

with much earnestness how, once upon a time, about thirty or forty years ago, *he* had a drama in Covent Garden Theatre, and how John Kemble entertained some notion of producing it. Consequently, he (Gaspard) was in correspondence with the great John, and had sundry interviews with him in the copyists' room or library of the theatre. Here Gaspard became familiar, by the courtesy of the manager, with the contents of an old oaken cabinet in that room, which contained the "fond records" of a succession of plays acted and unacted. That cabinet also was the repository of folios of play-bills—volumes more numerous than the massive tomes of the Bowyer Bible. Within certain drawers of that cabinet was secreted a musty mass of theatrical correspondence—centuries old, some of it! The motives, feelings and actions of histrionic characters, from Davenant and Killigrew to Garrick, Johnson and Goldsmith, could be perused and examined by means of those hieroglyphics. Gaspard has often expressed to us his infinite satisfaction at having access to one special packet in the aforesaid cabinet, being a correspondence between Major Mohun and Mr. Hart, two noted comedians, who flourished as early as the year 1663. The odd fist of Killigrew in caligraphy was known to Gaspard; and he could swear to Davenant's neater pothooks. It had been Gaspard's peculiar gratification to gloat over the bibliopolic treasures of the old Theatre Royal Covent Garden. And he had certainly been let into a few antiquated secrets pertaining to dead and gone theatricals. He knew what was Betterton's "screw," as first juvenile tragedian; what pecuniary reward Otway received for "Venice Preserved;" what were Cibber's troubles and Cooke's caprices; what Edmund Kean thought of John Kemble, and *vice versa*.

Gaspard had opportunities for indulging his bibliomania *con amore* in the library of the theatre. He delighted to pore over a play-bill folio in the sombre light, and allow his imagination to conjure up the ghosts of the old comedians, peopling the

stage of that theatre, or its rival, old Drury, with generation after generation of companies. Now the phantoms of Cibber's green-room appeared before him: Mountford, "so affecting as the lover;" Sandford, "so good in disagreeable characters;" Nokes, "in whose plain and palpable simplicity were recognised the characteristics of his acting." Then the ladies: Mrs. Barry, "impetuous as Cassandra, terrible as Roxana;" Mrs. Betterton, "superior to Mrs. Barry;" Mrs. Mountford, "mistress of more variety of humour than Cibber ever knew in any female performer;" Mrs. Bracegirdle, "a brunette, with such a lively aspect, such a glow of health and cheerfulness in her countenance—scarce an audience saw her that were not half of them her lovers."

Such were the apparitions that revisited the glimpses of the moon at Gaspard's bidding, while, like Prospero, he consulted his wizard-volume. Then, turning to a more recent page, a livelier host of phantoms were to his vision marshalled on the stage: Kemble in *propria persona*, Siddons and O'Neill, oily Munden, quaint Blanchard, hearty Emery, warbling Incedon, mimical Mathews, fat Fawcett, *et id genus omne!*

The scene changes to a rehearsal, and Mrs. Joanna Baillie, a dignified lady, crosses the stage. The authoress of the plays on the "Passions" has taken the arm of the portly Doctor (Mitford), and engages in conversation with sententious Mr. Kemble; probably it is on the subject of the production of one of her own dramas, perhaps "De Montford."

The lady's demeanour and expression of countenance betray anxiety. Is it to escape from the pillory of the "unacted?" Kemble preserves a reserved and frigidly polite dignity. While the Doctor urges the suit of the fair dramatist, the trio fade away, and Gaspard awakes to discover that he had fallen asleep in the library of Covent Garden Theatre, and found a pillow in a pile of old manuscripts of the "Unacted Drama."

MOURNING AND HALF-MOURNING.

BY MR. BISHOP GRYM.

"Poor Charles! And so *he's* dead and buried!" The news had but just reached me, and I sat staring out of window with eyes that saw not, repeating this sentence over and over; at first, no doubt, with as much meaning as the words might convey, but afterwards very vaguely; which my bad spirit suggested was the effect, first, of sorrow for my deceased friend, and, secondly, of philosophical abstraction: I caught him in the fact, and burked him.

