

AUBREY DE VERE.



AUBREY de Vere has made himself known to lovers of literature by his labors in both prose and poetry, but chiefly through the latter. He is sprung from a family, long resident in Ireland, of the old Norman stock, and derived from his father, Sir Aubrey de Vere, the friend of Wordsworth, a predisposition to verse; nor are the few stirring sonnets and the dramas of his father yet forgotten, though obscured by the splendor of the great poetic age in which he lived. Another son, Sir Stephen, the present baronet, has shown a share of the family gift both in original verse and in a recent translation of Horace, undertaken as a diversion of old age; but he is better known for the important service he performed in securing proper regulations for emigrant ships in the middle of the century. The family has been loyal to Ireland, and a large part of Aubrey de Vere's verse is devoted to the celebration of the historical and mythic legends, the piety, humanity, and sorrow of his own land. He belongs to the generation of Tennyson, having been born in 1814, but the voice in his verse is that of the "large language,"—of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley,—and echoes with an earlier day whose song has long fallen silent in our books; and there mingles with this strain of our most noble modern English speech the indefinable melody and the simple and spirited quality which seem indigenous to all Irish poetry.

Here, however, it is not meant to describe or praise his verse, but only to pay some brief tribute to the man, as we print his portrait, and to the life he has led in self-devotion to high and humane ends, in scenes and among men that make his reminiscences of unusual and lasting value, as is illustrated by the fragments of them that are given in these pages. As a boy he was the guest of Wordsworth, and the friendships which began with this and other eminent names make a roll of the century in England of astonishing fullness and brilliancy. He became a Roman Catholic in early manhood, at the era of the Oxford movement, and the church has been, perhaps, the chief poetic inspiration granted him. Several of his volumes deal with her legends, glories, and aspirations with an amplitude and a loftiness not elsewhere to be found in our literature, and with a pure fervor such as characterizes only the best of the "books of the spirit" that are so rare in the English tongue. The religious and poetic instincts united to lift his thought into a region almost Platonic, as respects the principles, the abstract motives, and ends of life, as is seen in his essays, which are bathed in a difficult air, while in his poetry the same elements take on an extraordinarily picturesque detail, and an individuality often heroic. The matter exceeds the style, as is inevitable, in all but the greatest, in such themes; but it does not excel the temper—liberal, refined, and lowly—in which it is humanized and made part and parcel of our nature, appealing to its own ideal. Such serious aims the poet certainly has; and if the touch of sympathy be present (and what can there ever be when that is lacking?), he succeeds.

One reads but little, however, in these "Recollections" without discovering a strongly marked personality, wholly apart from those "ideas" which his other works chiefly seek to illumine. The kindly nature; the strong sense of humor; the mind laboriously just in thought, and delicate, while frank, in appreciation; the cheerful enjoyment of varied life; the piety toward friends as well as toward heaven, and much else, will now for the first time, as here familiarly revealed, aid those who have enjoyed his very impersonal prose and verse to make near acquaintance with the man who has won their regard; and they will follow the completion of his work with more than friendly interest.

G. E. W.





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DANIEL O'CONNELL.

RECOLLECTIONS OF AUBREY DE VERE.

CHILDHOOD AND BOYHOOD.

MY earliest recollections are of our Irish home, Curragh Chase, and I always see it bathed as in summer sunshine. It was not once, however, as it is now. At the bottom of the lawn there now spreads a lake, but at that time it was rich meadow-land, divided by a slender stream, with fair green hills beyond. The pleasure-ground now blends insensibly with the lawns and woods; but it had then a wall around it, which, as my father's old friend and school-fellow, Sir Thomas Acland, said on

visiting us, when both had left youth behind, gave it a look of monastic seclusion. It was then divided into four grassy spaces, as smooth as velvet, and bright with many a flower-bed. I can still see the deer park, and the deer bounding from brake to brake of low-spreading oak and birch; the gathering of the poor on Sunday evenings at the gates of the long ash avenue for their rural dance; and the gay, though half bashful, confidence with which some rosy pretty peasant girl would advance, and drop a courtesy before one of our party, or some visitor at the "big house," that courtesy being an invitation

to dance. There was also a little open in the woods in which the neighbors danced; nor have I yet forgotten the vexation with which I found myself once snatched up and carried home to bed by one of those "merry maids whose tresses tossed in light," and who lost little time in returning to the revel.

It was a time at which opposites of all sorts oddly combined. The country-gentlemen were then looked up to as so many little princes, and the poor would have gladly adopted them as chiefs, like those of old, had they cared to accept that position; yet there was great familiarity in the intercourse of classes. It was all strangely mixed with simplicity of life. My grandmother drove about the park with her four grays and an outrider, while my father, with whom she lived, had his four blacks and an outrider; yet dinner, which was at five o'clock, would have been far from satisfactory to a diner-out of the present day. What a stranger would have thought ostentation was often a necessity, for the roads were generally carried over high hills. I well remember my grandmother's beautiful but melancholy black eyes, her ways at once authoritative and affectionate, and the reverence with which she was regarded by all. Nor have I forgotten her good-night to us children: "God bless you, child, and make a good man of you"; nor the loud laugh once when the youngest of us, not to be outdone in civility, responded, "God bless you, grandmother, and make a good woman of you."

We cared less for my grandfather, for though Curragh Chase, his chief residence, had always been our home, he lived much elsewhere. He was regarded as a man of remarkable ability, which he seldom turned to serious purpose. That ability was early marked, and Lord Shelburne, then high in office, when on a visit at our house, was so much struck by the boy that he turned to his father, and said: "Place that boy in my hands! I will give him a political education, get him into parliament on his coming of age, and he will turn out a great man—" an offer which was not accepted, and accordingly the boy was brought up to be an Irish squire, at a time when England may have "expected every man to do his duty," and Ireland expected every man to do, possibly some other man's duty, but, in any case, whatever amused him—ride well, stand by a friend, say good things, and fight duels.

In those days a duel was the most mirthful of pastimes, and in Dublin there still remains a tradition of two lawyers,—one the biggest, and the other the smallest, man in Irish society,—who met in the Phoenix Park, just after sunrise, to indulge in that amusement. As they approached each other, the big man set his glass to his eye,

and exclaimed: "But where is my honorable opponent? For I really cannot see him."

"What 's that he 's saying?" demanded the little man.

"I just remarked," replied the big man, "that I am so large that if you miss me, you are like the man who, when he took aim at the parish church, never succeeded in hitting the parish."

"What is that big 'Golumbus' of a man babbling about?" was his small antagonist's rejoinder. "That I can't miss him, and he cannot see me? Let his second get a bit of white chalk, and draw my exact size and shape on that huge carcass of his; and any bullet of mine that hits outside that white line shall not count."

My grandfather had no taste for duels. At a great public dinner, among the "healths" proposed was that of Lord Castlereagh, to whom my grandfather, then a member of the Irish parliament, was known to have a special aversion. All looked toward his seat, wondering how he would meet the dilemma; for the refusal to drink to a toast could then be expiated only by a duel. The glasses filled, he was the first to rise; he lifted his own, and said: "Here 's to the health of my Lord Castlereagh!" adding, with a significant expression of face, "the Lord be troublesome to him!"

My grandfather always gave the sagest advice to a friend, but generally acted himself from whim. Once when walking in a London street, he passed a room in which an auction was going on, and, attracted by the noise, entered it. The property set up for auction was the Island of Lundy in the Bristol Channel. He knew nothing whatsoever about it, but when the auctioneer proclaimed that it had never paid either tax or tithe, that it acknowledged neither king nor parliament, nor law civil or ecclesiastical, and that its proprietor was pope and emperor at once in his own scanty domain, he made a bid, and the island was knocked down to him. It turned out a good speculation. It paid its cost by the sale of rabbits; and whenever its purchaser chanced to have picked a quarrel with England and Ireland at the same time, it was a hermitage to which he could always retire and meditate. He planted there a small Irish colony, and drew up for them a very compendious code, including a quaint law of divorce in case of matrimonial disputes. In money matters he was adventurous and unlucky. He lost about £15,000 by cards, and then renounced them. He is said to have also lost about half the family property through some trivial offense given to his father. In other matters he was more fortunate. During the war he raised two regiments consisting of the sons of farmers, his own tenants and those of his neighbors, and bestowed a captain's commis-

sion on his only son, then a boy of five. I remember my father describing the pride with which he strutted about in his scarlet uniform, when the general rode out to review these regiments. "But where is the captain?" exclaimed the veteran. "Here I am," shouted the child. "But, my little man, you are too young to fight!" "Not at all," was the answer: "let the French land, and" — waving his sword in the air — "I will cut off their heads!" Alas! the hard-hearted Englishman "disbanded the captain," as the poor people described his act, and the youthful warrior lost forever the opportunity of humbling that "Corsican adventurer" who had called England a "nation of shopkeepers" and affirmed that the lions on her standard were only leopards.

My grandfather was the most popular of our country-gentlemen, because he had a great love for the poor, and always helped them at a pinch. A very old tenant once told me many stories illustrating this side of his character. Here is one of them. A young man was tried for murder, having killed a member of a rival faction in a faction-fight. The judge, reluctant to sentence him to death on account of his youth, turned to him and said: "Is there any one in court who could speak as to your character?" The youth looked round the court, and then said sadly, "There is no man here, my lord, that I know." At that my grandfather chanced to walk into the grand-jury gallery. He saw at once how matters stood. He called out, "You are a queer boy that don't know a friend when you see him!" The boy was quick-witted; he answered, "Oh, then, 't is myself that is proud to see your honor here this day!" "Well," said the judge, "Sir Vere, since you know that boy, will you tell us what you know of him?" "I will, my lord," said my grandfather; "and what I can tell you is this — that from the very first day that ever I saw him to this minute, I never knew anything of him that was not very good." The old tenant ended his tale by striking his hands together and exclaiming, "And he never to have clapped his eye upon the boy till that minute!" The boy escaped being hanged. Such traits make a man popular in Ireland; and it is said that at his funeral the keening (funeral wail) for many a mile was such as had rarely been heard. Not long ago I came upon a letter from an English minister of the day, informing him that the patent for his peerage, an English one, was ready. It seems, however, that at the last moment he changed his mind and declined it. Possibly there was some one to whom "he would not give so much satisfaction" as that of seeing him take a peerage.

