

love: Ellen—the loveliest, gentlest, kindest of beings.”

“Please, John, don’t,” said the compassionate little barber softly, as he marked the change in his friend’s voice, and looking up saw the strong effort it required to keep down the rising emotions: “I understand it all, John, without your telling. Haven’t I passed through it?”

Perhaps the poor clerk did not hear, or lost the import of his landlord’s well-meant but mistaken effort at consolation. For, after gazing vacantly for a moment at Mr. Keenedge, his countenance resumed its ordinary subdued and humble expression, and he went on with his history as though he had not been interrupted.

“Ellen soon became the secret object of my idolatry. I was too cautious, however, to let it appear that I thought of her. I knew that, at that early stage of our acquaintance, I should only defeat my own object by openly avowing my admiration and love. Not that my intentions or wishes were other than honourable. In my wildest profligacy and wickedness, I never thought other of Ellen than befitted her purity. There was indeed a holy innocence around her; and I thought only how, for her sake, if she were hereafter to be my wife, I could abandon all my evil courses as easily and eagerly as I had entered upon them: poor, stupid, presumptuous, conceited and unreasoning fool that I was! As though the seeds of evil sown in the human heart, and nourished there by evil passions, could be torn up by the root at will! Yet, I thought so, and I meant it: and it is one deep and burning reproach and degradation spared me, that I never entertained one thought or feeling in reference to Ellen, which would have compromised her purity.”

“Bless you, John, for saying so!” burst out the little barber, jumping up from his chair, and stepping across to the poor solitary, whose hand he clasped and commenced shaking energetically with both his own. “I might have been sure of it, John, knowing what I do know of you; but I was afraid too. I hope you’ll pardon me, John; but I did begin to be afraid: but it is all right now; so, cheerily! cheerily!”

It was an unfortunate flight this, of the little barber, as far as his hearing any more of his lodger’s story that night was concerned. Not that the poor clerk took offence at his friend’s honest enthusiasm; he was far too self-depreciatory for this. But he was startled and confused; and after trying in vain to recall the thread of his history, he shook his head mournfully.

“It is gone from me now, Mr. Keenedge,” said he; “you will look in again some other evening, and then I will finish what I have to tell;” and thereupon he courteously dismissed his visitor.

Not for long, however.

“It all comes of a empty stomick,” said the little barber to himself, when he had retired to his own room below, “these megrims in the head.” Saying this, the benevolent shaver of beards searched thoughtfully in the corner cupboard, which served him for pantry and larder. “It isn’t much,” said he, musingly: “but half a loaf is better than no

bread; and this bit of cold—ay, ay—and—so, so.” Thus communing with himself, he presently reappeared in the poor clerk’s room, laden with spoil.

“Not a bit nor a sup, John, have you had since twelve o’clock at noon; and now it is near upon twelve o’clock at night: and—;” but with what gentle arguments and entreaties he prevailed upon his poor lodger to share in his frugal supper, it matters little to the present reader.

A VISIT TO ALEPPO.

NEXT to Damascus, Aleppo is undoubtedly the most beautiful city in Syria. Unfortunately, the Moslems here are equally fanatical, and massacres of the Christian inhabitants have not been of infrequent occurrence. These disturbances, however, we may for the present leave to French and Turkish soldiers to subdue, whilst you and I, reader, can peacefully visit the city through the medium of these pages.

Nothing can compare to the monotony and dreariness of the approach to Aleppo, until within almost a stone’s throw of the city gates. Hour after hour have passed, and mile after mile been traversed; the ever shifting horizon has brought with it nothing but disappointment and vexation; even when arriving at an abrupt termination to the endless level plain, with small steep intervening valley and high hill opposite, on reaching which we feel persuaded the whole beauty and magnificence of the eastern city, with its citron groves, its fountains, its bulbs, etc. will burst upon us with overwhelming enchantment. Even when this feat, much to the suffering of our poor jaded nags, has been accomplished, and at last we attain the longed-for summit, there still stretches before us interminable desolation, with not even one singular formed rock or projecting stone to vary the disheartening sameness. At early dawn, or late in the evening, whole troops of pretty gazelles, and many rare and singular birds, lend life to this horrid solitude; but during the mid-day heat, there is nothing, positively nothing. Nature seems to have lost the power to keep awake.

