

Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna

1841

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I found a luxury in grieving alone, brooding on the past, and painting the probable future in any colours but those of reality. My father had enjoyed two livings with a minor canonry in the cathedral, but the emolument was very small, and his income had not allowed him, as yet, to make any provision for us. A small annuity was all that my mother could depend on, and I resolved to become a novel-writer, for which I was just qualified, both by nature and habits of thinking, and in which I should probably have succeeded very well, but it pleased God to save me from this snare. My brother's unexpected return on leave, with our subsequent changes of abode, paying visits among friends, and keeping my thoughts constantly unsettled, hindered the execution of the project ; and when my brother returned to Portugal, we repaired to London, to make a long stay with some near relations. It was there that I met with the gentleman, an officer on leave of absence, whose wife, at the end of six months, I became.

I am longing to arrive at that period when the light of the glorious gospel of Christ first shone upon me through the darkness of many trying dispensations : therefore I pass by much that intervened, including my dear brother's marriage, who returned again to Lisbon with his bride and his mother, to resume his staff situation there ; and shall only take you with me across the Atlantic, for a few Nova-Scotian reminiscences, before proceeding to the scene of my most precious recollections, dear Ireland. My husband had joined his regiment in Halifax, and sent me a summons to follow him out without delay ; in order to which I was obliged to embark in a large vessel taken up partially by government for the conveyance of troops, but in which there was a select party, occupying the state cabin, and making their own terms with the captain for the best possible accommodation and provision on the passage. Of this number was I ; and certainly a more select, polished, and agreeable party of highly-bred gentlemen could not have been found. I went under the kind care of one of these, with his wife, who had invited me to travel with them.

Have you ever been at sea ? It is a question the answer to which will throw very little light on the matter unless you also state how it agreed with you ; no two races on the earth can be more distinct than those two are upon the water,—the people who are sea-sick and the people who are not. It was my happy privilege to belong to the latter class : I never for a moment experienced even an unpleasant sensation from any marine cause, but on the contrary enjoyed exemption from all physical annoyances during a five weeks' voyage, excepting that of hunger. An abundant supply of every thing that was nourishing, in the most palatable form, left no excuse for remaining hungry ; nevertheless the demand was incessantly kept up ; and I appeal to all who have been similarly affected, whether the munching of hard sea-bread from morning to night under the pressure of a real sea appetite is not a greater luxury than the choicest viands on shore. To me it certainly was ; and surely I had reason to be deeply thankful to the Lord, who, by means of that delicious voyage, and its bracing, exhilarating effects, prepared me for a trying winter in the singular climate for which I was bound.

Every day, and all day long, be the weather what it might, I was stationed on deck ; generally seated on the highest point of the ship's stern, directly over the rudder, to enjoy a full view of that most graceful and exquisite spectacle, a large vessel's course through the

mighty deep. Our's was a splendid one : a West Indiaman, almost rivalling the sea-palaces of the East India Company, and manned in the first style. The troops on board under the command of a field officer, greatly added to the effect and comfort of the thing, for nothing is so conducive to the latter as military discipline, well and mildly maintained. . Although our party was perfectly distinct from those who went out entirely at the charge of government, consisting of several officers and their wives, yet we too were nearly all military, including the commandant, and were strictly amenable to martial law. Of course, that soul of domestic and social comfort, punctuality, reigned paramount ; every meal was regulated by beat of drum, subordination carefully preserved, and decorum, to the most minute particular, insisted on. No dishabille could appear, in the cabin or on deck ; no litter, not an article of luggage visible. All the sick people, all the cross people, and all the whimsical people were stowed away in their respective berths, and such drawing-room elegance, combined with the utmost freedom of good-humour and the unrestrained frankness that results from a consciousness of proper restraint, pervaded our little select coterie, amounting to seventeen gentlemen and two ladies, that it did not need the miserable contrast which I afterwards experienced on the homeward passage to assure me we were among the most favoured of ocean travellers. How very much do they err who consider the absence of order and method as supplying greater liberty or removing a sense of restraint ! Such freedom is galling to me ; and in my eyes, the want of punctuality is a want of honest principle ; for however people may think themselves authorized to rob God and themselves of their own time, they can plead no right to lay a violent hand on the time and duties of their neighbour. I say it deliberately, that I have been defrauded of hundreds of pounds, and cruelly deprived of my necessary refreshment in exercise, in sleep, and even in seasonable food, through this disgraceful want of punctuality in others, more than through any cause whatsoever besides. It is also very irritating, for a person who would cheerfully bestow a piece of gold does not like to be swindled out of a piece of copper ; and many an hour have I been ungenerously wronged of, to the excitement of feelings in themselves far from right, when I would gladly have so arranged my work as to bestow upon the robbers thrice the time they made me wantonly sacrifice. To say, I will come to you on such a day, leaving the person to expect you early, and then, after wasting her day in that uncomfortable unsettled state of looking out for a guest, which precludes all application to present duties, and to come late in the evening—or to accept an invitation to dinner, and either break the engagement or throw the house-hold into confusion by making it wait—to appoint a meeting, and fail of keeping your time—all these, and many other effects of this vile habit are exceedingly disgraceful, and wholly opposed to the scriptural rules laid down for the governance of our conduct one to another. I say nothing of the insult put upon the Most High, the daring presumption of breaking in upon the devotions of His worshippers, and involving them in the sin of abstractedness from the solemn work before them, by entering late into the house of prayer. Such persons may one day find they have a more serious account to render on the score of their contempt of punctuality than they seem willing to believe.