The poorer class in those days seldom wore shoes or stockings. That they did not count a

hardship. On the contrary, they found these appendages irksome; and at a later time often carried their shoes in their hands till near a town. Many of their houses were but hovels without chimneys or windows. The real patience, or rather cheerfulness, with which such hardships were borne should be recollected by such as justly complain of more recent violences committed in retaliation for imaginary wrongs. At that time the mass of the people spoke Irish, not English, habitually. They did not read; and if they had read they would have found no publications that preached Jacobinism. They were faithful, notwithstanding, to their political traditions. No one could keep an orange lily in the garden, though planted by known enemies of the Orange party. It was sure to be thrown over the wall, while we were informed that there were some "bad mimbers" in the neighborhood whom no vigilance could keep from stealing. We had at one time an excellent gardener, but he was an Orangeman from the "Black North." He had brought with him a big blunderbuss for the pacification of the South; and he boasted much of its capabilities. One night a number of men with blackened faces burst open the window of his bedroom, which was on the ground floor. The family were then in England, except two young lady relatives. One of them hid in a garret, the other made her appearance on the field of action, attended only by two maids, without fear and without cause for fear. The men listened to her rebuke with respect, and spared the life of the Orange gardener, after making him, however, swear to return forthwith to the North. They took away his blunderbuss, but a few days later wrote a letter stating that it would be found under a particular tree; and there it was found.

The extreme poverty here described will suggest the thought that the proprietor class had been very remiss in the discharge of their duties. That charge would be only partly true. They did not feel that poverty as much as they ought to have felt it; but neither did the Irish poor themselves, in ordinary times. The penal laws were still sufficiently recent to live on in their consequences; and one of these was, as Edmund Burke affirmed, a legislative mandate, "Thou shalt not improve." In prohibiting property to the mass of the people they had proscribed industry; but they could not prevent early marriages; and the consequence was that between the huge population and the scanty means of support there existed no proportion. The problem had become too vast to be solved by any efforts of individual proprietors, had they been ever so dutiful, able, and wealthy. The farms were too small for scientific cultivation; and if they had been consolidated, multitudes

must have been deprived of all support. The farms were not, it is true, laid out for cultivation at the landlord's cost, as in England; but if they had been, wherever competition for land existed, those improvements must have been paid for by a rent proportionately increased, as in England. Neither the proprietor nor tenant possessed the capital necessary for such improvements; but the poor man's capital was his labor, and the system which grew up in Ireland was the best at that time, not only for the landlord, but even more for the tenant, because he had thus his earnings at once as a farmer and as a laborer. Again, the laborer's pay was deplorably low; but the work given for it was proportionately low. That arrangement also grew naturally out of the circumstances of the country. If the rate of wages had been higher, the labor would then have been unproductive; and half the laborers must have been thrown out of employment, since even at a low rate of wages there was not work for the laborer for more than half the week. The low rate of wages simply distributed a small labor-fund among a large number of half-laborers. A philanthropist who doubled the rate of wages would only have increased the evil in the long run: for he would have drawn in upon a small neighborhood a double population with an artificial and therefore ephemeral support. Eventually the Irish population, wholly unemployed during a large portion of the year, was reckoned at two millions. A remedy for all this was indeed most necessary, but it did not rest with the individual proprietor, but with the state. It must have begun with a vast system of state-aided emigration to the colonies, where large aids both before and after their arrival should have been provided for the early settlers. The work would have been costly; but "these are heroic works and worthy kings." Ireland had early done what unaided energy could do in the way of emigration; but the effort was wholly insufficient, while also attended by needless suffering and a scant reward at best. Such state aid was a debt of honor on the part of the state; but the impulse thus given to the growth of her colonies, and the extension of her markets, would have eventually repaid that cost, a large proportion of which might have been justly charged upon the Irish property thus rendered capable of indefinite improvement. The land-laws in Ireland would have worked as they did in England when the pre-condition had been fulfilled, that is, a state of things substantially similar in the two countries. But this would have demanded assisted emigration, and such aid to industrial enterprises at home as the legislation of past times had rendered necessary.

The disproportion between the vast population and the slender means for their support

continued to increase year by year; I remember hearing in my boyhood my father frequently lamenting the blindness of statesmen who paid no serious attention to it. His political predictions generally turned out true. "We sit in a boat the gunwale of which is nearly level with the water," he used to say. "How will it be when the waves rise?" The waves rose in the famine of 1847-50, and his words recurred to me. They would have been heard often and far if he had had a parliamentary career. Unluckily, he stumbled at its threshold. He stood as a candidate for his county at the election of, I think, 1820. At that time to represent a county was a great distinction, and one sometimes sought from lower motives. My father stood for his county because he wished to benefit his country. But he stood a week too late; and the clouds of letters sent daily to the post were often answered by regrets that the votes of the writers had not been asked until they had been promised to another. Elections then lasted for a fortnight in Ireland, and were times of fierce excitement, though politics had little to do with it; for as Mr. Manners Sutton, when Speaker of the House of Commons, said to an Irish member, "Your country has no politics." At that time tenants invariably voted with their landlords,—it was an immemorial right,—and the story went that one night when an unpopular landlord had locked up forty of his tenants in a barn close to the town where an election was held, a discussion arose among them as to the expediency, not of voting against him, but of hanging themselves from the rafters to spite him the next morning when he unlocked the door. My father was strongly in favor of Catholic Emancipation, and was popular among the poor. He was popular also among the country-gentlemen. Every day the excitement increased; every road and every street, as we drove about, resounded with party cries, and I remember seeing quite a little boy waving his cap round his head, and shouting, "Long live Sir Aubrey, and long die Colonel O'Grady!"—the rival candidate. I can also remember being frightened by hearing that if my father were beaten it would be by the votes of "dead men"—that meant, of deceased freeholders whose names remained accidentally on the registry lists, and who were personated by impostors. During the last few days of the election the race was a neck-and-neck one. At last it was decided after an odd fashion. A country-gentleman with whom my father had always been on the friendliest terms, and who had waited for the last day of the polling in order to impart a more emphatic character to his proceeding, rode into Limerick at the head of his numerous tenantry, and voted against him! Between the two there had never been a cool-

ness; but many years before he had had a quarrel with my father's uncle, the Earl of Limerick; he had vowed revenge, and the opportunity had come. My father was a man of great magnanimity, and never resented injuries. Somebody once said of him, "Others forgive injuries, but he entirely forgets them, and that very soon." His conduct to the friend who had thus deprived him of a political career illustrated the old saying, "It takes two to quarrel." The intercourse between the families continued as before. Our vindictive neighbor was a friendly man when not crossed, having high breeding and great abilities; though, being, like most Irish gentlemen, without ambition, he never turned them to account. I remember his walking up and down our library years afterward, with his hands locked together behind his back, his head bent low before him, and his long, white hair streaming back over his shoulders, and hearing him say: "It is a great thing to be able to look back on a long life, and record, as I can, that never once did any man injure me but sooner or later I had my revenge." What he thus recorded he certainly regarded as a merit. An evil tradition had generated a "false conscience." He was like an Indian chief who had never forsaken a friend, or complained of a pang, or left a scalp on the head of an enemy of his tribe.

That disastrous vindictiveness is often found in races whose sympathies are no less keen, but who have only half emerged from an early stage of civilization; and it may then be combined with the most sensitive heart, and the strongest spirit of self-sacrifice. It is the barbaric element surviving in a society in which the Christian element may also be strong in many hearts, but into which the conventional ingredient of civilization has not yet entered. In Ireland the faction-fights then so common witnessed to the intensity of a perverted fidelity. They were regarded as a just retribution avenging a wrong inflicted perhaps a century before. Neither the civil nor the ecclesiastical power could restrain them. I remember a good old priest describing one of these faction-fights to me. When the day appointed for the terrible periodic rite had arrived, the two factions met at the place usually set apart for it, and stood face to face with a considerable space between them. The priest rode along the line dismounted, knelt down, lifted his hands, and solemnly adjured both factions, in the name of God, to depart, and not imbrue their native land with the blood of brothers. They thanked him with great reverence, and then requested him, as he had acquitted himself of his duty, to take his departure. He mounted, and rode to the top of an adjoining hill, on which was stationed a considerable body of cavalry and several ma-

gistrates, one of whom, a venerable old man, beckoned him to his carriage-window, and said to him with great agitation, "Sir, this is a dreadful sight!" "I pitied him," said the priest to me, "and desired him not to take on in that way, since there was no help for it." Then the two factions raised a great shout, and met in the middle space; the next moment the cavalry charged down the hill, and rode right over both.

I remember a touching incident in connection with the faction-fights. While the agitation for repeal was going on, O'Connell, both on religious and political grounds, made a great attempt to put them down, for he was quite sincere in his frequent assertion that "he who commits a crime is the enemy of his country." With the aid of the Catholic clergy he induced the rival factions in many parts of Ireland to meet at their parish church, renounce their ancient enmities, and shake hands. A relative of mine then traveling through the country observed a great crowd around a village church. He got out of his carriage, and entered the church. It was a "reconciliation" meeting. Two old gray-haired men, leaders of two rival factions, advanced slowly, with several halts, from the opposite ends of the church to the middle; stood there silent, face to face, and at last shook hands. The next moment one of them dashed himself down on the stone pavement, and cried aloud, "O my son, my murdered son! I have clasped the hand that shed the last drop of thy blood!"

