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THE MUMMY!

A TALE

OF

THE TWENTY-SECOND CENTURY.

“Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up?”

1 SAM., xxviii. 15.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1827.

PR4936

L4 M92

1827

vol

LONDON

PRINTED BY S. AND R. BENTLEY, DORSET STREET.

INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE long wished to write a novel, but I could not determine what it was to be about. I could not bear any thing common-place, and I did not know what to do for a hero. Heroes are generally so much alike, so monotonous, so dreadfully insipid—so completely brothers of one race, with the family likeness so amazingly strong—“This will not do for me,” thought I as I sauntered listlessly down a shady lane, one fine evening in June; “I must have something new, something quite out of the beaten path:—but what?—ay, that was the question. In vain did I rack my brains—in vain did I search the

storehouse of my memory : I could think of nothing that had not been thought of before.

“It is very strange!” said I, as I walked faster, as though I hoped the rapidity of my motion would shake off the sluggishness of my imagination. It was all in vain ! I struck my forehead and called wit to my assistance, but the malignant deity was deaf to my entreaty. “Surely,” thought I, “the deep mine of invention cannot be worked out ; there must be some new ideas left, if I could but find them.” To find them, however, was the difficulty.

Thus lost in meditation, I walked onwards till I reached the brow of a hill, and a superb prospect burst upon me. A fertile valley richly wooded, studded with sumptuous villas and romantic cottages, and watered by a noble river, that wound slowly its lazy course along, spread beneath my feet ; and lofty hills swelling to the skies, their summit lost in clouds, bounded the horizon. The sun was setting in all its splendour, and its lingering rays gave those glowing tints and deep masses of shadow to the landscape that sometimes pro-

duce so magical an effect. It was quite a Claude Lorraine scene; and more fully to enjoy it, I entered a hay-field, and seated myself upon a grassy bank. The day had been sultry; and the evening breeze, as it murmured through the foliage, felt cool and refreshing. "It is a lovely world," thought I, "notwithstanding all that cynics can say against it. Our own passions bring misery upon our heads, and then we rail at the world, though we only are in fault. Why should I seek to wander in the regions of fiction? Why not enjoy tranquilly the blessings Heaven has bestowed upon me?"

I felt too indolent to answer my own question; a delicious stillness crept over my senses, and the heaving chaos of my ideas was lulled to repose. A majestic oak stretched its gnarled arms in sullen dignity above my head; myriads of busy insects buzzed around me; and woodbines and wild roses, hanging from every hedge, mingled their perfume with that of the new-mown hay. I reclined languidly on my grassy couch, listening to the indistinct hum of the distant village, and feeling that de-

lightful sense of exemption from care, that a faint murmur of bustle afar off gives to the weary spirit, when suddenly the bells struck up a joyous peal—the cheerful notes now swelling loudly upon the ear, then sinking gently away with the retiring breeze, and then again returning with added sweetness. I listened with delight to their melody, till their softness seemed to increase; the sounds became gradually fainter and fainter; the landscape faded from my sight; a soft languor crept over me: in short, I slept.

It would be of no use to go to sleep without dreaming; and, accordingly, I had scarcely closed my eyes when, methought, a spirit stood before me. His head was crowned with flowers; his azure wings fluttered in the breeze, and a light drapery, like the fleecy vapour that hangs upon the summit of a mountain, floated round him. In his hand he held a scroll, and his voice sounded soft and sweet as the liquid melody of the nightingale.

“Take this,” said he, smiling benignantly; “it is the Chronicle of a future age. Weave

it into a story. It will so far gratify your wishes, as to give you a hero totally different from any hero that ever appeared before. You hesitate," continued he, again smiling, and regarding me earnestly: "I read your thoughts, and see you fear to sketch the scenes of which you are to write, because you imagine they must be different from those with which you are acquainted. This is a natural distrust: the scenes will indeed be different from those you now behold; the whole face of society will be changed: new governments will have arisen; strange discoveries will be made, and stranger modes of life adopted. The restless curiosity and research of man will then have enabled him to lift the veil from much which is (to him at least) at present a mystery; and his powers (both as regards mechanical agency and intellectual knowledge) will be greatly enlarged. But even then, in his plenitude of acquirement, he will be made conscious of the infirmity of his nature, and will be guilty of many absurdities which, in his less *enlightened* state, he would feel ashamed to commit.

“ To no one but yourself has this vision been revealed: do not fear to behold it. Though strange, it may be fully understood, for much will still remain to connect that future age with the present. The impulses and feelings of human creatures must, for the most part, be alike in all ages: habits vary, but nature endures; and the same passions were delineated, the same weaknesses ridiculed, by Aristophanes, Plautus, and Terence, as in after-times were described by Shakspeare and Moliere; and as they will be in the times of which you are to write,—by authors yet unknown.

“ But you still hesitate; you object that the novelty of the allusions perplexes you. This is quite a new kind of delicacy; as authors seldom trouble themselves to become acquainted with a subject before they begin to write upon it. However, since you are so very scrupulous, I will endeavour, if possible, to assist you. Look around.”

I did so; and saw, as in a magic glass, the scenes and characters, which I shall now endeavour to pass before the eyes of the reader.

THE MUMMY.

CHAPTER I.

