

## THE CHIMNEY-CORNER FOR 1866.

## BEING A FAMILY-TALK ON RECONSTRUCTION.

OUR Chimney-Corner, of which we have spoken somewhat, has, besides the wonted domestic circle, its *habitués* who have a frequent seat there. Among these, none is more welcome than Theophilus Thoro.

Friend Theophilus was born on the shady side of Nature, and endowed by his patron saint with every grace and gift which can make a human creature worthy and available, except the gift of seeing the bright side of things. His bead-roll of Christian virtues includes all the graces of the spirit except hope; and so, if one wants to know exactly the flaw, the defect, the doubtful side, and to take into account all the untoward possibilities of any person, place, or thing, he had best apply to friend Theophilus. He can tell you just where and how the best-laid scheme is likely to fail, just the screw that will fall loose in the smoothest-working machinery, just the flaw in the most perfect character, just the defect in the best-written book, just the variety of thorn that must accompany each particular species of rose.

Yet Theophilus is without guile or malice. His want of faith in human nature is not bitter and censorious, but melting and pitiful. "We are all poor trash, miserable dogs together," he seems to say, as he looks out on the world and its ways. There is not much to be expected of or for any of us; but let us love one another, and be patient.

Accordingly, Theophilus is one of the most incessant workers for human good, and perseveringly busy in every scheme of benevolent enterprise, in all which he labors with melancholy steadiness without hope. In religion he has the soul of a martyr,—nothing would suit him better than to be burned alive for his faith; but his belief in the success of Christianity is about on a par with that of the melancholy disciple of old, who, when Christ would go to

Judæa, could only say, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." Theophilus is always ready to die for the truth and the right, for which he never sees anything but defeat and destruction ahead.

During the late war, Theophilus has been a despairing patriot, dying daily, and giving all up for lost in every reverse from Bull Run to Fredericksburg. The surrender of Richmond and the capitulation of Lee shortened his visage somewhat; but the murder of the President soon brought it back to its old length. It is true, that, while Lincoln lived, he was in a perpetual state of dissent from all his measures. He had broken his heart for years over the miseries of the slaves, but he shuddered at the Emancipation Proclamation; a whirlwind of anarchy was about to sweep over the country, in which the black and the white would dash against each other and be shivered like potters' vessels. He was in despair at the accession of Johnson,—believing the worst of the unfavorable reports that clouded his reputation. Nevertheless he was among the first of loyal citizens to rally to the support of the new administration, because, though he had no hope in that, he could see nothing better.

You must not infer from all this that friend Theophilus is a social wet blanket, a goblin shadow at the domestic hearth. By no means. Nature has gifted him with that vein of humor and that impulse to friendly joviality which are frequent developments in sad-natured men, and often deceive superficial observers as to their real character. He who laughs well and makes you laugh is often called a man of cheerful disposition; yet in many cases nothing can be farther from it than precisely this kind of person.

Theophilus frequents our chimney-corner, perhaps because Mrs. Crow-

field and myself are, so to speak, children of the light and the day. My wife has precisely the opposite talent to that of our friend. She can discover the good point, the sound spot, where others see only defect and corruption. I myself am somewhat sanguine, and prone rather to expect good than evil, and with a vast stock of faith in the excellent things that may turn up in the future. The Millennium is one of the prime articles of my creed; and all the ups and downs of society I regard only as so many jolts on a very rough road that is taking the world on, through many upsets and disasters, to that final consummation.

Theophilus holds the same belief, theoretically; but it is apt to sink so far out of sight in the mire of present disaster as to be of very little comfort to him.

"Yes," he said, "we are going to ruin, in my view, about as fast as we can go. Miss Jennie, I will trouble you for another small lump of sugar in my tea."

"You have been saying that, about our going to ruin, every time you have taken tea here for four years past," said Jennie; "but I always noticed that your fears never spoiled your relish either for tea or muffins. People talk about being on the brink of a volcano, and the country going to destruction, and all that, just as they put pepper on their potatoes: it is an agreeable stimulant in conversation, — that's all."

"For my part," said my wife, "I can speak in another vein. When had we ever in all our history so *bright* prospects, so much to be thankful for? Slavery is abolished; the last stain of disgrace is wiped from our national honor. We stand now before the world self-consistent with our principles. We have come out of one of the severest struggles that ever tried a nation, purer and stronger in morals and religion, as well as more prosperous in material things."

"My dear Madam, excuse me," said Theophilus; "but I cannot help being reminded of what an English reviewer

once said, — that a lady's facts have as much poetry in them as Tom Moore's lyrics. Of course poetry is always agreeable, even though of no statistical value."

"I see no poetry in my facts," said Mrs. Crowfield. "Is not slavery forever abolished, by the confession of its best friends, — even of those who declare its abolition a misfortune, and themselves ruined in consequence?"

