

"One moment," he said gently. "May I ask you to leave it to me to make known my own name in my own time and way?"

"Certainly," said Gypsy, in utter scorn. "What further interest can the matter possibly have for me?"

She made her way wearily back along the path, guided by the beacon fire, vaguely conscious that she was very tired, and very, very sore at heart. They were almost within sight of the rest of the party, when she turned upon him to say, in sudden alarm, "My basket—I forgot it!"

She was schooling herself to meet criticising eyes, and was just aware that the absence of her afternoon's spoil would provoke remark.

"It is here; I have it," he said quietly.

Even at that moment, it struck her with a sudden pain that he could still think for her.

Then they stepped out together into the bright

circle of light. Gypsy breathed more freely when she perceived that her mother was no longer there.

"Mrs. Marchmont started home some time ago; it is getting so late," Joyce said, in a quiet matter-of-fact tone, coming up to Gypsy. "I think it is quite time we followed her example."

Sir Geoffrey picked up Lal, and carried him up to the spot where the pony was tethered.

"I am to ride all the way; Giles is gone in the cart," said Lal. "And please, Jan, will you walk close by me all the way? Because it is so very dark, and Dick says there are ghosts in the forest. Are there ghosts, do you think, Jan?"

Ay, truly, little Lal, ghosts of a golden past which will never blossom into a tender future; ghosts of happy hopes that lie dead and buried for evermore. The forest is a haunted place from henceforth, and the ghosts of the forest Pool no man can lay.

END OF CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

SOME STRANGE ANTIPATHIES.



IT is no uncommon thing to meet with people who have a strong antipathy to some particular thing or things. Sometimes it is a matter of pure sentiment; sometimes it is the association which brings the disgust; in other cases it is a mere affectation or an unreasoning or ignorant prejudice. At times it arises from a sort of mingled fear and dislike, as when ladies scream at the sight of a timid mouse—a "wee cowering beastie"—far more frightened than they. It is not our purpose in this paper to descant upon these comparatively commonplace and trifling antipathies, but to give instances of some well authenticated and deeply-rooted dislikes, ineradicable even by the strongest effort of the will.

It seems absolutely incredible that Peter the Great, the father of the Russian navy, should shudder at the sight of water, whether running or still, yet so it was, especially when alone. His palace gardens, beautiful as they were, he never entered, because the river Mosera flowed through them. His coachman had orders to avoid all roads which led past streams, and if compelled to cross a brook or bridge, the great emperor would sit with closed windows, in a cold perspiration. Another monarch, James I., the English Solomon, as he liked to be called, had many antipathies, chiefly tobacco, ling, and pork. He never overcame his inability to look with composure at a drawn sword; and it is said that on one occasion, when giving the *accolade*, the king turned his

face aside, nearly wounding the new-made knight. Henry III. of France had so great a dislike to cats that he fainted at the sight of one. We suppose that in this case the cat had to waive its proverbial prerogative and could *not* look at a king. This will seem as absurd as extraordinary to lady lovers of that much-petted animal, but what are we to say of the Countess of Lamballe, of unhappy history, to whom a violet was a thing of horror? Even this is not without precedent; for it is on record that Vincent the painter was seized with vertigo and swooned at the smell of roses. Scaliger states that one of his relations was made ill at the sight of a lily; and he himself would turn pale at the sight of water-cress, and could never drink milk.

Charles Kingsley, naturalist as he was to the core, had a great horror of spiders; and in "Glaucus," after saying that every one seems to have his antipathic animal, continues:—"I know one [himself] bred from his childhood to zoology by land and sea, and bold in asserting and honest in feeling that all without exception is beautiful, who yet cannot, after handling and petting and examining, all day long, every uncouth and venomous beast, avoid a paroxysm of horror at the sight of the common house-spider."

The writer shares this dislike to a painful extent; in this case it is inherited from his grandfather. The genial author of the "Turkish Spy" says that he would far prefer sword in hand to face a lion in his desert lair, than have a spider crawl over him in the dark. The cat, as we have previously mentioned, has repeatedly been an object of aversion. The Duke of Schomberg, though a redoubtable soldier, would not sit in the same room with a cat. A courtier of the