IN the year 2126, England enjoyed peace and tranquillity under the absolute dominion of a female sovereign. Numerous changes had taken place for some centuries in the political state of the country, and several forms of government had been successively adopted and destroyed, till, as is generally the case after violent revolutions, they all settled down into an absolute monarchy. In the meantime, the religion of the country had been mutable as its government; and in the end, by adopting Ca-

tholicism, it seemed to have arrived at nearly the same result: despotism in the state, indeed, naturally produces despotism in religion; the implicit faith and passive obedience required in the one case, being the best of all possible preparatives for the absolute submission of both mind and body necessary in the other.

In former times, England had been blessed with a mixed government and a tolerant religion, under which the people had enjoyed as much freedom as they perhaps ever can do, consistently with their prosperity and happiness. It is not in the nature of the human mind, however, to be contented: we must always either hope or fear; and things at a distance appear so much more beautiful than they do when we approach them, that we always fancy what we have not, infinitely superior to any thing we have; and neglect enjoyments within our reach, to pursue others, which, like *ignes fatui*, elude our grasp at the very moment when we hope we have attained them.

Thus it was with the people of England:—

Not satisfied with being rich and prosperous, they longed for something more. Abundance of wealth caused wild schemes and gigantic speculations; and though many failed, yet, as some succeeded, the enormity of the sums gained by the projectors, incited others to pursue the same career. New countries were discovered and civilized; the whole earth was brought to the highest pitch of cultivation; every corner of it was explored; mountains were levelled, mines were excavated, and the globe racked to its centre. Nay, the air and sea did not escape, and all nature was compelled to submit to the overwhelming supremacy of Man.

Still, however, the English people were not contented:—enabled to gratify every wish till satiety succeeded indulgence, they were still unhappy; perhaps, precisely because they had no longer any difficulties to encounter. In the meantime, education had become universal, and the technical terms of abstruse sciences familiar to the lowest mechanics; whilst questions of religion, politics, and metaphysics, agi

tated by them daily, supplied that stimulus, for which their minds, enervated by over cultivation, constantly craved. The consequences may be readily conceived. It was impossible for those to study deeply who had to labour for their daily bread; and not having time to make themselves masters of any given subject, they only learned enough of all to render them disputatious and discontented. Their heads were filled with words to which they affixed no definite ideas, and the little sense Heaven had blessed them with, was lost beneath a mass of undigested and misapplied knowledge.

Conceit inevitably leads to rebellion. The natural consequence of the mob thinking themselves as wise as their rulers, was, that they took the first convenient opportunity that offered, to jostle these aforesaid rulers from their seats. An aristocracy was established, and afterwards a democracy; but both shared the same fate; for the leaders of each in turn, found the instruments they had made use of to rise, soon became unmanageable. The people had tasted the sweets of power, they had learned

their own strength, they were enlightened ; and, fancying they understood the art of ruling as well as their quondam directors, they saw no reason why, after shaking off the control of one master, they should afterwards submit to the domination of many. " We are free," said they ; " we acknowledge no laws but those of nature, and of those we are as competent to judge as our would-be masters. In what are they superior to ourselves ? Nature has been as bountiful to us as to them, and we have had the same advantages of education. Why then should we toil to give them ease ? We are each capable of governing ourselves. Why then should we pay them to rule us ? Why should we be debarred from mental enjoyments and condemned to manual labour ? Are not our tastes as refined as theirs, and our minds as highly cultivated ? We will assert our independence, and throw off the yoke. If any man wish for luxuries, let him labour to procure them for himself. We will be slaves no longer ; we will all be masters."

Thus they reasoned, and thus they acted,

Amber

till government after government having been overturned, complete anarchy prevailed, and the people began to discover, though, alas! too late, that there was little pleasure in being masters when there were no subjects, and that it was impossible to enjoy intellectual pleasures, whilst each man was compelled to labour for his daily bread. This, however, was inevitable, for as perfect equality had been declared, of course no one would condescend to work for his neighbour, and every thing was badly done: as, however skilful any man may be in any particular art or profession, it is quite impossible he can excel in all.

In the meantime, the people who had, though they scarcely knew why, attached to the idea of equality that of exemption from toil, found to their infinite surprise, that their burthens had increased tenfold, whilst their comforts had unaccountably diminished in the same proportion. The blessings of civilization were indeed fast slipping away from them. Every man became afraid lest the hard-earned means of existence should be torn from his

grasp ; for, as all laws had been abolished, the strong tyrannized over the weak, and the most enlightened nation in the world was in imminent danger of degenerating into a horde of rapacious barbarians.

This state of things could not continue ; and the people, finding from experience that perfect equality was not quite the most enviable mode of government, began to suspect that a division of labour and a distinction of ranks were absolutely necessary to civilization ; and sought out their ancient nobility, to endeavour to restore something like order to society. These illustrious personages were soon found : those who had not emigrated, had retired to their seats in the country, where, surrounded by their dependants, and the few friends who had remained faithful to them, they enjoyed the *otium cum dignitate*, and consoled themselves for the loss of their former greatness, by railing most manfully at those who had deprived them of it.

Amongst this number, was the lineal descendant of the late royal family, and to him the

people now resolved humbly and unconditionally to offer the crown; imagining, with the usual vehemence and inconsistency of popular commotions, that an arbitrary government must be best for them, as being the very reverse of that, the evils of which they had just so forcibly experienced.