But I have run away from my ship ; yet not so ; for as every thing shines out most by contrast, it was natural to think on the ugly reverse when recalling the beautiful harmony and order of our regulations on board. We were favoured with most delightful weather, fresh and dry, and warm : with only one day's hard rain, during which the sea ' ran mountains ' as the sailors said. I was conducted on deck, ' just for one minute, that you may be able to say you have seen such a sea,' remarked the gentleman who put a military cloak over me, and led me up the stairs. But who could be satisfied with a momentary sight of anything so stupendously grand ! I resisted all efforts to persuade me into retreating again, and it ended in my being lashed to the mizen-mast by my friendly conductor, who declared that his head, the best landsman's head on board, would not stand the giddy scene ; in short, that he should be obliged to report himself sick, and exchange our agreeable society below for the solitude of his berth. Of course, I dismissed him, and was left among the mountains, alone, save when a

sailor passed me on his duties among the rigging, and gave me a smile of approval ; while the man at the wheel seemed to regard me as being under his especial patronage. The tars love one who does not flinch from their own element.

Truly, I saw, that day, the works of the Lord and his wonders in the great deep ! Imagine yourself in a ship, large among vessels, but a mere cork upon the waters of that mighty main. On every side, turn where you would, a huge mountain of irregular form was rising ; dark, smooth, of unbroken surface, but seeming about to burst from over-extension. How did you come into that strange valley ?—how should you get out of it ?—how avoid the rash of that giant billow that even now overhangs your bark ? These questions would inevitably rush through the mind ; but in a second of time the huge body beside you sank,—you were on its summit,—and another came rolling on. Meanwhile the ship would reel, with a slow slanting movement that gradually lowered the tall masts till the yards almost dipped in the brine, and you were either laid back on the frame work behind you, or well nigh suspended, looking down upon the water, over the ship's bulwarks. I soon discovered why my companion had so carefully buckled the leather-strap that held me to the mast ; certainly I cannot recal the scene with such steadiness of nerve as I beheld it with. Every now and then, a small billow would burst upon the vessel's side, sending its liquid treasure across the deck, and more than one ablution of the kind was added to the fresh water drenching bestowed by the clouds. Can you fancy the discomfort of such a situation ? Then you never were at sea, or at least you left your imagination ashore ; for I defy any person not well inured to it to look on such a scene with so negative a feeling as discomfort ; it will excite either terror or delight sufficient to engross the whole mind.

I well remember that, when deeply affected by the grandeur of this and other aspects assumed by the majestic main, I found the highest flights of man's sublimity too low. They would not express, would not chime in with my conceptions ; and I was driven to the inspired pages for a commentary on the glorious scene. It was then that the language of Job, of Isaiah, of Habakkuk supplied me with a strain suited to the sublime accompaniment of God's magnificent work. Sunrise I could not witness, because at that hour no lady might appear on deck, and my cabin had not a side window ; but sunset, moonlight, starlight, with the various phenomena of ocean's ever-varying appearance, these furnished an endless contemplation with which nothing could accord but the language of Holy Writ. I did not bring forth my Bible, well knowing the bantering remarks to which it would have exposed me on the score of affectation, but my memory served me equally well in that as in profane poetry ; and many a precious word of warning, exhortation, promise, did I recite, enchanted by the sublimity of what, as to its spiritual meaning, was still an unknown tongue to me. Among these, the thirty-second of Deuteronomy, the fortieth of Isaiah, and other passages full of the gospel, were repeatedly called to mind ; and above all, in blowing weather, the forty-sixth Psalm delighted me.

You may suppose that I could not wholly forget the fact of being where, in the strictest sense, there was but a step between me and death. The first day of our voyage some one had quoted the expression, ' there is but a plank between us and eternity ;' not with any serious application, but as a fine thought. I do not think that I was ever for a moment unmindful of this ; the presence of actual danger was always felt by me ; but concerning eternity I had no fears whatever. A general reliance on the boundless mercy of God, a recognition of Christ, as having suffered for our sins, and a degree of self-righteousness that easily threw my sins into the shade while magnifying my supposed merits, these formed the staff whereon I leaned ; and when the most imminent and appalling peril overhung us, so that we expected to be engulfed in the waves without hope of succour, I looked it boldly in the face, confident in my own false hope. Although just then revelling in enjoyments best suited to my natural taste, life had in reality no charms for me. From all that had gilded the sunny hours of youth I was

completely severed, and the world on which I had launched was a wilderness indeed in comparison with the Eden I had left. I would not have made the slightest effort to escape from death in any form, and though I was not senseless enough to prefer an eternity of untried wretchedness to the fleeting sorrows of mortal life, yet as my conscience was lulled to rest by the self-delusion that I suffered more than I deserved, and had therefore a claim on divine justice ; and as I was willing to receive the supposed balance of such debtor and creditor account in the world to come, I was perfectly content to be summoned to my reward. Blessed be God that I was not taken away in that hour of blind willingness !