"I confess, my dear Madam, that we have succeeded as we human creatures commonly do, in supposing that we have destroyed an evil, when we have only changed its name. We have contrived to withdraw from the slave just that fiction of property relation which made it for the interest of some one to care for him a little, however imperfectly; and having destroyed that, we turn him out defenceless to shift for himself in a community every member of which is embittered against him. The whole South resounds with the outcries of slaves suffering the vindictive wrath of former masters; laws are being passed hunting them out of this State and out of that; the animosity of race — at all times the most bitter and unreasonable of animosities — is being aroused all over the land. And the Free States take the lead in injustice to them. Witness the late vote of Connecticut on the suffrage question. The efforts of Government to protect the rights of these poor defenceless creatures are about as energetic as such efforts always have been and always will be while human nature remains what it is. For a while the obvious rights of the weaker party will be confessed, with some show of consideration, in public speeches; they will be paraded by philanthropic sentimentalists, to give point to their eloquence; they will be here and there sustained in Governmental measures, when there is no strong temptation to the contrary, and nothing better to be done; but the moment that political combinations begin to be formed, all the rights and interests of this helpless people will be bandied about, as so many make-weights in the political scale. Any troublesome

lion will have a negro thrown to him to keep him quiet. All their hopes will be dashed to the ground by the imperious Southern white, no longer feeling for them even the interest of a master, and regarding them with a mixture of hatred and loathing as the cause of all his reverses. Then, if, driven to despair, they seek to defend themselves by force, they will be crushed by the power of the Government, and ground to powder, as the weak have always been under the heel of the strong.

"So much for our abolition of slavery. As to our material prosperity, it consists of an inflated paper currency, an immense debt, a giddy, fool-hardy spirit of speculation and stock-gambling, and a perfect furor of extravagance, which is driving everybody to live beyond his means, and casting contempt on the republican virtues of simplicity and economy.

"As to advancement in morals, there never was so much intemperance in our people before, and the papers are full of accounts of frauds, defalcations, forgeries, robberies, assassinations, and arsons. Against this tide of corruption the various organized denominations of religion do nothing effectual. They are an army shut up within their own intrenchments, holding their own with difficulty, and in no situation to turn back the furious assaults of the enemy."

"In short," said Jennie, "according to your showing, the whole country is going to destruction. Now, if things really are so bad, if you really believe all you have been saying, you ought not to be sitting drinking your tea as you are now, or to have spent the afternoon playing croquet with us girls; you ought to gird yourself with sackcloth, and go up and down the land, raising the alarm, and saying, 'Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.'"

"Well," said Theophilus, while a covert smile played about his lips, "you know the saying, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow,' etc. Things are not yet *gone* to destruction, only *going*, — and why not have a good time on deck

before the ship goes to pieces? Your chimney-corner is a tranquil island in the ocean of trouble, and your muffins are absolutely perfect. I'll take another, if you'll please to pass them."

"I've a great mind *not* to pass them," said Jennie. "Are you in earnest in what you are saying? or are you only saying it for sensation? How *can* people believe such things and be comfortable? *I* could not. If I believed all you have been saying, I could not sleep nights, — I should be perfectly miserable; and *you* cannot really believe all this, or you would be."

"My dear child," said Mrs. Crowfield, "our friend's picture is the truth painted with all its shadows and none of its lights. All the dangers he speaks of are real and great, but he omits the counterbalancing good. Let *me* speak now. There never has been a time in our history when so many honest and just men held power in our land as now, — never a government before in which the public councils recognized with more respect the just and the right. There never was an instance of a powerful government showing more tenderness in the protection of a weak and defenceless race than ours has shown in the care of the freedmen hitherto. There never was a case in which the people of a country were more willing to give money and time and disinterested labor to raise and educate those who have thus been thrown on their care. Considering that we have had a great, harassing, and expensive war on our hands, I think the amount done by Government and individuals for the freedmen unequalled in the history of nations; and I do not know why it should be predicted from this past fact, that, in the future, both Government and people are about to throw them to the lions, as Mr. Theophilus supposes. Let us wait, at least, and see. So long as Government maintains a freedmen's bureau, administered by men of such high moral character, we must think, at all events, that there are strong indications in the right direction. Just think of the immense advance of public opinion within

four years, and of the grand successive steps of this advance, — Emancipation in the District of Columbia, the Repeal of the Fugitive-Slave Law, the General Emancipation Act, the Amendment of the Constitution. All these do not look as if the black were about to be ground to powder beneath the heel of the white. If the negroes are oppressed in the South, they can emigrate; no laws hold them; active, industrious laborers will soon find openings in any part of the Union."

"No," said Theophilus, "there will be black laws like those of Illinois and Tennessee, there will be turbulent uprisings of the Irish, excited by political demagogues, that will bar them out of Northern States. Besides, as a class, they *will* be idle and worthless. It will not be their fault, but it will be the result of their slave education. All their past observation of their masters has taught them that liberty means licensed laziness, that work means degradation, — and therefore they will loathe work, and cherish laziness as the sign of liberty. 'Am not I free? Have I not as good a right to do nothing as you?' will be the cry."