The prince, however, to whom a deputation from the people made this offer, happened not to be ambitious. Like another Cincinnatus, he placed all his happiness in the cultivation of a small farm, and had sufficient prudence to reject a grandeur which he felt must be purchased by the sacrifice of his peace. The deputies were in despair at his refusal; and they reurged their suit with every argument the distress of their situation could inspire. They painted in glowing colours the horrors of the anarchy that prevailed, the misery of the kingdom and despair of the people; and at last wound up their arguments by a solemn appeal to Heaven, that if he persisted in his refusal, the future wretchedness of the people might fall upon his head. The prince, how-

ever, continued inexorable ; and the deputies were preparing to withdraw, when the prince's daughter, who had been present during the whole interview, rushed forward and prevented their retreat :—" Stay ! I will be your queen," cried she energetically ; " I will save my country, or perish in the attempt !"

The princess was a beautiful woman, about six-and-twenty ; and, at this moment, her fine eyes sparkling with enthusiasm, her cheeks glowing, and her whole face and figure breathing dignity from the exalted purpose of her soul, she appeared to the deputies almost as a supernatural being ; and regarding her offer as a direct inspiration from Heaven, they bore her in triumph to the assembled multitude who awaited their return : whilst the people, ever caught by novelty, and desirous of any change to free them from the misery they were enduring, hailed her appearance with delight, and unanimously proclaimed her Queen.

The new sovereign soon found the task she had undertaken a difficult one ; but happening luckily to possess common sense and prudence,

united with a firm and active disposition, she contrived in time to restore order, and to confirm her own power, whilst she contributed to the happiness of her people. The face of the kingdom rapidly changed—security produced improvement—and the self-banished nobles of the former dynasty crowding round the new Queen, she chose from amongst them the wisest and most experienced for her counsellors, and by their help compounded an excellent code of laws. This book was open to the whole kingdom; and cases being decided by principle instead of precedent, litigation was almost unknown: for as the laws were fully and clearly explained, so as to be understood by every body, few dared to act in open violation of them, punishment being certain to follow detection; and all the agonizing delights of a law-suit were entirely destroyed, as every body knew, the moment the facts were stated, how it would inevitably terminate. This renewal of the golden age continued several years without interruption, the people being too much delighted with the personal comforts

they enjoyed, to complain of the errors inseparable from all human institutions; whilst the remembrance of what they had suffered during the reign of anarchy, made them tremble at a change, and patiently submit to trifling inconveniences to avoid the risk of positive evils.

This generation however passed away, and with it died, not only the recollection of the past misfortunes of the kingdom, but also the spirit of content they had engendered. A new race arose, who, with the ignorance and presumption of inexperience, found fault with every thing they did not understand, and accused the Queen and her ministers of dotage, merely because they did not accomplish impossibilities. The government, however, was too firmly established to be easily shaken. The judicious economy of the Queen had filled her treasury with riches; her prudent regulations had extended the commerce of her subjects to an almost incredible extent; and her firm and decided disposition made her universally respected both at home and abroad. The malcontents were therefore awed into submission, and

obliged, in spite of themselves, to rest satisfied with growling at the government they were not strong enough to overturn. At this time, however, the Queen died, and the state of affairs experienced an important change.

It has been before mentioned, that the religion of the country had altered with its government. Atheism, rational liberty, and fanaticism, had followed each other in regular succession ; and the people found, by fatal experience, that persecution and bigotry assimilated as naturally with infidelity as superstition. A fixed government, however, seemed to require an established religion ; and the multitude, ever in extremes, rushed from excess of liberty to intolerance. The Catholic faith was restored, new saints were canonized, and confessors appointed in the families of every person of distinction. These priests, however, were far from having the power they had possessed in former times. The eyes of men had been too long opened to be easily closed again. Education still continued amongst the lower classes ; and though, at the time this history

commences, it was going out of fashion with persons of rank, its influence was felt even by those most prejudiced against it. During the reign of the late Queen, the minds of the public not having any state affairs to occupy them, had been directed to the improvement of the arts and sciences ; and so many new inventions had been struck out, so many wonderful discoveries made, and so many ingenious contrivances put into execution, that poor nature seemed degraded from her throne, and usurping man to have stepped up to supply her place.

Before the Queen died, she chose her niece Claudia to succeed her ; and as she enacted that none of her successors should marry, she ordered that all future queens should be chosen, by the people, from such female members of her family as might be between twenty and twenty-five years of age, at the time of the throne's becoming vacant. Every male throughout the kingdom who had attained the age of twenty-one, was to have a voice in this election ; but as it was presumed it might be inconvenient to convoke these numerous electors into one place,

it was agreed that every ten thousand should choose a deputy to proceed to London to represent them, and that a majority of these deputies should elect the Queen. This scheme, however, though feasible in theory, seemed likely to present some difficulties when it was to be put in practice; but of these, the old Queen never troubled herself to think. She had provided against any immediate disturbance by choosing her own successor, and she left posterity to take care of itself.

Queen Claudia was one of those *fainéant* sovereigns of whom it is extremely difficult to write the history, for the simple but unanswerable reason, that they never perform any action worthy of being recorded. However, though she did not do much good, she seldom did any harm: she thus contrived to escape either violent censure or applause; and, in short, to get through life very decently, without making much bustle about it. She continued the same counsellors that had been employed by her predecessor, appointing the sons, when the fathers died, to save trouble. She left the laws as she

found them for the same reason ; and, in short, she let the affairs of government go on so quietly, and so exactly in the same routine as before, that for two or three years after her accession, the people were scarcely aware that any change had taken place.