The extreme peril to which I have alluded overtook us when within a short distance of our destination : we were suddenly caught by a tremendous wind from the south, which blew us right in the direction of Cape Sable, one of the most fatal head-lands in those seas. Night closed upon us, and the gale increased ; sails were spread, in a desperate hope of shifting the vessel's course, but were instantly torn into ribbands. At one time, for a moment, the rudder broke loose, the tiller-rope giving way under the violent strain upon it ; and the next minute the spanker-boom, an immense piece of timber, snapped like a reed. It was an awful scene ; on the lee side, the ship lay so low in the water that every thing was afloat in the sleeping cabins ; and the poor ladies were screaming over their terrified children, unheeded by the gentlemen, every one of whom was on deck. The captain openly declared we were bound for the bottom, if a very sudden and unlikely change of wind did not take place. In the midst of all this, I was reported missing, and as I had the privilege of being everybody's care, because, for the time being, I belonged to nobody, a search was commenced. A young officer found me, at last, so singularly situated that he went and reported me to the captain. I had climbed three tiers of lockers in the state cabin, opened one of the large stern windows, and was leaning out, as far as I could reach, enraptured beyond expression with the terrific grandeur of the scene. The sky above was black as midnight and the storm could make it, overhanging us like a large pall, and rendered awfully visible by the brilliancy of the waters beneath. I had heard of that phosphorescent appearance in the sea, but never could have imagined its grandeur, nor can I essay to describe it. Even in perfect stillness the illuminated element would have looked magnificent ; what then must it have been in a state of excessive, tumultuous agitation, the waves swelling up to a fearful height and then bursting into sheets of foam ; every drop containing some luminous animalculæ sparkling with vivid yet delicate lustre. We were going with headlong speed before the wind, and I hung right over the track of the rudder, a wild, mad eddy of silver foam, intermingled with fire. There was something in the scene that far overpassed all my extravagant imaginings of the terribly sublime. The hurry, the fierceness, the riot of those unfettered waters, the wild flash of their wondrous lights, the funereal blackness of the overhanging clouds, and the deep, desperate plunge of our gallant ship, as she seemed to rend her way through an opposing chaos—it was perfect delirium ; and no doubt I should have appeared in keeping with the rest to any external observer ; for I was stretching out at the window, the combs had fallen from my hair, which streamed as wildly as the rent sails ; and I was frequently deluged by some bursting wave, as the dip of the vessel brought me down almost to the surface. The peril of an open window was startling to those on deck, and the captain, hearing that I refused to relinquish my post, sent the mate to put up the dead lights ; so I sat down on the floor, buried my face in my hands, and strove to realize the magnificence thus rent from my sight.

Yes, God's works in the great deep are indeed wonders ! Nothing landward can possibly approach them ; in the rudest tempest the ground remains firm, and you feel that you are a spectator ; but at sea you are a part of the storm. The plank whereon, you stand refuses to support you ; ever shifting its inclination, while the whole of your frail tenement is now borne aloft, now dashed into the liquid furrow beneath, now struck back by a head-sea with a shock that makes every timber quiver, now flung on one side as if about to reverse itself in the bosom of the deep—no doubt the sense of personal danger, the death-pang already

anticipated, the dark abyss that yawns before the sinner, and the heaven opening on a believer's soul, must each and any of them deaden the sense to what I have vainly sought to describe ; and I suppose this accounts for the astonishment expressed by the whole party at my singular conduct, when the youth who was sent to warn me of the peril, described my half-angry, half-reproachful pettishness at the interruption, " Can't you let me enjoy it in peace, Mr. J—— ? Shall I ever see anything like it again ? Do go away." " But the captain says the window *must* be shut." " Then take me on deck, and you may shut it." " That is utterly impossible, no lady could stand for an instant on deck, your drapery would bear you over the ship's side." " Then I won't shut the window, so go and tell Captain L—— not to tease me with messages."

This was downright recklessness. I wonder when recalling it to mind, and feel that I could not have thus sported with death after I acquired a good and solid hope of everlasting life. The act of dying had always great terrors for me, until, through adverse circumstances, I seemed to have nothing worth living for, and then I could laugh at it in my own heart. Strange to say, that fearfulness of the passage through the dark valley returned with double force when I had realized a personal claim to the guiding rod and the supporting staff, and the bright inheritance beyond. But before this period of blessedness, of joy and peace in believing arrived, I had to pass through many waters of affliction, and to experience remarkable interpositions at His hand who was leading me by a path which I knew not.

Two of them I will mention : while at Annapolis and at Windsor, I had a horse provided for me of rare beauty and grace, but a perfect Bucephalus in her way. She was only two generations removed from a splendid Arabian, given by the good old king to the Duke of Kent, when H. R. H. went out in command to Nova Scotia. This creature was not three years old, and, to all appearance, unbroke. Her manners were those of a kid rather than of a horse : she was of a lovely dappled grey, with mane and tail of silver, the latter almost sweeping the ground ; and in her frolicsome gambols she turned it over her back like that of a Newfoundland dog. Her slow step was a bound ; her swift motion unlike that of any other animal I ever rode, so fleet, so smooth, so unruffled—I know nothing to which I can compare it. Well, I made this lovely creature so fond of me by constant petting, to which I suppose her Arab character made her peculiarly sensitive, that my voice had equal power over her as over my docile, faithful dog. No other person could in the slightest degree control her : our corps, the 7th Batt. of the 60th Rifles, was composed wholly of the *elite* of Napoleon's soldiers, taken in the Peninsula, and preferring the British service to a prison. They were principally conscripts, and many were evidently of a higher class in society than is usually found in the ranks. Among them were several Chasseurs and Polish Lancers, very fine equestrians, and as my husband had a Field Officer's command (on detachments) and allowances, our horses were well looked after. His groom was a Chasseur, mine a Pole ; but neither could ride Fairy, unless she happened to be in a very gracious mood. Lord Dalhousie's English coachman afterwards tried his hand at taming her, but all in vain. In an easy quiet way, she either sent her rider over her head, or by a laughable manoeuvre sitting down like a dog on her haunches, slipped him off the other way. Her drollery made the poor men so fond of her that she was rarely chastised ; and such a wilful, intractable wild Arab it would be hard to find. Upon her I was daily mounted ; and surely the Lord watched over me then indeed ! Inexperienced in riding, untaught, unassisted, and wholly unable to lay any check upon so powerful an animal, with an awkward country saddle, which, by some fatality was never well fixed, bit and bridle to match, and the mare's natural fire increased by high feed, behold me bound for the wildest paths in the wildest regions of that wild country ! But you must explore the roads about Annapolis, and the romantic spot called ' The General's Bridge,' to imagine either the enjoyment or the perils of that my happiest hour. Reckless to the last degree of desperation, I threw myself entirely on the fond attachment of the noble creature ; and when I saw her measuring with her eye some rugged fence or wild chasm, such as it was her

common sport to leap over in her play, the soft word of remonstrance that checked her was uttered more from regard to her safety than my own. The least whisper, a pat on the neck, or a stroke down the beautiful face that she used to throw up towards mine, would control her ; and never for a moment did she endanger me. This was little short of a daily miracle when we consider the nature of the country, her character, and my unskilfulness. It can only be accounted for on the ground of that wondrous power which having willed me to work for a time in the vineyard of the Lord, rendered me immortal until the work should be done. Oh that my soul and all that is within me could sufficiently bless the Lord, and remember all his benefits !

