

LIFE GROWS SO WEARY.

Oh! life grows so weary that early or late
We turn longing eyes toward the beautiful gate
At whose portal our burdens and sorrows
Laid down.

"A MADMAN."

Whenever I hear anybody say: "You know Jacques Parent died mad in an insane asylum," a painful shudder, a creeping of fear and anguish passes through all my bones; and I see again before me the figure of that tall strange man, mad perhaps long before I knew him—an alarming person, a really fearful maniac.

He was a man of about forty years old, tall, lanky, slightly stooped, with the eyes of one troubled by hallucination—black eyes, so black in fact that the pupil could not be distinguished—mobile eyes, wandering, sickly, haunted. What a singularly annoying person he was—bringing with him, spreading around him an atmosphere of an easiness, a vague distress of soul and body, such an incomprehensible feeling of nervousness as inclines people to believe in supernatural influence.

He had one very unpleasant crank—a mania for keeping his hands concealed. He was scarcely ever seen to let his hands wander listlessly—as we all do—upon surrounding objects, tables, furniture. Never did he touch anything in his vicinity in that familiar easy way which nearly all men have. Never did he let them be seen uncovered—those long, bony hands of his, slender and slightly nervous. He always kept them either buried in his pockets, or hidden behind his coat-tails, or concealed under his armpits when he folded his arms. One might have supposed he was afraid that those hands might, in spite of him, do something wrong—might perpetrate some ludicrous or shameful act if he allowed them to remain a moment free—if he suffered them to remain masters of their own movements.

When he was obliged to make use of them for the ordinary necessities of life, he did so only by sudden jerks, by swift movements of the arms, as though wishing to prevent them from having time to act of their own accord, to refuse to do his bidding, to do something else instead. When at table he would handle his glass, his knife or his fork so quickly that nobody ever had an opportunity to observe what he was going to do before it had already been done.

Now I was able one evening to obtain the explanation of his astounding disease of mind.

He used in those days to pay me visits from time to time at my country residence; and on the evening in question he seemed unusually nervous.

A storm was rising in the sky, black and stifling, after a long day of atrocious heat. No breath of air moves the leaves. A sort of hot-bath vapor passed across our faces, made us pant for air. I was feeling very uneasy, very much agitated, and I wished to go to bed.

When he saw me rise to leave the room Jacques Parent seized me by the arm with a grip of terror.

"Oh, no!" he said; "stay a little while with me!"

I looked at him in surprise, and murmured:

"It's only because this storm is making me very nervous."

"And me! Oh! remain here, I beg of you—I do not want to be left alone."

His looks were wild. I asked him: "What is the matter with you? Are you losing your senses?"

And he stammered in reply: "Yes, now and then, on such evenings as this—electrical evenings—I am—I am—I am afraid—I am afraid of myself, no, you do not understand me. It is because I am grieved with a might—no, a power—no, with a force. In short I can not tell you what it is; but

I find in myself a magnetic action, so extraordinary that I am afraid—yes, terrified at myself, as I have just told you."

And he concealed his madly quivering hands under the lapel of his jacket.

Then I myself began suddenly to feel the trembling of fear—a fear vague, mighty and horrible. I felt an awful desire to get away, to run away, to escape from the sight of him, to escape the sensation of feeling his wandering eye passing over me, then turn from me and circle about the ceiling, seeking some dark corner of the room to fix itself upon, as if he wanted to hide his awful gaze as well as his awful hands.

I stammered out: "Why, you never told me this before."

He went on:

"Do I ever tell anybody? Listen! This evening I cannot keep my secret, and I would rather you should know everything. Besides, you might be able to succor me.

"Do you know what magnetism is? No. Nobody knows what it is. But its existence is fully established; its manifestations are recognized; the doctors themselves practice it; one of the most illustrious, M. Charcot professes it. Therefore there is no doubt that it exists.

