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ROYAL HOSPITAL FOR NEURO-DISABILITY :
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Cured by an Incurable

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Part 2

these are, so may you be some day: help them in the misery from which you have escaped.'

"Let who will come here," said the little man, getting somewhat excited, but in a mild and gentle way. "Let who will come here, they will see, I hope, what they have escaped from—I am sure what they may come to. They are one and all within reach, *easy* reach, of the arm of the destroyer—the destroyer of health, of beauty, of comfort, the ravager of homes, the ruiner of fortunes, the wrecker of lives. Let those who come not here, but who read or are told of what is here, bethink them that as are these sore-stricken ones to-day, so may they themselves be to-morrow; and when they think of illnesses recovered, and accidents averted, and pains alleviated in their own history, or in that of those they love, let them drop a thankoffering and a blessing here. If it is to be but a trifle—well, littles make mickles. We live on little dewdrops, and little breathings, and little sun-rays; life is made up of littles. We could live altogether on littles in this place, if only we had enough of them."

The visits to the Hospital for Incurables were not without the effect on one of his patients, which was hoped for and anticipated by Dr. Jacobus.

Miss Gribble kept it a profound secret from her brother-in-law that she had been to the Hospital; and Mr. Anton kept it a profound secret from her that he had been there either, but the lady could not keep from her brother-in-law the excellent effects which flowed from her visit. Unquestionably, Miss Gribble was quite a different person from what she had been; to her the world ceased to be a mere cobweb corner. It was found to contain in it more than Miss Gribble. The organ-man was no longer a demon in disguise, and as to 'stericks, there were none. Miss Gribble's maid, having an eye to her half-crowns, frequently suggested them; but her mistress was inexorable, and *would* stand up straight, or sit up straight, as the case may be, when according to all past experience she ought to have slid away as though she had no backbone, and gone off.

The fact is, the existence of such real suffering as Miss Gribble had seen, made her free from the bonds of fancy in its diseased form and power; and so she saw life in different and real colours, and she bethought herself what she could do to alleviate the sufferings which she had seen; and not only these, but all the sufferings which the Hospital had, so to speak, in hand all over the country.

There was no doubt she could spare £5 a year out of her own income, and she did so; and no doubt whatever that the drive to the Hospital

was as nice a one as any other—far better than going round and round Hyde Park. So down she went to the Hospital three or four times every season, and always took a friend with her. That was one way of doing good, and a very substantial way too, for it made interest in the Hospital, and I should not be far wrong if I say that Miss Gribble was worth five-and-twenty pounds a year to its funds. The presence of suffering in Miss Gribble's mind would have only brought misery, but the thought of alleviated suffering brought happiness; and under the genial sunbeams of that happiness, fogs, damp, and mists were dispelled; fungi, toadstools, and mind-weeds were pulled up; cobwebs and their spiders were brushed away; uncanny reptiles buried themselves out of sight; hooting owls got off into some darkness which, wherever it was, was not in Miss Gribble's heart. The mosquitoes of life, which were always buzzing about and stinging her, and the centipedes, which were always crawling over her, buzzed, and stung, and crawled somewhere else. The fresh breeze blowing through Miss Gribble's spirit was too bracing for them. Even though they had been buttoned up to the chin in great coats, or been wrapped up tight in sealskin jackets, they'd have all got their death of cold if they had stayed; but the fresh breeze made *her* heart warm, for she exercised herself in it, and in blessing others she reaped blessings a thousand-fold herself.

CHAPTER VII.

The horrors of incurability were on Mr. Anton. Had he been told that that tremendous toe would screw, and tear, and drag him and cut him for the rest of his natural life, he could perhaps have borne it. At any rate it might kill him, and then, so far as the toe went, there would be an end; but to be told that his little Mary was incurable, and that by Dr. Jacobus, who knew all about her, that was terrible indeed.

Never before had the rich man realized the impotence of money. He used to think that money could do everything. He had not known that a voice had said to it from the beginning, "Hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther."

Mr. Anton had so far laid to heart what he had seen at the Hospital for Incurables, that he could now realize what it would be for his child to lie all day, all night, hopeless, helpless, upon her bed; more

or less in pain it may be, like that creature whom he had seen in the Hospital, who said to him when he asked her "If she suffered pain?" "Oh! yes, sir. I ache so, and my prospect is that I shall get worse and not better."

It may be, like that one who had been seventeen years in her chair, and said something to him about a "heart school," though he did not



quite understand what she meant by that. Had not Mr. Anton seen at that Hospital one with hip disease, sixteen years laid up? Ah how wonderful his memory was now. Yes, he remembered all about it: four operations at St. Bartholomew's, one leg in splints and one twisted up. To think of his little Mary being like that poor creature who had been ten years on her back with rheumatism, and who thought it "nice that she could do that much," when the "that

much" was only a scrap of crochet! There was that sufferer, seventeen years in that hospital, with twisted fingers and locked jaws. To be sure, she had said "She couldn't tell anyone how thankful she was for being there, as she had lost all her friends; but God knows;" and the poor creature had said she was "very happy there." It was wonderful how every sight and sound seemed to come up in the wretched man's memory, all to aggravate him in this, his bitter hour of woe. And now, what was money, what were estates and investments? He himself must go soon, and the little one for whom he designed everything could get from all his mortgages, and shares, and bonds, but the morsel she ate and the water-bed on which she was to lie. Aye, and small as the morsel was, the money could not insure her being able to eat it. His money had been his god, and it had been brought into the presence of suffering, and, like Dagon of old, it had tumbled down and fallen to pieces; aye, like Baal of old, it slept or was on a journey, and could not hear or come near in this hour of agony, when its worshipper did worse even than cry, and cut himself with stones.

At last the wretched man fell down upon the floor in a fit, from which it was not easy to recover him; but he was brought to, only, however, to lead a dazed kind of life for full a fortnight after. Up and down the house he wandered when all the rest were fast asleep; quietly and noiselessly he slipped into his little one's room to look at her in her bed, and then stole out to sob out great big sobs in the empty drawing-room below. Down in the city, the clerks wondered why there was no buying and selling of stock and other business; but the governor was in and out, never resting; or when he did sit at his desk it was with his elbows on it, and his head buried in his hands.

Withered leaves, whirling, scattering, fallen from the once green tree; old grey moss-grown stones tumbled from the arch and buttress and chiselled tracery of the once noble pile; coloured fragments of the once storied pane, fractured now, and meaning naught and telling naught; frayed and frowsy threads of the blurred and mildewed tapestry, with its bright pigments gone; gather yourselves all together to help to picture what all bonds and bills, all mortgages and shares, were now to the man who, for the first time, learned the impotence of money; the possible mockery of a great balance on the right side of a banker's book. For what had the rich man wrought all his life long? To put a morsel into an Incurable's mouth, and to lay her aching bones on a water bed.

Three long years passed, and gradually Mr. Anton's daughter was brought lower and lower, until, at last, she did come to the morsel,

and the water-bed. But one never-failing friend she had, and that was the lady next door, her aunt, Miss Gribble.