The earliest political event which I remember is the death of King George III. We children were all great loyalists; on this occasion we were put into mourning, and I believe that our grief on that occasion was very real, though not very lasting. Soon afterward we migrated to Mount Treachard, the residence of my maternal grandmother, on the banks of the Shannon. Many a day was spent sailing in a little open boat, with three masts, and four sails, now by the ivied cliff and fair wooded shores of Cahircon, now among the islands at the mouth of the Fergas, now beneath the heathy hills that overhang Foynes. I well recollect my father's characteristic remark on the far nobler view we should have had if only on one of those hills there had chanced to stand another castle like "Shanet," a ruined keep of the Desmonds, which crowned an eminence a few miles inland. He pointed also to Knock-Patrick, and told us how from its summit Ireland's great apostle had sent his benediction over all the lands to the south and west. Sometimes we made our way down the river, past Glin, Tarbert, and Kilrush, saw near its mouth the island of Scatterry, the lonely hermitage of St. Lenanus, and the long line of Ballibunion's

cliffs, with their submarine palace of caves, the sound of which, after a storm, was heard, in one wind, thirty miles off. I have never since felt anything like that terrible sense of loneliness which penetrated my whole being the evening of our arrival, when I was left for an hour alone, and looked westward over "the spacious Shannon spreading like a sea," and diversified only by a few black-sailed turf-boats far apart.

The next year we went to England. We traveled in a very large old family-coach with our own four horses. It took us four days to reach Dublin, and twice as many more to reach London. On the second evening, at Maryborough, we were informed that we should have an interesting sight the next morning at breakfast, as a man was then to be hanged on a platform just opposite our windows. We started accordingly an hour earlier than had been intended. Steamboats were then in a very early stage of their existence, and seven hours were dolorously spent before we landed at Holyhead. The slow rate at which we traveled showed us, however, many fair sights which the traveler now misses. I remember vividly the interest with which we saw King George IV. drawn by six cream-colored horses in his state coach, with the Duke of York beside him, and the Duke of Wellington opposite, on the occasion of a dissolution of Parliament. I remember no less, as in duty bound, our French governess, who told me, then eight years old, that I should never forget her, because she had taught me to write. She had, I believe, but one fault, viz., that, though not pretty, her manners were so perfect, and she was at once so brilliant and so "spiritual," that at evening parties she attracted more attention than any other lady in the room. She was an ardent Bonapartist, and her sister had married a brother of the Emperor Napoleon. At one time there was on a visit to us a young French lady, an equally ardent Legitimist, and I used to hear people marvel at the skill with which in their passages of arms the two politicians united the extreme of politeness with sarcastic bitterness.

During our residence in London my father published his first drama, "Julian the Apostate," and also his second, "The Duke of Mercia," both of which were highly praised in the periodicals, though neither had a large circulation. No poet was then popular except Byron, who must have deprived the world of as much poetry as he ever produced. I remember asking my father whether Byron or Scott was the greater man, and his answering, "Scott — because he is as great, and he is a good man also."

We passed a delightful summer on Richmond Hill, in a house then adjoining the "Star and

Garter." It was there, released from the streets, that I first felt the delight which comes to us from beautiful scenery, though Richmond lacked the nobler mountain range of Galtymore (Spenser's "Old Father Mole"), which raised the scenes amid which I had passed my earlier childhood to a higher order of beauty. We daily watched the sunsets from Richmond Terrace, with the Thames, reddened but glassy still, winding away among leagues of rich lowlands, "a haunt of ancient peace"; the hedge-rows trees crowding so closely together that, at a distance, the rich pasture-lands and stately homes embosomed in them seemed destined to be reabsorbed into that primeval forest which still waged a peaceful war with that "sweet enemy," modern civilization. Still more charming to my imagination were the long avenues and solemn groves of Ham House, within whose inclosure the venerable mansion looked content to stand half-hidden and guarded by its grim iron gates. I did not associate it with the historical events which it records, but with a German fairy-tale about a witch whose delight was to entice young lovers into her forest, then change them into birds, and hang them up in the cages that lined the corridors of her palace prison. Every year I revisit those scenes, and wonder at the recollection that our parents, with whom we first enjoyed them, seemed then to us to be elderly persons. They had not reached one half the ordinary life of man, for they had married at eighteen and seventeen.

Next summer was passed by us in a place called Ruxley near the village of Esher. It had a small but lovely lawn, in the middle of which stood two venerable cedar-trees; beyond it was a wood, and on the other side a common on which we played cricket. In the neighborhood we visited many beautiful places, especially Hampton Court, with its palatial gardens and priceless cartoons; Bushey Park, with its vast horse-chestnut avenue; Clermont; Kingston; and Boxhill, with its box-trees, in some cases, nearly as large, if I remember aright, as birch-trees. Close to us was a high hill from which we used to fly our kites, instructed in that art by our tutor, William St. George Palissier, the descendant of a French family exiled by the revocation of the Edict of Nantes. He was a very remarkable man, judging him by the impression he made on others as well as by my own recollections. He had a massive intellect, vigorously trained and richly stored; high principles, both moral and religious; a lofty sense of honor; perhaps too much self-confidence, which some would have called self-assertion, for he habitually spoke, though never discourteously, with the tone of a superior. He was a great classical scholar, and well acquainted with the best literature of modern countries,

especially the chief English poets and theologians. In person he was short and thick, with strong features, and a fine forehead, which I remember describing as "bursting with sense," for I had an enthusiastic admiration for him. That sentiment he was very far from reciprocating; for, so slow was I at my Latin for a boy of ten years, that he desired me to discard it altogether, inasmuch as I was an idiot. I asked him what, that being the case, I was to do; to which he replied that I might cultivate the moral faculties, since I had not the intellectual, and also make traceries of maps, laying them level upon glass. I asked next whether the moral faculties or the intellectual were the better; to which he replied that the moral were, seeing that good men took such with them to heaven, whereas the intellectual faculties underwent some strange revolution after death—an answer which entirely contented me. A few weeks afterward my father asked me some questions respecting my studies, and I replied that I had abandoned them all by my tutor's advice on account of being an idiot, and spent my time tracing maps on glass, and cultivating the moral qualities. With this state of things my father was far from being contented, and he told my tutor that the more stupid I was, the more trouble he should have taken with me. My Latin grammar was resumed, and when one day at our historical lesson I repeated to my tutor by heart the speech of Scipio Africanus to Hannibal before the battle of Zama, in place of giving merely the substance of it, he seemed surprised, and confided to me his opinion that possibly I might one day cease to be an idiot. Probably his earlier impression was not far astray, for when I began with arithmetic, several weeks elapsed before I could understand the process of "carrying" at the end of a line of figures in addition. He accompanied us when we returned to Curragh Chase, and there continued to read aloud to us the plays of Shakspeare, as he had previously read them, to our intense delight, at Ruxley. He was a magnificent dramatic reader, and these Shaksperian readings were perhaps the most stimulating part of our education. In about a year more he left us and settled at Carnarvon, a grievous loss to us, as I have always believed. He was careful of our religious instruction after a certain "high and dry" fashion, and constantly inculcated on us rectitude, purpose, and energy, his praise of the last being expressed in the saying, "There are three letters of more value than all the rest in the alphabet, viz., N. R. G." We had many later tutors, but none like him. The best of these was Edward Johnstone, a most kindly, upright, and religious man, who afterward became

a clergyman. He was an ardent admirer of Wordsworth, and the first to point out to me the extraordinary merits of his "Vernal Ode." One of our tutors I remember chiefly from his oddness. He used to ride with me, but never would leap a wall on a Sunday, because, as he remarked, "If I were killed while riding on a Sunday, my friends would not pity me."

Some four or five years after our return to Ireland passed away in a quiet routine of studies, wanderings in the woods, occupation in the garden, in which each of us had a little territory of his own, and pleasant readings aloud in the evening, our book being generally one that combined instruction with amusement, such as travels or biographies, seldom a novel, except when Walter Scott had brightened all the households in the land with another of his delightful romances. Sometimes a speech of Brougham's, Plunket's, or Canning's was read aloud; some of which had passages which strongly moved our youthful imaginations, such as Canning's celebrated boast in connection with his recognition of the independence of the South American republics—"I called a new world into existence to redress the balance of the old." It would have been difficult not to have caught a portion of the enthusiasm with which Canning was at that time spoken of by his friends (while even his enemies often contented themselves with calling him "a splendid Evil"), and of their delight when, on the death of Lord Liverpool, King George IV. reluctantly made him prime minister. On the other hand, the fanatics of the day abhorred him, and all the more for having allied himself with the leading Whigs, and discarded Lord Eldon and the high Tories. Unhappily, he died too soon to carry Catholic Emancipation, which in that case would not have needed to be carried through intimidation, and by statesmen who on principle had always resisted it. When the "Clare Election" was won by O'Connell, my father expressed his certainty that Catholic Emancipation must follow inevitably. It proved so. Before another year had passed (that of 1829), the hills were covered with bonfires celebrating the passing of "The Bill." I was then fifteen, and I well remember climbing to the top of a high pillar on the summit of a hill opposite our house, though how the feat was achieved I cannot conceive, and standing upon it for many minutes, waving a lighted torch round my head in the gathering darkness. Alas! like the concession of "Grattan's Parliament" in 1782, it had been a concession to fear, not to principle; it included, in deference to unworthy prejudices, several provisions of a petty and offensive character; and for forty years it continued to be unaccompanied by that which, thirty years previously, Pitt had perceived to

be its necessary supplement, viz., religious equality. The ancient religious patrimony of Ireland continued to be the endowment of a small minority, and "Protestant Ascendancy" continued to maintain in Ireland a war of religion where otherwise the old war of races would soon have been forgotten.