Poor Charles!—a slow, lumbering fellow, with a sardonic twitch about his mouth contrasting finely with the gentle things that often fell from it—a poet and a lover of poets, and in the twenty-first year of his age: so *he's* dead! Undisturbed

this time, thought again went rambling, imagining what he might have become—recalling circumstances for the first chapter of a once-possible Life and Writings of the celebrated C. W., but for the most part hopelessly circling round and round over a world where all was death, like the weary dove of Noah. Noah's dove, however, it is only just to say, has the advantage in comparison; he had eyes to see and strength to pluck the olive-branch which announced the world's return to life; but what I am pleased to call mine was so blinded with undue gloom as to perceive none such, though for it also there were olive-branches enough, that have flourished more than eighteen hundred years. Consequently, I merely wasted

time; and in this manner, surrounded by vague gloom, an hour was as much lost to me as to my departed friend, without his corresponding gain of an hour of eternity. The announcement of dinner, however, swiftly brought my dove back to time and its ark; but Death, when he comes so near as to pluck a friend from one's arm, makes philosophers of all living; and being just then too much of a philosopher to eat, I pulled my hat over my eyes in a very stern manner and walked out. Here it was worse.

The power of sympathy is known to be very great, and capable even of affecting our physical nature. Leavened with a grain of affectation, it was this power, perhaps, which, conferring upon me some participation of my friend's present estate, made the passing multitude appear as shadows, and I myself a shadow, though, of course, of a superior sort. Mayhap, too, this nearer acquaintance with him conferred some liberty of railing at the "ruthless enemy," and of reflecting so gloomily and sarcastically upon the condition of the *other shadows* as I am now conscious of. For with no love usually for a certain tribe of writers who are most in request with themselves when comparing the human family to worms, ephemeral insects and so on, in the teeth of "the human face divine," yet at that moment it seemed to me that all wisdom worth speaking of was theirs or subject to theirs, this world really a casino and gambling-house, life drunkenness, and even its best blessing, health, a mockery. It is a place thought I, for genius to starve in—where for bread stones are given it, *post mortem*. It is a place for Virtue to grow vicious in; a place where the Archangel Gabriel could not be truly religious unless his glorious hair were shorn to stubble, and his wings shrouded in an angular-cut coat studiously large. Youth found aptest comparison in a certain German picture wherein a child wanders down a narrow path edged with flowers that hide a great gulf on either side—only with his protecting angel left out. As for Age, it had the misfortune to meet me represented in an overdressed and (as I suspected) painted grand-dame, rolling past in an opera-going carriage; and I straightway longed to be opposite to her for a few moments that I might read her a sermon, taking for text the story of certain seamen who got mad drunk in sinking ships. Riches! I had to pass the shop of my neighbour Q., a goldsmith; and giving a parting glance at the little watch I have been coveting these two years, I doomed his premises to the doom of Tyre and Sidon: the dim workshop where the hammers clicked so busily became a howling wilderness, and bats and lizards lodged in his back parlour. Quoting the entire passage, I hurled "the cloud-capped towers" at a couple of factory-chimneys that loomed distant and large, like some profound and venerated authors, through volumes of self-created smoke; in fine, all the gloom which attaches to the unsubstantial character of sublunary things, all the darkness which sometimes accompanies the near approach of death, even in minds most strong in innocence and conviction of its real nature—was upon me.

I had walked very fast while cogitating these things, and by this time had regained my appetite. So I bought a cake, which, at other times, consulting my respectability, I should have discussed in the shop; or if it were a small one (as this was) upon the threshold—modestly. But what *now* was respectability? What, morally or in fact, was keeping a gig? And I ate my cake savagely in the streets—enjoying it nevertheless.