It was a standing wonder to that lady's brother-in-law how soft had become that lady's voice, how gentle that lady's touch, how unwearied that lady's vigils; the bedside of that fair young girl seemed to be what she chiefly lived for on earth. She was not the old Martha Gribble, the fidgety Martha Gribble, the spitiery Martha Gribble, who seemed to live the next door to Mr. Anton for the express purpose of worrying him, as if her being his sister-in-law gave her a natural right so to do. Ah, he did not know that the spell of the "Incurables" was on her. What she had learned in that home of pain made her at home in the home of pain, for she had learned gratitude; and the fret of life had given place to peace. And what she had learned herself, Miss Gribble taught her niece. The gentle girl took in the thought that she was not alone, but one of a great company, the pain-bearers, the depositories of one of the great secrets and mysteries of God. And as she lay there, and heard of one crippled for many a year who had no early home like hers, but had been brought up at an orphanage, whose leg had been amputated, who was obliged either to stand or lie, who said "it was heaven on earth when on one occasion she got out;" when she compared her own pains with those of this afflicted one, who, when in the Hospital, had to be removed to a lower floor owing to her cries of agony; oh! how much had she still to be thankful for, and how glad was she to scribble her little word of sympathy, such as it was, scarce legible to ordinary eyes, but, oh! how legible to the eye of suffering, preternaturally acute to catch sympathy and see its curves of graceful beauty, even in the twisted and deformed letters of the shaking and feeble hand.

Pain ministering to pain! Surely heaven can see few more touching sights on earth than that! Pleasure refusing to minister to pain—surely heaven can witness no sadder sight than that. Nay, why go so far; is not bare freedom from pain, pleasure in itself? Are there not some who call that "heaven upon earth;" and have they no alleviating hand with which to touch and soothe the throb, which must throb and throb, until the last pulse has beaten, and the last breath has sighed?

Hard lines they were indeed for the young girl who now lay upon a hopeless bed of illness. Life had at first few prospects for her. It is true, from her room window she could see the blue sky, at least one little patch of it; but she knew that she could never go as others went, and see it in its grand expanse, away over the blue waters, away over the mountain-tops, and the heather, and green, green fields. By her side were flowers, flowers enough. They filled costly vases, they grew in

ornamental pots. But she could never see the hedgerow blossoms, or smell the perfumed air. Her little tiny fountain played its jet over the moss in her little fernery, but it was ever the same, the same; and she longed to see the dewdrops carpeting the earth with diamonds and trembling on the leaves, and the stream dancing amid the stones and swirling round the great wells, and leaping from high precipices, and flowing sedately and solemnly along—all like the changes and chances of this mortal life, which would have been far preferable in her mind to the dull monotony of even the most pampered existence.

Of all these things the young girl had accounts enough in books, of some of them she had accounts in colour, in pictures; but, oh! the heart longed for the freshness of the reality—for life, life itself, for which man is made.

'Twas hard at first to settle down as an "Incurable"—to look on, and on, and on the long straight road of life, with no change until the last great change itself; to be cut off from the common pleasures which seemed the heritage of all; and willingly would the young girl have exchanged her lot with all its luxuries crammed into that one room, for hard work and only daily bread, if she could be as others and take her part in life's work, whatever it might be. But the doom of the "Incurable" was on her, and for her there was no hope. True, she had not to think of that daily bread as many an "Incurable" had. She had none to taunt her with her worthlessness in life, or to grudge her the morsel she required, because it had not been earned. She was not hustled here and there, as if she were ever in the way. She had not to overhear what let her know without mistake that she was a burden which others had to bear, and that she could be spared and not be missed. All this, the lot, alas! of many an "Incurable," the nerve-twisting, the blood-letting of the heart, was not her portion; but the fate of the "Incurables" was on her still. At first it was all hard to bear, but the worst of conditions has its alleviations; and Mary Anton in process of time found hers.

And they came, not in the way in which we might have expected, from the comforts and luxuries with which she was surrounded. Soon these became very little to her. Grapes, apparently the lineal descendants of those at Eshcol—great grapes at fifteen shillings the pound, almost as big as plums—were left untasted; jellies lay by the bedside untouched; even the flowers seemed to have a sameness; the outside alleviations could not satisfy the yearnings of the heart, which was not bound down incurably and hopelessly incapable in that bed. What Mary wanted was heart-food, heart-flowers.

"And now," said she to her aunt, "now I cannot do anything for

anyone. I can't attend on father, I can't help anyone; I can't even stop to speak to Foxey, and tell him to 'be a good boy,' as I used to do when I passed his crossing."

CHAPTER VIII.

Now Miss Gribble had never told anyone the secret of her new-found amiability. She had paid several visits to the "Incurables," improving, I am glad to say, each time. Every visit made her feel more and more how much she herself had to be thankful for; and how loud was the call upon the unsuffering to do something for those who were ever in pain. Her little ailments, as we have said, had disappeared under the presence of real sufferings; and she had gone out of herself into others, and their needs.

In our friend there had lain, all unknown to herself, certain potentialities of benevolence, which, if only they could be got to expand, contained within them great elements of good to others, and happiness to herself. They had, for many a long day, been useless. Her powers of pity had been spent in pitying herself; but ever since that first visit to the Hospital for "Incurables"—ever since her sight of all that hopeless, helpless suffering, the potentialities began to assume form, and to stir, and to breathe, and heave, and want to expand; and, so to speak, to get out of the bones of the stays of selfdom, which had cribbed, cramped, cabined, and confined them so long.

The potentialities ended somewhat after the manner of dynamiters, by bursting the laces and cracking the bones of the tyrant that held imprisoned Miss Gribble, and letting her spirit come forth in the true line of beauty—a blessing to others, and abundantly blessed in herself.

Miss Gribble felt herself developing, and the process was one both of pleasure and surprise—her hand had a farther reach, her eye a longer range, her heart a stronger beat, her foot a firmer tread. More of the world, more of mankind, belonged to her, and more of her belonged to mankind; she knew more, she believed more, she thought more. She had never had any further conception of the music of life than what had flowed from the little melody that had piped itself forth when she once made a pair of muffetees for the old man who drove the brougham she occasionally hired: now she was promoted to harmony. She passed from single notes to chords, from feeble twittering to full-voiced song. She knew something of the Psalmist's feeling

when he said, "Praise the Lord, O my soul, and *all that is within me*, bless His holy name." In truth Miss Gribble's opinions might be said to have taken a very strong and unexpected turn indeed, for that lady (*i.e.* the present Miss Gribble) began to look down upon and speak harshly of the former—so much so that I might almost say the late Miss Gribble, upon whom the present Miss Gribble, in her bright and joyous existence, looked back, was looked upon as no better than a mere creeping worm, or a sloughed-off chrysalis. I have said "bright and joyous existence" advisedly, for though Miss Gribble had little in her present phase of life to do with any but those in suffering, viz., her friends, the "Incurables," whom she frequently visited, and her niece, with whom she spent much of her time; still, the living for others, and the sympathising with them, brought her so much happiness that, she looked upon herself as a kind of butterfly—somewhat matured, it is true, and of a solid type, not exactly coquetting with the flowers, but on terms of solid friendship with them. Colour, scent, all were here; others had become her property: she owned them as well as herself—them, through their sorrows, no doubt; but is not that the way that Christ owns us?—that Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, that One, who "forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, Himself likewise took part in the same."

It was hard, no doubt, for the young creature now laid for life upon a bed of suffering, to be reconciled to her life-long sorrow; to have no future as regards this world; and no present, but one of constraint and pain. Still the thing could be done. God had ordained that such things shall be done, as I myself had proved to me in this same Hospital for "Incurables," of which I have made so much mention here. For that poor thing in the Hospital who was struck down at twenty-one, just from getting damp feet, who was twisted in fingers and lock-jawed in mouth, and who had been seventeen years in this state, told me, as she spake of the loss of all friends, that none could tell how thankful she was, but that God knew; and how very happy she was here. The bitterness of this living death had passed, as God in His mercy makes it pass, so that we become reconciled to the life which is to be our life—the life of suffering, and weariness, and pain. But we have to go through the throes of birth into this new life, with its earth of faded verdure, and skies of clouded grey.