I was then unmindful of, and unthankful for His protection ; I revelled in the delights of a freedom that none could share but my dog, who never left the side of his associate. Shall I give you a sketch of the group, in some lines composed during one of those excursions ? They may partly describe it. I found them among some old papers :—

‘ I know by the ardour thou can’st not restrain,
By the curve of thy neck and the toss of thy mane,
By the foam of thy snorting which spangles my brow,
The fire of the Arab is hot in thee now.
’Twere harsh to control thee, my frolicksome steed,
I give thee the rein—so away at thy speed ;
Thy rider will dare to be wilful as thee,
Laugh the future to scorn, and partake in thy glee.
Away to the mountain—what need we to fear ?
Pursuit cannot press on my Fairy’s career.
Full light were the heel and well balanced the head
That ventured to follow the track of thy tread ;
Where roars the loud torrent and starts the rude plank,
And thunders the rock-severed mass down the bank.
While mirror’d in crystal the far-shooting glow,
With dazzling effulgence is sparkling below.
One start, and I die ; yet in peace I recline,
My bosom can rest on the fealty of thine ;
Thou lov’st me, my sweet one, and would’st not be free
From a yoke that has never borne rudely on thee
Ah, pleasant the empire of those to confess
Whose wrath is a whisper, their rule a caress

Behold how thy playmate is stretching beside,
As loth to be vanquish’d in love or in pride.
While upward he glances his eye-ball of jet
Half dreading thy fleetness may distance him yet
Ah Marco, poor Marco—our pastime to-day
Were reft of one pleasure if he were away.

How precious these moments ! fair Freedom expands
Her pinions of light o’er the desolate lands :
The waters are flashing as bright as thine eye
Unchained as thy motion the breezes sweep by ;
Delicious they come, o’er the flower-scented earth
Like whispers of love from the isle of my birth ;
While the white-bosom’d Cistus her perfume exhales,
And sighs out a spicy farewell to the gales.

Unfeared and unfearing well traverse the wood.
Where pours the rude torrent its turbulent flood :
The forest's red children will smile as we scour
By the log-fashioned hut and the pine-woven bower ;
Thy feathery footsteps scarce bending the gross.
Or denting the dew-spangled moss where we pass.

What startles thee ? ' Twas but the sentinel gun
Flashed a vesper salute to thy rival, the sun ;
He has closed his swift progress before thee, and sweeps
With fetlock of gold, the last verge of the steeps.
The fire-fly anon from his covert shall glide.
And dark fall the shadows of ere on the tide.
Tread softly—my spirit is joyous no more,
A northern aurora, it shone and is o'er ;
The tears will fall fast as I gather the rein.
And a long look reverts to yon shadowy plain.'

There is more of it, but nothing to the purpose of the present history. It cost me something to transcribe this, so vividly is the past recalled by it. Would to God I might more fully devote to His service every day of the life so wonderfully preserved by Him !

In addition to this continuous preservation on horse-back, I experienced the same interposing providence when violently upset in a gig. The road where it occurred was strewn with broken rocks, on either side, for miles ; and scarcely one dear spot appeared, save that on which I was thrown, where a carpet of the softest grass overspread a perfect level of about twelve feet in length and nearly the same in width. Here I fell, with no other injury than a contusion on the hip. The gig was completely reversed, the horse dashed on till he ran one of the shafts into a bank, and set himself fast.

My sojourn in this interesting country was of two years' duration, marked with many mercies, among the greatest of which was the uninterrupted enjoyment of perfect health ; although my first winter there was the most severe that had been known for thirty years, and the following summer one of the most oppressively hot they had ever experienced. The gradations of spring, autumn and twilight are there scarcely known, and the sudden transition from summer to winter is as trying to the health of an European as that from day to night is uncongenial to the taste. Here, too, I repented at leisure, and amended with no small difficulty and labour, my neglect of those accomplishments to which my dear mother had so often vainly solicited my attention. The pencil was profitless ; I had long thrown it by : books were no longer an adequate set-off against realities, even could I have conjured up a library in the wilderness of Nova Scotia's inland settlement : but the culinary and confectionary branches of education were there invaluable, and in them I was wofully deficient. Had I not coaxed the old French soldier who officiated as mess-cook to give me a few lessons, we must have lived on raw meal and salt rations during weeks when the roads were completely snowed up, and no provisions could be brought in. However, I proved an apt scholar to poor Sebastian, and to the kind neighbours who initiated me into the mysteries of preserves and pastry. Young ladies cannot tell into what situations events may throw them ; and I would strongly recommend the revival of that obsolete study called good housewifery. The woman who cannot dispense with female servants must not travel : I had none for six months—keen winter months—in Annapolis ; the only persons who could be found disengaged being of characters wholly inadmissible. The straits to which I was put were any thing but laughable at the time, though the recollection now often excites a smile. Indeed no perfection in European housekeeping would avail to guard against the devastations that a Nova Scotian frost will make, if not met