Now if it be cause of thankfulness to be brought back to healthy views of our lot in this world, then thanks to that cake. If it be a blessed thing to restore one to consciousness of a divine providence and thankfulness to it—a providence which, having fashioned us so gloriously, with brains to think, and hearts to love if we harden them not—has provided us even in our very weaknesses with countless opportunities of such charity and forbearance as might easily make death the mere opening of a door to glory, and oil the hinges of it—if this be a blessed thing, then blessings on the confectioner of that cake! At first sight, this seems like an affectation—a straining after "goody-good" simplicity rather than a record of fact. But he who, upon mature consideration, still suspects this to be the case, let him also suspect his digestion. Let that man doubt the philosophy of charity-dinners, deep-rooted in the British mind as it is, who cannot believe that the fulness of the stomach is also the fulness of the soul, disposing it to charity and just perceptions. At present, however, leaving that absorbing subject to be treated of on a future occasion, it must suffice here to assert that when I had eaten the cake its ingredients seemed to cry aloud to my heart, reproaching it for thanklessness and other smaller vices; and representing, as it did, several quarters of the globe, the reproach was not a light one. Gloom fled! And "O Death!" said I aloud, "after all, what art thou? The cutting of a thread!—the length of which is of no consequence, and will not be judged of: it is not admissible evidence. The question is only regarding the *quality* of it! Look you, therefore, Bishop G. (tapping his shirt-front), that as *you* spin this thread of life, you introduce as many strands of virtue as you can lay hands on—no matter where or how; but as to whether it be clipped at thirty years' length or eighty, that is not your business." And, to make a beginning, I gave a small alms to a beggar-woman with sleepy twins, knowing very well that they were not hers, but hired, perhaps born, for the purpose; never mind, neither was *that* my business.

But my friend's death was not to be altogether ejected from consideration; and as I continued to mourn the loss, though more reasonably, it suddenly occurred to me that as black was my only wear, I could gratify my feelings by "going into mourning" for him at small expense; a crape band, and the thing is done. Besides, said my evil self—who was not burked for good—it will have such an air of sentiment and genuine feeling.

With this resolve I made up to a draper's establishment, and was about to enter when two considerations arrested me on the threshold. First, as to the depth of the proposed band; what depth

of crape, according to rule, would properly indicate the relationship between deceased and myself—the amount of grief he was by right entitled to. Let us consider: for a wife or for grown children, the tip of your hat-band should come within half an inch from the tip of your hat, if you are a faithful husband or affectionate father; for a parent, an inch shorter; for grand-parent, sister, brother or young child, a shade more than half the depth of your hat; for an uncle or aunt who leaves you nothing, about three inches of crape is sufficiently affectionate, and for cousins (unless they happen to be sweethearts also) the same, short measure. For a friend, then, any measure between two-and-a-half inches and nothing. But before I got to the bottom of the scale the moral nausea which seized me at starting became inflammatory. I grew indignant at it, and resolved on a band of the brother and sister estimate.—Secondly, should I have it pinned plain, or in puffed bows behind? The latter mode was ungraceful, unusual, and some pence more costly. But the first consideration led me to suspect that what is usual is usually hypocritical and heartless; that the mode is a great tyrant, not only coercing personal comfort, but, often and more than we are aware, shearing our feelings and emotions to undue proportions and unnatural shapes; as gardeners of the old Italian school clipped God's trees into respectability. But, said I, it shall not clip *my* feelings to its Procrustean couch; and so resolved to assert my moral courage in crape bows.

"Some crape for a hat-band," said I, with a melancholy resignation which surprised me, for I certainly meant not to express it, and advancing towards a painfully neat young man behind the counter; "Some crape for a hat-band." The look of subdued and chastened cheerfulness passed from the young man's face as he replied, "Crape, sir? certainly, sir, if you prefer it; but the elastic cloths is the fashionable band now, sir!" He unhorsed me at a blow. "Crape, sir?"—there were volumes of respectful sympathy in the whisper; it was as if he had said, "Has it really come to *that*?" and I began to feel the necessity of sublimating the expression of grief in my countenance to a height equal to his sympathy, when the tone of the latter part of his sentence, concealing an almost equal amount of commiseration at my ignorance of the disgrace of crape in relation to the hat, changed the current. Besides, torn by renewed misgivings about bows, I was by no means prepared for these elastic cloths, which, stepping in in the confusion, carried the day. "Let me have an elastic band, then," said I, growing nervous with a host of moral and metaphysical considerations; and, with a deepening shade upon his countenance, the young man fixed the article round my hat, received payment in a crisis of melancholy, and went forthwith, evidently lightened in heart, to soothe a young mother's anxiety concerning flannel.