In reconciling Mary Anton to her lot Miss Gribble had a principal hand. Having yielded herself to the influence of the sorrows of others, and sympathy for them—not bare, barren, cold sympathy, but sympathy in hand and heart—she had been privileged to bring blessing to the one who was nearest and dearest to her in life: that

was her motherless niece. And the blessing came by means of those who were suffering themselves; for when Miss Gribble told her niece of this one praising God, though never out of pain; and of that one obliged to be strapped down, and never able to turn at all; and of another cased in irons, or her feet would be away under her hips, and all from having stood on the flag-stones of a church in thin boots; and



brought her messages from the sick ones to hold on, and hold out, for that they themselves had been supported and so should she be too, the sick girl began to feel that she was not alone, but was one of many, a child of the great family of woe.

"But I must help them all," said the suffering girl. "What good is pity, aunt, if we don't help?" And so, off went this little present and that, out of her pocket-money; off went now a pheasant, now a

partridge, now a grouse, now a chicken, now a duck, and now a drake; now a pattern to work, and now a book to read; now a commission for an antimacassar, which some twisted fingers would take six months to make; now one for a pair of muffetees to be sent off to the North-Sea fishers, or to warm the numbed fingers of some dilapidated old night cabman. Hours and hours of pleasure did such commissions give. The antimacassar began on January 1st, at eleven o'clock in the morning, could not come to an end, by means of those gnarled, twisted, screw-like fingers, before July 1st at eleven o'clock too. Six months it would take to make, but it gave an object, an interest, a pleasure, a feeling of something being done, for all that time; and if you had asked good old Miss Popplethwaite what month it was, or what day of it, she had only to look at her antimacassar and read it all off as if it were an almanac: "so many rows done, so many to be done—ah! yes, 'tis March 30th." And the wonder is she could not also tell you, by that antimacassar, what quarter the moon was in, and when the sun rose and set, and when it would be high water at London Bridge, or possibly when the next eclipse of the sun or moon would be. Seven and sixpence was all that the antimacassar was to bring in, and that was not much for six months' work, seeing the price of the cotton had to be taken out of it; but 'twas something to look forward to. To finish the work was something in itself, and the small profit was sweeter than the swoop of many a speculator on the Stock Exchange, when he carries off his thousands as a bull or a bear, it doesn't matter much to him.

And then there was that five-pound note. If there was a pleasure in doing something for this individual one, which undoubtedly there was—there was another kind of pleasure in feeling that something was being done for *all*. The crippled girl seemed in this to gather the whole of the "Incurables," as it were, to herself, and, in the little way in her power, to help them all.

That boy, Foxey, whom we mentioned incidentally in passing, but who is worthy of a much more extended notice—the boy who swept the crossing—had been a protégé of Mary Anton's when she was able to go out. She had often spoken to him, and Foxey always considered it a red-letter day when he saw the young lady with the crutch; first it was the young lady with the stick, then the young lady with the crutch, and, alas! last of all, the young lady with "the crutches," in the plural number.

For this young lady, independently of giving Foxey odd halfpence, had also bestowed on him some kind words now and again, which were much more odd to this youth, seeing such so seldom came his

way. But there were still more than these associations in Foxey mind. Mary Anton had given him a book which could not have cost less than a shilling, and, on Christmas Day, had given him a shilling itself, on his giving a solemn undertaking that he would not expend it in sweets, but in something of a more substantial kind.

Now, as Mary Anton lay on her bed, and as time went on, she greatly desired to be doing good to some one in the very flesh, *i.e.* that she should actually come into contact with the flesh and blood which she wished to benefit. Could she have gone to the "Hospital for Incurables," that would have abundantly satisfied her, but that she could



not do. Perhaps *you* may do it, good reader, but she certainly could not.

It was while lying awake one night, comparatively free from pain and suffering, that Foxey came into Mary Anton's mind. She wondered many things about him: how was he getting on at the crossing? had the few little words she had said to him from Holy Scripture done him any good? She should like to see Foxey again.

Miss Gribble had by this time become the confidante of many of her niece's thoughts, feelings, and desires, and so she soon came to know about this longing of hers to do good to actual flesh and blood; and that as she could not get to the Incurables, that flesh and blood was the boy to whom she had so often shown a little kindness while she was well.

Of course, Foxey could not be brought into the house, much less up to Mary Anton's room, without her father's permission, and that Miss Gribble undertook to get.

"Very odd," said the old gentleman when he heard of it; "very odd. Boy of the street! What d'ye call him? Foxey? Can't be the boy that ran after me a week ago, and gave me back half-a-crown, saying he thought I had given it to him in mistake for a penny; boy with one boot and one shoe, and a fuzzy head and a red comforter round his neck. Thought perhaps I'd give him five shillings for being honest in returning half-a-crown. Capital dodge that, eh! eh!"

"That's he, by the description, so far as his body is concerned," said Miss Gribble; "but I don't think you're altogether right about the rest. I've heard that that boy is very good to his mother, and gives her all he earns but one penny a day, and that he keeps for himself."

"To buy cigars with, I suppose," said Mr. Anton.

"I don't know how many cigars you can get for a penny," said Miss Gribble; "it may go in lollipops for what I know; or perhaps he may save it up to buy clothes. I only know there is good in the boy."

"Well, well," said the old gentleman, whose soul was not in any way drawn towards Foxey, but who was keen to do anything on earth, and at any price, that would give his incurable child a moment's pleasure. "I'll speak to John about it." And Miss Gribble went her way.

Mr. Anton rang the bell, and his servant-man appeared.

"John."

"Sir."

"There is a street-sweeping boy, called Foxey, round the corner there; do you know the boy?"

"Yes, sir."

"How do you know him?"

"I know him two ways—three ways, I may say. First, by his having only one boot and one shoe, and by his fuzzy head and red comforter; second, by my taking him several threepenny pieces from Miss Mary with messages to be a good and honest boy; and, third—"

and here John paused.

"Speak up, John, if you know anything bad of him."

"Third, by his coming here every Saturday night, and ringing the area bell, to ask humbly how the young lady is. He said he had a deal of work to find out where she lived, and that he'd come reg'lar to the end of the world."

Anything connected with his only and incurable child touched

Mr. Anton's heart at once; so he looked fixedly at his man, and said, "John—"

"Here, sir."

"Take that boy and get him washed—take him to the parish baths—"

"Yes, sir."

"And have him scrubbed with a broom or brush, or scraped, for I'm sure the young vagabond has an inch of dirt on him; and when



he has been well boiled—boiled, John, do you hear—then take him to the nearest ready-made clothes shop and get him dressed decently, and then tell Miss Gribble he's ready. That's all you have to do with it—hand him over to Miss Gribble."

John, being himself of a benevolent character, was nothing loth to undertake the task. Accordingly, when Mr. Anton had taken his departure the next day for the city, off he set to operate on Mr. Foxey.

This young gentleman was to be found in his usual sphere of duty, and was at the moment diligently engaged in carrying an old lady's dog for her over the crossing. This ended, he was open to an engagement of any other kind.

"Here, boy"—and Foxey approached Mr. Anton's man, expecting, no doubt, that in some way or other this unexpected introduction might lead to business of some kind.

"How should you like to be washed?"

"I'm pretty nigh washed every wet day," said Foxey, "and don't see that I want no cleaning at all."

"No doubt you think a drizzle's enough to clean your face, or perhaps a fog," observed Mr. Anton's man.

"All I knows about fog," said Foxey, "is that it don't bother about my face; it goes right down inside—there's plenty of room for it there, for wittles is scarce; but it ain't content to bide, and I'm obliged to cough it up again. It's a trouble goin' down and a trouble comin' up again; and I wish 'twould bide wherever it came from, though where that is I've never heerd tell."