The commencement of the year 2126 was, however, marked by symptoms of turbulence. The malcontents, secretly encouraged by Roderick, King of Ireland, and suffered to gain strength under the easy sway of Claudia, rose to arms in different parts of the kingdom ; and marching to London, attempted to seize the person of the Queen. For the moment, the regular forces of the kingdom seemed paralysed, and the insurgents would have succeeded in their daring attempt, but for the presence of mind and valour of Edmund Montagu, a young officer of ancient family, a captain in the Queen's body-guard, who had the good fortune to rescue his sovereign.

This circumstance was decisive ; the rebels, disappointed in their hopes, and imperfectly organized, gave way everywhere before the re-

gular troops, who had now recovered from their stupor; whilst the Queen, whose gratitude for the timely succour afforded by Edmund Montagu was unbounded, made him commander of her forces in Germany, and the youthful hero quitted England to take possession of his post.

The commencement of the year 1638 was however marked by symptoms of turbulence. The parliament, newly convened by the death of James, and called to pass a bill under the name of Charles, was to meet in different parts of the kingdom; and the king, in order to prevent the persons of the Queen, for the present, the royal family of the kingdom, and the king, and the parliament, were ordered in their daily business, that the persons of royal and noble families, and the young officers of various ranks, to remain in the Queen's household, and attend her good service to a year, his Majesty's pleasure. This circumstance was doubtless, and probably disappointed in their hopes, and perhaps, perhaps, gave way to various disorders.

CHAPTER II.

High and distinguished as was the favour shown to Edmund Montagu, it was by no means greater than he deserved. His face and figure were such as the imagination delights to picture as a hero of antiquity; and his character accorded well with the majestic graces of his person. Haughty and commanding in his temper—ambition was his God, and love of glory his strongest passion; yet his very pride had a nobleness in it, and his soldiers loved though they feared him.

Very different was the character of his younger brother Edric, whose romantic disposition and

contemplative turn of mind often excited the ridicule of his friends. As usual, however, in similar cases, the persecutions he endured upon the subject, only wedded him more firmly to his own peculiar opinions; which, indeed, he seemed determined to sustain with the constancy of a martyr; whilst he put on such a countenance of resolution and magnanimity whenever they were assailed by jests or raillery, as might have been imagined suitable to an expiring Indian at the stake. Unfortunately, however, his friends did not always properly estimate this dignified silence; and their repeated bursts of laughter grated so harshly in the ears of the youthful Diogenes, that he became gradually disgusted with mankind. He secluded himself from society; despised the opinion of the world, because he found it was against him; and supposed himself capable of resisting every species of temptation, simply because, as yet, he had met with nothing adequate to tempt him. Older and more experienced persons have made the same mistake.

The education of these two young men had

been entrusted to tutors of characters as essentially different as those of their pupils.—Father Morris, who had had the care of the elder, was an intelligent Catholic priest, the confessor of the family. Whilst Doctor Entwerten, who took charge of the younger, was a worthy inoffensive man, whose passion for trying experiments was his leading foible ; but whose good-nature caused him to be beloved, even by those to whom his follies made him appear ridiculous.

Sir Ambrose Montagu, the father of Edmund and Edric, was a widower, and these two sons constituted his whole family. The worthy Baronet was no bad representative of what an old English country gentleman always has been, and of what it still continued, even in that age of refinement. He was as warm in his feelings as hasty in his temper, and as violent in his prejudices, as any of his predecessors. In fact, the same causes must always lead to the same results ; and there is something in a country life that never fails to produce certain peculiar effects upon the mind.

Sir Ambrose, however, was far superior to the generality of his class, and amongst innumerable other good qualities, he was an indulgent master and an affectionate father. His foible, however,—for alas! where shall we find character without one,—was a desire to show occasionally how implicitly he could be obeyed. In general, he was easy to a fault; and it was only when roused by opposition, that the natural obstinacy of his disposition displayed itself. Edmund was his favourite son; the early military glory of the youthful hero was flattering to his parental pride, and his eyes would glisten with delight at the bare mention of his darling's name.

It was one fine evening in the summer of the year 2126, when Sir Ambrose Montagu, such as we have described him, was sitting in his library, anxiously expecting intelligence from the army. To divert his impatience, he had ordered the attendance of his steward Mr. Davis, and endeavoured to amuse himself by hearing a report of the affairs of his farm; whilst Abelard,

an old butler, who had been in the Baronet's service more than forty years, stood behind his master's chair holding a small tray, on which was placed an elegant apparatus for smoking, and a magnificent service of malleable glass, made to fold up to a pocket size, when not in use, containing the baronet's evening refreshment.

Sir Ambrose was above seventy; and his long white hair hung in waving curls upon his shoulders, as he now sat in his comfortable elastic arm-chair, leaning one elbow upon the table before him. His features had been very handsome, and his complexion still retained that look of health and cleanness, which, in a green old age, is the sure indication of a well-spent life. His countenance, though intelligent, was unmarked by the traces of any stormy passions; the cares and troubles of life seemed to have passed gently over him, and content had smoothed the wrinkles age might have made upon his brow; whilst the tall thin figure of Mr. Davis, as he stood reverentially bending forward, his hat in his hand, and his whole de-

meanour expressing a singular mixture of preciseness and habitual respect, contrasted strongly with the dignified appearance of his master.