by tactics peculiar to that climate. How could I anticipate that a fine piece of beef, fresh killed, brought in at noon still warm, would by two o'clock require smart blows with a hatchet to slice off a steak ? or that half a dozen plates, perfectly dry, placed at a moderate distance from the fire preparatory to dinner, would presently separate into half a hundred fragments, through the action of heat on their frosted pores ; or that milk drawn from a cow within sight of my breakfast table would be sheeted with ice on its passage thither—or that a momentary pause, for the choice of a fitting phrase in writing a letter, would load the nib of my pen with a black icicle ? If I did not cry over my numerous breakages, and other disasters, it was under the apprehension of tears freezing on my eyelids : and truly they might have done so ; for my fingers were once in that awful condition that must have ended in mortification, but for the presence of mind of a poor soldier, who, seeing me running to the fire in that state, drew his bayonet to bar my approach, and wrapping a coarse cloth round my lifeless hands, muff-fashion, compelled me to walk up and down the spacious hall until the circulation returned, which it did with a sensation of agony that well nigh took away my senses. This was a most signal escape, for I was wholly ignorant of my danger, and not a little perplexed and annoyed at the insubordinate conduct of the veteran, who was a model of respectful humility. Had he, poor fellow, known how busy those fingers would one day be against his religion—for he was a French Romanist—he might have been tempted to sheath his bayonet and give me free access to the tempting fire, the immense faggots of which would have sufficed to roast a heretic.

Nova Scotia is, I firmly believe, the most generally and devotedly loyal of all our colonies : the attachment of its people to the mother-country is beautiful ; and their partisanship in all questions between us and the States most zealous. The only fault I had to find with them was their indifference towards the poor relics of the Indian race still dwelling in the woods, who were to me objects of the liveliest interest even before I had any feeling of Christian duty towards the heathen ; or towards such as those, who are worse than heathen, being numbered among the members of the Romish Church, and utterly, wretchedly ignorant even of such little truth as remains buried under the mass of anti-christian error, to make its darkness more visible. The Indians are wholly despised ; scarcely looked on as beings of the same race, by the generality of the colonists. Where Christian principle prevails, they become of course, important in the highest degree : but I speak of what I saw, when vital godliness was little known among them, and I can aver that even Lord Dalhousie scarcely could succeed in stirring up a momentary interest for the dispersed Aborigines. That excellent nobleman devoted himself very warmly to the work of attempting their civilization ; and told me that if a few would join him, heartily and zealously in the effort, he should succeed : but that what between lukewarmness on the one side, and suspicion on the other, he found himself completely baffled. It was not to be wondered at that the Indians had a lurking dread of experiencing again the hardships, not to say the treachery and cruelty, inflicted on their fathers. I enjoyed a high place in the affection and confidence of those interesting people, the origin of which may help to prove at how light an estimate the poor creatures were generally rated by their white brethren. My claim on their attachment consisted in nothing more than the performance of a bounden duty in sheltering for a few weeks one of their number, who had, in a most unprovoked and cruel manner, been wounded by a party of our soldiers, and left to perish in the woods.

How beautiful do the white cliffs of Albion appear in the eyes of the returning wanderer who has learned by a foreign sojourn to estimate the comforts, the privileges, the blessings of this island home ! No place could be more thoroughly English in feeling, habits and principles than Nova Scotia ; but it was not England. The violent transition of seasons, so different from the soft gradations by which, with us, winter brightens into summer, and summer fades into winter, marked a contrast far from pleasing ; and the intensity of cold, the fierceness of heat, alike unknown in our temperate climate, forced comparisons far from

agreeable. Thus, on the lowest ground of a wholly selfish feeling, the approach to my native shore could not be otherwise than delightful ; but viewed as the mother land of all her interesting colonies, as the great emporium of commerce, the chief temple of liberty, the nurse of military prowess, the unconquered champion of all that is nationally great throughout the world, the sight of our free and happy isle is indeed an inspiring one to those who can appreciate moral grandeur. How much more, in the eyes of the Christian, is she to be esteemed as the glory of all lands (until Judea again shine forth in that her own unalienable character,) as possessing the true knowledge of God, and labouring to spend that knowledge throughout the world—the land of Protestantism, the land of the Bible !

I really cannot understand the meaning, nor fancy what may be the feeling, of those who profess to have merged their patriotism in something of universal good-will to the household of faith all over the world. It seems to me every whit as unnatural as that the members of a Christian family should forego all the sweets of conjugal, parental, filial, fraternal love, in the determination to feel an equal regard for his neighbour's wife, husband, &c., as for his own ; and, moreover, to take an equal concern in the affairs of his neighbour's kitchen as in his own household matters. This sort of generalizing regard would throw our respective establishments into singular confusion, and might betray ourselves into sundry false positions, and very awkward predicaments. However, the comparative extinction of natural affection would form the most prominently reprehensible feature in the case ; and I cannot but think that the boasted cosmopolitanism of some good people would wear an aspect not very dissimilar if rightly and soberly viewed. Certainly I could no more tear the love of country from my heart, than I could the love of kindred ; and when my step again pressed the English strand, it was with a sensation almost resembling the fabled invigoration of the Titans, who derived new life, new strength, new enterprize from coming in contact with their mother earth.

England, indeed, contained little that was personally endearing to me, except my beloved surviving parent ; but it was a joyous thing to embrace her once more, after the deep roll of the ocean had separated us for nearly three years ; during a portion of which she had been learning to prize her native land in a disgusting region of all that is most directly opposed to liberty, civil or religious ; to honourable feeling, just conduct, honest principle or practical decency. In short, she had been in Portugal !

IRELAND.