"Well, you're to come with me and be washed and dressed too, and you're to ask no questions, but do as you're bid."

Then Mr. Anton's man revealed to Foxey that the young lady in whom he was so much interested, was interested enough in him to want to see him; and that he must be made decent before he could be admitted into her presence.

This reconciled our young friend to anything which might be required in the ablution line; so that what Mr. Anton's servant-man wanted was accomplished, and the great constitutional doctrine of the liberty of the subject not interfered with.

Foxey was first taken to the baths, and rubbed and scrubbed to honest John's heart's content. Like shrimps, he was put in alive and came out quite another colour, only not dead and curled up—subdued indeed, but with a good deal of life in him still. Thence he was moved on to the clothier's, where he was fitted, so far as he could be by tape, without anything being tried on, with a new suit. He was given boots to correspond, and might be said to have been turned out in what for him was first-rate style.

If he could have gone up and down Regent Street arm-in-arm with his old self, and an advertisement to look on himself as he was, and as he had been, and then for all mankind to try Pears' soap, he might have been the means of selling quite a ton of that boon and blessing to mankind. Not that he was at present by any means a rival to the driven snow; but, all things are by comparison—he

had at least no dirt on him that would fall off. The ingrained, if to be dealt with at all, would require the energies of that wonder-worker, time.

Foxy, thus swept and garnished, was duly delivered into Miss Gribble's hands, who brought him up to the invalid's chamber. At first, Foxy was much alarmed; he scarce recognised, in the pale, thin



face, the young lady whose pence had afforded him such unlimited satisfaction; and the hands which were outstretched on the coverlet were thin and transparent and glass-like—quite unlike any of the hands which Foxy was accustomed to see. Foxy had dim notions about the angels and their habits and ways, and whether they went to bed and got up like other folk, and especially it was a moot point as to whether they fell ill and kept their beds from time to time.

The young Incurable was an angel to him; though no doubt an incurable angel would have been a great curiosity in itself, if such a thing were to be found.

"Go near the bed," said Miss Gribble; and Foxy, urged on gently from behind by that lady, who acted both as rudder and propeller, found himself close to the invalid's side.

Foxy opened proceedings by seizing the front locks or bushes of his hair, and making them rise from his scalp with the vehemence with which they were pulled.

The response was of a much milder character; it was the putting out of the invalid's hand in a half-weary fashion, which was, indeed, the only fashion of which it was capable, to shake hands with him.

You will remember, good reader, that she wanted to do good in flesh and blood, and to flesh and blood.

But Foxy's flesh and blood had too long been an outcast from the general stuff of which humanity is supposed to be made, to come all at once to touching a real lady's hand, and that lady with an admixture of the angel in her—how much he did not know—so, with a "Humbly beg pardon, miss," he pulled out the new spotted cotton pocket-handkerchief, still folded as it came from the outfitter's, which pocket-handkerchief, John Jones, by way of finishing him off, had bought him, and laying it on his hand, put that member of his body within reach of the thin fingers which were outstretched close by. "I've been biled, miss," said Foxy, "till the flesh a'most fell off the bones, but I'm not clean enough yet to touch the like of you, and maybe, if I'm not too bold in asking, you'll let me put this handkerchief atween your fingers and mine."

But the desire of the sick girl was to come near to any kind of suffering and sorrow, and as Foxy was the only available incarnation of these, to feel she had come near them in him.

The interview could not be a protracted one, for the sick girl was too weak for such; but it was long enough for Foxy to hear some kind words, which made him live in a new world from that day out, and to be promised some substantial benefits, which he appreciated greatly, as being decidedly still in the flesh.

"I may never see you again," said the wasted girl, "for I may soon die."

But Mary Anton had no chance of saying more, for Foxy, shutting his fist, and assuming a prophetic air, broke in. "You ain't a-goin' to die, miss, you ain't. If anybody's wanted to die, they can come and take me. I can be run over any day at the crossin'; but you're a-wanted, miss, you are; there's thousands of poor folks, all wantin'

the like of you; and you ain't a-goin' to die—I says it, and I means it, and I knows it;" and Foxey might have gone on prophesying, had not Miss Gribble gently propelled and steered him again, but this time out through the bedroom door; whence, under John Jones's friendly guidance, he found his way to the pantry, where he was well fed, and whence he was sent forth with a shilling in his pocket into the outer world again.

Yes, Foxey had spoken a great truth when he said that the world



wanted such as Mary Anton:—poor suffering flesh and blood; poor failing heart and nerves; poor crushed and weary and worn spirits; poor helpless burdens to themselves and to others—the world has many of them, and the world does not hold many who care for them.

Not looking at all, or looking, and passing by on the other side—so goes it with most in the world. There is no communion with stricken flesh and blood, with stricken head and heart, as regards too many who are unstricken themselves.

Beware, reader, of an unwincing, an unshrinking, an unthoughtful heart; its very hardness will invite the stroke by which it may be crushed, the cut by which it may be made to wince and shrink at last; while, with all its wincings and shrinkings, it must still remain within touch of the worse than steel which plays like the forked flash in and out, in and out, of your very innermost and most living self.

Blessed is the man that provideth for the sick and needy; the Lord will remember him in the time of trouble! Who knows? The kindly thought of you for others may be returned to you a hundred-fold in the kindly thought of God to you; to alleviate may be to be alleviated; to sustain, to be sustained; to comfort, to be comforted; to cheer, to be cheered, until sustaining, and comforting, and cheering shall be needed no more. Who is there that has given, and it has not been given to him a thousandfold again?

I look at that household of Incurables, where Miss Gribble learned so much, and did so much. I think of the hundreds of little sufferers, the outside members of that sad family, bearing their pains and going through their weary hours in their own lone spots here and there, and with their sorrows I couple the little joys which the friend of the Incurables supplies. I see them resting in the hollow of its great hand, and shaded over with the same. I hear the whirl, and buzz, and grate, and jar, and cracking, crushing sounds of the rolling earthquake world outside; and when I think of those who have sheltered these fragile ones from what must quickly shatter them to pieces, I say, Yea, blessed are they who provide for the sick and needy; may the Lord remember them in the time of trouble!

CHAPTER IX.

The determination that the operation should be performed acted differently on the different people concerned in it.

Dr. Jacobus became more grave than was even his wont. Mrs. Jacobus could not get him off to sleep at all, nor could she get him to take kindly to his meals. He seemed like a man that had committed some great crime, and had some great weight on his mind. For, though he had not to perform the operation himself, he was, of course, responsible for its being undertaken at all; and, as the operation was a new one, he was not absolutely sure about it. Had it been merely whipping off a leg or arm, the Doctor would have asked for a second

helping all the same; but now, scarce a bit would he eat; and he seemed to keep always thinking, thinking, thinking, as if that would do any good.

The French doctor, however, was in excellent spirits; he called this formidable operation "von leetle ting dat do von vonderful good." "Mon ami," said he to Dr. Jacobus, "keep up von great heart, be von great man; dis little matter turn out von great success. Mademoiselle jump like leetle ting belonging to de cat—vat you call him?—von



kitten. She play like kitten hunting him tail—skip, dance. Oders do vell, mademoiselle do vell too."

The doctor was master of the operation he was about to perform, and though it was true he could not be *absolutely* sure of its after effects, still he felt that confidence was essential to all, and he had no grounds for expecting anything but the happiest result.

The operation was in truth a grave, a very grave one; rather let me say the operations, for there had to be a course of them. The darting

and shifting pains in the patient's legs, recurring in paroxysms and with great severity, and the dropsical swelling of the knees, had originally been treated as rheumatism, and all the known medicinal remedies had been tried, but without effect. Turkish baths, sulphur baths, six weeks at Harrogate and six at Bath—all had done nothing for the patient, who only got worse and worse, until finally she entirely lost the power of her limbs.