"A man—a being—has the frightful and incomprehensible power of compelling another being, by mere force of will, to sleep, and of robbing him while so asleep of his thought, of his soul, just as one might steal a purse. He steals his thought—that is to say, his soul—the sanctuary, the secret of the Me—the soul, that deep of being supposed to be impenetrable, unfathomable—the soul, which is the asylum of fancies that man dares not avow, of all hidden things, of all that one desires to conceal from other human beings; and he tears it open—he violates it—he exhibits it nakedly—he flings it to the public! Is it not atrocious, wicked, infamous?"

"Why how can this be done? Does anybody know? Why, what can anybody know about it? All is mystery. We have no means of communicating with other objects save our miserable senses—incomplete, infirm, so feeble that they have scarcely power enough to discover what is round about us. All is mystery. Think of music, for example; that divine art—that art which troubles the soul, carries it away, intoxicates it, maddens it—what is that music? Nothing.

"You do not understand me? Listen! Two bodies strike against each other. The air vibrates. Its vibrations are more or less numerous, more or less rapid, more or less powerful, according to the nature of the shock. Now each of us has in his or her ear a fine small skin which receives these aerial vibrations and transmits them to the brain in the form of sound. Fancy a glass of water turning into wine in your mouth! The tympanum accomplishes this incredible metamorphosis—this miraculous change of motion into sound. See!

"Music, that complex and mysterious art—precise as algebra and yet vague as a dream—that art made of mathematics and of wind, exists only through the strange property of a little morsel of skin. Did it not exist, that little skin—neither could sound exist, since sound consists in itself of a mere vibration. Could music be understood had we no ears? No! Very well, then! we are surrounded by many other things the existence of which we will never be able to even suspect, simply because we lack those sense-organs which could reveal them to us.

"Perhaps magnetism belongs to this class of things. We can only have a presentiment of this power—we can only feel our way tremblingly in its spectral neighborhood—we can only catch a faint glimpse of this new secret of nature—because the natural instrument of revelation does not exist within us.

"As for myself—as for myself, I am possessed of a frightful power. I feel as though there were within me another being, another life imprisoned in me, incessantly trying to escape—another being who is ever striving to act against my will, who agitates me, gnaws me, exhausts me. What is it? What is he? I do not know; but there are two of us in this miserable body of mine; and it is he, or the other one, who often proves the stronger, as he is this evening.

"I need only look at people in order to stupefy them as thoroughly as though I drugged them with heavy doses of opium. I have only to extend my hands in order to produce things—things—horrible things! If you could only know! Yes, if you could only know! My power does not merely extend to men, but to animals and even—ever to inanimate objects!

"All this tortures and terrifies me. I often think of tearing out my eyes—of cutting off my hands.

"But I am going to show you—I want you to know everything! Here! I will show you the power I speak of—not over human creatures—that can be seen anywhere—but over—over animals. Call Mirza!"

He walked to and fro with great rapid strides, like one in a hallucination; and he stretched out his hands, which had been kept hidden in his

bosom. They seemed to me as terrible as though he had suddenly produced two naked swords.

And I obeyed him mechanically, completely subjugated, quivering with terror, and nevertheless devoured by an impetuous curiosity to see. I opened the door and whistled to my dog, who was lying down in the hallway. Forthwith I heard the hurried pattering of her nails on the steps of the stairway; and she appeared at the door, all joyously, wagging her tail.

Then I ordered her to lie down in an armchair; she leaped upon it, and Jacques began to stroke her and look into her eyes. At once she became uneasy; she commenced to quiver, turning her head first to one side, then to the other in order, to avoid the fixed gaze of the man, seeming to be seized with over-growing fear. Then suddenly she began to tremble all over, as dogs tremble. Her whole body palpitated, shook with long shudders; and she tried to escape, to run away. But he simply placed his hand upon the skull of the animal; and under the touch she uttered one of those long howls that may be heard by night through the great silence of the country.