Pleased with the sober appearance conferred upon my hat, I resumed it and walked out of the shop; but, turning my head, my gratification fell below zero on beholding the neat young man completely restored to peace. Nay, that might have been

tolerated, but it was more than simple restoration to peace; for as he bent over the flannel, rubbing his hands, his face beamed with suggestions of one just returned from a brisk winter walk to his blazing hearth, and tea. He was in a perfect glow; the fragrance of the beverage that cheers and so on was in his nostrils; and his ears heard the noise of children on the stairs, as they made a tumultuous descent upon him from all quarters of the house, shouting "Papa!" at every step. I turned away in indignation.

Who shall fathom the depths of self-love, or map the vast territory it occupies in every human heart? A Dead Sea it might rather be called—a Medi-cordian sea, wherein is no life; where alone gaudy ephemera hum and deposit their carcasses, and surrounded by a border of living verdure more or less narrow, and more or less sickening beneath the unwholesome exhalations.

But this question, Who shall fathom, &c., is wrongly put; turn it over twice in your mind, and you find, besides, that it contains a considerable amount of quackery. This form of words may be compared to a royal robe, which actors having taken possession of, is now unwillingly become an investiture of majesty to any grandiloquent cipher who may choose to get into it: verily, 'twere almost devout to wish that Job would return and redeem it from further desecration. Pity that the "gods" so vehemently applaud this kind of Brummagem majesty, or Brummagem philosophy, leading, as it does, far away from all true conclusions; though, doubtless, through pleasanter paths than those that *do* lead to true conclusions. Nevertheless, the goal, the ultimatum, is the great thing to consider; by keeping it always in sight, heedless of whatever mire may intervene, success can only be earned: it is better (many writers, sacred and profane, have said it) to travel the miry path that leads to some truth, be it ever so small, than to go round and round like a mill-horse amid ever so many flowers, and finally arrive at nothing. Thus too many of the reading public, in admiration of such profound inquiries as that above instanced, are content to answer *only* with admiration, never caring to seek for a more satisfactory reply; especially as the sense of the context usually is, that these terrible depths of self-love, or whatever human frailty may be in question, are unavoidable flaws in the manufacture, evils contingent on our fallen state, of which we are the pitiable victims. Who shall fathom the depths of self-love? Why, any man, approximately at least. Every penny cast into a beggar's lap is deep-sounding, as every donor of such a miserable gift may prove, if he will stop and resolutely drag into the light the feeling of self-applause that follows it, and not content himself by simply pooch-pooching his own weakness, wondering how such an ungenerous feeling can take possession of him even for a moment—perhaps increasing his pace or gazing into print-shops to get rid of it, humming a tune the while in order to drown the voice that says within in mocking blasphemy, "Cast thy bread upon the waters!"—thy *bread* upon the waters!

The real question is, however, Who has courage

to acknowledge its extent, pleading nothing in extenuation, making no excuses for it, but setting down in plain figures what results he has honestly come to? Confessions of this sort the world has, indeed, seen, of which some have been received as good-natured fanatical stories, others as the work of incarnate devils, hell-born anthropophagi, who were first steeped heels and all in lakes that rendered them invulnerable to shame, and then providentially turned into the world to become examples to mankind for ever. Chief in the enunciation of such eagerly-applauded criticism have always been the editors of sectarian publications, men who have a high moral character standing for public hire in the shops of news-vendors, in plain livery. But it is all wrong; for, taken in the mass, even these critics have as good a claim to infernal parentage as any man, the better, perhaps, because they vaunt an excess of inherent morality greater than fact justifies. In character, as in intellect, the difference between the men of one nation is not nearly so wide as is generally assumed. Between the artist and the lover of art, the preacher and the devotee, the difference is mainly mechanical or circumstantial; and though there may be apostles and poets unattainably above these, they are not to be classed with either; they can only be afforded to us at intervals of centuries—giving light enough, indeed, to extend through all time. Men of fine imagination, artists, simply pious men, you may find in every street; but when Isaiah dies, you must look abroad upon the many islands that slumber on the deep—wild islands, and silent but for the wind and the leaves—choose amongst them all, build there an abiding habitation, and wait some time even for Milton.