The windows of the library opened to the ground, and looked out upon a fine terrace, shaded by a verandah, supported by trellis-work, round which, twined roses mingled with vines. Below, stretched a smiling valley, beautifully wooded, and watered by a majestic river winding slowly along; now lost amidst the spreading foliage of the trees that hung over its banks, and then shining forth again in the sun like a lake of liquid silver. Beyond, rose hills majestically towering to the skies, their clear outline now distinctly marked by the setting sun, as it slowly sunk behind them, shedding its glowing tints of purple and gold upon their heathy sides; whilst some of its brilliant rays even penetrated through the leafy shade of the verandah, and danced like summer lightning upon the surface of a mirror of polished steel which hung directly in face of Sir Ambrose.

“What a lovely evening!” exclaimed the worthy baronet, gazing with a delighted eye upon the rich landscape before him; “often as I have looked upon this scene, methinks every time I see it I discover some new beauty. How finely that golden tint which the sun throws upon the tops of those trees is relieved by the deep masses of shadow below!”

“It is a fine evening,” said Davis, bowing low, “and if your honour pleases, I think we had better get the patent steam-mowing apparatus in motion to-morrow. If the sun should be as hot to-morrow as it has been to-day, I am sure the hay will make without using the burning glass at all.”

“Do as you like, Davis,” returned his master, taking his pipe, “you know I leave these matters entirely to you.”

“And does not your honour think I had better give the barley a little rain? It will be all burnt up, if this weather continues; and if your honour approves, it may be done immediately, for I saw a nice black heavy-looking cloud sail-

✓
vegetable
burnt

ing by just now, and I can get the electrical machine out in five minutes to draw it down, if your honour thinks fit."

"I have already told you I leave these things entirely to you, Davis," returned the baronet, puffing out volumes of smoke from his hookah. "Inundate the fields if you will; you have my full permission to do whatever you please with them, so that you don't trouble me any more about the matter."

"But I would not wish to act without your honour's full conviction," resumed the persevering steward. "Your honour must be aware of the aridity of the soil, and of the impossibility that exists of a proper developement of the incipient heads, unless they be supplied with an adequate quantity of moisture."

"You are very unreasonable, Davis," said Sir Ambrose; "most of your fraternity would be satisfied by being permitted to have their own way; but you——"

"Excuse my interrupting your honour," cried Davis, bowing profoundly; "but I cannot bear it to be thought that I was capable of

persuading your honour to take any steps, your honour might not thoroughly approve. Now as to the germinization and ripening——”

“ My good fellow !” exclaimed Sir Ambrose, smiling at the energy with which Davis spoke—his thin figure waving backwards and forwards in the sunshine, and his earnest wish to convince his master, almost depriving his voice of its usual solemn and sententious tone. “ As I said before, I give you full and free liberty to burn, dry, or drown my fields, as you may think fit; empowering you to take any steps you judge proper, either to germinate or ripen corn upon any part of my estate whatever, only premising, that in future you never trouble me upon the subject; and so good night.”

This being spoken in a tone of voice Davis did not dare to disobey, he slowly retired, apparently as much annoyed at having his own way, as some people are at being contradicted; when suddenly a brilliant flash of light gleamed on the baronet's polished mirror. “ Ah! what was that ?” exclaimed Sir Ambrose, starting up, and dashing his pipe upon the ground.

He gazed eagerly upon the mirror for a few seconds in breathless anxiety, bending forwards in a listening attitude, and not daring to stir, as though he feared the slightest movement might destroy the pleasing illusion. The flash was repeated again and again in rapid succession, whilst a peal of silver bells began to ring their rounds in liquid melody. "Thank God! thank God!" exclaimed the aged baronet, sinking upon his knees, and clasping his hands together, whilst the big tears rolled rapidly down his face, "My Edmund has conquered! my Edmund is safe!"

The faithful servants of Sir Ambrose followed the example of their master, and for some minutes the whole party appeared lost in silent thanksgiving; the silver bells still continuing their harmonious sweetness, though in softer and softer strains, till at last they gradually died away upon the ear. Sir Ambrose started from his knees as the melody ceased, and desiring Abelard to summon Edric and Father Morris, he rushed upon the terrace, followed by Davis, to examine a telegraph placed

upon a mount at little distance, so as to be seen from one end of it: the light and music just mentioned, being a signal always given, when some important information was about to be transmitted.

The sun had now sunk behind the hills, and the shades of evening were rapidly closing in as the baronet, with streaming eyes, watched the various movements of the machine. "One, two, and six!" said he; "yes, that signifies he has won the battle, and is safe. My heart told me so, when I saw the signal flash. My darling Edmund!—two, four, and eight—he has subdued the Germans, and taken the whole of the fine province of France. Six, six, and four—alas! my failing eyes are too weak to see distinctly. Davis, look I implore you! The signal is changing before we have discovered its meaning! For mercy's sake, look before it be too late! Alas! alas! I had forgotten your eyes are as feeble as mine own. Oh, Davis! where is Edric? Why is not he here to assist his poor old father at such a moment as this?"

In the meantime, Edric was, as usual, engaged in those abstract speculations with Dr. Entwerfen, which now formed the only pleasure of his existence, and which he pursued with an eagerness that made all the ordinary affairs of life appear tasteless and insipid. His imagination had become heated by long dwelling upon the same theme; and a strange, wild, undefinable craving to hold converse with a disembodied spirit haunted him incessantly. He had long buried this feverish anxiety in his own breast, and tried in vain to subdue it; but it seemed to hang upon his steps, to present itself before him wherever he went, and, in short, to pursue him with the malignancy of a demon.

“What is the matter with you, Edric?” said Dr. Entwerfen to his pupil, the day we have already mentioned. “You are so changed, I scarcely know you, and your eyes have a wild expression, absolutely terrific.”