WHEN Catholic Emancipation was conceded, half the political world thought that Ireland was to become a paradise, and the other half, that she was to become a pandemonium. They were both mistaken; for several years there was no very marked change. In it two antagonistic parties had long been accustomed to quarreling, and when there was nothing to quarrel about, life seemed a little dull, and each of them would have been in sympathy with Paley, who, when the Archbishop of York boasted to him in glowing terms that he and his wife, though married for fifty years, had never had a difference, replied, "Mighty flat, my lord, mighty flat!" Our home life pursued the even tenor of its way. We, the three elder brothers, worked at our classics in the morning, and in the afternoon took a long walk or a long ride, for each of us boasted a horse, though we seldom rode together; and in the evening there was often music, especially when Lord Montague was with us, for he and his sister, my mother, had been used to play duets from Mozart in their youth, he on the flute and she on the pianoforte, and they continued the habit in advanced life. At Christmas we used to visit at Adare Manor. It was a gay as well as a friendly and hospitable house; after dinner we had private theatricals, games of all sorts, dances, and, in the day, pleasant wanderings beside the beautiful Maique, which mirrored in waters that, even when swiftest, seldom lost their transparency as stately a row of elms, ninety feet high, as England herself can boast, and the venerable ruins of a castle which belonged to the Kildares, though islanded, as it were, in a territory almost all the rest of which belonged to the Desmond branch of the same Geraldine race. Adare, then as now a singularly pretty village, had for centuries been a walled town. It had seen many battles, and had been more than once burned down; but it was famous chiefly for the number of its monastic institutions, still represented by the ruins of a Franciscan convent, as well as by one of the Trinitarian, and one of the Augustinian order, the churches of which have been restored, and are now used, one for Catholic, and the other for Protestant worship. The Knights Templars once possessed a house at Adare; but its site cannot now be discovered.

Among our Christmas holidays at Adare there is one which I am not likely ever to for-

get. About eight miles from the village rises a hill eight hundred feet in elevation, with a singularly graceful outline, named "Knockfierna," or the "Hill of the Fairies," because in popular belief it abounded in the "Good People," then universally believed in by the Gaelic race in Ireland. We set off to climb it one day soon after breakfast — *we* meaning my two elder brothers and I, and the son of our host, Lord Adare, afterward well known as Earl of Dunraven, the author of two valuable works, "Memorials of Adare," and an excellent work on Irish antiquities. Two other members of the exploring party were our tutor, and a friend of Adare's several years older than he. It was hard walking, especially after the ascent of the hill began; we had to climb many walls and ditches, and to force our way through many a narrow lane. We had brought no luncheon with us, and before we reached the summit the winter sun had sunk considerably. We walked about the hilltop for some time admiring the view, a very fine one, though, like many Irish views, somewhat dreary, from the comparative absence of trees, the amount of moorland intersected by winding streams, and the number of ruins, many of them modern. All at once we discovered that we were faint with hunger, and so much fatigued that without refreshment we could hardly make our way home. Half-way down the hill stood a farm-house. The farmer was most courteous, but, alas! there was not a morsel of food in his house. What he had he gave, and that was cider, for which, like the Irish peasant of that day, he would take no payment. Each of us drank only one cider-glass of it, and we took our departure, cheered, but by no means invigorated. After we had walked for ten minutes one of us became so sleepy that he could hardly walk, and his nearest neighbor at once gave him an arm. A little later the same complaint was made by another of us, and the same friendly aid was forced upon him. But in a few minutes more not only were we unable to walk, but we were unable to stand, the only exceptions being the two among us who were no longer boys — our tutor and Adare's friend. Never shall I forget their astonishment first, and afterward their vexation. They were in some degree in charge of us, and the responsibility seemed to rest upon them. The Christmas evening was closing around us; there was no help near, and apparently no reason why our sleep should not last till sunrise. They argued, they expostulated, they pushed us, and they pulled us; but all would not do. I was the last to give way; and my last recollection is that my second brother had just succeeded in climbing to the top of a wooden gate, but could not lift his leg over it, and lay upon his face along it. Our tutor stamped

up and down the road indulging largely in his favorite ejaculation, "Gracious patience! gracious patience!" to which my brother replied with his last gleam of wakeful intelligence, "There is one very amiable trait about you, Mr. Johnstone: you are never tired of toasting your absent friends." The next moment he rolled over and slept beside us in the mud. The cider had affected our brains because our stomachs were empty. In about a quarter of an hour the trance was dissolved almost as suddenly as it fell on us: and we walked forward very mirthfully, reaching home just in time to hear the dressing-bell ring. Only one light shone through the mullioned windows of the manor-house; and I remember Adare's remark as we drew near: "Beside that light my little sisters sits weeping. She is sure that I am dead." At dinner we told the story of our adventures, and it excited much laughter. Lord Dunraven "moralized the tale." "You see, young gentlemen, each of you undertook to support and guide his neighbor, though not one of you could take care of himself. That is the way of Ireland. You will help your neighbor best by taking care each of himself." His advice was like that of another old Irish gentleman, a relative of mine, whose "good night" to his grandchildren often ended with this counsel, "Take good care of yourself, child; and your friends will love you all the better."

Lord Dunraven was certainly one of the most sagacious and remarkable of those whom I associated with those old days. He had re-

presented our county in the House of Commons in three successive parliaments, and was by some regarded as the best speaker among the Irish members, though so sensitive was his temperament that to address a board of magistrates or of poor-law guardians was to him a painful effort. It was in conversation, when he forgot that he had an audience, and was only thinking aloud, that his keenness of wit, discriminate selection of language, force, and felicity of illustration, made themselves most felt. He was much given to reflection on practical, not abstract, subjects, and held strong opinions on the ethics of life, which challenged attention all the more because it was never as the preacher or the moralist that he spoke, but as one recording what observation or experience had impressed upon a clear intelligence. I well remember his once saying, while a pale blue eye kindled with conviction: "Some people do wrong because they regard that as a proof of their cleverness. Their cleverness is the cleverness of an old Irish beggar-woman who has dreamed that she found a crock of gold in some particular spot under the wall of a neighboring ruin. She rushes to it, kneels down, and drags at the loose basement with her withered old hands till the stones higher up get loosened, and tumble on her head. Nothing that is wrong is ever a success except for the moment. The nature of things is against it. The man who undertakes the enterprise is contending against a law or a fate that is irresistible."

Aubrey de Vere.

A GENTLEMAN VAGABOND.



FOUND the major standing in front of Delmonico's, interviewing a large, bare-headed personage, in brown cloth spotted with brass buttons. The major was in search of his very particular friend, Mr. John Hardy of Madison Square, and the personage in brown and brass was rather languidly indicating, by a limp and undecisive forefinger, a route through a section of the city which, correctly followed, would have landed the major in the East River.

I knew him by the peculiar slant of his slouch hat, the rosy glow of his face, and the way in which his trousers clung to the curves of his well-developed legs, and ended in a sprawl which

half covered his shoes. I recognized, too, a carpet-bag, a ninety-nine-cent affair, an "occasion," with galvanized iron clasps and paper-leather sides—the kind opened with your thumb.

The major—or, to be more definite, Major Tom Slocomb of Pocomoke—was from one of the lower counties of the Chesapeake. He was supposed to own what remained of a vast colonial estate, situated on an island in the bay, consisting of several thousand acres of land and water,—mostly water,—a manor house, once painted white, and a number of out-buildings in various stages of dilapidation and decay.

In his early penniless life he had migrated from his more northern native State, settled in the county, and, shortly after his arrival, had married the relict of the late lamented Major John Talbot of Pocomoke, greatly to the sur-

RECOLLECTIONS OF AUBREY DE VERE.

II. YOUTH.



ERALD GRIFFIN, a friend of mine in youth, lived about four miles from us in a village called Pallas. He was a man of remarkable genius, and of a character yet more remarkable, though his life was too short to allow either to be recognized widely. He was the youngest of four brothers, whose parents had emigrated to America. As a boy he lived with two brothers, both of them physicians, whose talents and conduct eventually made them eminently successful in their profession; but in early years their career was a struggling one. The boy had a high spirit of independence. He resolved to be no longer a burden to them, to cast himself upon the huge world of London, and there make his way as he might. Knowing that his brothers would not sanction a design apparently so hopeless, he took his departure without an adieu; and for a considerable time they did not know where he was. At first he supported himself by reporting for newspapers, and afterward by writing short dramatic pieces for the small theaters. He could thus, however, win but a precarious existence, and during several years seems to have been in danger of starving, for he never allowed his brothers to know of his difficulties. Later he wrote tales illustrative of Irish life in the lower and middle classes, entitled "Holland Tide," "Tales of the Munster Festivals," etc. All at once to his great surprise his little spark of local reputation burst out into a flame. His "Collegians" appeared: it met with a great and immediate success. Some of the critics pronounced him the best novelist of the time next to Sir Walter Scott; his publisher sent him £600, and he despatched the whole of that sum at once to his parents in America. "The Collegians" has been frequently reprinted, and presents the best picture existing of Irish peasant life, at once the most vivid and the most accurate. Its comic parts are the most comic, and its tragic the most tragic, to be found in Irish literature. The tale is founded on a terrible crime perpetrated in the county of Limerick early in this century. A young man of gentle birth fell in love with a beautiful and virtuous peasant girl, married her secretly, got tired of her, and drowned her in the Shannon. For a considerable time it was impossible to

arrest the murderer; his capture was described to me by a near relative of mine, the magistrate who arrested him. He had received secret information, and led a body of police to the house of the murderer's parents at a late hour of the night. Apparently there had been a dinner party in that house, for on the door being opened after a slight delay he was received in the hall by its mistress, a tall and stately lady in a black velvet dress. She addressed him with quiet scorn, informed him that her house, a hospitable one, had been favored by many guests, but none resembling those who had come at that unusual hour to visit it; that she knew his errand; that her son had not been in that house for many weeks; but that he was welcome to search for him as they pleased. They searched the house in vain — they next searched the offices. When on the point of retiring one of the party remarked a ladder within the stable, the top of which leaned against a small door in the wall. The policemen refused to mount it, for they said that if the murderer was hid on the premises he must be behind that door and would certainly stab the first to enter. The magistrate mounted. The search was again in vain, and all had descended from the loft except the last policeman, who, as he approached the door, carelessly prodded with his bayonet the straw with which the floor was covered. A loud scream rang out from beneath it, and the murderer leaped up. He had been grazed, not wounded, and if he had held his peace must have escaped. His scream was almost immediately reëchoed by a distant one louder and more piercing. It came from one who knew her son's voice well. That magistrate told me that the most terrible thing he had ever witnessed was the contrast between that mother's stately bearing at first and the piteous abjectness of her later appeals as on her knees she implored him to spare her son.