I NOW arrive at an epoch from which I may date the commencement of all that deserves to be called life, inasmuch I had hitherto been living without God in the world. My existence was a feverish dream of vain pleasures first, and then of agitations and horrors. My mind was a chaos of useless information, my character of unapplied energies, my heart a waste of unclaimed affections, and my hope an enigma of confused speculations. I had plenty to do, yet felt that I was doing nothing ; and there was a growing want within my bosom, a craving after I knew not what ; a restless, unsatisfied, unhappy feeling, that seemed in quest of some unknown good. How this was awakened, I know not ; it was unaccompanied with any conviction of my own sinfulness, or any doubt of my perfect safety as a child of God. I did not anticipate any satisfaction from change of place ; but readily prepared to obey a summons from my husband to follow him to Ireland, whither he had gone to engage in a law-suit. To be sure I hated Ireland most cordially ; I had never seen it, and as a matter of choice would have preferred New South Wales, so completely was I influenced by the prevailing prejudice against that land of barbarism ! Many people despise Ireland, who, if you demand a reason, will tell you it is a horrid place, and the people all savages ; but if you press for proofs and illustrations, furthermore such deponents say not.

On a dull day in April I took my place, a solitary traveller, in the Shrewsbury coach, quite ignorant as to the road I was to travel, and far less at home than I should have been in the wildest part of North America, or on the deck of a ship bound to circumnavigate the globe. We rattled out of London, and the first thing that at all roused my attention was a moonlight view of Oxford, where we stopped at midnight to change horses. Those old grey towers, and mighty masses of ancient building, on which the silvery ray fell with fine effect, awoke in my bosom two melancholy trains of thought ; one was the recollection of my father, whose enthusiastic attachment to his own university had often provoked warm discussion with the no less attached Cantabs of our old social parties, and who often held out to me, as the greatest of earthly gratifications, a visit with him to that seat of learning, which he would describe in glowing colours. But where was my father now ? His poor girl, the delight of his eyes and treasure of his heart, was in Oxford, with none to guide, none to guard, none to speak a cheering word to her. I shrank back in the coach ; and grieved over this till a sudden turning once more threw before me the outline of some magnificent old fabric bathed in moonlight, and that called up a fit of patriotism, calculated to darken yet more the prospect before me. This was England, my own proud England ; and these “ the cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,” that distinguished her seats of learning above all others. I was bound — for Ireland ! What English young lady had ever studied the history of that remote, half-civilized settlement called Ireland ? Not I, certainly, nor any of my acquaintance ; but I took it for granted that Ireland had no antiquities, nothing to distinguish her from other barbarous lands, except that her people ate potatoes, made blunders, and went to mass. I felt it a sort of degradation to have an Irish name, and to go there as a resident ; but comforted myself by resolving never in any particular to give into any Irish mode of living, speaking or thinking, and to associate only with such as had been at least educated in England.

The next day’s rising sun shone upon Stratford-on-Avon ; and here revived in some degree, my Shakesperean mania, to the still higher exaltation of my English stilts, and the deeper debasement of all “ rough Irish kernes.” At Shrewsbury we parted with a kind old lady, who had shewn me some good-natured attentions, and I was left with only an elderly gentleman, bound also for Dublin, who told me we must start at 3 o’clock the following morning for Holyhead. I was dreadfully dejected, and told him I hoped he would not think the worse of me for being so utterly alone, and that he would excuse my retiring to my own apartment the instant we had dined. He took pencil and paper, and with a glow of benevolent feeling expressed his anxious desire to take the same care of me that he would of his own daughter, and to look on me as his especial charge, until he should give me into the hands of my lawful protector. I thanked him, with true English reserve, and a coldness that seemed rather to grate on his warm feelings, and having owned that his seeing my Newfoundland dog well fed and lodged would be a great obligation, I withdrew to fret alone over my exile to this foreign land. You may call this an exaggeration, but it is no such thing. I delight in dwelling upon my reluctant approach to the land that I was to love so fondly.

Next day my miseries were alleviated by the enchanting beauties of the Welsh country through which we passed; and my regard for Mr. D. greatly increased by the compassionate care he took of a poor sickly woman and her ragged infant, whom he descried on the top of the coach, and first threw his large cloak to them, then, with my cordial assent, took them inside, and watched them most kindly, until he fell asleep. I peeped into his fine benevolent face, and inwardly confessed there might be some nice people in Ireland.

At the inn where we dined, I made another acquaintance : a younger, but middle-aged man, whose vivacity, combined with Welch mutton and ale, quite raised my spirits. Hearing from Mr. D. with what enthusiasm I had admired the scenery of Llangollen, he volunteered to hand me in at the coach window, a note of every remarkable place we should approach during the rest of the journey ; adding, “ I know the road pretty well, having traversed it at least

twice a year for sixteen years, passing to and from my Irish home.” He was a legal man, a finished gentleman, and another sad draw-back on my perverse prejudices. Mr. F. proved an excellent descriptive guide, punctually reaching to me from the roof of the coach his little memoranda, in time for me to take a survey of the object concerned ; and also most assiduously aiding in the care of my luggage and dog when we were all put into the ferry-boat.

There was then no bridge over the Menai, and I being in total ignorance of the route was not a little dismayed at the embarkation : forgetting that Holyhead was in Anglesea, and that Anglesea was an island. At last, when the boat pushed off, the opposite shore being hidden under the mist of deepening twilight, I addressed the ferryman in a tone of remonstrance that infinitely diverted the whole party, “ Surely you are not going to take me over in this way to Ireland !”

“ No, no,” said Mr. F. “ you shall have a good night’s rest, and a better sea-boat, before we start for the dear green isle.”