“I am, indeed, half mad,” returned Edric, with a melancholy smile; “and yet, perhaps, you will laugh when I tell you the reason of

my uneasiness. I am tormented by an earnest desire to communicate with one who has been an inhabitant of the tomb. I would fain know the secrets of the grave, and ascertain whether the spirit be chained after death to its earthly covering of clay, condemned till the day of final resurrection to hover over the rotting mass of corruption that once contained it; or whether the last agonies of death free it from its mortal ties, and leave it floating, free as air, in the bright regions of ethereal space?"

"You know my opinion," said the doctor.

"I do," replied the pupil; "but forgive me if I add—I do not feel satisfied with it: in fact mine is not a character to be satisfied with building my faith upon that of any other man. I would see, and judge for myself."

"I do not blame you," resumed the doctor; "a reasonable being should believe nothing he cannot prove;—however, to remove your doubts, I am convinced we have only occasion to step into the adjoining church-yard, and try my galvanic battery of fifty surgeon power, (which you must allow is surely enough to

reanimate the dead,) upon a body, and then——”

“Hold! hold!” cried Edric, shuddering. “My blood freezes in my veins, at the thought of a church-yard:—your words recall a horrible dream that I had last night, which, even now, dwells upon my mind, and resists all the efforts I can make to shake it off.”

“Tell it to me, then,” resumed the doctor; “for when the imagination is possessed by horrible fantasies, it is often relieved by speaking of them to another person.”

“I thought,” said Edric, “that I was wandering in a thick gloomy wood, through which I had the utmost difficulty to make my way. The black trees, frowning in awful majesty above my head, twined together in masses, so as almost to obstruct my path. Suddenly, a fearful light flashed upon me, and I saw at my feet a horrid charnel house, where the dying mingled terrifically with the dead. The miserable living wretches turned and writhed with pain, striving in vain to escape from the mass of putrescence

heaped upon them. I saw their eye-balls roll in agony—I watched the distortion of their features, and, making a violent effort to relieve one who had almost crawled to my feet, I shrank back with horror as I found the arm I grasped give way to my touch, and a disgusting mass of corruption crumble beneath my fingers!—Shuddering I awoke—a cold sweat hanging upon my brows, and every nerve thrilling with convulsive agony.”

“Mere visionary terrors,” said the doctor. “You have suffered your imagination to dwell upon one subject, till it is become morbid.—However, though I do not see any reason why your dream should make you decline my offer, I will not urge it if it give you pain.”

“Is it not strange,” continued Edric, apparently pursuing the current of his own thoughts, “that the mind should crave so earnestly what the body shudders at; and yet, how can a mass of mere matter, which we see sink into corruption the moment the spirit is withdrawn from it, shudder? How can it even feel? I can scarcely analyse my own sensations;

but it appears to me that two separate and distinct spirits animate the mass of clay that composes the human frame. The one, the merely vital spark which gives it life and motion, and which we share in common with brutes, and even vegetables ; and the other, the divine ethereal spirit, which we may properly term the soul, and which is a direct emanation from God himself, only bestowed upon man."

"You know my sentiments upon the subject," replied the doctor, "therefore I need not repeat them."

"I know," resumed Edric, "you think the organs of thought, reflection, imagination, reason, and, in short, all that mysterious faculty which we call the mind, material ; and that as long as the body remains uncorrupted they may be restored, provided circulation can be renewed : for that you think the only principle necessary to set the animal machine in motion."

"Can any thing be more clear ?" said the doctor. "We all know that circulation and the action of the lungs are inseparably connected, and that if the latter be arrested, death

must ensue. How frequently are apparently dead bodies recovered by friction, which produces circulation; and inflation of the lungs with air, which restores their action. If your idea be correct, that the soul leaves the body the instant what we call death takes place, how do you account for these instances of resuscitation? Think you that the soul can be recalled to the body after it has once quitted it? Or that it hovers over it in air, attached to it by invisible ligatures, ready to be drawn back to its former situation, when the body shall resume its vital functions? You cannot surely suppose it remains in a dormant state, and is reawakened with the body; for this would be inconsistent with the very idea of an incorporeal spirit."

"Certainly," resumed Edric, "the spirit must be capable of existing perfectly distinct from the body; though how, I own candidly my imperfect reason cannot enable me to comprehend."

"I wish you would overcome your childish reluctance to trying an experiment upon a

corpse, as that must set your doubts at rest. For if we could succeed in reanimating a dead body that has been long entombed, so that it might enjoy its reasoning faculties, or, as you call it, its soul in full perfection, my opinion would be completely established."

"But where shall we find a perfect body, which has been dead a sufficient time to prevent the possibility of its being only in a trance?—For even if I could conquer the repugnance I feel at the thought of touching such a mass of cold mortality, as that presented in my dream last night, according to your own theory, the organs must be perfect, or the experiment will not be complete."

"What think you of trying to operate upon a mummy? You know a chamber has been lately discovered in the great pyramid, which is supposed to be the real tomb of Cheops; and where, it is said, the mummies of that great king and the principal personages of his household have been found in a state of wonderful preservation."

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“But mummies are so swathed up.”

“Not those of kings and princes. You know all travellers, both ancient and modern, who have seen them, agree, that they are wrapped merely in folds of red and white linen, every finger and even every toe distinct; thus, if we could succeed in resuscitating Cheops, we need not even touch the body; as the clothing it is wrapped in will not at all encumber its movements.”