Emperor Ferdinand carried this dislike so far as to bleed at the nose on hearing a cat mew. A well-known officer of Her Majesty's army, who has proved his strength and courage in more than one campaign, turns pale at the sight of a cat. On one occasion when asked out to dinner, his host, who was rather sceptical as to the reality of this feeling, concealed a cat in an ottoman in the dining-room. Dinner was announced and commenced, but his guest was evidently ill at ease; and at length declared his inability to go on eating, as he was sure there was a cat in the room. An apparently thorough, but unavailing, search was made; but his visitor was so completely upset that the host, with many apologies for his experiment, "let the cat out of the bag" and of the ottoman at the same time. Lord Lauderdale, on the other hand, declared that the mew-ing of the cat was to him sweeter than any music, while he had the greatest dislike to the lute and the bagpipe. In this latter aversion he was by no means singular. Dogs too have come in for their share of dislike. De Musset cordially detested them. When a candidate for the Academy he called upon a prominent member. At the gate of the château a dirty ugly dog received him most affectionately, and insisted on preceding him into the drawing-room, De Musset cursing his friend's predilection for the brute. The Academician entered and they adjourned to the dining-room, the dog at their heels. Seizing his opportunity the dog placed his muddy paws upon the spotless cloth and carried off a *bonne-bouche*. "The wretch wants shooting!" was De Musset's muttered thought, but he politely said—

"You are fond of dogs, I see?"

"Fond of dogs?" retorted the Academician—"I hate them!"

"But this animal here?" queried De Musset: "I have only tolerated it because it was yours, sir."

"Mine!" exclaimed the poet; "the thought that it was yours alone kept me from killing him!"

We have read somewhere of a man who, if he saw a crayfish, became perfectly limp and helpless, while the perspiration streamed from his face. The writer's brother has so strong a dislike to beet-root, that a dish of it placed near him will not only destroy all appetite, but cause him to turn pale and feel faint.

Boyle, philosopher though he was, tells us himself that he was unable to overcome his aversion to the sound of a jet of water splashing from a pipe. He records the case of a man whose antipathy to honey was so great, that a poultice of which it was an ingredient applied to his foot made him ill. He mentions that a servant of his never could hear a knife sharpened, or a sheet of brown paper torn, without bleeding at the gums. Chesne, secretary to Francis I., would bleed at the nose at the sight of apples. Jean Jacques Rousseau writes of a Parisian lady who was always seized with uncontrollable and violent laughter at the sound of any music. A friend of the writer's is affected obversely; at the sound of a barrel-organ it is only by the strongest effort of will that she refrains from sobbing and shrieking aloud. The aversion in

this case is only to barrel-organs; street-pianos do not disturb her peace more than to the inevitable extent. Another lady friend at the touch of a russet apple shudders and has all her teeth set on edge.

It may be said that the majority of the above-mentioned cases, curious as they undoubtedly are, are merely mental or nervous antipathies; constitutional and deep-seated perhaps, but still affecting only the nervous system. We will now, however, give some well-authenticated instances of strange antipathies, which literally prove to a remarkable degree the truth of the adage, "One man's meat is another's poison." Mr. Lewes in his "Physiology of Common Life," to which we gratefully acknowledge our indebtedness, mentions the case of a soldier, who in 1844 was compelled to quit the French army owing to his invincible repugnance to animal food. The Abbé de Villedieu was another who disliked all animal food, and for thirty years subsisted entirely on vegetables. He was then, much against his will, persuaded to try a meat diet. Commencing with fish and meat soups, he eventually partook of mutton and beef, but the event justified his fears; for plethora and sleepiness supervened and were shortly followed by cerebral inflammation, of which he died. Dr. Prout writes of a man on whom mutton acted as poison: "He could not eat mutton in any form. The peculiarity was supposed to be owing to caprice, and the mutton was repeatedly disguised and given to him unknown, but uniformly with the same result of producing violent vomiting and diarrhœa. And from the severity of the effects, which were in fact those of a virulent poison, there can be little doubt that if the use of mutton had been persisted in it would have destroyed the life of the individual." There have been well-known cases of coffee invariably producing violent sickness; while gooseberries and cherries, even if moderately indulged in, in some individuals cause general inflammation. Others cannot take eggs, and even in cakes or puddings will detect their presence by the serious disturbances consequent. Hahn relates of himself that seven or eight strawberries would throw him into convulsions; while Tissot tells us he could never swallow sugar without vomiting. Shakespeare, whose observation nothing ever escaped, in the *Merchant of Venice* (Act iv., Scene 1) makes Shylock say—

"Some men there are love not a gaping pig;
Some that are mad if they behold a cat;
And others, when the bag-pipe sings i' the nose,
Cannot contain themselves; for affection,
Mistress of passion, sways it to the mood
Of what it likes or loathes."

Shakespeare could assign no reason for these antipathies, neither shall we attempt it. Nature is full of variety and originality. It is as though, with a grand prodigality, a magnificent recklessness, she broke her moulds, lest she should repeat herself. Infinite if subtle are the differences and idiosyncrasies which go to make up individual character; and what to one man is a source of comfort or delight, may be to another an object of loathing and aversion.