Steamers were not then upon the packet station, and the wind being unfavourable, we had a passage of seventeen hours, not landing until two in the morning of Easter Sunday. Nothing could exceed my discomfort, as you may suppose, when I tell you that after paying my bill at Holyhead, I, in a fit of abstraction, deposited it very safely in my purse, and in its stead threw away my last bank-note. The mistake was not suspected until, in mid voyage, I examined the state of my finances, and found the sum total to amount to one shilling. This was an awful discovery ; my passage was paid, but how to reach Dublin was a mystery, and such was the untamed pride of my character that I would sooner have walked there than confessed to the fact, which might have been doubted, and laid myself under the obligation of a loan which I was sure of repaying in a few hours, even to good old Mr. D. When I stepped from the deck of the packet upon the plank that rested against the pier of Howth, I had not one single half-penny in my pocket ; and I experienced without the slightest emotion one of the most hair-breadth escapes of my life.

The water was very low ; the plank, of course, sloped greatly, and, as soon as I set my foot on it, began to slide down. In another second I should have been plunged between the vessel’s side and the stone pier, without any human possibility of rescue ; and already I had lost my balance, when a sailor, springing on the bulwarks, caught me round the knees, and at the same instant Mr. F. throwing himself on the ground, seized and steadied the plank, until I recovered my footing and ran up. I shudder to recall the hardened indifference of my own spirit while the kind, warm-hearted Irishmen were agitated with strong emotion, and all around me thanking God for my escape. Each of my friends thought I had landed under the care of the other ; while one had my dog, and the other my portmanteau. I received their fervent ‘ cead-mille-failthe’ with cold politeness, and trod with feelings of disgust on the dear little green shamrocks that I now prize so fondly.

We went to the hotel, and Mr. D. proposed my retiring to a chamber until the coach started ; but my empty purse would not allow of that, so I said I preferred sitting where I was. Refreshments were ordered ; but though in a state of ravenous hunger, I steadily refused to touch them ; for I would not have allowed another person to pay for me, and was resolved to conceal my loss as long as I could. I was excused, on the presumption of a qualmishness resulting from the tossing of the ship ; and most melancholy, most forlorn were the feelings with which I watched through the large window the fading moonbeams and the dawning day. To my unspeakable joy, the two gentlemen proposed taking a post-chaise with me to Dublin, the expence being no more and the comfort much greater than going by coach ; and having

requested Mr. F. to keep an exact account of my share in the charges, I took my seat beside them with a far lighter heart ; my dog being on the foot-board in front of the carriage.

Away we drove, our horses being young, fresh, and in high condition. It was a glorious morning, and vainly did I strive not to admire the scenery, as one after another of the beautiful villas that adorn the Howth road gleamed out in the snowy whiteness that characterizes the houses there ; generally embosomed in trees, and surrounded by gardens, on the rising grounds. We were descending the hilly road very rapidly when by some means the horses took fright, and broke into a full gallop, crossing and recrossing the road in a fearful manner. The driver was thrown on the foot-board, poor Tajo hung by his chain against the horses' legs, and our situation was most critical. I had suffered from one upset in America, and resolved not to encounter another ; so quietly gathering my long riding habit about me with one hand, and putting the other out at the window, I opened the door, and with one active spring flung myself out. You know the extreme peril, the almost certain destruction of such a leap from a carriage at full speed ; I did not, or certainly I would not have taken it. However, at that very instant of time the horses made a dead stop ; and the chaise remained stationary only a few paces in advance of me.

Was not the hand of God here ? Oh, surely it was, in the most marked and wonderful manner. No cause could be assigned for the arrest of the animals ; the driver had lost the reins, and no one was near. I had fallen flat on the road side, just grazing my gloves with the gravel, and getting a good mouthful of the soil, with which my face was brought into involuntary contact. In a moment I sprang to my feet, and blowing it out exclaimed with a laugh, ' Oh, well ! I suppose I am to love this country after all ; for I have kissed it in spite of me.' I then ran to help my dog out of his disagreeable state of suspension, and returned to my friends, who were frightened and angry too, and who refused to let me into the chaise unless I positively promised not to jump out any more. To shorten the tale, I reached the Hibernian hotel, where my husband was, seized some money, and paid my expences without any one having discovered that I was a complete bankrupt up to that minute.

I have been very prolix here ; for I cannot overlook a single incident connected with this eventful journey. Never did any one less anticipate a blessing, or look for happiness than I in visiting Ireland. I cannot enter into more particulars, because it would involve the names of friends who might not wish to figure in print ; but if these pages ever meet the eyes of any who gave me the first day's welcome in Dublin, let them be assured that the remembrance of their tender kindness, the glowing warmth of their open hospitality, and their solicitude to make the poor stranger happy among them, broke through the ice of a heart that had frozen itself up in most unnatural reserve, and gave life to the first pulse that played within it, of the love that soon pervaded its every vein—the love of dear generous Ireland.

My first journey into the interior was to the King's county, where I passed some weeks in a house most curiously situated, with an open prospect of ten miles pure bog in front of it. Being newly built, nothing had yet had time to grow ; but its owner, one of the most delightful old gentlemen I ever met with, had spared no cost to render it commodious and handsome. He was a fine specimen of the hospitable Irish gentlemen, and took great pleasure in bringing me acquainted with the customs of a people and the features of a place so new to me. Indeed, it was my first introduction to what was really Irish, for Dublin is too much of a capital city to afford many specimens of distinct nationality. On that great festival of the peasantry, St. John's eve, Mr. C, resolved on giving his tenants and neighbours a treat that should also enlighten me on one of their most singular relics of paganism. It is the custom at sunset on that evening to kindle numerous immense fires throughout the country, built like our bonfires, to a great height, the pile being composed of turf, bog-wood, and such other combustibles as they can gather. The turf yields a steady, substantial body of fire, the bogwood a most brill-

iant flame ; and the effect of these great beacons blazing on every hill, sending up volumes of smoke from every point of the horizon, is very remarkable. Ours was a magnificent one, being provided by the landlord as a compliment to his people, and was built on the lawn, as close beside the house as safety would admit. Early in the evening the peasants began to assemble, all habited in their best array, glowing with health, every countenance full of that sparkling animation and excess of enjoyment that characterize the enthusiastic people of the land. I had never seen anything resembling it, and was exceedingly delighted with their handsome, intelligent, merry faces, the bold bearing of the men, and the playful, but really modest deportment of the maidens ; the vivacity of the aged people, and wild glee of the children. The fire being kindled, a splendid blaze shot up, and for a while they stood contemplating it, with faces strangely disfigured by the peculiar light first emitted when bogwood is thrown on ; after a short pause, the ground was cleared in front of an old blind piper, the very *beau-ideal* of energy, drollery, and shrewdness, who, seated on a low chair, with a well-plenished jug within his reach, screwed his pipes to the liveliest tunes, and the endless jig began.