The only indications of our approach to the journey’s end, is the frequent succession of ruined towns dating from many bygone centuries. How the inhabitants could have lived in such arid wilds, without one drop of water, or apparently the means of procuring any for miles around, or how the founders could have fixed upon such desolate and uncongenial sites, it is difficult to surmise. That they were architects, and well skilled in hewing stone, there cannot be the shadow of a doubt. Witness the mementoes that survive them; the vast substantial blocks once supporting beams and rafters, and the solid arches that not all the earthquakes of centuries have shaken from their rocky foundations. But who knows? perhaps, as is acknowledged to have been the case with other parts of Syria and Palestine—Carmel, for instance—this desolation was once a fertile fruitful land; a land flowing with waters, shaded by umbrageous fruit trees, and rich in pasturage; its hills echoing

to the shepherd's pipe, or the sweet note of the nightingale; its midnight breezes lulled by the murmuring of countless streamlets and pleasant cascades.

Harbingers of the near approach to something like civilization and cultivation, there appear here and there sorry-looking fig trees and sorrier-looking flocks of goats. A little further on, and our thirsty guides point out one or two low buildings, constructed of unbaked bricks, which cover tanks or reservoirs of not over-delicious water—not over-delicious even to the thirsty wayfarer; first, because the water is always brackish, and is often disturbed by goats and even Arabs refreshing themselves by a dip therein; and secondly, because it is always muddy, and during eight months of the year is more than lukewarm. Still, these relics of the benevolence of long defunct shiekhs are always welcome, especially yonder larger one, which has more pretensions as to size and architecture, and which, from its distance affording an easy and pleasant ride to the citizen, and from the oft recurrence of the event, is known to the English of Aleppo as "Farewell Point." Thus far, and no further, can they conveniently accompany friends or guests who are about to bid farewell to the city and its hundred minarets.

At this point, overcome by fatigue and heat, we bivouac for a while under the shady wall of the great reservoir, in company with a caravan of camels bound in the same direction as ourselves, and a caravan of mules bound down coastwards. On the one side we are flanked by a thousand bales of Manchester manufactured goods, destined for Mosul and Bagdad, on the other by thousands of sacks of gall-nuts, intended for European markets, and anxiously waited for by tanners in general. Perhaps some of these very gall-nuts form part of the very ink with which I now write these reminiscences. The tired drivers, sore-footed and heated, having slaked their thirst, are stretched out at full length on the sand, snoring complacently.

We have barely been rested, and are just about to refresh ourselves with coffee and something in the shape of lunch, when, tearing over the plain with breathless haste, up comes the Tartar with his wearied post-horses, and these also stop for water and rest. Amidst all this medley of costume and nation, a large flock of lanky-looking goats make a desperate and determined charge for the reservoir, skipping over bales and sacks, treading upon sleeping men's shins,* and so disappear into the subterranean reservoir, and take their fill of water. Where they can find anything to eat in the desolation around us is a mystery that not even the miserably clad Arab goatherd can explain; all he knows is, that he himself does not fare sumptuously, and that a few scattered thorn bushes afford the only apparent means of sustenance to the goats.

Starting from this point, we have still a few miles of desolation to traverse, the only difference being that every now and then we encounter peasants with heavily-laden donkeys, who are plodding their way homewards to the neighbouring villages

with the goods bartered for the produce of their respective farms and fields. Their "Allah con Mahik"—"May God go with you"—is a pleasant interruption to the solitude and monotony around. Suddenly we reach the verge of what we fear may prove to be another of those many intervening ravines which open out only fresh scenes of desolation. But no; this time we are delightfully mistaken. There, far below us, from amidst an intensely green mass of foliage, which stretches from left to right as far as the eye can embrace, rises a hundred domes and minarets, palpably white against a distant range of purple hills, and literally glittering in the afternoon sun. Overhead is a clear and cloudless blue sky. At our very feet, and sloping gradually towards a small intervening rivulet, which looks indescribably cool and delicious as it bubbles along, extends a vast verdant pasturage, dotted all over with cattle, and through which winds the high road to the city. On the other side of the bridge which spans the rivulet, there gradually ascends an equally verdant plain, the top of which is crowned by the city itself. In the centre of the city rises a remarkably abrupt hill, surmounted by a ruined fortress, once famous for the resistance it offered to the early Mahomedan invaders.

