that Lady Dighton troubled me at times, and I found that I did not get accustomed to her ways so much as I had supposed I should do. She frequently so startled and distressed me, that I could not dismiss the recollection from my mind, nor resist an uneasy sort of curiosity about her, for which I often reproached myself. But this was a small evil compared with my numerous blessings: and I well remember that on this particular evening, though more perplexed and grieved by her than usual, the end of my reflections was a strong determination to continue at Greyfriars even for her sake—to do my utmost to win upon and soften the old lady, and, if possible, to alleviate her sufferings, whatever might be their origin. Little did I think that a casual circumstance of the very next day would soon scatter the whole family, and leave me to seek another home.

I have said that Greyfriars was situated in a remote and wild part of Cornwall. Among the accompaniments of such a situation, difficult and even dangerous roads were naturally to be expected. One peculiarity meriting that character led down the steep hill which sheltered the abbey to the north, into what was by courtesy called the high road through the village, and on the morning which followed the conversation I have just related, two gentlemen-tourists, in their own gig, met with an accident in descending it. Captain Sinclair was roused from a pleasant simmer over a new magazine by the news that a carriage was broken to pieces within a short distance of the abbey-gates, one gentleman killed on the spot, and another dreadfully hurt. On reaching the scene of the disaster, accompanied by all the male and several of the female servants, he found matters not quite so bad as they had been represented. There was indeed a gig with a wheel lying by its side, the shafts and traces broken, and the horse nowhere visible; a gentleman lay on the bank, evidently in considerable pain, and his companion, apparently unhurt, was endeavouring to support and assist him. Captain Sinclair immediately despatched a man on horseback for the nearest surgeon, and, with the aid of a door taken off the hinges, and a mattress and pillows, the sufferer was brought to the abbey, and laid down in one of the lower apartments. He soon recovered enough to sit up, and presently to stand up, saying, that the only injuries he had received were a blow on the head, which had stunned him for a few minutes, and some considerable mischief, he feared, in the left arm. The surgeon, who had luckily been met with in the village, soon ascertained that it was only a simple fracture just above the wrist, that would cause, after a few days, little more than inconvenience. He could not pronounce so positively as to the head. Leeches and lotions were to be applied without loss of time, and the patient was to be kept perfectly quiet in a darkened room for at least eight-and-forty hours. The apartment into which he had been carried was a parlour in the modernised part of the abbey; a bed and other requisite appendages were quickly moved into it; and after the leeches had done their work, he was left, by the doctor's directions, in perfect quiet, with only the old housekeeper to attend to him.

When Captain Sinclair and the other gentlemen came to us in the drawing-room, I recognised in the latter an acquaintance of some years' standing. He was uncle to a pupil whose education I had what is called "finished," and who continued to be a dear friend of mine. We were glad to see each other, and he said he thought himself fortunate in finding it thus certified that he was not swindling himself into the hospitable walls of Greyfriars. With a pleasant sort of mock ceremony, he begged me to vouch that he was the Rev. Horace Davis, rector of Castle-Stepworth, in Somersetshire, and brother-in-law to Joseph Baker, Esq., in whose house we had become acquainted with each other. He then told us that his unlucky companion, Mr. M'Ilvar, was a clever young Scotch lawyer, of an old Highland family, and that they were making a little fishing and sketching tour together when this misfortune befell them. Captain Sinclair, whose kind heart better accorded with his old Indian habits of hospitality than with those of Greyfriars, soon settled it authoritatively with Mr. Davis, that he and his friend were to consider themselves as fixtures till the invalid was able to be removed with perfect safety.

We separated soon after this conversation to dress for dinner, and when we met again, it was a pleasant surprise to me to see how this unexpected visit had aroused Captain Sinclair from his ordinary langour and silence. The next morning, Mr. Davis brought us very excellent reports of "Mac," as he called him, who, he said, protested he was quite well, and was grumbling most dreadfully at the surgeon's continued orders that he should be kept perfectly quiet, and at his old nurse's stubborn adherence to them. When, however, another day had passed, and all fear of evil consequences from the injury to the head had vanished, Mr. Davis told us at dinner that Mac had announced his determination to join our party on the following day.