I felt myself numbed, dizzy as one feels when on the deck of a rocking ship. I saw the furniture bending, the walls moving. I gasped out: "Enough of this, Jacques! enough!"

But he did not listen to me. He continued to gaze at Mirza in a frightful, continuous manner. She closed her eyes at last and let her head drop as if sinking to sleep. He turned toward me.

"It is done," he said. "Now watch."

And throwing his handkerchief to the further end of the apartment, he shouted: "Fetch it!" The animal rose, staggering, stumbling as if blind, moving her feet as paralytics move their limbs, and found her way to the handkerchief, which made a white spot at the edge of the wall. Several times she tried to seize it in her mouth; but she snapped in the air close beside it, as if she could not see it. Finally she caught it in her jaws, and returned with the same unsteady, somnambulist gait.

It was something terrifying to see.

He commanded her: "Lie down!" She crouched. Then touching her forehead he cried: "A hare!—sick him! sick him!" And the animal, still lying on her side, seemed trying to run, tossed her limbs like dogs do, while dreaming, and without opening her mouth made strange barking sounds—ventriiloquistic barking.

Jacques seemed now like one insane. The sweat streamed from his forehead. He thundered out: "Bite him!—bite your master!" She made two or three terrible struggles, one would have sworn she was striving against an irresistible force. He repeated, "Bite him!" Then rising up, my own dog approached me, and I recoiled; I retreated to the wall, trembling with fright, my foot raised to kick her, to repulse her.

But Jacques again ordered: "Come back here—at once!" She returned to him. Then, with his two great hands, he commenced to rub her head, as though removing invisible hands which tied it.

Mirza reopened her eyes. "That's all!" he said.

I did not dare to lay my hands upon her—and I pushed the door open immediately to let her go out. She went forth very slowly, trembling all over, thoroughly exhausted; and once more I heard the pattering of her claws as she descended the stairs.

But Jacques again approached me: "That is not the worst," he said. "What terrifies me the most is this: Objects obey me!"

On my table was lying a sort of ornamental poniard which I used to cut the leaves of books. It seemed to crawl—it moved slowly—and all at once I saw—yes, I saw the knife itself tremble and quiver, and slide of its own accord, slowly, surely to the outstretched hand waiting for it, into the grasp of the fingers ready to close upon it.

I screamed with terror. I thought for a moment that I had become mad myself; but the shriek of my own voice at once calmed me.

Jacques continued:

"All objects come to me in the same way. That is why I hide my hands. What is this? Is it magnetism, electricity, loadstone-power? I don't know—but it is horrible. And do you know why it is horrible? When I find myself alone—the very moment I am alone—I cannot help calling to me everything about me. And I spend whole days in moving things this way from place to place—never tiring of exerting this abominable power of mine, as if to find out whether I am losing it or not."

He had again buried his two large hands in his pockets; and he stared into the night. A light noise, a faint shuddering seemed to pass through the trees.

It was the rain commencing to fall. I muttered: "It is frightful!"

He repeated: "It is horrible!"

Then a great tremor rushed through the foliage like a gust of wind. It was the heavy shower descending—a thick and torrential rain.

Jacques began to breathe in the air,

with long, powerful aspirations which lifted his chest.

"Leave me now," he said; "the rain will give me calm. I wish now to be alone."

An English Farm—A Wife.