"Already the lazy whites, who never lifted a hand in any useful employment, begin to raise the cry that 'niggers won't work'; and I suspect the cry may not be without reason. Industrious citizens can never be made in a community where the higher class think useful labor a disgrace. The whites will oppose the negro in every effort to rise; they will debar him of every civil and social right; they will set him the worst possible example, as they have been doing for hundreds of years; and then they will hound and hiss at him for being what they made him. This is the old track of the world, — the good, broad, reputable road on which all aristocracies and privileged classes have been always travelling; and it's not likely that we shall have much of a secession from it. The Millennium is n't so near us as that, by a great deal."

"It's all very well arguing from human selfishness and human sin in that

way," said I; "but you can't take up a newspaper that does n't contain abundant facts to the contrary. Here, now," — and I turned to the Tribune, — "is one item that fell under my eye accidentally, as you were speaking: —

"The Superintendent of Freedmen's Affairs in Louisiana, in making up his last Annual Report, says he has 1,952 blacks settled temporarily on 9,650 acres of land, who last year raised crops to the value of \$175,000, and that he had but few worthless blacks under his care, and that, as a class, the blacks have fewer vagrants than can be found among any other class of persons."

"Such testimonies gem the newspapers like stars."

"Newspapers of your way of thinking, very likely," said Theophilus; "but if it comes to statistics, I can bring counter statements, numerous and dire, from scores of Southern papers, of vagrancy, laziness, improvidence, and wretchedness."

"Probably both are true," said I, "according to the greater or less care which has been taken of the blacks in different regions. Left to themselves, they tend downward, pressed down by the whole weight of semi-barbarous white society; but when the free North protects and guides, the results are as you see."

"And do you think the free North has salt enough in it to save this whole Southern mass from corruption? I wish I could think so; but all I can see in the free North at present is a raging, tearing, headlong chase after *money*. Now money is of significance only as it gives people the power of expressing their ideal of life. And what does this ideal prove to be among us? Is it not to ape all the splendors and vices of old aristocratic society? Is it not to be able to live in idleness, without useful employment, a life of glitter and flutter and show? What do our New York dames of fashion seek after? To avoid family care, to find servants at any price who will relieve them of home responsibilities, and take charge of their houses and children while they shine at ball and

opera, and drive in the park. And the servants who learn of these mistresses, — what do they seek after? *They* seek also to get rid of care, to live as nearly as possible without work, to dress and shine in their secondary sphere, as the mistresses do in the primary one. High wages with little work and plenty of company express Biddy's ideal of life, which is a little more respectable than that of her mistress, who wants high wages with no work. The house and the children are not hers; and why should she care more for their well-being than the mistress and the mother?

"Hence come wranglings and moanings. Biddy uses a chest of tea in three months, and the amount of the butcher's bill is fabulous; Jane gives the baby laudanum to quiet it, while she slips out to *her* parties; and the upper classes are shocked at the demoralized state of the Irish, their utter want of faithfulness and moral principle! How dreadful that there are no people who enjoy the self-denials and the cares which they dislike, that there are no people who rejoice in carrying that burden of duties which they do not wish to touch with one of their fingers! The outcry about the badness of servants means just this: that everybody is tired of self-helpfulness, — the servants as thoroughly as the masters and mistresses. All want the cream of life, without even the trouble of skimming; and the great fight now is, who shall drink the skim-milk, which nobody wants. *Work*, — honorable toil, — manly, womanly endeavor, — is just what nobody likes; and this is as much a fact in the free North as in the slave South.

"What are all the young girls looking for in marriage? Some man with money enough to save them from taking any care or having any trouble in domestic life, enabling them, like the lilies of the field, to rival Solomon in all his glory; while they toil not neither do they spin; and when they find that even money cannot purchase freedom from care in family life, because their servants are exactly of the same mind with themselves, and hate to do their duties as

cordially as they themselves do, then are they in anguish of spirit, and wish for slavery, or aristocracy, or anything that would give them power over the lower classes."

"But surely, Mr. Theophilus," said Jennie, "there is no sin in disliking trouble, and wanting to live easily and have a good time in one's life, — it's so very natural."

"No sin, my dear, I admit; but there is a certain amount of work and trouble that somebody must take, to carry on the family and the world; and the mischief is, that all are agreed in wanting to get rid of it. Human nature is, above all things, lazy. I am lazy myself. Everybody is. The whole struggle of society is as to who shall eat the hard bread-and-cheese of labor, which must be eaten by somebody. Nobody wants it, — neither you in the parlor, nor Biddy in the kitchen.