"You will find him a much pleasanter fellow than I am," said he laughing. "Everybody likes old Mac."

Captain Sinclair, who himself had some distant Scotch connections, began inquiring into the young lawyer's clan and family.

"He springs from a very ancient Highland stock," answered Mr. Davis; "and his family, it is said, are always clever and odd, as he is. There is scarcely a bonnet among the M'Ilvars, I believe, that has not a bee of some sort or other *in* it. Many of his ancestors were celebrated second-sight seers. His father and mother were first-cousins, and he himself can remember some circumstances connected with his father's death, which, to say the least of them, are very curious. He was then about six years old, and I doubt not a quick and observant boy. His father's return home was hourly expected after a long absence in England. It was, he says, a still summer evening; there was a long and winding approach through the grounds to their house, and he and his elder brothers and sisters were anxiously listening for the distant sound of wheels, that they might be ready to rush to the door, when suddenly his mother stood up, and looking vacantly around, said: 'It is a stranger who is coming!' At that moment, they began to hear the sounds they were watching for; but their attention was soon painfully drawn to their mother, who sank upon the ground, shrouding her head in a shawl, and, as the carriage passed the nearest gate, she looked up with a ghastly countenance and said; 'Your father is dying on an English bed—strangers are watching over him! He is gone! he is dead!' Mac declares that this was all exactly true. His father had been taken suddenly and dangerously ill on his homeward journey; the approaching carriage brought a messenger with these sad tidings, and it was afterwards ascertained that he had expired before they reached his family."

"And do you believe this?" said I.

"What can I say?" answered he. "Here is a fact vouched for by an eye and ear witness, quite old enough to remember it, and quite incapable of inventing or even embellishing the circumstances. I must yield at least a sort of belief to the story, and can only be thankful that English mothers are not given to frighten their children out of their wits by such vagaries."

"Your friend does not inherit this strange power?" asked Captain Sinclair.

"Why—no," replied Mr. Davis with some hesitation. "I never heard that he could boast any knowledge of the future; but if all is true that is told of him, he has sometimes had a strange sense of the present."

"A sense of the present is nothing very strange or rare," said I smiling: "I do not in the least comprehend your meaning."

"Well, it is not easy to express what one does not one's self understand. It is said that he has felt at times a supernatural sort of impression of the presence of crime. He evidently does not like to speak about it; only once during our great intimacy has he mentioned it at all openly to me; and even then very briefly, and as if he wished to escape from the subject."

"And what did he say?"

"He said it was true that a strange and wretched feeling had come over him in places where any evil deed had been committed; and that sooner or later this feeling had guided him in various indescribable ways to the discovery of the criminal."

"Surely a species of insanity," said I.

"Never was there a clearer or a sounder head in this world," said Mr. Davis warmly.

"Did he give any instances of his having really exercised this strange power?" asked Captain Sinclair.

"No; he said they were very rare, and always accompanied by discomfort, and even distress of mind. However, if you will not think I do nothing but invent wonderful stories," continued Mr. Davis, "I certainly could give you a remarkable instance—not within my own knowledge, but told to me by his clerk, as composed and unimaginative a man as a quiet elderly Scotchman can well be, and who was himself present during all the circumstances."

"O pray, tell us," said every voice at once, for the girls were eagerly listening to the conversation.