"We're up at 4 o'clock, for yer must be up beimes; the young poultry are soft and can't bide long whies without food. At quarter to four I steps out of my bed just sharp like, and sings out to the girls and they slips forth from bed as quick as ever they may, and we jumps on with our clothes and minds our beasts, whatever it may be that God has given us to look after. And then at 7 o'clock Bilston and all of us have breakfast. We have home-made bread, and there's bread and milk for the girls; and we always has a slip of bacon on Sundays. After we have had breakfast," continued Mrs. Bilston, "master he bids they settle themselves, and we all sits this wise—Polly there, and Tom yonder, and Bilston in his armchair," and the good woman enumerated and showed me exactly where each member of her family sat. "Then the master calls for the family Bible, as belonged to his grandfather, in which is written how his father's sister died of the measles when she was four years old; and he begins at the first chapter of Genesis and works right on forward like till the book is ended, and then he starts and begins again. He always reads one chapter, and never more and never no less; and when anything he thinks applies like he says to one of them, 'Now you take and mind that, my lad,' or 'my wench,' as the case may be; and then, when he has said a few words of learning and minding, we gets up and each of us goes off to his or her business. I churns regular three times a week, and the girls they get off to making the beds or scrubbing, or maybe to the calves or to the poultry. There's always work for the willing. Then by twelve o'clock we're all in again, and after the gals and boys has a-made themselves tidy—for I can't do with no dirt about their hands and faces at meal—while we sits down; and we has most times broth or rice and sagg pudding, and winter times an apple tart, or, for a treat like, a jam roll; and then there's a glass of cider for Bilston and the men, and there's milk for the gals. And after we've a-done—that's saying, when all's we have eaten up clean and neat whatever father or myself have a-given them—we goes out, all but Polly, who clears away, and washes up and puts back all the pewter; and then we minds the beasts again till 4 o'clock, when we comes in and has tea, which I keeps in the tea-caddy as my mother a-gave me when I married, and which I always keeps locked—for I won't have no trifling with the tea; and after tea we drives in the poultry to roost, and we stalls the calves and such like 'nesh' beasts for the night. And after that the gals come, and they out with their needle and thread; and to make the work go merry, we sings such songs as I used to learn by times when I was a chit, such as 'Cherry Ripe,' 'Little Boy Blue' and 'Sally in our Alley,' and all the while we darn father's stockings or make the boys new shirts, or maybe the gals make their own gowns—but I won't have no furbelows nor bunching about behind nor before, as such like folly only hinders their gait and makes them vain with frippery. Then there's often the sheets to mend or the underlinen to put to rights. And I always keep they sweet with lavender, as does a body good to smell and seems well and pleasant like for any one in bed. And at 9 o'clock we all get to bed, and I goes round rooms at the half hour; for I don't stand no candles burning after such whiles, for it be a danger to the house and a folly to themselves."

The Crops.

November returns of cotton to the Department of Agriculture, indicate a crop somewhat larger than 1883. It is in unusually fine condition, of good color, unstained by storms and free from trash and dirt. Returns of the rate of the yield of corn indicate a product somewhat in excess of eight hundred million bushels, or an average rate or small fraction above 26 bushels per acre. The best yields are, as in 1883, in what has been designated the "Great American Desert." "The arid region," in the vicinity of the 100th meridian, have produced heavy crops of maize of a high quality, and that line of longitude has ceased to be an absolute barrier to the corn production or general farming. The quality of corn is better than in 1883, nearly everywhere, and the Northern belt is worth 25 to 75 per cent. more. The potato crop is nearly an average yield of 90 bushels per acre, and exceeds 190,000,000 bushels.

Relics of Monmouth Field.

Among the relics exhibited at the unveiling of the Monmouth Battle Monument at Freehold is a sword carried by Major Joseph Powell, and the very cannon used by Captain Molly Pitcher on the battle field of Monmouth. The exhibitor of these relics is the grandson of Major Joseph Powell, the venerable T. McChesney, M. D., of Cranbury, N. J. The old gentleman, though now in his eighty-third year, is quite active, and is apparently as full of patriotism as was his grandfather, Major Powell.

An Old German Town.