The guilt was conclusively proved, and the murderer was sentenced to be hanged; but in those times justice was not always impartially administered, and the peasantry were certain that a gentleman never would be hanged. He requested that he should be taken to the place of execution in a carriage, but his crime had excited universal abhorrence, and none of the livery stables in Limerick would supply one. One was procured from a distance on the morn-

ing of the execution, and the unhappy man entered it. When midway on the bridge in Limerick that spans a small arm of the Shannon, the horses stopped, and no efforts could induce them to go farther. The crowds were more certain than ever that somehow there would be an escape: a gentleman could not be hanged. The horses plunged more and more furiously, but would not advance. The murderer fell into an agony of terror. He exclaimed, "Let me out, and I will walk!" He walked to the place of execution, and was hanged.

The "Colleen Bawn," which had an extraordinary success at one of the London theaters, was a dramatic condensation of "The Collegians." I went to see it, but could not remain for more than ten minutes. All the refinement which, not less than strength, marks the original, and especially the scenes that describe the Irish peasantry, had vanished, and a vulgar sensationalism had taken its place. This vulgarity has been so common in the delineations of Ireland, whether in novels or on the stage, that the ordinary English conception of the Irish peasant is the opposite of the truth in many cases: at least it wholly ignores that delicacy, pathos, and sympathy which characterize the humbler and the better among them, and remind us that manners are a tradition, and that in the centuries gone by many a political convulsion placed nobility "in commission" among the poor. In Gerald Griffin's day, when whatever crime might be stimulated by violent passions, or whatever exaggeration might mingle with a generous "Nationalist" enthusiasm, the preaching of that vulgarest of all things, Jacobinism, had never been heard, a man of genius like him could not fail to feel the charm both of the Irish character and the Irish manner, a thing then so much valued that "bad manners to you" was an ordinary malediction. Many of his poems illustrate Irish peasant life with singular grace and pathos; and to become the Irish Burns, as he once told me, was long the great object of his ambition.

After the publication of "The Collegians," Gerald Griffin took up his abode once more in the small dispensary house of his brother at Pallas. My father thought that he would there find little room for his books, and many interruptions of his studious hours. He invited him to pass the winter at Curragh Chase, placing two rooms at his disposal, and telling him that he would find quiet in the woods, and a large command of books in the library; but Gerald declined the invitation. He built an arbor in his brother's garden, and there, I think, made a study of Homer. He had a great knowledge of early Irish history, and we all expected from him a long series of historic romances illustrating Ireland as Scott's had illustrated Scotland.

An unexpected obstacle frustrated that hope. He was a remarkably religious man. Prosperity, which weakens religion in many Irishmen, deepened it in him. Whatever ambition belonged to him in youth left him early: things spiritual remained to him the sole realities, and literature was of worth only so far as it reflected them. He startled his friends by asserting that strong passion, one of the chief attractions in imaginative literature, did little but mischief. It was in vain that those friends, clerical as well as secular, maintained that in wise hands it should have an elevating tendency: he clung to his doctrine all the more because it involved self-sacrifice, well aware that it must be fatal to the success of literature such as that for which his gifts and his experience had especially fitted him. He wrote no more popular novels, though a later production, "The Invasion," recording one of the Danish piratical descents on Ireland, is full of admirable description. One day his brother found the fireplace black with the cinders of papers recently burned. He had just destroyed the whole of his manuscripts, verse and prose alike, and answered all inquiries by stating that he had devoted the rest of his life to the instruction of little peasant boys, as one of the "Christian Brothers" — the humblest of all religious communities. He labored assiduously for a few years at Cork; there, a few years later, I saw his grave, and heard his fellow-laborers declare that if Ireland had ever had a saint, Gerald Griffin was one. No doubt his choice was the best, not only for himself, but for the children who came under an influence so benign. But the country he loved so well lost its chance of an Irish Burns, or an Irish Scott; and the unfriendly critic will say, "So fares it with Irish gifts: the lower hit their mark, the highest miss it, sometimes by going to one side of it, and as often by going above it!" Macready, later, brought upon the stage a drama called "Gisippus," written by Gerald in early youth. I think it proved a success, and the £300 paid for it brought out a new edition of Gerald's works. In his religious retreat he found a peace and a solemn happiness of which he wrote in rapturous terms. In person he was dignified; and his face was eminently handsome, as well as refined and intellectual.

My recollections in connection with these, my early years, are chiefly rural and sylvan. They come to me fragrant with the smell of the new-mown grass in the pleasure-grounds, the breath of the cows as they stood still to be milked, rolling their eyes in quiet pleasure, with a majestic slowness such as the Greeks attributed to the eyes of Juno. No change was desired by us, and little came. The winds of early spring waved the long masses of daffodils till they made a confused though

rapturous splendor in the lake close by, just as they had done the year before; and those who saw the pageant hardly noted that those winds were cold. Each spring the blackbird gave us again his rough, strong note, and the robin's, as the season advanced, gained a roundness and fullness like that of the thrush. Each year we watched the orderly succession of the flowers, and if the bluebell or the cowslip came a little before or after its proper time, we felt as much aggrieved as the child who misses the word he is accustomed to in the story heard a hundred times before. Each spring there came again the contented cooing of wood-doves far away, and that tremulous pathos of the young lamb's bleat, which seemed hardly in harmony with his gladness as he bounded over the pastures illuminated by the sudden April green. Each year the autumn replaced the precipitate ardors of the spring with graver joys and sedate fruitions—its golden harvests, and all those darker colors which decorate though sadly the funeral feast of the year. The maple slowly as of old relinquished his fires, and there was the falling leaf, and the frightened flutter of the poplar's gilded tablets, in place of the thickening leaves and deepening shadows of the vernal woodlands; but beyond these woodlands a remoter landscape was once more seen through clearer air. In youth the enjoyment we derive from nature is less consciously the enjoyment of its beauty than it is in later life or in memory. We then think perhaps less of the scene than of the incident connected with it, less of the tree than of our triumph when we first climbed it, less of the flower than of the one for whom it was gathered; but beyond all these incidental joys associated with nature there is an unconscious joy in her beauty, the better, no doubt, for being unconscious. In the home of our childhood there was the more of this incidental enjoyment, because, owing to its size, there was always so much of improvement going on in it. One of its approaches was three miles long, and it passed three lakes, one surrounded by meadows, pastures, and groves, another by woods which had never been planted by man, though perhaps often cut down, and successively renewed—a portion of ancient Ireland's "forest primeval." Through those woods my father was never tired of making new drives and walks. The most interesting of these was the "Cave Walk," so called from a deep cave retiring back from a long line of cliff crowned with wood, matted over with ivy, and so perpendicular that it looked like the walls of a castle. I used often to descend into that cave merely for the sake of enjoying, on reascending, and approaching its mouth, the embalmed and delicious air into which the breath of unnumbered flowers and leaves and

streams, seen or invisible, seemed to have been melted down. One felt as if life required nothing more for its satisfaction than the quiet breathing of such air—a great healing to body and spirit alike.

With my father landscape-gardening was one mode of taking out the poetry which was so deeply seated within him; and if he had lived in a garret he would probably have written more verse. His love of nature was one of his strongest instincts, though hardly stronger than his love of really high art. Most of our enjoyments cost us much, and most of our affections, whether associated with the household life or with our country, cause us so much pain, either in the way of regret or of anxiety, as abundantly to remind us that they were accorded to us even more as a school of duty than as a source of enjoyment. But nature is a very disinterested benefactress: she gives much and demands little; she touches the human heart with a hand of air so light that it leaves behind no burden of responsibility. The fallen tree seldom has a tear dropped on it; the faded flower never—or never for its own sake; and in our wanderings from river to river, or from vale to vale, we never reproach ourselves with inconstancy. There at least

We've but to make love to the lips we are near.

For that reason a wise man should put a finer edge upon his appreciation of nature than on most of his sensibilities. My father probably owed much of this, the most unalloyed of his enjoyments, to his mother's generosity, amounting as it did to a self-sacrifice almost heroic. She had seen how much boys, and especially an only son,—as my father was,—suffer from the influences of home, enervating when unmixed, and the adulation of dependents, never so seductive as when it comes (such was then the case in Ireland) not from self-interest so much as from affection. She sent her only child, then about ten years old, to the charge of a tutor on the banks of Windermere. All the night before his departure the boy heard his mother's sobs, but she persisted, and, when the years of separation were past, reaped the reward. His tutor was not much of a scholar; but he was dutiful, upright, and brave, and he instilled those virtues into his pupil, or protected their growth in him. The wild and witching scenery all around taught him another lore. Gleams from Windermere, always his favorite among the lakes, were probably with him amid the most striking, though hardly less lovely, scenes among which his mature life was chiefly cast; and unconsciously may have interpreted them to him. Nature's grander features create in a responsive imagination those great ideas

of loveliness and of sublimity which, once elicited within us, enable us to detect and enjoy those natural attributes wherever they exist, though less strongly manifested.