"Well," said he, "I need not trouble you with all the particulars which led to Mac's being consulted by a poor widow lady, whose whole income depended on the discovery of a deed executed in the lifetime of her deceased husband, and which had been stolen from the place where it had been deposited. Such was her story. The heir-at-law, her husband's nephew, denied that such a deed had ever existed. The widow named two witnesses whose signatures had been put to it in her presence. One of them was dead; the other, an old family servant, admitted that he had signed some written paper, but he knew nothing more about it, and believed that it had been a power of attorney. Mac mistrusted the nephew from the first. He was a rich man and determined to have what he called his rights, although his success would reduce his uncle's widow to beggary. His cunning was well met by Mac, who, having ascertained that he had taken the surviving witness into his own service, insisted upon seeing the man. Many excuses were made: he was absent—he was ill; but the point was not yielded; and at length, upon Mac's expressing his determination to see the doctor who attended him, it was arranged that he should visit the sick man in his bedchamber at a specified hour on the following day. Up to that time, it does not appear that his views extended beyond a hope, that by strictly and carefully questioning the man, some light might be thrown on the mysterious disappearance of the deed. The clerk who told me the story accompanied Mr. McIlvar to the nephew's house in London. He says that he conversed with him in his usual manner as they walked along together; but he afterwards remembered that, when within the house, he stared about somewhat strangely, and changed colour. He was preceded up the stairs by a servant, closely followed by the clerk, who distinctly recollected that he staggered more than once, and seemed to cling to the balusters. When they reached the bedroom door, he caught hold of the clerk's arm, and visibly trembled. But, sir," continued he, "as we passed the door, Mr. M'Ilvar let go my arm, and seemed, as it were, to push me from him, and walked straight up to the bedside. The room was very much darkened, so that at first I could scarcely distinguish the figure of the sick man under a heap of bed-clothes. Mr. M'Ilvar pulled away the clothes. 'There is no sickness here,' says he. 'Sit up.' I never heard such a deep, fearful voice as he spoke in. The man raised himself in the bed, looking greatly bewildered; and his master, who had been hidden by the curtains, rose hastily, and faced us on the opposite side of the bed. 'Ask your questions, sir,' said he, 'and the man will answer. He admits that he signed'—— Mr. M'Ilvar took no heed of him. 'Sit up, and give me the deed; it is under your pillow—it is under your head;' and he plunged his hand within the bed-clothes, and drew forth a parchment from beneath the bolster. The pretended sick man sat up shaking and helpless, and did nothing to prevent him. The master made a snatch at it over the bed, saying something very violently that I forgot; but Mr. M'Ilvar thrust the paper into his bosom, saying: 'If I do not hear from you, you will hear from me;' and he turned round, and went straight out of the room, and down stairs, and out of the house, and I after him, as it were in a dream. He never spoke to me a word about it, but sure enough there was the very deed; and the poor lady got her own."

"And what followed? Were the servant and his master punished?"

"I heard little of the *denouement*. The widow wished the matter to be kept secret. It was believed that the nephew was as much surprised as any one at the discovery of the deed, which he fully believed had been destroyed by the man, who had contrived to gain possession of it during his late master's illness."

"Well," said I, after a pause, "the story does not satisfy me; there are several points in it that I should like to have explained."

"So should I," answered Mr. Davis. "I have made one or two trials, by alluding to the matter to Mac himself, but he cut me very short. He said it was certainly a remarkable case, but important papers supposed to be lost had not unfrequently been discovered by some curious circumstance or coincidence; and he had such a troubled look in his face, that I did not like to press the subject."

"My opinion is," said I stoutly, "that Mr. M'Ilvar had gained some private knowledge of the facts, which he thought to startle the man into confessing; and that much of the mystification arose from the Scotch clerk's dreams of second-sight, and the hereditary gifts connected with it attributed to the M'Ilvar family."

Here both my pupils broke out into exclamations at my attempt to deprive the story of its mysterious charm, and the conversation soon turned into another channel. After we left the gentlemen, the girls were full of what they had heard of this Mac of mystery. I had only seen him carried through the hall amid pillows and blankets, and I could not, therefore, satisfy their curiosity as to his personal appearance. Janet, who had a romantic tendency, felt confident that he was tall, thin, pale, and interesting, with black hair, a Roman nose, and wild, flashing, dark eyes. Ellen fully agreed in the brightness and wildness of the eyes, but she asserted that they ought to be blue, the nose Grecian, and the hair auburn, wavy, thick, and flowing. Next day, the hero himself appeared in the drawing-room before dinner: a little fair man, with a very commonplace sort of nose, small, light, but very quick and intelligent eyes, and hair weak, scant, and decidedly sandy. He had, however, a most agreeable smile and manner of speaking, and in a few minutes we were all listening with great amusement to his account of their accident, and of his friend's driving, to which alone, he protested, it was to be attributed. He mimicked the country people who came to their assistance, and described his own heroism, active and passive, with so much cleverness and real drollery, that we could do nothing but listen and laugh. During the dinner, he was the life of the party, clever, full of ancedote, talking much, yet never obtrusively, so that he pleased all his companions; and the girls went to bed that night fully persuaded that the world did not contain any other mortal half so delightful.