We are mentally embracing and enjoying the whole of the picturesque panorama before us, when a fierce-looking Albanian rushes out of a wretched little tent, and presenting his gun at our muleteer's head, loudly commands him to stop. This is the officer of the customs; and though the utmost extent of our baggage is confined to bedding material, a carpet bag or so, a few necessary cooking utensils, and fodder for the animals we bestride, this ruthless fellow will listen to no reason. Either we must unload on the spot and have everything turned topsy-turvy, which, with repacking and reloading, would keep us here till after the city gates were closed for the night, or else we must submit to a levy of blackmail in the shape of what is termed "buckshish." Choosing the latter as the least of two evils, we are overwhelmed with compliments. The poor muleteer, who has been in abject terror for the last five minutes, now recovers his wonted hilarity, and chants forth lays laudatory of his beloved "Haleb." The weary animals themselves prick up their ears and their courage, as the well-known city of their repose rises rapidly before them. We traverse the little bridge to the twirling whiz of several water wheels, which serve for the purpose of irrigation, as also in some instances for floating corn mills. We ascend the opposite acclivity leisurely, fanned by the delightful cool evening breeze, and regaled with the music of myriads of skylarks, whose notes thrill us with delight. The sun sets in unobscured glory as we enter the *bab il ferage*, or the gate of beauty; and in five minutes afterwards, amidst a multitude of foot passengers of all sexes, sizes, classes, and costumes, we are traversing the narrow and not over-cleanly streets. It is nightfall when we alight at the Latin Convent, for there are no hotels in the city. We are lodged and fed most hospitably, and after refreshing ourselves, weary and worn out by the

* See the accompanying illustration.

journey, we seek the couch of repose. Then it is that, for the first time, in all its oriental magnificence, with cadences sweet beyond description, from a hundred minaret tops there bursts forth the intonations of a thousand voices, chanting in strictest melody and symphony to melancholy but sweet music, the Muezzin call, "Allah Ackbar!" The last vibration dies away in the stillness of night, and we are soon hushed in slumber.

To the music of a similar chorus, still more sublime however in effect, owing to the perfect stillness which reigns throughout the city, the really fine voices of the chanters arouse us from profoundest slumber, to see the first grey streak of daylight peeping in through the window of our small but comfortable cell in the convent. "Prayer is better than sleep"—such is the substance of this early Muezzin call of the Moslem.

It is a delightful morning, and the sun rises in unobscured glory. At this period of the day, during the summer months, the early breeze of morning is almost an indispensable stimulant to brace us up against the enervating effects of the heat and closeness of the day from about 8 A.M. to sunset, and we enjoy it to its full extent as we promenade to and fro the extensive flat terrace of the convent. We observe from thence one remarkable feature in the structure of the city, namely, that the terraces of the various houses and khans communicate with one another, with scarcely any interruption, for a distance of sometimes a mile in extent. From the fact of Aleppo being subdivided into so many various quarters, each occupied almost exclusively by creeds at variance with each other, this has been a wise and excellent precaution; as from time to time, (the latest outbreak occurring in 1851, when the Bedouins and more fanatical Moslems rose and massacred several of the helpless native Christians,) some sudden *émeute* compels the Christians of all denominations, as well as the Jews, to confine themselves to their own quarter for mutual protection; and if barricaded street doors should be forced, the besieged fly to the terrace, and thus pass from house to house, and from quarter to quarter of the city. Indeed, the whole of the streets and houses of Aleppo are constructed upon the defensive principle. Every house and khan has double and treble massive iron-begirt doors; every arcade and every street is furnished with ponderous gates, which are regularly and punctually closed at night, and from which egress or ingress after 8 P.M. or before daylight depend upon surly door-keepers, whose feelings are best acted upon by the magical word "buckshish." It was mainly owing to these extreme precautions that so many unfortunately perished during the last terrible earthquake of 1821, as the people met with continual impediments in their efforts to escape into the open country. In the new suburban quarters of Jedidah and Kitab, these evils have been carefully avoided.

So much for the more remarkable features of the city itself; and *à propos* of this, we may mention that the most remarkable feature of the veritable Aleppine is his nose—a nose prodigiously long; long flowing silk robes, and the mark of the *Hüb il Senne*, or Aleppo button, on either cheek; these

are the distinguishing features and characteristics of the Aleppines, male and female, young and old.