The Harz mountains have no considerable elevation, except at one point (the Braken three thousand four hundred feet.) but on the eastern side rise so abruptly from the flatness of the cultivated fields as to enhance their dignity by the striking contrast. They have done their very best here in the first effort. At the summit of the eastern elevation, where firs and beeches run part way down the slope and corn has worked its way up to meet them, stands Schloss Blankenburg, half-residence, half fortress, very solid, very homely, long and low. One would say that its site justifies the use of this building as a residence, for if the view from its windows were less fine the execrable furniture of its rooms would make life a burden. The explanations of its original, and its early times more important, character of fortress is obvious. The town is built on the hillside below the castle, and the town wall depends from the loop, which it makes about the heavy masonry and rock work of its Burg, as one may plainly see. The wall spreads out in pear shape below to inclose the few hundred houses.

Peasant women here have a custom which may illustrate at this dependence. They do not carry their babies on the arm, but an arrangement like the lower half of a skirt is hung round the neck, over one shoulder and under the other reaching to the waist. In the bosom of that lower fold the child is probably snug enough. So Blankenburg seems to have been carried by the castle; but no longer an infant town, it has broken its walls and kicked itself loose from the stone skirt, of which one now finds fragments used as the ready made sides of dwelling houses, and a considerable piece still hanging about the shoulders of the Schloss. To free her hands for work the peasant woman has invented her portable crèche; evidently the old counts of Blankenburg had need of both hands. Right and left from their hill, within rifle range almost, are two other fortified heights—these totally ruinous—Regenstein and Helmburg. It was not a quiet neighbor in days of old. The profession of robber baron was overcrowded. Competition was so keen in the fourteenth century that one Count Regenstein was three times made prisoner by the citizens of a neighboring town. The citizens were clement, and twice dismissed him with an admonition; but finally shut him up in a cage (still to be seen in Quedinburg), and so exhibited him to the public as an incorrigibly thievish bird.

"In one of the rooms of the Schloss Maria Theresa was born," the Castellan will tell us. This is not true; but the lovely and brilliant empress passed her early childhood here. Looking out from this window one sees just below on the slope the Rathaus, in the walls of which are embedded cannon balls, perpetuating the memory of a siege by Wallenstein in the thirty years' war. Covering the vast eastern plain are grain fields, without fences and now showing various colors, woods of artificial appearance, cleared of underbrush and their trees set out in rows. Fields and woods are really the most enjoyable sights here, of course, just as their ruder forms in America have always seemed more beautiful than city halls and factories. Novelty of associations can do little more than deepen and quicken customary forms of enjoyment.

The Highland Lassies.

"The handsomest man I have ever seen," said William Black, "was a boatman on the west of Skye, the calm and serious dignity of whose face seemed more suggestive of Leonardo di Vinci than of herring fishing; and the handsomest woman I have ever seen was a young married lady, who, some years ago, happened to be traveling in the Clansman, and whose gently modulated English indicated an Inverness origin. When a Highland girl, even of the peasant class, is pretty (and the phenomenon is not of a very rare occurrence), the prettiness is of a refined and intellectual type; the forehead high, the eyes clear, full and contemplative, the mouth fine, and the expression of the face gentle and yet firm. Wordsworth never forgot the beauty of the Highland girl he saw at Invernaid. Indeed, it is said he had to recur to that fount when he wished to pay a poetical compliment to his wife. For the rest, the way an educated Highland young lady speaks English is one of the most delightful things in the world, though, no doubt she would be very much surprised, and even indignant, if she was told that she had any accent at all."

A Bonanza.

Cotton seed is the Southern bonanza. There are three and a half pounds of seed to every pound of fibre. More than 4,000,000 tons are produced annually, but notwithstanding the rapid increase in the number of mills, only about ten per cent. of the seed is crushed, the rest being largely thrown away. A ton of seed yields 35 gallons of oil, 22 pounds of cotton, and 750 pounds of cake, used for fattening cattle. The value of these products is \$10. The oil is largely used for making fine soaps, and when refined properly can hardly be distinguished from olive oil, which it is superseding for many purposes.

Camphor.