It is pleasant enough to wander thus discursively in by-fields, but difficult (seeing that one consumes his path as he goes) to get back to the deserted roadway. Before, then, the chasm which stands between us and our forsaken theme grows too wide to be leapt gracefully, let us return to it; again, however, declaring against the dandy soiree-philosophy that stands aloof from its vices and weaknesses, and placidly shakes its head at them as *won-der-ful* phenomena, *cu-rious* developments of the human mind, and there leaves them; rather admiring themselves for containing such wonderful and curious mechanism than otherwise. But Anatomies of the Human Mind, Considerations of the Moral Nature of Man, and all essays of a like character, are quite useless if we thence derive nought beyond learned wonder; a purpose as well served by anatomising your goose-quill, or better by taking a looking-glass and seeking in your eyes the whereabouts of *me*. There are many artists wicked enough, but not one sufficiently clever, or I would say to him, Carry with you into the realms of perdition this caricature: Sleek Philosophy, its hands in its breeches-pockets, gazing sagaciously through improved spectacles into the depths of human folly and wickedness, and finding that it is *cu-rious*!—its hands *still* in its breeches-pockets! Ye Powers! that artist would not, then, descend into perdition without having performed *one* good deed; for the

devils, coming to see, would burst into such a storm of laughter as no torments should quench for *that* day.

All this *apropos* of a draper's young man wounding my tender feelings by the hollowness of his sympathy. For indeed my selfishness was stung to rampant if momentary indignation against the false-hearted draper. Who inquired for sympathy? Do we usually go to drapers' establishments, with shillings in our hands, to buy balm for the wounded spirit, or balm of any sort? Was it not crape I asked for—a hat-band, and nothing *but* a hat-band? But he must look melancholy, indorsing on chin, cheek and brow, "All flesh is grass!" He must tread with sad abstraction, and deliver me "Crape, sir?" in *that* tone! The natural consequence of all which, to an unsuspecting nature, is to betray that nature; to unseat it from the moral dignity of crape puffed behind to the finicism of an elastic. And then, at the mention of flannel, to cast away his sadness, and in a fresh pantomime play upon that young woman's feelings, new strung, as one might plainly see, to the sweet note, "Mother." But so it has ever been: some natures —

A graceful figure, gracefully draped, here sailed into the horizon and occupied it entirely. Two brown eyes, musical, and ranging through many octaves of delight and soberest gravity, glanced brightly down the street. Of course I knew why: it was my unknown friend. Fifty times in this same quiet neighbourhood we had met. Three times with sidelong, inquisitive looks; some dozen with embarrassment, not to say with blushes, gazing steadily into areas or into the firmament; once again with a low bow and ghastly-easy smile, when, it being miry and room for one only at the moment of passing to avoid a puddle, I resolutely plunged my foot in it and yielded her the *pas*; but the remaining thirty-four with brightest smiles of recognition, cordial if wordless Good mornings which for her part (and my greeting was carefully regulated by hers) brow, tresses, even her brilliant teeth, strove to emphasise. From this insignificant source much real, wholesome happiness flowed, I am sure, to each of us; none the less because it was a charmed source, that must vanish if approached too near.

Here, then, was my friend, her eyes ready primed with the gay Good morrow that was to be exchanged for mine. But can a man who is newly arrayed in mourning-weeds smile glad greetings? If so, then what a revolution must instantly be made in my deportment! For now I suddenly found it had assumed the spirit of the black band, and was become appropriately ghostly and solemn. No time for reflection; let us go through with the play. Accordingly, as we met, an expression of appealing grief—elegiac of tender ties ruthlessly destroyed, and indicative of a feeling mind—passed over my countenance.

A moment after I had an opportunity of judging its effect. Surprise, vexation, laughter! The charm, then, was broken; chaos, embarrassment if nothing worse, come again; for the hatband not being noticed, I was understood to be a lugu-

brious lover, by name Augustus Moddle! Angels and ministers of grace!—but let me be content with saying no more about the draper. Thou small pharisee, say no more!