Cocks and hens there are in abundance, catering for themselves in the streets; legions of ugly half-starved curs, similarly employed; donkeys laden with produce, comprising everything in the vegetable, fruit, and poultry line, and driven by hard-worked fellah peasants, (who carry their shoes slung over their shoulders for fear of wearing them out, and only put them on when they reach their journey's end,) to meet the demands of the various early markets in the city. Scores upon scores of gawky-looking camels pick their careful way, laden with every conceivable produce or manufacture of the four quarters of the globe. On the back of one rides Manchester in a bale; on a second, France in barrels of light wine; on a third, Naples in boxes of maccaroni; on a fourth, Italy in tin cases of oil preserves; whilst a fifth is bestrode by brother Jonathan, who brings cigars of monstrous dimensions. A veritable central *dépôt* for the commerce of the east and the west is Aleppo; great still, but far more magnificent in the days when no Cape of Good Hope or Suez route existed, and when the Bagdad and Bussorah caravans literally carried millions of wealth to and fro every trip, and scented the desert far and wide with the rich spices of the then little known Ind. To this day, Aleppo lays the exclusive claim to the best scammony in the world; and who has not heard of her pistachio nuts, dried or preserved in salt? Even Shakespeare had something to say about Aleppo when he made the spiteful witch vent her spleen upon the chesnut-eating sailor's wife, whose "husband to Aleppo's gone."

The peculiar feature of the tradespeople is, that they monopolize whole streets to themselves. Here, amidst a deafening clatter, we find ourselves amongst the tinkers; there, nothing but shoes and shoemakers are to be seen. A third street is devoted to tailors; a fourth to carpenters, and so on to the end of the chapter of trades. These streets are, however, public thoroughfares, and very inconvenient ones to boot. They are exceedingly narrow, and but for the shelter afforded by one shop or another, foot passengers are now and then subjected to the risk of being crushed by huge logs of timber or massive bales in their transit to and fro upon camel or mule-back. None of the people that work here reside in or near their shops. At night all the shops are locked, and the streets are deserted and left to the guardianship of the gatekeepers before alluded to, and packs of hungry, savage dogs.

After wending our way through these avenues for some considerable distance, we come suddenly upon one of the many large khans or caravansaries which abound in Aleppo. They are all alike, save as to dimensions and accommodation. Passing through a lofty archway, we are ushered into a capacious square, in the centre of which invariably stands a fountain, used chiefly for purposes of ablution. The lofty buildings that surround the lower compartments are almost exclusively devoted to business purposes. Some serve as warehouses, some as European shops, and a few are occupied



FAREWELL POINT, ON THE ALEPPO ROAD. (PAGE 712.)

by migratory Arab merchants, samples of whose goods are scattered over the pavement, whilst their horses or mules are tethered round about the fountain. The upper compartments constitute the private residences and business offices of European merchants, communicating all round by wide open balconies. Many of the most important mercantile bargains are concluded in the square of these khans, amidst a publicity and riot which it is useless to attempt to describe.

A remarkable object amongst the various costumes of men and women that throng this place, is yonder sedate old gentleman, riding by upon a tall bony-looking milk-white donkey—a rarity procurable only from Bagdad. In lieu of the usual turbans or turban, this singular old man sports upon his head a huge upright black goat-skin cap, square at both ends. The wearer is a privileged being, and the head-dress he wears is called a kalpak. By it he is exempted from paying the capitation tax to which the rest of the Christian population are subjected, and this kalpak has been an heir-loom in the family through many generations. It was awarded by one of the old Sultans to certain families who rendered the Ottoman government good service in time of need, and the privi-

lege has never been repealed. If we were to visit the interior of that old gentleman's house, we should find relics which he, though by no means in opulent circumstances, would not part with for any consideration.

Hurrying hence through a number of tortuous alleys, we suddenly come upon the Jedidah gate, where we find a specimen of Turkish soldiery. A lieutenant commands the guard here; and at the moment we pass, he, with one boot and one shoe, and in doubtful-looking shirt sleeves, is playing at dominoes with one of the privates.

To get to Jedidah we have to pass close under the whitened city walls, the refraction of heat from which is anything but agreeable. Here we encounter legions of the most deplorable and clamorous beggars. The blind, the halt, the lame, and folk with hideous distortions, occupy their posts from day to day, knowing well that the tide of native wealthy merchants must sweep past them twice a day on their way to and from business and their homes. Some small spray of charity from the waves of this human tide serves to keep them from downright starvation.

Just as we are about to enter into Jedidah, the old gentleman in the kalpak before alluded to trots

by on his donkey. He salutes us, and perceiving that we are strangers, and that the hour of noon is at hand, begs us to accept of his hospitality. We gladly avail ourselves of the invitation, and a few yards brings us to an exceedingly shabby old door, let, to all appearance, into a dead wall. No sooner is the owner's voice heard than "open sesame," and we find ourselves ushered into an elegant court-yard, redolent of sweet flowers, abounding with fountains and bird-cages, whilst at the further end is a beautifully tessellated alcove, where, on each divan, are seated madame his wife, and his two very pretty daughters, who receive us with ease and elegance. Ten minutes afterwards, diminutive tables are introduced, and the meal is served, consisting chiefly of preserved apricots stewed in milk, than which a more delicious dish for a warm climate could not be contrived.