At last the disease was pronounced to be Locomotor Ataxy, a disease of the spinal nerves, and all known remedies were tried against the enemy now that it was found out, but all in vain.

For six months the galvanic battery opened fire on it every second day, but with no effect; dry-cupping along the spine left the poor patient as before; hypodermic injections of morphia often failed to relieve the pain.

There was one chance left, and only one—a desperate one it is true, but still it might succeed: it was the operation, or rather series of operations, which Dr. Defosse was now about to perform.

The operation was a new one, and if performed there was the chance of entire recovery, of life being worth the living, of freedom from pain, and that alone would be worth it all; it seemed as though it would be an abiding heaven upon earth.

"Life being worth the living." I use these words "speaking," as the Apostle says, "after the manner of men." For if only we could "know," as Bishop Butler says, "the whole of the matter," if only we could look into the *long* future, if only the *full* purposes of God were revealed to us, we should see that He could not consistently with His nature give *any* life which would not be "worth the living."

It is true that, with our short sight, there may be nothing but crippledom and pain, nothing but isolation, and weariness, and want. It is better for me to die than to live, may be our own thought and that of every one around. But we see "only in part," and we know only "in part." This life, lived as God will have it to be lived, in meek endurance, in faith and trust, has in it the elements of a future of exceeding glory. It is the dull and it may be gnarled and mis-shapen tuber, from which will spring a stem of verdure, and which will issue in a flower graceful in its form and delicate in its shade.

There will be those, in hereafter glory, humbly conscious of the beauty that is upon them, well knowing that they must have lived the lower life of suffering before they could have attained to this higher life of freedom and of joy; and looking back on the past, the

past without which perhaps this particular glory in their present life could not be obtained, they will say that life was worth the living—the life they once had—to issue in the life they have now.

'Tis hard, 'tis hard, 'tis very hard to say. No lips can utter it save those which have been steeped deep in the baptism of the cross; no head can understand it save one to whose thoughts have been given



a double measure of the Spirit; no heart can feel it save one which, according to its measure, beats stroke for stroke with the Father's heart itself. But it is possible. The future may so touch the present as to draw even from the Incurable, in ever-present helpless pain, a testimony great as that of the confessor or martyr of the past. That life, a life such as his or hers, even such a life (as God-given) is worth the living.

As to Mr. Anton his condition was a very mixed one. At times he seemed almost to pick up his sister-in-law's cast-off hysterics. Certainly, now he was up in the clouds, now down in the depths. What if his child should really recover? What if she were to be able to brighten his old age, to run, to skip, and dance as other girls; to be a real woman, to lead a life of healthy flesh and blood; to pick the flowers and go into the open and join in the games and sports of others like herself? But what if she died? There was a "what" on that side too. The young girl's father had imagination enough to picture to himself the empty bed, the having no one to think about, to care for; the loneliness, the desolation of the home, the sadness of ended life, even though that life had been one of so much suffering.

And Mr. Anton's gold rose up before him. No one now to leave it to. Nothing, nothing to be done with it. Bonds, bills, and mortgages, all seemed withered leaves; for this man, like many men, had not learned to look beyond what was immediately his own. He was in the power of money, in the power of circumstances; his all was not spread abroad, and so standing on a firm basis. It was made perilously to balance on a single point, from which it was liable at any moment to topple over and to come to smash.

Take my advice, good reader, and as regards both money and interest in life, make a broad base if you wish to stand.

This condition of mind could not last long without, as we have already chronicled on a previous occasion, a certain amount of unhinging, which showed itself very plainly in Mr. Anton's aberrations the very first day he went to the City after he had given his consent to the operation. That day Mr. Anton was observed by the clerks as looking rather queer as he passed through to his inner office: he appeared absent and wandering, and altogether unlike himself. This was odd, but there was something much odder to come; for the inner office bell was rung, and on the small boy, who always answered, making his appearance, the merchant ordered him to go off as fast as he could to the Stock Exchange and buy him £10,000 worth of Trunks at 90.

The boy didn't quite like the look of his master, and as the latter had a very large office ruler close to his hand, and that ruler had, so the traditions of the office said, once been hurled in former years at even the sacred head of the senior clerk himself, he made his exit as quickly as possible.

The senior clerk, and the book-keeper, and the cashier, took the bewildered boy into a private room, and there heard from him the

portentous intelligence that their principal had ordered all these Trunks.

At first they, too, were in a state of bewilderment; and dismissing the office-boy with strict injunctions not to mention to anyone a word about the matter, they put their heads together.

At last light dawned on the mind of the book-keeper on the matter. "Ah!" said Mr. Stone, the book-keeper, "I have it. No wonder we did not hit it off at once, for 'tis quite out of our line of business. Mr.



Anton means Grand Trunks of Canada; but bless me, what a price and what a sum!" Then Mr. Stone went to the door and locked it, to make sure that no one could come in; and, being a very particular and suspicious man, to make doubly sure, he also put a chair against the door; then, looking carefully around, he whispered to the others, "Our principal is off his head to-day; depend upon it, his daughter is worse. He's been nearly off several days, and I've had great work to steady him, and if this goes on, 'twill end in his doing something that will

ruin him. Now if he had sent off that order for the Trunks in writing the broker would have executed it, and he would have lost a lot of money; unless, indeed, seeing the price, he may have thought that there must be some mistake. However, we must be cautious, and, if he sends out any messages, must, for to-day at any rate, keep our eye on them," and having said this, Mr. Stone dismissed the assembly. They were all prudent, steady men, and "mum was the word," and generally keeping a sharp eye on the office-boy, they went on with their work.

But Mr. Anton gave them no further trouble. The day wore on and he made no sign (to the great relief of the office-boy, it must be confessed). The senior knocked gently at the door—no answer; then another knock—none this time either. Then the door was gently opened a little bit, and the senior peeped in and saw his principal leaning on his two elbows and apparently asleep. After a time Mr. Stone ventured to touch him on the shoulder, and to his inexpressible relief he heard him utter a sound, "Eh! ah! is it all over? Draw a cheque for him for £1,000. Mary, my child, there are the balls. Now then, Jenkins, saddle Miss Anton's pony. We're off to Switzerland next week, up the Rhigi. Now then, Mary, don't go so quick; your old father's out of breath."

"Ah, depend upon it," said Mr. Stone, "'tis something about his daughter; there is some turn for the worse, or something or other. The best thing to be done is to take him home as quickly as we can."

Accordingly, a cab was called and Mr. Anton, accompanied by his head clerk (and as the head clerk was eminently a cautious man, by the book-keeper too), was taken home and put to bed, where he remained, to the immense relief of everyone concerned, until all was over.

CHAPTER X.

It was in the gloaming of a summer evening that an elderly woman sat by the bedside of a fair wasted girl, and with pencil and paper took notes of what she said.

"I have been told," said Mary Anton, for she was the sick one, "that this operation may end in death. There is at least the chance, and for that chance I must be prepared; so, aunt, put down what I should like to be said to father if I shouldn't see him again, and what I wish done.

"Tell father his child kissed this flower twenty times over for him to take the kisses off, as she cannot give them to him herself. I wish it would never fade, but always keep fresh, so that he might think how fresh my love always was; but, ah!" said the girl, with a tear, "perhaps when 'tis withered and faded, 'twill be more like myself."

"I want father to see that Foxey is brought up to be a good man, and if I die I wish Foxey to be asked to the funeral."