The improvements which my father was always making in his country-seat were stimulated also by his desire to do good. They gave a very large amount of enjoyment to the poor, who regarded him in return with reverence and gratitude. We young ones became thus much more widely acquainted than we should otherwise have been with the humbler class, and many a remembered and often quaint incident brings back that intercourse to me. I may as well mention one of them. At one time the work in progress consisted in the removal and planting out of large trees under the superintendence of a certain Ulysses D——, who in that art was a specialist, though without education. He was full of odd sayings, such as, "We would like to go to heaven; but we would not like to go there *too soon!*" Once he remarked to me: "It is a pleasure to find that the older we get the better we get. When I was a young man I was continually cursing, and now I curse mighty little. Neither priest nor parson could make any hand of me. It was a lady that cured me — Mrs. Oldworthy. I was planting a tree, and a big one; and was after saying to the men, 'Three bounces each man round that tree, to stiffen the earth!' Now there was a laborer among them who could not bounce rightly because he was wearing a great-coat. Then I began to curse him most terribly, and never heard Mrs. Oldworthy coming up behind me. Said she, 'I've heard great cursing in my life, but I never heard cursing like that!' I was greatly frightened, and answered: 'Sure, ma'am, it is only for his own good, and for the good of his innocent children, that I am cursing him; for if Mr. Oldworthy saw him working in a great-coat, he'd turn him out of the concern, and they would all starve together.' Then she gave me a wonderful answer: 'Sir,' she said, 'it's a wonder to me that you would not think more of your own soul than of another man's body!' Since then I've been dropping the fashion."

Our store of amusing incidents was always increased when my eldest brother returned from Cambridge at vacation time. We used to hear much of two among the younger Fellows, who united great scholarship and a strong sympathy with the undergraduates. These two were Julius Hare, the great friend of Walter Savage Landor, and Connop Thirlwall, afterward bishop of St. David's, the latter of whom I never think of without a grateful recollection of the grief which I heard him express at the destruction of the monasteries in England. It was a sentiment which I had not expected from one

who was opposed to the traditional and ecclesiastical school of English theology. Some of the anecdotes which I then or later heard respecting Cambridge matters related to the head of one of her chief colleges, a man justly honored for his learning and piety, but often criticized for the prosaic character of his mind and for a certain minuteness which petrified his erudition. Two of the undergraduates were discussing his "dryas dust" ways in the college library after a fashion a little irreverent, when a Fellow walked up to them. He was a somewhat pompous man, and his reproof was true to his character. "You are probably ignorant, young gentlemen, that the venerable person of whom you have been speaking with such levity is one of the profoundest scholars of our age — indeed, it may be doubted whether any man of our age has bathed more deeply in the sacred fountains of antiquity." "Or come up drier, sir," was the reply of the undergraduate. Another anecdote indicates that the venerable man's simplicity was equal to his scholarship. After fifty years' seclusion within the walls of his college it struck him that it was time for him to see a little of the world, and he accepted an invitation from an early pupil who was entertaining a large party in a great country-house. At dinner he sat next to the young lady of the house. Their conversation fell upon baths, and she happened to mention that she took a shower-bath every morning to invigorate her system, adding, when he inquired what a shower-bath was, that it resembled a very small round room; that the bather took his or her stand in the center of it, and upon pulling a string was drenched by a sudden flood of water from above. Next morning the recluse rose at his usual hour, six o'clock, and, being of an inquisitive temper, thought it well to explore carefully what he had never seen before, a large country-house. On pulling open a door he found himself at the entrance of a very small circular apartment, one of those in which housemaids store away old brushes and household articles past their work. In the center of it stood a plaster cast of the Venus of Medici. The venerable man recoiled, closed the door, and walked in the park till summoned by the breakfast bell. He took his seat, and his host asked whether he would have tea or coffee. But he had reflected on what good manners imperatively required; and his answer was: "My lord, I can neither partake of tea, or coffee, or any other refection, until I have first tendered my humblest apologies to the interesting young lady whom I now see dispensing the chocolate, and on whose sanitary ablutions this morning as she stood in her shower-bath I was so unfortunate as unwittingly to intrude."

It was in the earlier half of September, 1831,

that I met first the man of the greatest intellect that I have ever known, and between whom and myself there sprang up what may be called a friendship at first sight, he being then in the twenty-seventh year of his life, and I in the eighteenth of mine. My new friend was Professor Hamilton, better known as Sir William Rowan Hamilton, "Astronomer Royal" in the Dublin University. I had often heard of him as the prodigy of that university, one who on entering it had sent in an essay written in fourteen or fifteen different languages, most of them Oriental, Græek being the latest which he had learned; and who during his course at Trinity College had successively carried off every prize open to his competition whether in classics or in science. At the age of twenty-two he had published a mathematical essay, "Systems of Rays," of which one of the chief men of science then living pronounced that "it had made a new science of mathematical optics."

It was impossible for the most careless observer not to be struck by him at once. One's first impression was that he was a great embodied intellect rather than a human being. Wordsworth wrote of Coleridge as "the rapt one of the godlike forehead," but it could not have been more marvelous than Hamilton's. The moral expression of his countenance corresponded with the intellectual. What it indicated was, when there was nothing to disturb him, an unbounded reverence. It was as if his consciousness of the greatness of what is above us rendered him but half-conscious of the things around. The nobility of his forehead, which alone arrested one's attention, imparted a grandeur to the whole face, the other features of which had nothing remarkable about them. His figure was not tall, and had nothing of grace or distinction about it. His voice was rather a singular one, generally low-toned, but leaping up occasionally into a higher key upon some slight excitement. It need hardly be said that with his habitual reverence there went a corresponding humility as regards himself, and an invariable courtesy in his intercourse with all others. He seemed always to think it likely that he might be mistaken, while in every neighbor, however full of infirmities, it was the human being that he saw, and one invested with all the rights and dignities which belong to humanity. Another quality which belonged pre-eminently to him was his absolute absence of all disguise. Some one remarked of him, "Hamilton is simply transparent; his thoughts are as visible to you as the leaves of a tree close by and sun-smitten. It would be impossible for him to tell a lie even if he wished to do so; and he could no more conceal a thought than he could tell a lie." In that entire unguardedness there was something both attractive and pa-

thetic: it was like a fragment from a world higher than ours, a virtue hardly suited to a world like ours, in which the unprotected must so often become the prey of the fraudulent and the wicked. Of Sir William Rowan Hamilton I may state Wordsworth's opinion. One night, while we stood beside his little domestic lake, Rydal, as it glistened in the beam of a low-hung moon, Wordsworth said, "I have known crowds of clever men, as every one has; not a few of high abilities and several of real genius; yet I have only seen one whom I should call wonderful — Coleridge." He then added: "But I should not say that; for I have known one other man, a fellow-countryman of yours, who was wonderful also — Sir William Rowan Hamilton, and he was singularly like Coleridge."

One of the things most remarkable in Sir William Rowan Hamilton was the combination of qualities both mental and moral, seldom united. In Coleridge the metaphysical power existed in not less strength than the imaginative; and though no doubt he owed great duties to so great a faculty, and effected much to spiritualize the metaphysics of his age, every lover of poetry must lament that he did not for another dozen years give himself mainly to poetry. Wordsworth once said to me that Coleridge's twenty-sixth year was his "annus mirabilis," and that if he had not then suffered himself to be drawn aside from poetry he must have proved the chief poet of modern times. But Sir W. R. Hamilton's combination of the mathematical gift with that for languages, and of both with the metaphysical, was a union more rare. I used to see him reading the most arduous works of Plato in the original Greek, wholly unconscious that the room was dinned by a somewhat noisy company. When he had soared into a high region of speculative thought — and it was there only that he was quite at home — he took no note of objects close by. A few days after our first meeting, we walked together on a road a part of which was overflowed by the river at its side. Our theme was the transcendental philosophy, of which he was a great admirer. I felt sure that he would not observe the flood, and made no remark on it. We walked straight on till the water was half-way up to our knees. At last he exclaimed: "What 's this? We seem to be walking through a river; had we not better return to the dry land?" Both at Adare and Curragh Chase I used to sit up with him in his bedroom till near sunrise, while he held such discourse as, I suppose, was the best compensation I could have had for never hearing that of Coleridge. His mirthfulness, however, was almost as strong as the speculative power. Once, just after he had admitted that some passages in Coleridge's writings were

as obscure as they were profound, adding, however, that by patient attention he had followed the meaning of those passages, excepting one in "Aids to Reflection," I answered: "I know a lady who seems to have found no difficulty in his works — Mrs. —, that very gay and fashionable person you met lately. She spoke of the 'Aids to Reflection,' and I replied that it was a great book, I believed, but a long and difficult one. She answered, 'I will take it up to my room after breakfast.' She did so; brought it down at luncheon time, and told me she had read it, thought it a very pleasant book, and had found nothing difficult in it." He laughed till he could no longer stand. I early observed that his abstracted habits, while they kept him as ignorant of the world as he was indifferent to it, did not prevent his occasionally exercising a keen, if fitful, appreciation of character. He would refer to past incidents, which at the time he had not seemed to remark, with a singular, though never uncharitable, insight. His absence of self-confidence, as regards judgments on all subjects, was indicated by some unconscious modes of expression such as, "I seem to myself to think." His profound convictions respecting the Christian revelation, and also the truths of a spiritual philosophy, acquired an additional force from their contrast with his self-distrust in lighter matters. To all reasonable objections he listened with a deference which looked like a provisional and tentative consent. He approved strongly of Coleridge's revival of the scholastic terms "subjective" and "objective," though perhaps he would have been more careful than was Coleridge that the larger and more solid prerogative of the objective, where the latter was not confounded with the merely material, should not suffer from the aggressions of the subjective. I remember his once saying: "It is no conceit in a poet if he sees much more of interest in his own poetry than others see; with his associations it must possess more: but he should remember that the merit which it possesses at once for himself and for others is all the merit that belongs to it objectively." Theology interested him quite as much as philosophy; and at a somewhat later time, when "Church Principles" began to be strongly asserted, he said that on philosophical grounds they had great claims on our religious consideration, and that he hoped to write an essay showing that on the reasoning of Butler's "Analogy," they were in affinity with Christian ideas. When, however, some of those who had adopted High Church principles had made their submission to the Roman Catholic Church, he seemed to me to turn his attention away from that subject. His early training had, I think, given him in a degree the traditional prepossessions against the Roman Catholic Church

common among Irish Protestants, not unconnected with class distinctions and political conflicts. These I did not share, being already an ardent disciple of Edmund Burke, who asserted that there was no religious body in Europe which represented or at least resembled the early Christian Church so much as the Irish Catholic Church of his own day. I looked upon her as deeply wronged in the past, and as placed by the consequent political agitations of recent times under circumstances unfavorable to a right estimate of her religious character.