After leaving Jedidah, we visit the ruins of the fortress on the mound in the centre of the city. The whole place is overrun with brushwood, and is difficult of ascent. Many snakes glide rapidly away from the dilapidated old walls, where they have been basking in the sun. Under these circumstances, and as the view is limited, we content ourselves with picking up a few antique old arrows, which the inhabitants declare are some of the identical ones used by the Islam invaders; and, beating a hasty retreat, we pass rapidly out of the city again, and make the best of our way to Kitab, which is at the exactly opposite extremity of the city to Jedidah. On our way thither, we pass through some of the vast gardens of which the Aleppines are so exceedingly proud, and whither daily during the fine weather pic-nic parties resort. The gardens have not much to boast of in the shape of flowers. There is no lack of shady trees, however, and pleasant rivulets intersect the whole. Under almost every tree we find some pleasure party bivouacked, their chief amusement seeming to be the chanting of doleful ditties with a horribly nasal twang.

Kitab has arisen, as it were, out of the dust and fragments of the earthquake of 1821. It is exclusively occupied by European families, who have built themselves elegant light residences surrounded with tasty flower gardens, and in the immediate proximity of large open plains. There are no streets, each house being detached, and surrounded by extensive grounds. The founders of this place had before their eyes with vivid terror the disastrous results of being cooped up in narrow stone thoroughfares, and have endeavoured to provide some outlet against any like calamity in the future. This brings our visit to Aleppo to an end.

PASSING THE BOTTLE.

HALF the intemperance in England is due not so much to a love of drink, as to a listless, unthinking, mechanical compliance with forms and usages. In private society, the absurd custom of health-drinking and head-bobbing has been judiciously got rid of, after an existence extending over half a century. Excessive indulgence in wine is no longer

encouraged and stimulated by the "good manners" of the dinner-table, and those who enter the drawing-room, after the banquet is over, with flushed faces and filmy eyes, must proclaim themselves drunkards, pure and simple. At public dinners, the enduring monotonous system of "toasts" is still an incentive to intemperance. No matter what fiery poison is put before you under the names of "port" and "sherry," you must empty your glass to the Queen, the Prince Consort, Albert Prince of Wales, and the rest of the royal family; to the army and navy, the chief object of the meeting (whatever that may be), and the chairman and vice-chairman. If you happen to sit amongst a temperate knot of men, amongst the reporters, for example, who have work to do, you may go through these "toasts" with comparatively little drinking; but if your seat happens to be in a prominent part of the room, and some would-be loyal maniac thinks proper to shout out "bumpers," you may have to consume a pint or two of trash in obedience to custom.

Twenty years ago, Mr. Dunlop published a book upon the artificial and compulsory drinking usages in Great Britain and Ireland; and though many of the empty and injurious customs he censures have been driven out since 1840, by the slightly improved habits of all classes, too many yet remain as supporters of intemperance. He was able to enumerate at least three hundred of these drinking usages, spread over about ninety-eight trades and occupations; and we shall only be giving publicity to the contents of a very useful though half forgotten book, if we describe a few of these convivial laws of society.

We pass over Scotland and Ireland, and turn to England, properly so called.

Amongst shipwrights, the apprentice is drunk into his trade and drunk out of it. He has to find two pounds for his "footing," to be expended in drink, and from one to five pounds for the same purpose on his "loosing," or termination of his apprenticeship. Launching is always a great drinking festival for the men, and every tradesman interested in the rise and progress of the vessel—block-maker, painter, plumber, glazier, joiner, and others—has to pay drink fees to the "shop" at one period or another. There is "caulking-footing" and "keel money" given by the owners and employers; "chip-money," about three shillings, extracted from every pair of sawyers in the yard; besides other drink-tributes exacted when the lower deck beams are got in. A workman pays ten shillings on his marriage, and is fined one shilling for drink if he comes to his "yard" on a Monday morning unshaved, or with dirty shoes, or a dirty shirt. The non-payment of most of these penalties is met by various punishments. Sometimes the jacket of the offender is nailed to the board with large nails, or his hat is mopped with tar.

In foundries the practice is very similar. "Footings" and "loosings" cost just as much, and the money collected is spent in the same manner. Shifting vice, or lathe, moving to a better situation in the work, birthdays, national saints' days, and orders given to brass, iron, coal, timber, and tin merchants, are all marked with a certain amount of