This pleasant intercourse continued for several days; we got more and more intimate and attracted by the guests to whom chance had introduced us: consequently, when they began to talk of continuing their travels, every voice was loud in opposition; and one day after dinner Captain Sinclair entreated them not to utter another word of the kind till Mr. M'Ilvar had quite recovered the use of his arm.

"At all events, before we go," said Mr. Davis, "I want very much to see the whole of this most extraordinary jumble of buildings called Greyfriars You must know I have a spice both of the architect and the antiquary in me, and I have paced round and round four courts and quadrangles, and peeped into so many queer little windows and loopholes, that I quite long to get better acquainted with all the old passages and chambers within."

"You must see the kitchen and the chapel, Mr. Davis," said I; "they are considered the great sights of the place, and the only ones, I believe, really worth seeing."

"Grace before meat," observed Mr. M'Ilvar. "You should say the chapel and the kitchen."

"You can see them this evening—in five minutes, if you please," said Capt. Sinclair. "As for the parts of the abbey that have been long shut up, I doubt if the old housekeeper herself, who has lived here at least half a century, could find keys enough to take you over them. I, at least, have never attempted such a journey."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Mr. M'Ilvar. "Well, if I lived here, I should never rest till I explored every corner and cranny. I have not heard half enough about the place; surely there must be haunted rooms, secret passages, sliding panels, and all sorts of mysteries. I am certain Charles II. was concealed here somewhere or other: they show his hiding-place at Dunster, not very distant hence. History retains no record of his refuge there, and why should he not have been sheltered by Dightons as well as Luttrells."

"Well, Mr. M'Ilvar," said I, "you are not far wrong in some of your conjectures. There is a secret chamber somewhere in the abbey; is there not, Captain Sinclair?"

"Yes, I have heard of something of the sort," he answered; "but you cannot very well see it, if there is, as no one now living knows where to find it."

"No?" said both gentlemen in a breath.

"Positively no," he replied. "My wife would, I suppose, be the sole possessor of the secret, if Sir Thomas had not died so suddenly. It is well known in this neighbourhood that at least one, perhaps two or more concealed apartments exist in the abbey. The tradition goes, that each proprietor of the estate has had the secret revealed to him by his predecessor, under a solemn oath of the profoundest secrecy, and that he in like manner is bound to confide it to his heir under the same restrictions; but although the property was settled on Lady Dighton, Sir Thomas never spoke on the subject to her."

"I doubt if the rooms have any real existence," said I.

"Why, I really believe there is some truth in the story," answered Captain Sinclair. "One of the farmers in the neighbourhood told me that his father well remembered a great hue and cry in the country in the Pretender's time about several persons who, it was said, were traced to the abbey. A strict search was made after them in every part of the building, and the place was watched by a detachment of military for a fortnight or three weeks afterwards. But no one either within or without the walls could discover a trace of the strangers. My informant, however, declared that some time after the search had been given up as hopeless, his father one night saw several persons, apparently gentlemen, leave the precincts of the abbey, and hastening to the shore, embark in a boat, which made towards a vessle that had been observed all day in the offing. My acquaintance was out on a little private smuggling concern of his own, and had to hide from the party in a hole in the cliff, whither he went to fetch a keg of brandy. He was certain that he saw Sir Ralph Dighton, the then owner of the abbey, accompany these persons to the shore, take leave of them there, and after watching the departure of the boat, return to Greyfriars."