"Father is not to fret, but is always to think that I am happy, and waiting for him in the happy land; and he is to think a great deal, and pray a great deal to come there, and be with his child for ever. Jesus Christ will help him—the blessed Jesus, who wipes away all our sins; and then there is the Good Spirit, who makes us fit for that beautiful land."

"And tell father all about the poor sick people at the Incurable place,

and tell him to send them flowers and fruit sometimes, and if he likes, he can say they are from me, though I shall be far away. Still you know, auntie dear, they will be from me all the same; and whatever father and you don't care to have for keepsakes of my little things, I want you to give to those I know, by messages, and letters—or if any one will buy them, then send them the money."

"And there is another thing—a great thing"—said the girl; "tell father that, as he has plenty of money, his little daughter asked him to remember those who were incurable as she was, and who, unless he, and such as he, help, must want the comforts which she had. It will be like keeping on helping his little Mary, long after she has gone; and it will be like giving her pleasure, for this is what she would greatly wish."

* * * * *

For eight-and-twenty days not a sound was heard in Partington Street; the neighbours all around where Mr. Anton lived, said they never saw so much straw in any street before. It lay thick, not only opposite Mr. Anton's house, but up and down, so that the place, so far as sound went, was almost like the abode of the dead.

The monkey man was paid out into some far-off distance, even along the pavement the passers-by seemed to go with gentle tread. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin;" and as it had got abroad that an operation had been performed on which hung life and death, Mary Anton seemed for awhile to become the common property and interest of the street.

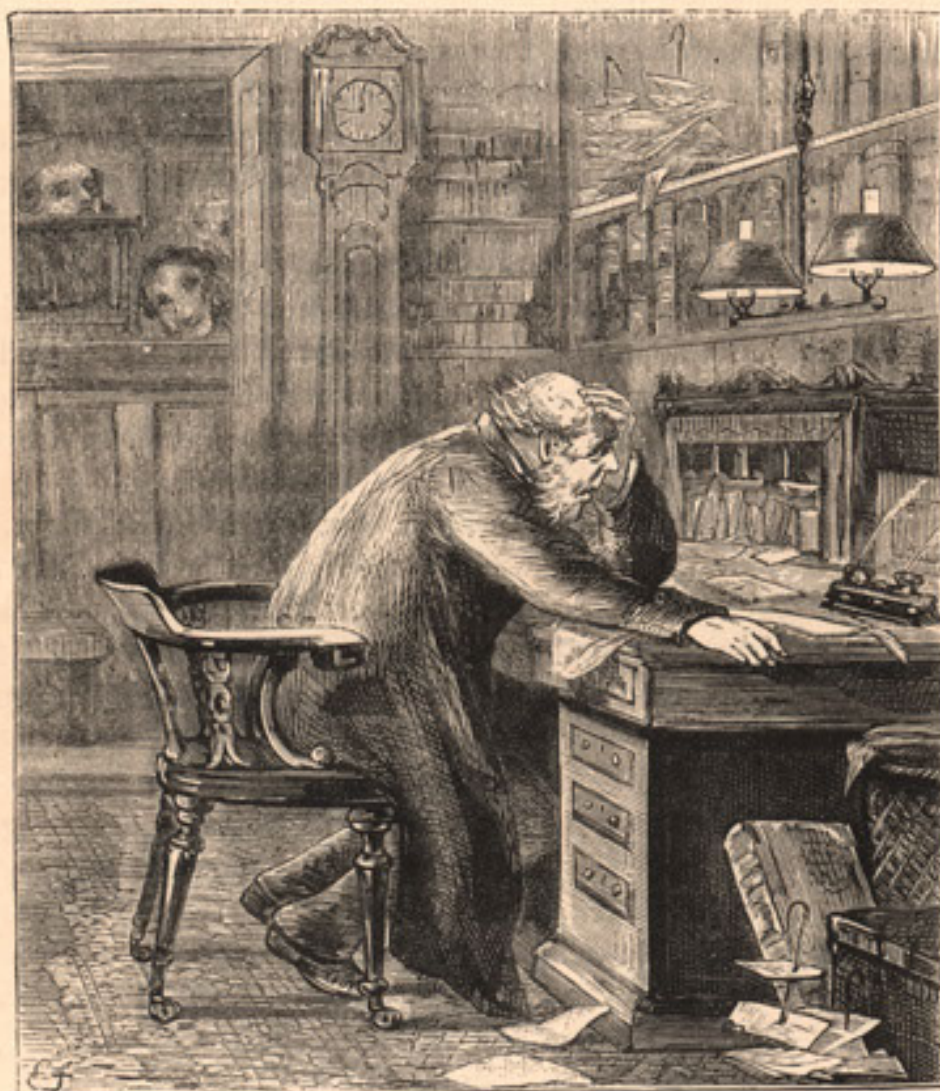
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"Wake up, mine dear sare," said Dr. Defosse to an elderly gentleman, a few days after the last operation had been performed; which elderly gentleman was Mr. Anton, who had kept to his room in a dreamy kind of state, ever since the eventful afternoon in which, escorted by the head clerk (and for prudence' sake, by the book-keeper also) he had been driven home in a cab.

"I return now to mine own country vid a light heart. Dis leetle daughter skip like wild goat; she fly about like vat you call him—shuttlecock; all go well. Dis friend of yours, Doctor Jacobus Smid, carry on de case; skilful man, understand de whole business to de end. Accept mine best compliments, I make mine adieus;" and finishing off with half a dozen bows Dr. Defosse departed, leaving poor Mr. Anton in a half bewildered state.

Dr. Jacobus and Miss Gribble, harnessing themselves to Mr. Anton's half comatose mind, by degrees pulled him out of the lethargic state into which he had fallen, so that he became conscious that the

dreaded event had come off and past, and was leaving a blessing behind it. Slowly, but surely, Mr. Anton came to understand that his child might yet be well, and be like other girls, and have life, and sunshine, and laughter, and joy; that life's music, and colour, and perfume should be for her as it was for others. But for the present neither could he see her, nor she him. Still, upon father and daughter



each day was doing its own good work, and the good day itself would soon come.

Meanwhile, the head and confidential clerk, who had been unremitting in his attentions, was, to his great astonishment, one day invited up to Mr. Anton's room; and it must be said that he left it in depressed spirits, fearing that his principal had become hopelessly childish, if not downright insane. For that astute man of business,

with an earnestness scarcely called for by the occasion, commissioned Mr. Stone forthwith to purchase for him an entire set of lawn-tennis things complete—the very best that money could buy—a skipping rope, a lady's tricycle, and an Arab pony. He was moreover to try to get an alpenstock, and to purchase a lady's travelling bag with the best silver fittings, and sundry other odds and ends all appertaining to motion, travel, and the very opposite of his child's past life—at least, the frail life of the last few years.



The head clerk, as we have said, was a prudent man; he looked forward to being a partner, perhaps before very long, so keeping his own counsel, he went forthwith and executed all the commissions, except the more bulky ones of the Arab and tricycle, which he thought would keep. Meanwhile, he would wait and see whereunto these things would grow. He knew his principal had, in the way of business, made many long-headed though strange investments, which had turned out well; perhaps something would come out of this, though

the dark suspicion really was that he was becoming childish. But not a bit of it. Having secured the lawn-tennis apparatus, Mr. Anton had a couple of costly pictures taken down, and the lawn-tennis racquets and balls fixed up artistically in their place, the nets also being so disposed as to add to the general effect. The bag was laid on a table under them, and an alpenstock stood in the corner hard by: in a word, the old man surrounded himself with all that he had ordered for the



girl, all except the Arab and the tricycle, which would, had they been bought, have been somewhat in the way.