"'The mass ought to labor, and *we* lie on sofas,' is a sentence that would unite more subscribers than any confession of faith that ever was presented, whether religious or political; and its subscribers would be as numerous and sincere in the Free States as in the Slave States, or I am much mistaken in my judgment. The negroes are men and women, like any of the rest of us, and particularly apt in the imitation of the ways and ideas current in good society; and consequently to learn to play on the piano, and to have nothing in particular to do, will be the goal of aspiration among colored girls and women, and to do house-work will seem to them intolerable drudgery, simply because it is so among the fair models to whom they look up in humble admiration. You see, my dear, what it is to live in a democracy. It deprives us of the vantage-ground on which we cultivated people can stand and say to our neighbor, — 'The cream is for me, and the skim-milk for you; the white bread for me, and the brown for you. I am born to amuse myself and have a good time, and you are born to do everything that is tiresome and disagreeable to me.' The 'My Lady Ludlows' of

England can stand on their platform and lecture the lower classes from the Church Catechism, to 'order themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters'; and they can base their exhortations on the old established law of society, by which some are born to inherit the earth, and live a life of ease and pleasure, and others to toil, without pleasure or amusement, for their support and aggrandizement. An aristocracy, as I take it, is a combination of human beings to divide life into two parts, one of which shall comprise all social and moral advantages, refinement, elegance, leisure, ease, pleasure, and amusement,—and the other, incessant toil, with the absence of every privilege and blessing of human existence. Life thus divided, we aristocrats keep the good for ourselves and our children, and distribute the evil as the lot of the general mass of mankind. The desire to monopolize and to dominate is the most rooted form of human selfishness; it is the hydra with many heads, and, cut off in one place, it puts out in another.

"Nominally, the great aristocratic arrangement of American society has just been destroyed; but really, I take it, the essential *animus* of the slave system still exists, and pervades the community, North as well as South. Everybody is wanting to get the work done by somebody else, and to take the money himself; the grinding between employers and employed is going on all the time, and the field of controversy has only been made wider by bringing in a whole new class of laborers. The Irish have now the opportunity to sustain their aristocracy over the negro. Shall they not have somebody to look down upon?"

"All through free society, employers and employed are at incessant feud; and the more free and enlightened the society, the more bitter the feud. The standing complaint of life in America is the badness of servants; and England, which always follows at a certain rate behind us in our social movements, is beginning to raise very loudly the same complaint. The condition of service has been thought worthy of pub-

lic attention in some of the leading British prints; and Ruskin, in a summing-up article, speaks of it as a deep ulcer in society,—a thing hopeless of remedy."

"My dear Mr. Theophilus," said my wife, "I cannot imagine whither you are rambling, or to what purpose you are getting up these horrible shadows. You talk of the world as if there were no God in it, overruling the selfishness of men, and educating it up to order and justice. I do not deny that there is a vast deal of truth in what you say. Nobody doubts, that, in general, human nature *is* selfish, callous, unfeeling, willing to engross all good to itself, and to trample on the rights of others. Nevertheless, thanks to God's teaching and fatherly care, the world has worked along to the point of a great nation founded on the principles of strict equality, forbidding all monopolies, aristocracies, privileged classes, by its very constitution; and now, by God's wonderful providence, this nation has been brought, and forced, as it were, to overturn and abolish the only aristocratic institution that interfered with its free development. Does not this look as if a Mightier Power than ours were working in and for us, supplementing our weakness and infirmity? and if we believe that man is always ready to drop everything and let it run back to evil, shall we not have faith that God will *not* drop the noble work He has so evidently taken in hand in this nation?"

"And I want to know," said Jennie, "why your illustrations of selfishness are all drawn from the female sex. Why do you speak of *girls* that marry for money, any more than men? of *mistresses* of families that want to be free from household duties and responsibilities, rather than of masters?"

"My charming young lady," said Theophilus, "it is a fact that in America, except the slaveholders, women have hitherto been the only aristocracy. Women have been the privileged class,—the only one to which our rough democracy has always and everywhere given the precedence,—and consequently the



vices of aristocrats are more developed in them as a class than among men. The leading principle of aristocracy, which is to take pay without work, to live on the toils and earnings of others, is one which obtains more generally among women than among men in this country. The men of our country, as a general thing, even in our uppermost classes, always propose to themselves some work or business by which they may acquire a fortune, or enlarge that already made for them by their fathers. The women of the same class propose to themselves nothing but to live at their ease on the money made for them by the labors of fathers and husbands. As a consequence, they become enervated and indolent, — averse to any bracing, wholesome effort, either mental or physical. The unavoidable responsibilities and cares of a family, instead of being viewed by them in the light of a noble life-work, in which they do their part in the general labors of the world, seem to them so many injuries and wrongs; they seek to turn them upon servants, and find servants unwilling to take them; and so selfish are they, that I have heard more than one lady declare that she did n't care if it was unjust, she should like to have slaves rather than be plagued with servants who had so much liberty. All the novels, poetry, and light literature of the world, which form the general staple of female reading, are based upon aristocratic institutions, and impregnated with aristocratic ideas; and women among us are constantly aspiring to foreign and aristocratic modes of life rather than to those of native, republican simplicity. How many women are there, think you, that would not go in for aristocracy and aristocratic prerogatives, if they were only sure that they themselves should be of the privileged class? To be 'My Lady Duchess,' and to have a right by that simple title to the prostrate deference of all the lower orders! How many would have firmness to vote against such an establishment merely because it was bad for society? Tell the fair Mrs. Feathercap,

'In order that you may be a duchess, and have everything a paradise of elegance and luxury around you and your children, a hundred poor families must have no chance for anything better than black bread and muddy water all their lives, a hundred poor men must work all their lives on such wages that a fortnight's sickness will send their families to the almshouse, and that no amount of honesty and forethought can lay up any provision for old age' —

"Come now, Sir," said Jennie, "don't tell me that there are any girls or women so mean and selfish as to want aristocracy or rank so purchased! You are too bad, Mr. Theophilus!"