I could not, of course, but be drawn yet nearer to Sir William R. Hamilton by the profound affection which he felt for my sister almost from the first time that they met, a love recorded in several poems included in the admirable life of him by the Rev. R. P. Greaves. His sympathies were perhaps at first drawn to her in part by the discovery that she had for several years felt the same enthusiasm for Coleridge as a poet which he himself had felt for him as a philosopher. If reverence, gratitude, and a cordial friendship could have been an adequate return for love, he might have been well satisfied; but we must remember *Leolf's* reply to *Elgiva*¹ when she had asked, "Is gratitude, then, nothing?" It was this: "To me it is nothing, being less than love." Such love as his, however, whether fortunate or unfortunate in its immediate issues, could not but in the long run have proved "its own reward." She survived him for many years after he had entirely fulfilled the early promise of his youthful genius, and enjoyed many years of deserved admiration, and ennobling happiness; and to the end she retained the same gratitude for that early affection which I also felt at the time, and have never ceased to feel. She only met him once after he returned to his labors at the Observatory. I was more fortunate, and frequently visited him there, especially during my undergraduate course in the Dublin University.

When each examination was over I hurried to the Observatory, and soon found the philosopher in his study, or in his garden, laid out by Bishop Brenkley, his predecessor, of whom he always spoke with a filial reverence. "I am afraid I offended him," he said, "the first time we met. I, then a youth of eighteen, sat next him at some public luncheon. We did not speak, and I felt as if good manners required that I should break the silence. My eye happened to rest on a large map of Van Diemen's Land which hung on the wall. I turned to him and said, 'Pray, my lord, were you ever in Botany Bay?' The bishop turned half round to me with a displeased look, and only replied, 'Eat your soup, sir; eat your soup!' He evi-

¹ Sir Henry Taylor's "Edwin the Fair."

dently thought I was inquiring whether he had ever been transported. Such a thought had never entered my head."

Sir W. R. Hamilton kept a headstrong horse to which he had given the name of "Comet," and used to gallop it in circles, or perhaps in ellipses, round the lawn. On one occasion he mounted him in Dublin, just after a curious mathematical problem had suggested itself to him. The horse took a mean advantage of his abstraction, and ran away. "When I found it impossible to stop him," he said, "I gave him his head, and returned to the problem. He ran for four miles, and stood still at my gate—just as the problem was solved!" Another time, when the country was disturbed, I found him practising with a pistol. "It occurred to me," he said, "that if the Observatory were attacked I ought to know how to defend it." He had fixed a deal board on the garden wall, traced a black circle on it, and marked the center of that circle by a blue periwinkle stuck in a hole. "Now you shall fire," he said, "and we shall see which of us can get nearest to the mark." I had never fired a pistol before, and fired almost at random. By an odd chance the bullet went through the heart of the periwinkle, leaving the outward leaves stuck upon the board. We were both amazed, and I considered myself a heaven-born genius in regard to this new accomplishment. Why will not the successful stop in time? I fired again and again, but never could hit the flower, the circular space, the board, or, I believe, the wall itself!

The Royal Astronomer did not look through his telescopes more than once or twice a year! He used to say, "That is my deputy's business. The stars move all right; but what interests me is the high mathesis that accounts for their movements." He was so much occupied with the purely abstract part of science that its material phenomena interested him only so far as they revealed laws. This characteristic was remarkably illustrated by one of his best-known discoveries, that of "Conical Refraction." He read a mathematical paper before the Royal Irish Academy demonstrating that under certain possible circumstances beams of light would be refracted, not as had ever been previously observed, but in the form of a cone. His statement was heard with wonder, and he was invited to verify his discovery by the aid of some instrument invented for that purpose; but he declined to make such an attempt, remarking that no experiment could add a certainty to mathematical demonstration. A considerable time afterward the desired instrument was constructed by Professor Lloyd; and after the discovery had been forgotten by most of those who had heard it announced, the radiant stranger leaped into palpable existence. When in-

formed of the fact, Hamilton dryly made answer, "I told you so." It was on the heights of mathematics that he breathed freely, and I used to see him writing his calculations from morning till late in the evening almost without stirring from his chair, as rapidly as another could have written notes of invitation, and flinging each of the long foolscap sheets on the ground beside him; and I have been assured by competent authorities that there existed but few mathematicians in Europe capable of reading and understanding what had thus been so easily written. Many volumes of those compositions are said to exist in an unpublished form. I remember his telling me that on one occasion he had escaped from a fit of severe depression by resolutely rising into those regions of what he called "planetary contemplation"; but I believe that on that occasion his meditations had belonged to the metaphysical yet more than to the mathematical order.

His domestic life was brightened by children to whom he was devotedly attached, though his devotion to them sometimes combined with it an odd form of speculative interest. "That little boy," he once said, pointing to a boy of about five or six years old, "ran up to me the other day, and cross-questioned me about the mysteries in the doctrine of the Trinity. 'How,' he demanded, 'can there be three, and yet only one?' I answered, 'You are too young for such matters; go back to your top.' He flogged it about the passages a score of times, then returned to me and said, 'I have found it all out—this is the explanation,' and propounded his theory. 'You are wrong,' I answered; 'you are too young to understand the matter; go and play.' He returned three times more, successively, and each time propounded a new explanation, and received the same answer. But now listen! His four explanations of the mystery were the four great heresies of the first four centuries! He discovered them all for himself. I did not give him the slightest assistance. What an intellect!"

The next year I repeated my visit, and Hamilton told me another tale of his boy, but with less of paternal triumph. "I said to him last night when he was going to bed, 'To-morrow Aubrey de Vere will be here: shall you not be glad to see him?' He mused for some time, and then made answer, remorsefully: 'Thinking of Latin, and thinking of trouble, and thinking of God, I had forgotten Aubrey de Vere.'"

In those days I saw Hamilton under various circumstances. On one occasion we made an expedition together among the "wooded walls" of Wicklow's mountains, and ended by drinking their health. Then did our

. . . flowing cups pass swiftly round
With no allaying Thames,

though we brimmed them frequently, and only in part from the Power's Court cascade. When he looked at the mountains he made as good remarks on them as Wordsworth could have made; when he was soaring in the region of mystical philosophy, he saw them no more than if he had been tracking the Sahara sands; and when I told him amusing stories he flung himself on the heather in convulsions of laughter. Our wanderings ended at the hospitable country-house of the Provost of Trinity College at Killiney, after leaving which he addressed to me a sonnet commemorative of them, of which I was very proud, and which included this striking line on music,

Problems of harmony proposed and solved,

which confirms the assertion often made that between music and mathematics there exist important relations. He introduced me to various friends worthy of his friendship. One of these was a lady who sang with remarkable pathos. She boasted to me that when she sang her first song to him he paid her no compliments, but stood listening while the tears ran down his cheeks. Another of these friends was the Irish poetess Felicia Hemans, whose poetry, rich in felicitous diction and metrical harmony, and always sustained by high thoughts and sentiments natural and elevated, if not now remembered as it deserves to be, was honored by the praise of Wordsworth, who assigns to her a place among the poets whose successive deaths are the theme of that "Extemporary Effusion" which stands high among his later poems. She had passed a summer at Dove Cottage, close to Windermere, and there seen much of him; and when we called on her in Dublin she had just received a manuscript copy of his "Yarrow Revisited," copied for her by Wordsworth's daughter Dora. She read it to us, not in the musical chant which to him was natural, but with singular sweetness, significance, and an especial pathos when she came to the passages which marked that love borne by the poet, neglected so long, for him who had been from his youth "the whole world's favorite."

But a time was approaching in which themes such as occupied the great mind of Sir W. R. Hamilton were to lose their interest for all except a few, and all other utterances to be lost in one great political battle-cry. The cry was "Repeal of the Union." The great democratic battle had begun.

The low rumbling on the horizon became louder by degrees, and the interval between the flash and the sound became shorter. When, at the Clare election, Sir Edward O'Brien, a late surviving Irish chief, the lineal descendant of

the greatest among the Irish kings, and a great proprietor passionately loved by his tenants, saw them vote against him and the other tenants follow their example, he declared in amazement that the country was not fit for a gentleman to live in.

The old order changeth, yielding place to new,

was a warning more loudly proclaimed as the Repeal agitation went on. An election took place in the county of Limerick, and both sides prepared for the conflict. Nearly all the proprietors were banded together against Repeal and O'Connell, including the few who had advocated Catholic Emancipation. The candidate on the opposite side was a man of ancient family, excellent character, and not, I think, a Repealer, but it suited the Repeal game to support him, in order to separate the tenants from their landlords. Of these the most powerful by far was a certain nobleman, the Earl of K——, whose territories, 60,000 acres, with a rental of £46,000 per annum, extended through a large part of three counties, and included much of those Desmond lands, some 600,000 acres of which had been confiscated by Queen Elizabeth in a single day. He was also, I believe, descended in the female line from the "White Knight," to whom that title had been given after a battle fought, many centuries previously, by the "White Knight's" father, the Earl of Desmond.