An Irish jig is interminable, so long as the party holds together ; for when one of the dancers becomes fatigued, a fresh individual is ready to step into the vacated place quick as thought ; so that the other does not pause, until in like manner obliged to give place to a successor. They continue footing it, and setting to one another, occasionally moving in a figure, and changing places, with extraordinary rapidity, spirit and grace. Few indeed among even the very lowest of the most impoverished class have grown into youth without obtaining some lessons in this accomplishment from the travelling dancing-masters of their district ; and certainly in the way they use it, many would be disposed to grant a dispensation to the young peasant which they would withhold from the young peer. It is, however, sadly abused among them, to Sabbath-breaking, revellings, and the most immoral scenes, where they are congregated and kept together under its influence ; and the same scene, enacted a year afterwards, would have awoke in my mind very different feelings from those with which I regarded this first spectacle of Irish hilarity, when I could hardly be restrained by the laughing remonstrances of ‘ the quality ’ from throwing myself into the midst of the joyous groupe, and dancing with them.

But something was to follow that puzzled me not a little ; when the fire had burned for some hours, and got low, an indispensable part of the ceremony commenced. Every one present, of the peasantry, passed through it, and several children were thrown across the sparkling embers ; while a wooden frame of some eight feet long, with a horse’s head fixed to one end, and a large white sheet thrown over it, concealing the wood and the man on whose head it was carried, made its appearance. This was greeted with loud shouts as the “ white horse ;” and having been safely carried by the skill of its bearer several times through the fire with a bold leap, it pursued the people, who ran screaming and laughing in every direction. I asked what the horse was meant for, and was told it represented all cattle. Here was the old pagan worship of Baal, if not of Moloch too, carried on openly and universally in the heart of a nominally Christian country, and by millions professing the Christian name ! I was confounded, for I did not then know that Popery is only a crafty adaptation of pagan idolatries to its own scheme ; and while I looked upon the now wildly excited people, with their children and, in a figure, all their cattle passing again and again through the fire, I almost questioned in my own mind the lawfulness of the spectacle, considered in the light that the Bible must, even to the natural heart, exhibit it in to those who confess the true God. There was no one to whom I could breathe such thoughts, and they soon faded from my mind : not so the impression made on it by this fair specimen of a population whom I had long classed with the savage inhabitants of barbarous lands, picturing them to myself as dark, ferocious, discontented and malignant. That such was the reverse of their natural character I now began to feel convinced ; and from that evening my heart gradually warmed towards a race whom I found to be frank, warm and affectionate beyond any I had ever met with.

My interest in them, however, was soon to be placed on another and a firmer basis. I took up my permanent abode in a neighbouring county ; and within six months after that celebration of St. John's eve I experienced the mighty power of God in a way truly marvellous. Great and marvellous are all his works: in creating, in sustaining, in governing this world of wonderful creatures ; but oh how surpassingly marvellous and great in redeeming lost sinners, in taking away the heart of stone, and giving a heart of flesh, and making his people willing in the day of his power ! I have carefully abstained from any particulars respecting myself that could either cast a reproach on the dead or give pain to the living : I shall do so still, and merely remark that as far as this world was concerned my lot had no happiness mingled in it, and that my only solace under many grievous trials consisted in two things ; one was a careful concealment of whatever might subject my proud spirit to the mortification of being pitied when I desired rather to be envied ; and the other a confident assurance that in suffering afflictions silently, unresistingly and uncomplainingly, I was making God my debtor to a large amount. What desperate wickedness of a deceived and deceitful heart was this ! The very thing in which I so arrogantly vaunted myself before God was the direct result of personal pride, in itself a great sin ; and thus I truly gloried in my shame. I never looked beyond the rod to Him who had appointed it ; but satisfying myself that I had not merited, from man, any severity, my demerits at the hand of the Most High were wholly put out of the calculation. Thus, of course, every stroke drove me further from the only Rock of refuge, and deeper into the fastnesses of my own vain conceits. Added to this, I was wholly shut out from all the ordinary means by which the Lord usually calls sinners to himself. There was no gospel ministry then within my reach ; nor could I, if it were provided, have profited by it, owing to my infirmity. Into Christian society I had never entered ; nor had the least glimmer of spiritual light shone into my mind. My religion was that of the pharisee, and my addresses to God included, like his, an acknowledgment that it was by divine favour I was so much better than my neighbours. Reality had so far chased away romance, that my old favourite authors had little power to charm me ; and the hollowness of my affected gaiety and ease made society a very sickening thing. Besides, at my first coming to the very aristocratical little town where I then resided, I was neglected in a manner very mortifying to one who had been accustomed to find her level in society even a grade higher than that ; and this was most mercifully ordered, not only to humble my intolerable pride, but to smooth the way for that separation from worldly associates which was soon to become the desire of my heart, and to aid me in afterwards withstanding the temptation of most earnest and affectionate attentions from all around me, when, by means of an old friend very high indeed in military command, my real standing in society became better known to them.

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