"Perhaps they might not, were it stated in just these terms; yet I think, if the question of the establishment of an order of aristocracy among us were put to vote, we should find more women than men who would go for it; and they would flout at the consequences to society with the lively wit and the musical laugh which make feminine selfishness so genteel and agreeable.

"No! It is a fact, that, in America, the women, in the wealthy classes, are like the noblemen of aristocracies, and the men are the workers. And in all this outcry that has been raised about women's wages being inferior to those of men there is one thing overlooked, — and that is, that women's work is generally inferior to that of men, because in every rank they are the pets of society, and are excused from the laborious drill and training by which men are fitted for their callings. Our fair friends come in generally by some royal road to knowledge, which saves them the dire necessity of real work, — a sort of feminine hop-skip-and-jump into science or mechanical skill, — nothing like the uncompromising hard labor to which the boy is put who would be a mechanic or farmer, a lawyer or physician.

"I admit freely that we men are to blame for most of the faults of our fair nobility. There is plenty of heroism, abundance of energy, and love of noble endeavor lying dormant in these sheltered and petted daughters of the better

classes ; but *we* keep it down and smother it. Fathers and brothers think it discreditable to themselves not to give their daughters and sisters the means of living in idleness ; and any adventurous fair one, who seeks to end the ennui of utter aimlessness by applying herself to some occupation whereby she may earn her own living, infallibly draws down on her the comments of her whole circle : — ‘ Keeping school, is she ? Is n’t her father rich enough to support her ? What could possess her ? ’ ”

“ I am glad, my dear Sir Oracle, that you are beginning to recollect yourself and temper your severities on our sex,” said my wife. “ As usual, there is much truth lying about loosely in the vicinity of your assertions ; but they are as far from being in themselves the truth as would be their exact opposites.

“ The class of American women who travel, live abroad, and represent our country to the foreign eye, have acquired the reputation of being Sybarites in luxury and extravagance, and there is much in the modes of life that are creeping into our richer circles to justify this.

“ Miss Murray, ex-maid-of-honor to the Queen of England, among other impressions which she received from an extended tour through our country, states it as her conviction that young American girls of the better classes are less helpful in nursing the sick and in the general duties of family life than the daughters of the aristocracy of England ; and I am inclined to believe it, because even the Queen has taken special pains to cultivate habits of energy and self-helpfulness in her children. One of the toys of the Princess Royal was said to be a cottage of her own, furnished with every accommodation for cooking and housekeeping, where she from time to time enacted the part of housekeeper, making bread and biscuit, boiling potatoes which she herself had gathered from her own garden-patch, and inviting her royal parents to meals of her own preparing ; and report says, that the dignitaries of the German court have been horrified at the energetic de-

termination of the young royal housekeeper to overlook her own linen-closets and attend to her own affairs. But, as an offset to what I have been saying, it must be admitted that America is a country where a young woman can be self-supporting without forfeiting her place in society. All our New England and Western towns show us female teachers who are as well received and as much caressed in society, and as often contract advantageous marriages, as any women whatever ; and the productive labor of American women, in various arts, trades, and callings, would be found, I think, not inferior to that of any women in the world.

“ Furthermore, the history of the late war has shown them capable of every form of heroic endeavor. We have had hundreds of Florence Nightingales, and an amount of real hard work has been done by female hands not inferior to that performed by men in the camp and field, and enough to make sure that American womanhood is not yet so enervated as seriously to interfere with the prospects of free republican society.”

“ I wonder,” said Jennie, “ what it is in our country that spoils the working-classes that come into it. They say that the emigrants, as they land here, are often simple-hearted people, willing to work, accustomed to early hours and plain living, decorous and respectful in their manners. It would seem as if aristocratic drilling had done them good. In a few months they become brawling, impertinent, grasping, want high wages, and are very unwilling to work. I went to several intelligence-offices the other day to look for a girl for Marianne, and I thought, by the way the candidates catechized the ladies, and the airs they took upon them, that they considered themselves the future mistresses interrogating their subordinates.

“ ‘ Does ye expect me to do the washin’ with the cookin’ ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Yes.’ ”

“ ‘ Thin I ’ll niver go to that place ! ’ ”

“ ‘ And does ye expect me to get the



early breakfast for yer husband to be off in the train every mornin' ?'