"And have you never tried to find these rooms?"

"Dalton our rector has searched for them over and over again; he has taken plans of the older parts of the abbey, where they must be, if anywhere; he has made all manner of measurements and calculations of dimensions inside and outside——"

"And with no success?"

"Not the slightest."

"Well, I would never rest till I found them," persevered Mr. M'Ilvar.

"And for what use or purpose?" answered quiet Captain Sinclair. "I believe there are two or three hundred accessible rooms in the abbey; what earthly good would there be in adding one or two more to the number?—no doubt, as old, as awkward, and as inconvenient as any of the others."

No one attempted to controvert this sober reasoning, and we all started in high spirits to show our guests the most curious parts of the abbey, little dreaming that another hour would produce the first links of a chain of events entailing heavy misfortunes on our kind and easy host.

First of all, we visited the kitchen, little changed in appearance since it provided for more than a hundred monks and retainers. I believe that almost as many persons were fed from it at that present time. The servants of the household were very numerous, and they had a flock of helpers of various kinds from the village. The housekeeper was elderly and heavy, and easy tempered; no one restraind her, and she restraind no one; and in the enormous old chimney a fire was always blazing, not much inferior, I should think, to that which burned there in the days of the mitred abbots.

We were not sorry to leave the broiling atmosphere for the chapel, which, with the kitchens, formed an entire side of the principal quadrangle of the abbey. There was much here to interest two men of superior education and refined tastes. Some of the carvings were very beautiful, but everything looked neglected and hastening to ruin. At the west end of the building, opposite the altar, and above the door by which we had entered, was the abbot's gallery, as it was called. It ran along the whole width of that end of the chapel which it completely overlooked, and at either extremity was space sufficient to hold one or two persons, screened from observation by a richly carved wooden framework. Here it was said the superior could sit, and overlook the proceedings of the monks without being himself seen. In the back of the abbot's gallery was a door communicating with his own apartments in the abbey, and it was reached from the chapel by a curious little winding to a low door above.

We were all wandering about, calling to each other to notice different parts of the building, when I observed Mr. M'Ilvar leaning against a pillar at the west end of the chapel, seemingly lost in thought. Presently I saw him ascend the little staircase I have just mentioned, and passing through the door above, he disappeared from my sight I looked for him in the open portion of the abbot's gallery, but did not see him, and some one speaking to me at the moment, I thought no more of the matter till we were about to leave the chapel, when Mr. Davis calling out to know where Mac had hidden himself.

"I saw him go up the abbot's stair," said I.

"I do not see him in the gallery," he answered; and began again to call after him, but there was no answer.

"He must have gone into the abbey by the passage," said one of the girls.

Captain Sinclair and I instinctively looked at each other; and I saw that like myself, he was thinking of the close communication between that passage and Lady Dighton's apartments. Without saying anything, he began to go quickly up the stairs, and in a moment appeared in the gallery.

"Davis," said he, "come hither; the poor fellow is ill; he is in a fit, or has fainted, or something."

Mr. Davis ran up hastily, and remembering that I had salts in my pocket, I followed him. The gentleman raised him up; he was deadly pale, and evidently quite insensible, but his eyes were staring wide open, and he was very fearful to look upon. "We must carry him into the abbey," said Captain Sinclair, and between them they began lifting him along the passage, when Lady Dighton opened the door of her sitting-room by which they were passing, and asked the reason of the unusual sounds so near her apartments.