When I get home, said I to myself, taking off my hat to look at it, under pretence of cooling what clever men call "my brow," When I get home I will remove this band. It will make a nice pair of gaiters, I daresay; or it will do to go round the birdcage, if lined with green or yellow. For I find that, up to this moment, the investiture of mourning has done me no good; though my moral nature must indeed need mending if without involuntary hypocrisy I may not wear this symbol of respect for a man who died *enceinte* of poetry. Surely, it is right and seemly that noun-mourning and verb-mourning should go together, that when the soul is shadow-clad the visible being should be clothed in sad-coloured habiliments. It is a wholesome connexion of the seen with the unseen, of to-day with eternity, of this world with the world next door; wholesome, because in whatever mind this union exists not at all, *there exists nothing more noble than a sneer*, and in lieu of inspiration and prophecy that sat upon the hills and sang three thousand years ago, with echoes that have not all descended yet, superior to all things in the heaven above and in the earth beneath there rules Appeal to Reason—reason, that twenty years since found scarce conquerable mystery in A B C.

But there is a better argument than this in favour of funereal crape. Of all external aids in consoling the bereaved it is the first and best. No strong emotion can abate or be satisfied without sympathy of action. Thus we laugh and weep; and thus that emotion which is still and nerveless *never* abates, but swells until it can no longer be contained; and then there is another broken heart. So when a man rises out of grief to array himself in sackcloth he makes the first small step towards the verge of the shadow of death. Hitherto belonging to the grave almost as much as his unburied dead, an advance toward a tailor is his first advance toward the world; acquiescence in a new suit the first note of renewed harmony with life, or business, which is the same thing. Hitherto, one fact of which you were *not* the object has reigned alone, "My brother is dead;" but to this another is now joined: "*I* mourn for my brother." The balance, you see, begins to be restored at once. No more can be done.

Unless by and by you choose to wear "half-mourning;" which, though all rush into, should

be assumed only by men of minutely mathematical mind; that is to say, if truth and consistency are worth regarding in such matters. For here is a problem almost as difficult of solution to the Observatory of Greenwich as to any pensioner who has a telescope for hire on the hill thereof. If grief that weeps all night and dreams all day = 1 spine. blk. frock + 1 do. vest + 1 pr. do. trousers, what is the equation of 1 do. frock + 1 do. vest + 1 pr. do. *plaid* trousers? In simple words (for the benefit of country gentlemen) how much sorrow goes to a yard of crape? A delicate question which, with a progeny of uncomfortable suggestions, must obtrude itself, one would think, into the mind of every intending half-mourner, and bring him to a pause. For when such an one resolves within himself, "I go into half-mourning on Wednesday," it must be supposed that, by calculation retrospective and presumptive, he has found that on that day his sorrow will have dwindled to just one half of its primal intensity; that Tuesday would be premature, Thursday procrastination. And when on Wednesday he buds upon society in a spriggy waistcoat, society is to understand that a careful examination of pattern-books has decided him upon *that* number and proportion of sprigs, as assimilating to the degree in which peace has blossomed in his heart. By the laws of reason, that is what we *must* understand; that is the literal translation of the proceeding. But by what rules the proceeding is governed; by what processes Wednesday and the waistcoat come to be established while yet blue paletots are avoided as most indecorous, and brass buttons as grossest levity, *how* sorrow can be halved at all—this is not so easy of solution.

Unless, said I, turning a corner, the half that remains is the half that was affected: which is the fact. For depend on it that man has ceased to mourn who dons half-mourning. It is a meaner, a more transparent conventionalism than your hat-band scale; and the Lord preserve me—

Here I was arrested—for it was now dark, and lights shone in the casements—by the shadow of a man's head sharply visible upon a window-blind. The shadow was arguing. It swung heavily to and fro; it flourished round and round, in its way, with much emphasis; and ever and anon came down decisively, like a hatchet, cleaving your argument in twain. I suspected the mockery at once; and, with an uncomfortable feeling of sudden condensation, I went humbly home to my pipe; and there at intervals, in the thin bright clouds that wreathed round my head, found the moral.