"'Yes.'

"'I niver does that,—that ought to be a second girl's work.'

"'How many servants does ye keep, Ma'am ?'

"'Two.'

"'I niver lives with people that keeps but two servants.'

"'How many has ye in yer family ?'

"'Seven.'

"'That 's too large a family. Has ye much company ?'

"'Yes, we have company occasionally.'

"'Thin I can't come to ye ; it 'll be too harrd a place.'

"In fact, the thing they were all in quest of seemed to be a very small family, with very high wages, and many perquisites and privileges.

"This is the kind of work-people our manners and institutions make of people that come over here. I remember one day seeing a coachman touch his cap to his mistress when she spoke to him, as is the way in Europe, and hearing one or two others saying among themselves,—

"'That chap 's a greenie ; he 'll get over that soon.'"

"All these things show," said I, "that the staff of power has passed from the hands of gentility into those of labor. We may think the working-classes somewhat unseemly in their assertion of self-importance ; but, after all, are they, considering their inferior advantages of breeding, any more overbearing and impertinent than the upper classes have always been to them in all ages and countries ?

"When Biddy looks long, hedges in her work with many conditions, and is careful to get the most she can for the least labor, is she, after all, doing any more than you or I or all the rest of the world ? I myself will not write articles for five dollars a page, when there are those who will give me fifteen. I would not do double duty as an editor on a salary of seven thousand, when I could get ten thousand for less work.

"Biddy and her mistress are two human beings, with the same human wants. Both want to escape trouble, to make their life comfortable and easy, with the least outlay of expense. Biddy's capital is her muscles and sinews ; and she wants to get as many greenbacks in exchange for them as her wit and shrewdness will enable her to do. You feel, when you bargain with her, that she is nothing to you, except so far as her strength and knowledge may save you care and trouble ; and she feels that you are nothing to her, except so far as she can get your money for her work. The free-and-easy airs of those seeking employment show one thing,—that the country in general is prosperous, and that openings for profitable employment are so numerous that it is not thought necessary to try to conciliate favor. If the community were at starvation-point, and the loss of a situation brought fear of the almshouse, the laboring-class would be more subservient. As it is, there is a little spice of the bitterness of a past age of servitude in their present attitude,—a bristling, self-defensive impertinence, which will gradually smooth away as society learns to accommodate itself to the new order of things."

"Well, but, papa," said Jennie, "don't you think all this a very severe test, if applied to us women particularly, more than to the men ? Mr. Theophilus seems to think women are aristocrats, and go for enslaving the lower classes out of mere selfishness ; but I say that we are a great deal more strongly tempted than men, because all these annoyances and trials of domestic life come upon us. It is very insidious, the aristocratic argument, as it appeals to us ; there seems much to be said in its favor. It does appear to me that it is better to have servants and work-people tidy, industrious, respectful, and decorous, as they are in Europe, than domineering, impertinent, and negligent, as they are here,—and it seems that there is something in our institutions that produces these disagreeable traits : and I presume that the negroes will eventu-

ally be travelling the same road as the Irish, and from the same influences.

"When people see all these things, and feel all the inconveniences of them, I don't wonder that they are tempted not to like democracy, and to feel as if aristocratic institutions made a more agreeable state of society. It is not such a blank, bald, downright piece of brutal selfishness as Mr. Theophilus there seems to suppose, for us to wish there were some quiet, submissive, laborious lower class, who would be content to work for kind treatment and moderate wages."

"But, my little dear," said I, "the matter is not left to our choice. Wish it or not wish it, it's what we evidently can't have. The day for that thing is past. The power is passing out of the hands of the cultivated few into those of the strong, laborious many. *Numbers* is the king of our era; and he will reign over us, whether we will hear or whether we will forbear. The sighers for an obedient lower class and the mourners for slavery may get ready their crape, and have their pocket-handkerchiefs bordered with black; for they have much weeping to do, and for many years to come. The good old feudal times, when two thirds of the population thought themselves born only for the honor, glory, and profit of the other third, are gone, with all their beautiful devotions, all their trappings of song and story. In the land where such institutions were most deeply rooted and most firmly established, they are assailed every day by hard hands and stout hearts; and their position resembles that of some of the picturesque ruins of Italy, which are constantly being torn away to build prosaic modern shops and houses.