It was soon explained to her. Of course she had heard of our guests, though she had never seen them, and now, with all the courtesy she could at times display, she insisted on the sick man being brought into her room and laid upon the sofa. I put the salts to his nose, and their pungency seemed to revive him. He raised his head, and looked wildly around him. He was ghastly pale, and apparently unable to speak; his eyes glared vacantly on the surrounding objects, and at length fixed on Lady Dighton, while a strange expression began to appear in his countenance "I am unknown to your friend, which I ought not to be," said she smiling to Mr. Davis; "but I am a sad invalid, and every one humours and excuses me. You, too, I hope,' she continued, turning to Mr. M'Ilvar, and looking more gentle and handsome than I had ever seen her, as she made a step or two towards him—"you, too, I hope"—She stopped abruptly, and imagine our astonishment when we saw him vehemently stretch forth his arms, with the hands widely expanded towards her, as if to thrust her from him: "Stand off!—away! away," he cried. She paused, and we all looked at each other in amazement. "Away!" he repeated more faintly, but with the same expression of repugnance and disgust. Poor bewildered Mr. Davis then seized him by the arm, saying: "We must get him to his own room." Captain Sinclair, in confusion and dismay, immediately seized the other arm, and said he would show them the way. They left the room, and so did I, scarcely knowing that I did so. The effect of this strange behaviour on Lady Dighton, I never knew. It was not till I had been some little time in my own chamber that it occurred to me that I ought not to have left her alone after so strange an occurrence: but it was done, and could not be helped. The children had not followed us to the abbot's gallery, but had quitted the chapel by the usual entrance.

When Mr. Davis rejoined us at the tea-table he looked greatly troubled; nevertheless, he gave a good report of his friend, who, he said, had recovered from his attack, but, as he seemed weak and nervous, he had persuaded him to go to bed. He did not attempt any explanation of his conduct towards Lady Dighton, nor even allude to it. After tea, he returned to M'Ilvar, and did not come back to us till we were about to separate for the night. As I passed along one of the passages leading to my bedchamber, I heard a slight noise behind me, and turning round, saw Mr. Davis on tiptoe quickly following me.

"Miss Vernon," said he in a whisper, "could you oblige me by coming into the garden without your pupil before breakfast? I earnestly wish to have a few moments' conversation with you. Pray, come, if you possibly can; it will be a great favour to me."

"Certainly," I answered, in considerable surprise; then, after an instant's thought, I added: "I will be on the bench in the grove as soon after seven as I can."

"Thank you, thank you," said he, very earnestly, and we parted. The circumstances of this short interview impressed me so much, that I wrote down before I slept everything that had occurred since Mr. M'Ilvar's illness in the chapel; afterwards, strange events followed in such quick succession, that I continued to record at night the particulars of each day, so that I am entitled to give a faithful, though perhaps abrupt and irregular outline of this brief but fearful episode in my hitherto common-place life.

(To be continued.)

A Good Cow.—We copy from the "New England Farmer" the following account of the product of a cow owned in New Hampshire. It shows extraordinary productiveness such as is not often reached in any section of the country. It was attained, too, without any extraordinary expense for food:

"As several have given the results of products of cows and growth of calves, I will try my hand at it. My cow dropped her calf January 30, 1864. I commenced saving milk February 5, 1862, she being farrow, we made 366 lbs. of butter. We used a quart of milk a day in the family. The skim milk was given to the calf two months, then one-half of it one month more, mixed with 75 cents worth of fine feed made into porridge, and then grass, up to her eyes in clover. Since the calf came to the barn, she has had good hay and three cents' worth of waste of the flour mill, per day. The calf is now 15 months old, girths 5 ft. 3 in., and is 5 ft. 9 in. from roots of horn to rump.

"The skim milk from April to October 27 was given to a pig one month old, weighing 14 pounds, and cost $3. When dressed October 27, he weighed 302 pounds. The cow had good feed in summer, and about two cents' worth of waste per day, and since she came to the barn, foddering three times a day of corn stalks or hay, about four cents' worth of waste.

Weak Faith.—A venerable clergyman of whom we know, is accustomed to pray very specifically. Lately asking for the total overthrow of the rebels, he said: "We acknowledge the weakness of our faith when we ask for their repentance."—*Providence Journal.*

The self-examining society has proposed the following queries to all people about this financial period: 1. Does it cost anything to print a newspaper? 2. How long can a printer afford to furnish a paper without pay? 3. Do printers eat, drink, and wear clothing? 4. If they do, do they get it? 5. Do you owe for your paper? 6. Is not this particular period a first-rate time to "pay up?"