“The idea is feasible, and, as you rightly say, if it can be put into execution, it will set the matter at rest for ever. I should also like to visit the pyramids, those celebrated monuments of antiquity, whose origin is lost in the obscurity of the darker ages, and which seem to have been spared by the devastating hand of time, purposely to perplex the learned.”

“You say right,” cried the doctor with enthusiasm. “And who can tell but that we may be the favoured happy mortals, destined to raise the mystic veil that has so long covered them? we may be destined to explore these

wonderful monuments—to revive their mummies, and force them to reveal the secrets of their prison-house. Cheops is said to have built the great pyramid, and it is Cheops whom we shall endeavour to re-animate! what then can be more palpable, than that it should be he who is destined at length to reveal the mystery.”

“Every word you utter, doctor, increases my ardent desire to put our scheme into immediate execution: but how can we accomplish it? How obtain my father’s consent? You know it has long been his intention to marry me to the niece of his friend the Duke of Cornwall, and you know how obstinate both he and the duke are.”

“Then if you remain in England, it is your intention to marry Rosabella?”

“I would perish first.”

“If that be the case, I confess I do not see the force of your objection.”

“True; for as long as I refuse to marry her, their anger will be the same, whether I travel or remain in England. In fact, I shall be hap-

pier at a distance than here, where I shall be annoyed by having the subject constantly recurred to. Yet it pains me to speak upon it to my father. He has so long cherished the idea of my marriage, and dwelt upon it so fondly—”

“Then you had better stay,—relinquish all thoughts of scientific discoveries, and settle contentedly on an estate in the country; employing your time in regulating your farm, settling the disputes of your neighbours, and bringing up your children, if you should happen to have any.”

“How can you torment me so?—If you could imagine the struggle in my bosom, between inclination and duty, you would pity me.”

“Do you think your presence necessary to your father’s happiness?”

“No—if Edmund be with him, he will never think of me.”

“And do you not think—nay, are you not certain, that an union with Rosabella would make you miserable?”

“It is impossible to doubt it. Her violent temper, and the mystery which hangs over the

fate of her father, which she cannot bear to have even alluded to, forbid the thought of happiness as connected with her."

"It is strange, so little should be known of her father. I never heard the particulars of his story."

"No human being knows the whole, I believe, but the duke and my father. However, I remember to have heard it rumoured when I was a child, that he had committed some fearful crime, and that he was either executed, or had destroyed himself."

"Then it is not surprising that it should pain Rosabella to hear him spoken of. But to return to our subject: your answers have removed the only doubts that can arise; and after what you have confessed yourself, I cannot imagine what further hesitation you can feel—"

At this moment they were both startled; and the words were arrested on the doctor's lips by a gentle tap at the door. It was old Abelard the butler. Half ashamed of the unphilosophic terror he had evinced, the doctor felt glad to be

able to hide his emotion under the appearance of anger, and demanded peevishly, what was the matter. "Have I not told you a hundred times," continued he, "that I do not like to be interrupted at my studies! and that nothing is more disagreeable than to have one's attention distracted, when it has been fixed upon an affair of importance!"

"I do not attempt to controvert the axiom you have just propounded," returned Abelard, speaking in a slow precise manner, as though he weighed every syllable before he drawled it forth: "for undeniable facts do not admit of contradiction. However, as the message with which I stand charged at the present moment relates to master Edric, instead of yourself, I humbly opine, no blame can attach itself to me, on account of the unpremeditated interruption of which you allege me culpable."

"And what have you to say to me?" demanded Edric.

"That the worthy gentleman, your respectable progenitor, requests you instantly to put in exercise your locomotive powers to join him

on the terrace, to the end, that there your superior visual faculties may afford *soulagement* to the mental anxiety under which he at present labours, by aiding him to develop the intelligence conveyed to him by the telegraphic machine."

"What!" exclaimed Edric, eagerly, and then, without waiting a reply, he darted forward, and in a few seconds was by the side of his father.

Abelard gazed after him with amazement: "There is something very astonishing," said he, addressing Dr. Entwerfen, "in the effervescence of the animal spirits during youth. I labour under a complete acatalepsy upon the subject; I should think it must arise from the excessive elasticity of the nerves. Ideas strike—" but here, happening unfortunately to look up, he too was struck to find Dr. Entwerfen had vanished with his pupil, and unwilling to waste his eloquence upon the empty air, he also departed; slowly and solemnly, however, according to his custom, to join the party assembled on the terrace.

CHAPTER III.

WHEN Edric and Dr. Entwerfen reached Sir Ambrose, they found Father Morris at his side, explaining with his usual promptness and clearness the meaning of the different signs of the telegraph.

“My dear Edric,” exclaimed Sir Ambrose, throwing himself into the arms of his son, “my dear, dear Edric! your brother has gained the battle! The Germans are completely overthrown. He has taken their king, and several of their princes prisoners; and the fine province of France is ceded to us entirely!”

“I am rejoiced to hear it,” cried Edric, returning his father’s embrace with emotion, “and he, I hope, is safe?”

“I hope so too,” replied Sir Ambrose; “though he says nothing of himself: but you know Edmund: ‘Our troops won this,’ ‘our army gained that!’—‘the soldiers fought bravely!’—he never speaks of himself. To hear him relate a battle, nobody would imagine he had ever had any thing to do with it.”

“It is too dark to see any more,” said Father Morris, who had been for some time watching the telegraph, and now turned from it in despair; “the machine is still in motion, but it is too dark for me to decipher what it means.”