"This great democratic movement is coming down into modern society with a march as irresistible as the glacier moves down from the mountains. Its front is in America,—and beyond are England, France, Italy, Prussia, and the Mohammedan countries. In all, the rights of the laboring masses are a living force, bearing slowly and inevita-

bly all before it. Our war has been a marshalling of its armies, commanded by a hard-handed, inspired man of the working-class. An intelligent American, recently resident in Egypt, says it was affecting to notice the interest with which the working-classes there were looking upon our late struggle in America, and the earnestness of their wishes for the triumph of the Union. 'It is our cause, it is for us,' they said, as said the cotton-spinners of England and the silk-weavers of Lyons. The forces of this mighty movement are still directed by a man from the lower orders, the sworn foe of exclusive privileges and landed aristocracies. If Andy Johnson is consistent with himself, with the principles which raised him from a tailor's bench to the head of a mighty nation, he will see to it that the work that Lincoln began is so thoroughly done, that every man and every woman in America, of whatever race or complexion, shall have exactly equal rights before the law, and be free to rise or fall according to their individual intelligence, industry, and moral worth. So long as everything is not strictly in accordance with our principles of democracy, so long as there is in any part of the country an aristocratic upper class who despise labor, and a laboring lower class that is denied equal political rights, so long this grinding and discord between the two will never cease in America. It will make trouble not only in the South, but in the North,—trouble between all employers and employed,—trouble in every branch and department of labor,—trouble in every parlor and every kitchen.

"What is it that has driven every American woman out of domestic service, when domestic service is full as well paid, is easier, healthier, and in many cases far more agreeable, than shop and factory work? It is, more than anything else, the influence of slavery in the South,—its insensible influence on the minds of mistresses, giving them false ideas of what ought to be the position and treatment of a female citizen in domestic service, and its very marked

influence on the minds of freedom-loving Americans, causing them to choose *any* position rather than one which is regarded as assimilating them to slaves. It is difficult to say what are the very worst results of a system so altogether bad as that of slavery; but one of the worst is certainly the utter contempt it brings on useful labor, and the consequent utter physical and moral degradation of a large body of the whites; and this contempt of useful labor has been constantly spreading like an infection from the Southern to the Northern States, particularly among women, who, as our friend here has truly said, are by our worship and exaltation of them made peculiarly liable to take the malaria of aristocratic society. Let anybody observe the conversation in good society for an hour or two, and hear the tone in which servant-girls, seamstresses, mechanics, and all who work for their living, are sometimes mentioned, and he will see, that, while every one of the speakers professes to regard useful labor as respectable, she is yet deeply imbued with the leaven of aristocratic ideas.

"In the South the contempt for labor bred of slavery has so permeated society, that we see great, coarse, vulgar *lazzaroni* lying about in rags and vermin, and dependent on government rations, maintaining, as their only source of self-respect, that they never have done and never *will* do a stroke of useful work, in all their lives. In the North there are, I believe, no *men* who would make such a boast; but I think there are many women — beautiful, fascinating *lazzaroni* of the parlor and boudoir — who make their boast of elegant helplessness and utter incompetence for any of woman's duties with equal *naïveté*. The Spartans made their slaves drunk, to teach their children the evils of intoxication; and it seems to be the policy of a large class in the South now to keep down and degrade the only working-class they have, for the sake of teaching their children to despise work.

"We of the North, who know the

dignity of labor, who know the value of free and equal institutions, who have enjoyed advantages for seeing their operation, ought, in true brotherliness, to exercise the power given us by the present position of the people of the Southern States, and put things thoroughly right *for* them, well knowing, that, though they may not like it at the moment, they will like it in the end, and that it will bring them peace, plenty, and settled prosperity, such as they have long envied here in the North. It is no kindness to an invalid brother, half recovered from delirium, to leave him a knife to cut his throat with, should he be so disposed. We should rather appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober, and do real kindness, trusting to the future for our meed of gratitude.

"Giving equal political rights to all the inhabitants of the Southern States will be their shortest way to quiet and to wealth. It will avert what is else almost certain, — a war of races; since all experience shows that the ballot introduces the very politest relations between the higher and lower classes. If the right be restricted, let it be by requirements of property and education, applying to all the population equally.

"Meanwhile, we citizens and citizenesses of the North should remember that Reconstruction means something more than setting things right in the Southern States. We have saved our government and institutions, but we have paid a fearful price for their salvation; and we ought to prove now that they are worth the price.

"The empty chair, never to be filled, — the light gone out on its candlestick, never on earth to be rekindled, — gallant souls that have exhaled to heaven in slow torture and starvation, — the precious blood that has drenched a hundred battle-fields, — all call to us with warning voices, and tell us not to let such sacrifices be in vain. They call on us by our clear understanding of the great principles of democratic equality, for which our martyred brethren suffered and died, to show to all the world that their death was no mean

and useless waste, but a glorious investment for the future of mankind.

"This war, these sufferings, these sacrifices, ought to make every American man and woman look on himself and herself as belonging to a royal priesthood, a peculiar people. The blood of our slain ought to be a gulf, wide and deep as the Atlantic, dividing us from the opinions and the practices of countries whose government and society are founded on other and antagonistic ideas. Democratic republicanism has never yet been perfectly worked out either in this or any other country. It is a splendid edifice, half built, deformed by rude scaffolding, noisy with the clink of trowels, blinding the eyes with the dust of lime, and endangering our heads with falling brick. We make our way over heaps of shavings and lumber to view the stately apartments, — we endanger our necks in climbing ladders standing in the place of future stair-cases; but let us not for all this cry out that the old rat-holed mansions of former ages, with their mould, and moss, and cockroaches, are better than this new palace. There is no lime-dust, no clink of trowels, no rough scaffolding there, to be sure, and life goes on very quietly; but there is the foul air of slow and sure decay.