These were all preparations for a time when his child should be as others: no longer a helpless, hopeless incurable, but instinct with life and the joyousness of health. All medicine is not made of drugs; all the pharmacopœia of it having been poured bodily down Mr. Anton's throat would have done him no good; many a time has it tried in vain to minister to a mind diseased. But these things were emblems of hope. How these balls would be tossed; how these racquets would be

swirled; what laughter would echo about those nets; how glorious and free the air that would be breathed about that alpenstock; how everything that his darling could want would be at hand out of that silver-fitted box! The old man looked at them all until they entered into his very heart of hearts, and they helped to bring him to, and to make him well again.

But the strangest thing I have to relate is the fact that the idea entered into the old man's mind of playing with his child himself; and, to prepare himself for such an event, he ordered Jones into the strip of back garden behind the house, and there had a practice. True it was but one, owing to its unexpected effects on his respiratory organs, still it showed the exhilaration of his mind, and the buoyancy of his hope in the restoration of his child; in truth, he was blessedly and wisely becoming a child himself again.

CHAPTER XI.

All the straw is gone from Partington Street; and there stands at the door of No. 25 a carriage drawn by a pair of grey horses, which had been described, in the advertisement which set forth their virtues, as being of "extravagant action." The dealer persuaded Mr. Anton that that was something superlatively fine; and therefore, the joyful father felt that such splendid steeds would be the most suitable for his child—one, as it were, restored to him from the dead, restored to him almost from a living grave.

The steeds with the extravagant action, which they had been in the habit of exhibiting in Hyde Park, had now, however, some more serious work before them: they were bound for the country.

It was Mary Anton's earnest desire that the first real long drive she took should be to the Home of the Incurables, whose sympathy had helped her through many a weary hour; and the interest in whom had been to her an object in an otherwise almost objectless life. And who was Mr. Anton that he should say her nay? Had she chosen to have gone to Bethnal Green, or the London Docks, or the gas-works, or Newgate—had it been some hundred years earlier, to Tyburn itself, there to be hanged by the neck until he was dead—thither would those horses with the extravagant action have found themselves going, without any doubt. It was enough for Mr. Anton that, in the place to which they were going, *she* had friends. But in truth the worthy man

had no chance of saying "Nay," for he was never told where they were going at all. Had not the little daughter put her two arms round his neck, and told him *she* was going to take him a drive (that in itself was a good joke), but that she would only take him the drive on condition that he did not ask where he was going. And before the old gentleman, who all through life had been particularly careful in looking before him, and seeing where he was going, could say a word to agree, or disagree, had not the whole question been settled, and the bargain made, with a kiss—a kiss no longer from a thin and bloodless lip, but from one plump and red, and suggestive of cherries ripe? If Mary were to take him in his own carriage to be hanged it would have been doubtless the right thing. So off they started, Mary archly directing the course, and on they went, the same road which Mr. Anton had travelled some years before, and to the same place, where his sister-in-law had been cured, and where he had not been cured—to the Home of the Incurables, the place which had been called the Palace of Pain.

All went well on this grand expedition, with the exception of an unfortunate collision in which the horses with extravagant action brought to grief an unaristocratic donkey. This poor beast, not being properly educated in its duty to its betters—or, it may be, endued with the democratic spirit of the age—had neglected to get out of the way in time; and fate overtook him in the form of a smash. But the damage was not great, after all; and what were a sovereign or two to Mr. Anton in his present joyous state of mind? So the matter was soon settled, and the high-stepping steeds proceeded on their way, whether feeling that they had fulfilled their duty to their pretensions, and done a good deed, or not, I cannot tell.

In rolled the carriage drawn by the steeds with the extravagant action; in it rolled, inside the grounds of the Palace of Pain, and in it was what had been thought to be an Incurable, now almost by a miracle cured, and what was still an Incurable—or rather let me say an "uncured," for these two are not the same.

Mr. Anton could not enter those well-remembered gates without knowing where he was going; and, as he was a man as well able as any one to put two and two together, this mental process carried out made a four then and there. There was his child, his only child, lately believed to be an Incurable, now sitting, well, by his side, and there before him was the Palace of Pain, the home and shelter of many a truly Incurable, pain-stricken, and to be in misery until death; that was another "two." And what was the "four" to which these two and two came. That "four" was himself; he—he, Joseph Anton—

had been blessed, and he had not as yet blessed in turn. "Four" meant that before him lay the great golden alms-dish for his offertory, his thanksgiving offering, his solid acknowledgment of the gift of God.

Here, no doubt, he had been before, but his visit had done nothing for him; he had remained as selfish, as irritable, as unheeding of the sufferings of others as he had ever been. His money, his heart, had not gone forth; he had not thought, as his sister-in-law had done, of what had to be seen, and had been seen, in the Palace of Pain.



But now, the power of contrast was to work upon him—a medicine for his soul, even as it may be a medicine, good reader, for your own.

Helplessly was Mr. Joseph Anton in the power of the little maid who had brought him that day within the gates of the Palace of Pain, the supposed Incurable, amongst those who were Incurables indeed.

Close, eye to eye, was he brought with the worn, the weary, and the sad; with the helpless, the weakened, and the hopeless; with those in many cases whose sun had gone down while it was yet day,

and for whom there remained naught save twilight, darkening into night itself.

O big man, owner of ground rents, mortgages, debentures, bonds! O man of many bottles of crusted port! O man of bees-wing and turtle! O man able to hold your own in the market and on the exchange! why cling close to your child? Why want to touch her hand? Why so nervously hold on to those little fingers, as if you felt yourself amid the unknown with all its strangeness, and knew not the shapes around, and what the next and next would be? Why, when she disengaged her hand for one short moment, hold on so nervously to her dress, as though to sever from her for a moment would be to break a charm, to imperil safety, to hazard a drifting away to some terrible unknown? Why? why? Ah! I will tell you why. Because your child is in fellowship with suffering, and you are not; you are awakened now for the first time really to its fact, but you know it not by sympathy, only by sight.

And sight-knowledge of suffering without sympathy-knowledge is disquieting, and that from which we would flee.

But Mr. Anton could not flee; and that day he had to go through room after room, and to bed after bed, and chair after chair, and couch after couch, soaking in sights of suffering of all kinds, until his brain was full.

But he was getting good. Don't have any false pity for him, kind reader. Don't want to shorten his stay; he was getting good. You are glad of it, and so am I.

Perhaps, seeing all this suffering and helplessness through the medium of his only child, his own cured child, did him good. Maybe, something mesmeric, sympathetic, call it what you like, something of the charity of sympathy, flowed from her into him; it may be that virtue went out of her, which was designed to make him whole. Some are gifted to be mediums between heaven and earth.

Touch a sick one with your own hand in mercy, it will do you good. What strange impulse came over the man of mortgages and lands, who only knew anything of pain to shout at it, and curse it, when embodied in his toe—what, I say, came over him, that he asked leave to shake up the pillow of one poor stricken creature to whom his child was saying a verse of a hymn? He shook it, and patted it, and smoothed it, and asked if it was all right. O man of money! you felt shaky within; your blood felt queer—yes, your very blood—it was your selfdom being interpenetrated with another self. That touch was a link with sorrow.

Why, why, I want to know, did you, Joseph Anton, take from your

button-hole the flower which you had placed there in honour of this grand outing with your child, and with your own hands put the fresh blossom into the uncanny fingers of that withered hand, gnarled and distorted with rheumatic gout? The "go-forward" of charity was on you, and the thrill vibrated again, as yet again another chord was touched in your heart by the grateful look and the thankful word.

Joseph Anton, Joseph Anton, I want to know how you found out that you had harp-strings in your heart—loose jangling strings, silent



for melody, because you had not let them be tuned, as God tunes human heart-strings, by the sufferings of others appreciated, or sufferings of our own endured.