We had ignorantly supposed that camphor was the sap of a tree, gathered as that of our maple trees is, and evaporated until the fragrant and brilliant gum, with which we are familiar, was deposited, but find that though it is obtained in two or three ways, neither of them agrees with my idea. In China, from whence most of the gum camphor of commerce comes, the whole tree is split in small pieces, which are steeped in water and the liquor thus obtained is distilled until the gum is formed. In the Island of Sumatra, however, there is a variety of the camphor-tree which is much larger than that of China, under the bark of which the gum is found in a concrete form, and from which it is brushed down carefully with long brooms. Another variety of the same tree yields its gum in the form of pitch. In this case the gatherers first pierce the trees with an axe to discover their worth, as no outward sign betrays whether the heart of the tree will be found to contain oil, a resinous pitch, or gum.

After the axe has disclosed the white and shining substance for which they seek, the tree is cut down, divided into lengths of about three feet, and split open very carefully, when the gum is taken out in solid rolls, often as large as a man's arm, and all ready for market. One tree sometimes furnishes as much as eleven pounds of gum, of so fine a quality as to be valued by the Chinese at fifty times the price of that produced by their own trees. This superior quality, of which the Island of Sumatra yields only about 390 lbs., a year is rarely if ever exported. So highly is it prized by the natives of Japan and China, that the home market exhausts the supply, and they are unwilling to allow outside barbarians to obtain any. The Laurus Camphora of China is an evergreen of the Laurel family, growing to a large size, having glossy leaves and bearing clusters of yellowish flowers, which are succeeded by bunches of fruit resembling black currants. The camphor-tree of Sumatra is a larger and much more aromatic species. The Arabians are said to have introduced this valuable article to the notice of Europeans, since there is no evidence that it was known either to the Greeks or Romans.

A Hale Old Man of 93.

A tall, spare-built man, with snow white hair and beard, and dressed in a well-worn homespun suit, climbed up to the editorial rooms of the Philadelphia, Pa., News, accompanied by a small and peculiar looking dog. The man was Captain Robert W. Anderson, aged 93, of Sumter, South Carolina, a veteran of the war of 1812. In the late war he was a veterinary surgeon in a Southern regiment. The old gentleman is remarkably preserved for a man of his age, and is in full possession of all his faculties. He left Sumter on May 7 last, and walked all the way to Boston, where he has a son. In June last he was in New York, and his arrival was chronicled at the time. He visited all the principal cities in Massachusetts, traveling from place to place on foot. A month ago he went to Portland, Maine, from Boston by steamer and traveled extensively through that State on foot. He returned to Boston two weeks ago, and is now in New York city again on his way back to South Carolina. On his trip from Boston to New York he walked as far as Stamford. He says he will walk the entire distance home if the roads are good. The old man's walk per day on his journey from Sumter to Boston averaged 22 miles. He says he sometimes had difficulty in securing shelter from farmers who had been so victimized by tramps that they regarded everybody with suspicion. Generally speaking, Captain Anderson says he was most hospitably received. His papers, which include certificate of character from the Sheriff of his county, Judges and others, disposed of any doubt that might be entertained of his identity or statements.

In 1812 Captain Anderson drove a wagon between Sumter and Boston and between Charleston and Boston. He subsequently, in the same year, was employed by the Government to drive a wagon between this city and Boston which carried Government gold and silver. He intends trying to get somebody interested in his case at Washington to procure him a pension. The only obstacle to him getting it is the fact that although he was employed by the Government in 1812 he was not enlisted. He says the records at Washington will prove all that he says about his employment by the Government. Captain Anderson's dog Fido accompanies him in his travels. The captain never used tobacco, but always takes a drink when he thinks he wants it. He has never been sick in his life.

California Products.

A San Francisco paper estimates the total value of California products for 1884 at \$81,000,000. About \$50,000,000 will be exported, consisting of wheat, barley, flour, wine, brandy, wool, salmon and canned fruits. Wheat leads the lists of exports, the total product being 1,500,000 tons, valued at \$46,500,000.

Defile not your mouth with impure words.