"Republican institutions in America are in a transition state; they have not yet separated themselves from foreign and antagonistic ideas and traditions, derived from old countries; and the labors necessary for the upbuilding of society are not yet so adjusted that there is mutual pleasure and comfort in the relations of employer and employed. We still incline to class-distinctions and aristocracies. We incline to the scheme of dividing the world's work into two orders: first, physical labor, which is held to be rude and vulgar, and the province of a lower class; and second, brain labor, held to be refined and aristocratic, and the province of a higher class. Meanwhile, the Creator, who is the greatest of levellers, has given to every human being *both* a physical system, needing to be kept in order by

physical labor, and an intellectual or brain power, needing to be kept in order by brain labor. *Work*, use, employment, is the condition of health in both; and he who works either to the neglect of the other lives but a half-life, and is an imperfect human being.

"The aristocracies of the Old World claim that their only labor should be that of the brain; and they keep their physical system in order by violent exercise, which is made genteel from the fact only that it is not useful or productive. It would be losing caste to refresh the muscles by handling the plough or the axe; and so foxes and hares must be kept to be hunted, and whole counties turned into preserves, in order that the nobility and gentry may have physical exercise in a way befitting their station, — that is to say, in a way that produces nothing, and does good only to themselves.

"The model republican uses his brain for the highest purposes of brain work, and his muscles in *productive* physical labor; and useful labor he respects above that which is merely agreeable.

"When this equal respect for physical and mental labor shall have taken possession of every American citizen, there will be no so-called laboring class: there will no more be a class all muscle without brain power to guide it, and a class all brain without muscular power to execute. The labors of society will be lighter, because each individual will take his part in them; they will be performed better, because no one will be overburdened.

"In those days, Miss Jennie, it will be an easier matter to keep house, because, house-work being no longer regarded as degrading drudgery, you will find a superior class of women ready to engage in it.

"Every young girl and woman, who in her sphere and by her example shows that she is not ashamed of domestic labor, and that she considers the necessary work and duties of family life as dignified and important, is helping to bring on this good day. Louis Philippe once jestingly remarked, — 'I have this

qualification for being a king in these days, that I have blacked my own boots, and could black them again.'

"Every American ought to cultivate, as his pride and birthright, the habit of self-helpfulness. Our command of the labors of good *employés* in any department is liable to such interruptions, that he who has blacked his own boots, and can do it again, is, on the whole, likely to secure the most comfort in life.

"As to that which Mr. Ruskin pronounces to be a deep, irremediable ulcer in society, namely, domestic service, we hold that the last workings of pure democracy will cleanse and heal it. When right ideas are sufficiently spread,—when everybody is self-helpful and capable of being self-supporting,—when there is a fair start for every human being in

the race of life, and all its prizes are, without respect of persons, to be obtained by the best runner,—when every kind of useful labor is thoroughly respected,—then there will be a clear, just, wholesome basis of intercourse on which employers and employed can move without wrangling or discord.

"Renouncing all claims to superiority on the one hand, and all thought of servility on the other, service can be rendered by fair contracts and agreements, with that mutual respect and benevolence which every human being owes to every other.

"But for this transition period, which is wearing out the life of so many women, and making so many households uncomfortable, I have some alleviating suggestions, which I shall give in my next paper."

## GRIFFITH GAUNT; OR, JEALOUSY.

### CHAPTER IV. — *Continued.*

HE uttered a little shout of joy and amazement; his mare reared and plunged, and then was quiet. And thus Kate Peyton and he met,—at right angles,—and so close that it looked as if she had meant to ride him down.

How he stared at her! How more than mortal fair she shone, returning to those bereaved eyes of his, as if she had really dropped from heaven!

His clasped hands, his haggard face channelled by tears, showed the keen girl she was strong where she had thought herself weak, and she comported herself accordingly, and in one moment took a much higher tone than she had intended as she came along.

"I am afraid," said she, very coldly, "you will have to postpone your journey a day or two. I am grieved to tell you that poor Mr. Charlton is dead."

Griffith uttered an exclamation.

"He asked for you; and messengers are out after you on every side. You must go to Bolton at once."

"Well-a-day!" said Griffith, "has he left me, too? Good, kind old man, on any other day I had found tears for thee! But now, methinks, happy are the dead. Alas! sweet mistress, I hoped you came to tell me you had—I might—what signifies what I hoped?—when I saw you had deigned to ride after me. Why should I go to Bolton, after all?"

"Because you will be an ungrateful wretch else. What! leave others to carry your kinsman and your benefactor to his grave, while you turn your back on him, and inherit his estate? For shame, Sir! for shame!"

Griffith expostulated, humbly.

"How hardly you judge me! What are Bolton Hall and Park to me now? They were to have been yours, you know. And yours they shall be. I