The despotic temper of the Earl of K—— was no doubt increased by scenes which he had witnessed as a boy. When he was but fourteen, during a great social gathering at his father's residence, a profligate neighbor, one of the county gentry, though a married man, induced a daughter of the house to elope with him. The moment the crime was discovered the earl, accompanied by the boy, went in pursuit of the criminal. After several days' pursuit the outraged father arrived, late in the night, at an inn which the fugitives had reached a few hours previously. He got out of his carriage, accompanied by his young son, and with a pistol in each hand mounted the stairs. A door was pointed out to him. It was locked; but the earl kicked it open. A man rushed forward; the earl fired two pistols, and the betrayer fell dead at his feet. The earl was arraigned for this act before the Irish House of Lords, and made no defense. The peers walked processionally in their robes, and each, as he passed the throne, laid his hand on his breast and pronounced the verdict, "Not guilty, upon my honor." A few years later the boy witnessed another important event. He had become a young officer; the Irish rebellion of 1798 burst out, and with several other

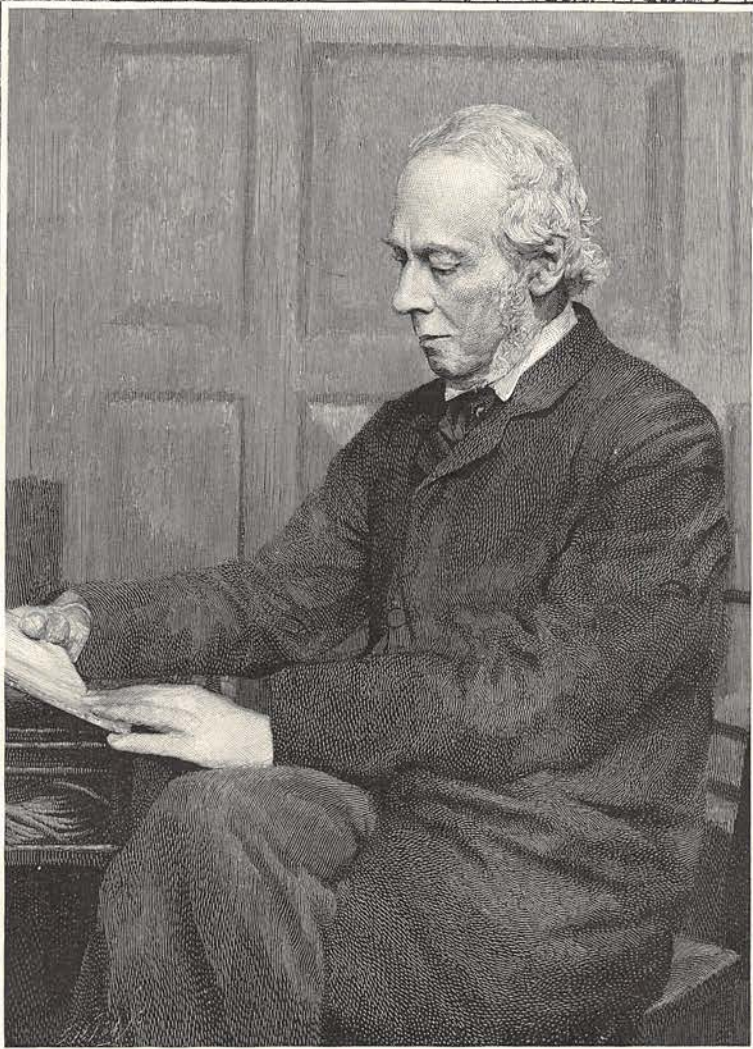
persons of importance he was suddenly captured, and detained as a hostage. When fortune turned against the insurgents, in the first rage of disappointment a massacre ensued, and he had a narrow escape from death.

When the family estates had become his own, the earl is said to have ruled with a sway almost as absolute as that of one of his forefathers, who, as was reported, transported several persons to America on his own sole authority. The later earl also was impatient of "the law's delays," and it was rumored that if a tenant had, in his opinion, seriously misbehaved, he simply gave directions that his house should be pulled down about his ears. Notwithstanding, he was regarded as a "beneficent despot," and the handsome houses of his tenants, whose rents were never called exorbitant, excited the envy of all the neighboring farmers. He built two churches in the neighboring town, a Catholic one and a Protestant one; and near them stood a "hospital for decayed gentlemen and gentlewomen," supported by a charge on the estate of £1200 per annum. He gave an immense amount of employment, and was honored proportionately by the laboring class. He had been for a long time kept out of the family residence by the protracted life of his mother. On her death he sent at once for an architect. "Build me," he said, "a castle. I am no judge of architecture; but it must be larger than any other house in Ireland; and it must have an entrance tower named the 'White Knight's Tower.' No delay! It is time for me to enjoy." When the castle was half finished a wealthy manufacturer built a huge chimney in the square of the town, which crouched beneath the hill on which that castle stood. The earl sent him orders to pull it down or depart, two invitations which the man of business declined. The earl drove down into the town, and, as usual, a crowd collected about his carriage. He said: "I am come to wish you good-by, boys. This place is but a small place, and there is not room in it for me and that man [pointing to the factory]. He says the law is on his side, and I dare say it is. Consequently I go to England to-morrow morning." During the night the lord of industry received a visit from uninvited guests; the next morning no smoke went over the towers and the woods, and on the third day he had taken his departure. The great castle was finished, and there was one great house-warming.

No gathering of the sort ever succeeded in those stately halls. What succeeded was the Limerick election. As that election drew near a rumor grew up that the fidelity of the tenants was not to be relied on; but few believed it. A neighbor of ours, himself a nobleman of

large landed possessions, went to the new castle to consult with its lord, who greeted him with the inquiry, "Is — in the field?" "No," was the answer; and the questioner resumed, "Then I set up my old friend M——," naming a popular country gentleman worth £10,000 per annum, who had lately built a house suitable to that income, on visiting which his friend at the castle commented on it thus: "The house is pretty; but what is the use of it? It is too large to hang at your watch-chain, and too small to live in." When the two peers had discussed the political symptoms of the day the Earl of K——, dashing his hand loudly on the table, exclaimed: "Sir, I will tell you the simple truth of the case. The Irish people are gone mad! My father returned fourteen members of parliament [he meant the Irish parliament], and it is with difficulty that I return eight!" The loyalty of the tenant-vote was next touched upon. "That matter is settled," the earl replied. "I have sent orders that the whole of my county of Limerick tenants shall ride into Limerick on the first day of election, and be the first to vote. Once they have set the example the other fellows of course will follow it. I shall go into Limerick myself." He did so two days before the election, and each day he gave a grand banquet to the county gentlemen.

The earl occupied the house of his friend, Lord ——, which, with the palace of the Protestant bishop, occupied one side of a court opening into a wide street. At the open window the earl sat with the candidate he favored. They were big and burly men both, and in high good humor, now quaffing a bottle of champagne, now leaning out and chaffing with the city mob, which cheered them to the echo, for it united the old Irish taste for chieftainship with the novel aspiration after democratic power. The rest of the room was filled with a fluctuating throng of country gentlemen, who brought in the latest news, and then amused themselves with the humors of the crowd. The appointed hour was sounded from the bells of St. Mary's Cathedral, as merrily as on that morning when Sarsfield crossed the Shannon and burst the Dutch cannon. In mile-long cavalcade the K—— tenantry rode down Limerick's chief street; another and larger crowd cheered them and their fine horses, and doubtless that acclaim sent an exhilaration into their heads as potent as the fumes of champagne could have created there. After an hour or two a dullness began to spread over that gay apartment, and many talked in whispers. The earl soon perceived that all was not right, and its usual sternness returned to his strong face. "You are hiding something from me," he exclaimed; "something has gone wrong; what has happened?" After a pause a gentleman



ENGRAVED BY R. G. TIETZE, FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY FREDERICK HOLLYER.

Aubrey



De Vere

moved forward, and replied, "My lord, what has gone wrong is this: the K—— tenantry have voted." "What of that?" "My lord, they have voted with the enemy to a man! The other tenants are following their example. The election is lost."

I record these things as they were described to me by those who witnessed them. The earl traveled back to his castle all night; at early dawn he reached it; but it is doubtful whether the White Knight's Tower, as he drove beneath it, smiled upon a defeated chief. During the whole of that day he sat alone, speaking to none, and seen by none. Late the second night the bell of his bedroom rang without intermission, and a short time afterward mounted couriers were scouring all parts of his estates, commanding the attendance at a certain specified hour of all the tenantry in occupation of its 60,000 acres. When the ap-

pointed hour arrived, he sat enthroned on the dais, at one end of a gallery a hundred feet long; his official persons were ranged near him in a line at each side of that gallery. What he intended to say to his tenants has often been guessed at, but will never be known. The tenants thronged in at the lower end of the gallery, advancing nearer each moment, as their numbers increased, to where the earl sat. His eye was fixed upon them with that look for which it was famed, but he spoke no word. Suddenly its expression changed: he leaped from his seat, raised his arms on high, and exclaimed: "They are come to tear me in pieces; they are come to tear me in pieces!" The next night but one he was in a mad-house. There he continued to live for many years, faithfully attended by a devoted wife; but he is said never to have had a lucid interval.

Aubrey de Vere.

THE FLIGHT OF SONG.

HOW may the poet sing
When Song is far away?
He has no charm to bring,
No power of yea or nay,
To lure that peerless wing,
To bid it go or stay.
How may the poet sing,
With Song so far away?

Bind — and sweet Song is dumb;
She droops, she dies.
Loose her — no echoes come
From her far skies.
Farther she mounts, and higher;
Elate, elusive still,
She knows alone one will —
Her own desire.
O lingering delay!
When, lo! on one glad day,
Into the heart she slips
With swift surprise!
Her touch upon the lips,
Upon the eyes,
And all life's pulses thrill,
And all the world is spring —
Is spring in Paradise:
Then may the poet sing!

Ina Coolbrith.