You found out the wonder of internal song, by suffering coming home to yourself in what you saw amongst the hopeless Incurables; in remembering how near incurability had come to the one you loved most; in how others have been stricken, and you yourself escaped. You put your Mary, as she bloomed into perfect health, side by side

with those who could only wither more and more into the decay of strength. You put her merry laugh side by side with their heaving sigh or stifled moan. You put her "might have been" with their "is," and their "will be" even to the end.

And so it came to pass, Joseph Anton, that you woke up to life's music in its tenderest tones, and found that the sufferings of others could make vibrations of joy as well as sorrow in the heart. For when you sympathised with them, and relieved them, they ever touched some chord, and every chord vibrated as though its music had been awakened by an angel's breath.

You were right, Mr. Anton (as would be many another whose sick are recovered; who have escaped in themselves or those dear to them the fate of the Incurable; or who, being incurable, have all comforts which can alleviate their lot); you were right to determine to be life-long the Incurables' friend—right to enlist for the Palace of Pain the sympathies of those who are blessed with freedom from the weariness or agonies of pain. Amongst Incurables you found the cure for your own life of dissatisfaction and selfishness. And you, my reader, fixing your eye on the Incurable, and helping him, too, may be filled with a spirit of thankfulness, and be delivered by God's mercy from the miseries of a life filled with self—devoted to self, and therefore full of miseries for self.

By the humble instrumentality of the dwellers in the Palace of Pain may your deliverance be wrought, and with a new world before you, and a new life in which to live in it, you may say, "My history, too, has been what I have read of here—I have been

'CURED BY AN INCURABLE.'

AND now, good reader, that you have so kindly accompanied me through the foregoing pages, and have come honestly to the end—not by skipping and jumping, but by fair honest reading; stopping, no doubt, to look at my friend Pencilpoint's notions by the way (for it is Crowquill who is addressing you)—let me ask you the question which the great Roman satirist asked in his day, "What hinders that a man should tell the truth, in a laughing or merry way?" So have I told the truth in the foregoing pages; in that I have set before you the existence of suffering, incurable suffering, and the noble instrumentality by which that suffering can be alleviated.

The hand which has traced these lines belongs to one who is not ignorant of suffering himself; and again he may quote a Roman poet and say, "Not ignorant of suffering myself, I have learnt to help those who are in suffering."

It may be that you are ignorant of suffering, in any of its varied forms; or that your knowledge of it may be but slight, so that you might be said to know its name, and little more.

Then pity the poor incurable sufferer who spends a lifetime in pain, or in that weariness which, in many a case, is worse than pain. If your thankoffering runs in the direction of alleviating the sorrows of the incurable, the consciousness of what you are spared will make your health, be it absolute or comparative, all the more gratefully enjoyed.

Are you stricken yourself? and round about you, have you the comforts and alleviations which competence, if not affluence afford? Then, as you enjoy your good things, double their value by sharing them with those whose flesh winces as your flesh, whose heads ache as yours, who toss as you toss upon your bed, but who are what you are not—a burden not only to themselves, but to others too.

"I have smoothed a pillow; I have soothed a pain; I have whiled away an hour; I have rested the weary; I have comforted the sad; I have borrowed the voices of heaven, and whispered them amid the awful groans, or the still more awful silences, of earth." To be able to say these things is to be able to say a great "I have." Through these sick and weary ones you may say this beautiful "I have."

One hundred and ninety-six, not only sick, but alas! also incurable folk are within the walls of the Palace of Pain; and five hundred and one are connected with it by receiving from it £20 a year each. That £20 makes all the difference between decent humble comfort and the being bitten hard by the grinding jaws of poverty. That £20 is

to them as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land—in the desert in which they must live.

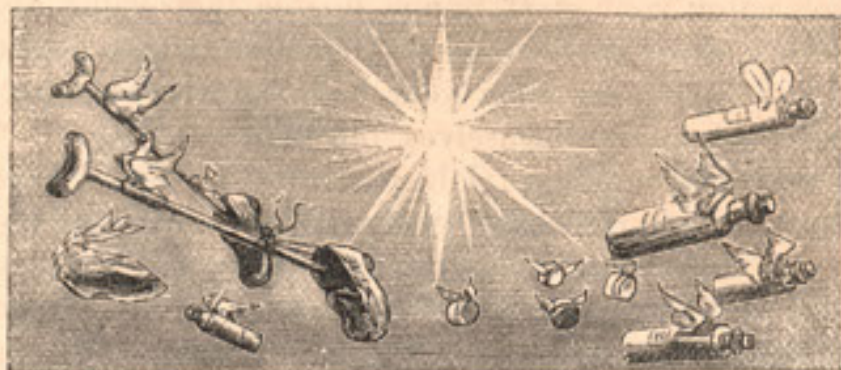
The hospital itself requires £12,000 a year for its expenses, and the outside pension list £10,000. Fifty new inmates or pensioners are elected every year; but, looking at the applications which are made, one might truly say, "But what are they amongst so many?"

The charity is happily not in debt—that incurable disorder of so many charities—but it has had to resort to selling some of its stock in order to pay its way; and every such sale weakens its power of doing good. The Metropolitan Hospital Sunday Fund does not give it any help, considering it is not within the immediate sphere of its operations.

Nearly five hundred subscribers are lost to the charity every year by death. Possibly some one not requiring cure at all—some one grateful for being comfortable, though incurable—who has read these pages, may help to supply this loss.

The recipients of this charity are above the pauper class, and on this account feel not less but more acutely their position of helplessness.

Have those you love, good reader, been cured? Or, better still, do they need no curing? Or, being incurable, do they live in sufficiency and peace? Or is it thus in any of these respects with your very self? Then your thankoffering for the same, turning in this direction, will at once show your fervent gratitude to God, and your tender sympathy with man.



THE ROYAL HOSPITAL FOR INCURABLES, WEST HILL, PUTNEY HEATH.

Instituted 31st July, 1854.

Patron: HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES, K.G.

President.

THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL OF ABERDEEN.

Treasurer.

JOHN DERBY ALLCROFT, Esq., F.R.A.S.

This Charity was established to relieve and to cherish, *during the remainder of life*, persons, above the pauper class, suffering from incurable maladies, and thereby disqualified for the duties of life.

For persons *needing a home* an asylum is provided: medical attendance, nursing, and domestic comforts are supplied, and the endeavour is made to alleviate suffering, and to cheer the life from which health has departed.

To persons *having a home*, but without the means of support, a pension of £20 a year is given; thus the family circle is unbroken, and the invalid is relieved from the pain of dependence.

There are at present 196 Inmates, and 501 Pensioners. Total 697.

A Sea-side House, receiving six inmates at one time, has been opened in St. Margaret's Road, St. Leonard's-on-Sea.

The Institution is open every week-day, for the inspection of Subscribers and Friends, between the hours of Twelve and Six.

Inmates' Visiting Days, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, from Two to Five.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.

An Annual Subscriber has One Vote for Half-a-Guinea, and an additional Vote for every additional Half-a-Guinea. A Life Subscriber has One Vote for Life for Five Guineas, and an additional Vote for Life for every additional Five Guineas.

Subscriptions received at the Office, 106, Queen Victoria Street, by the Secretary, Mr. FREDERIC ANDREW, to whom all Orders should be made payable; by the Treasurer; by Messrs. GLYN, MILLS, & Co., 67, Lombard Street; and Messrs. COUTTS & Co., 59, Strand.

OFFICES:—106, QUEEN VICTORIA STREET, LONDON. E.C.

January, 1887.

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