The attention of all present was directed to the sky as he spoke. It was indeed become of pitchy blackness, a general gloom seemed to hang over the face of nature; the birds flew twittering for shelter, a low wind moaned through the trees, and, in short, every thing seemed to portend a storm.

“Had we not better return to the house?” said Dr. Entwerfen, looking round with something like fear at these alarming indications, for his heated imagination had not yet quite recovered the effect of the awful speculations

he had so lately been indulging in. "What is that black spot there? I declare it moves! Good heavens, what can it be?"

"Really, doctor!" returned Abelard, "you provoke the action of my risible faculties. That opaque body which you perceive at a little distance, and which seems to have occasioned such a fearful excitement of your nervous system, is only a living specimen of the *corvus* genus, who has probably descended upon earth to search for his vermicular repast."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Abelard," rejoined Mr. Davis, speaking with his usual precision, "but, according to my humble apprehension, you labour under a slight mistake as to that particular. The feathered biped that has so forcibly attracted your attention, appears to me, not one of the *corvi*, but rather one of the *graculi*; a variety of extremely rare occurrence in this vicinity, and which are sometimes called *incendriæ aves*, from their unfortunate propensity to put habitations in combustion, by picking up small pieces of phlogisticated carbon, and carrying them in their beaks to the combination of

straw and other materials, sometimes piled upon the apex of a house, to defend it from the inroads of pluviosity."

"It is of no use," sighed Sir Ambrose, still straining his eyes to endeavour to decipher the movements of the telegraph, the outlines of which only now appeared, stamped as if in jet, and strongly relieved by the dark grey sky beyond.

"It is of no use," reiterated Father Morris, and the whole party were preparing to retire, when suddenly a vivid light flashed upon them from the hill, and instantly a long line of torches seemed to stream along the horizon. "He is coming home, but will write more to-morrow," exclaimed the whole party simultaneously; for all knew well by experience, the meaning of that signal. "He is coming home, thank God!" repeated Sir Ambrose, his pallid lips quivering, and every limb trembling with agitation.

"Look to my father," cried Edric, "he will faint."

"Oh no, no!" repeated Sir Ambrose: "thank God! thank God!"

“Lean upon me, at least,” said Edric, affectionately.

Sir Ambrose complied ; and, supported by his son, still gazed anxiously on the torches, their red glare shedding an unnatural light around them, and making the surrounding darkness only appear still more intense. Thunder now growled in the distance, and rain began to fall in large drops ; yet still Sir Ambrose gazed upon the torches, and could not be persuaded to leave the terrace. These wild, fearful looking lights, gleaming through the tempest, seemed a connecting link between him and his darling son ; and it was not till they were obscured by the thick heavy rain, and even the outline of the telegraph vanished in the gathering clouds around, that he could be induced to seek for shelter.

Sir Ambrose slept little that night : the sleep of age is easily broken, and perhaps the joyful agitation of his spirits had produced a slight access of fever. He rose with the dawn ; and, long before the rest of his family had descended, summoned Abelard, that he might dispatch

him to inform his most intimate friend the Duke of Cornwall of the news.

“Go,” said he, as soon as the drowsy butler made his appearance. “I am sure the duke feels nearly as great an interest in the success of Edmund as myself, and will not be displeased if he be disturbed a little earlier than usual upon such an occasion.”

“I obey,” replied Abelard. “I will shake off my somnolent propensities, and speed with the velocity of the electric fluid to the castle of the noble chieftain.”

“Take heed you do not forget your message by the way,” repeated Sir Ambrose, smiling.

“Not all the waters of Lethe could wash such somnifugous tidings from my memory,” replied the butler. “Your honour’s words are imprinted upon the mnemonic organ of my brain; and my sensorium must be divided from my cerebellum ere they can be effaced.”

The Duke of Cornwall had been the intimate friend of Sir Ambrose almost from infancy. They had been companions at school and at college; besides which, peculiar circumstances

which had happened in their youth, had linked them together in indissoluble ties. What these circumstances were, however, no one exactly knew, except the parties concerned, and they always avoided alluding to them. All that was generally understood upon the subject, being, that Sir Ambrose had, in some manner, been instrumental in saving the duke's life; but how, when, or where, was never clearly explained.

The Duke of Cornwall was of the Royal family of England, and closely allied to the throne. His father had been brother to that prince who had so stedfastly refused the crown when it was offered to him by the ambassadors from the people; and as that prince had left no male descendants, the duke might be considered as legitimately entitled to reign. The thought of disturbing by his claims the female dynasty now established, had, however, never entered into the mind of the duke; who, with half the sense of his friend Sir Ambrose, possessed, at least, ten times the obstinacy; and having taken it into his head

that he would marry his daughter Elvira to Edmund Montagu, and his niece Rosabella to Edric, he turned all his thoughts, plans, and wishes to the accomplishment of this object, and suffered no other idea to interfere with it.

Those, however, who were acquainted with the characters of the young people, thought the duke had quite reversed the natural order of things by this arrangement; and that the strong mind and haughty spirit of Rosabella would have suited better with the ambitious Edmund; whilst the soft yielding disposition and feminine graces of Elvira seemed to harmonize exactly with the taste of the philosophic Edric. No persuasions, however, could induce the duke to deviate in the slightest degree from his design. Like many of the higher classes of society in those days of universal education, he affected an excessive plainness and simplicity in his language; so much so, indeed, as sometimes almost to degenerate into rudeness, in order that it might be clearly distinguished from the elaborate and scientific expressions of the vulgar;