

surety for him for £500. But to secure me from loss, Christopher gave me a bill of sale to that amount. It is that bill which I have put into execution."

Mr. Lloyd spoke so softly and deliberately, and with such ineffable composure, that Barry, amid all her perplexity, felt a preternatural calm possess her, like the calm which precedes a hurricane.

"But you never had to pay the five hundred pounds to Devonshires," she remonstrated.

"True, niece," he said, "but I was surety for it, and I might have had to pay it any day of the fifteen years. Five hundred pounds, and twenty-five pounds per annum interest! I cannot get more than four hundred and sixty for this furniture, as the times are so bad. I hope it is clear to you now."

"No," cried Barry, "if you did not pay the money, I don't see why you sell our things for it."

"But I was surety for it," he repeated, "and your father gave me the bill. There is no flaw in it. Your father consulted a lawyer, and he looked it over, and said there is no condition or limit against my claim. The things have never been yours; they are mine, and I've sold them."

"But, uncle," said Barry, with intense earnestness, "do you not see that you can have no right whatever to do this, unless you had had to pay the money. If my father had been a dishonest man you would have had this claim, but he never defrauded the Devonshires of a farthing. He gave you that bill to secure you against the possibility of any loss; but you have lost nothing by him."

Mr. Lloyd's imperturbable face wore for a moment such an expression of the secret cruelty and cunning of a miser that Barry paused to look at him with alarmed astonishment; but he met her riveted gaze with an immobility that appalled her. From that moment she knew that no arguments or entreaties could move him.

"I have my bill," he said, doggedly, and with a feint at anger intended to frighten her into silence, "and I've acted upon it. I suppose it would not be pleasant for you that I should stay here another night, so I've taken a bedroom at the broker's, and I shall go home to-morrow. He will be here at dusk to take away some of the things, for I wish to spare you the pain of being watched by the neighbours. I told Christopher so, and as I've said I'll act. I'm not as hard upon you as I've a right to be, for I've left you enough furniture to go on with in a small house suited to your means. I am not going to let you go into debt by living here. I shouldn't mind giving you a ten-pound note, which will keep you ten or twelve weeks with economy; and I'll see what I can do more for you when that is gone, if your father has got nothing to do. A pound a week is ample; many families live on less."

"I will not take a farthing of your ill-gotten money," cried Barry, in a glow of indignation; "you rob my father of it with one hand, and give it back as alms with the other. No; keep the money if you persist in taking it."

"Very well, Niece Barry," answered her uncle, buttoning up his pocket-book again, "it is your own doings, remember. You cut off your nose to spite your face. I am going away now; but if you'll beg my pardon, and promise to keep your temper, I might make you the offer again."

"Never!" said Barry, in a voice trembling with great anger.

"Well, well, well," he ejaculated, taking up his

old hat, "then I'm going. I have such a thing to make as my will, you know."

"I do not care!" cried Barry; "your money has been a curse to us, as well as yourself. My father has spent every shilling as he earned it, and we have been brought up idly and extravagantly, because you had a fortune to leave, as we were taught to believe. Your money is a curse to everybody about you. It has brought my aunt to her grave, for she is dying for the want of comforts which any artisan's wife would have here. And it has made your heart as hard and cold as a stone. I wish you had been a poor man, for then instead of being ruined ourselves, we could have shown you what brotherhood and relationship meant. It is your wealth that has ruined us all, and yourself with us, for you are the poorest and most miserable amongst us, and I pity you."

Mr. Lloyd had made his way to the front door, and Barry had followed him, giving utterance to her farewell speech in excited tones, and with glances and gesture of a vehement indignation; but her last words, "I pity you," were spoken in a softer and saddened key, as the old man, grey-headed and bent, was about to close behind him the door of his brother's house. He heard them, and his ear, more sensitive than his heart, caught the tone of sad compassion in which they were uttered; but he smiled to himself at the notion of the girl's romance. A penniless girl, with the burden of a family upon her shoulders, pitying him who could count his money, all saved and hoarded by himself, by a number something over a thousand of pounds a year; and every day he lived, every hour that he was waking or sleeping, he was growing richer and richer. He hoped he should live as long as his forefathers, who had attained to eighty and ninety years of age; and as he went along the streets his brain was busy over its calculations as to what wealth would be his when he should reach his ninetieth year.

Barry watched her uncle down to the gate, and then she turned away with a sob. She looked very pretty just then, retaining all the glow and sparkle of her late passion, but subdued by the new-born pity which had been awakened by the sight of her uncle's look of age. For Barry thought he looked very worn and aged indeed, and her heart had softened towards him on that account solely. She walked slowly back across the lobby to the door of the sitting-room, and opening it, saw Richard Crichton there, with Mab. With an exclamation of surprise and delight Richard rushed to the door to meet her, and taking both her hands in his own, bent down his handsome face till it almost touched hers; and Barry forgot in a moment that her uncle Lloyd was gone away in wrath.

"I know all about it, my dearest Barry," whispered Richard, "but you must not trouble your dear head about it. This will prove who they are that love you. It will bring out your real friends."

His voice had never taken a tone so tender, nor had his eyes ever looked quite so closely into her own before; and Barry was quite satisfied that never had girl bestowed her love more wisely or more worthily.

THE PRICE OF A GRAVE.

A GRAVE, the final resting-place which all men are hastening to, for the most part with averted faces and

unwilling steps—which the defeated in life's battle have longed for with weary longing; a grave—the last want, which shuts out all other wants—is almost the only gift of which it can be said that man never willingly denies it, even to the poorest of his fellows. "That I may bury my dead out of my sight," said the patriarch, when he sought a grave for the mother of nations; and the feeling that breathed in the words was older far than Abraham, and has been identically the same in all bereaved hearts, among all peoples, in all times. But the modes of burial have been as various as this sentiment has been uniform, and all nations have differed more or less in their mortuary ceremonies. Volumes might be written, and indeed volumes have been written, on the subject of sepulture; and it is curious to note the different degrees of importance attached to the disposal of the dead in different ages and among different peoples. In ancient Egypt the dead would seem to have been even of more importance than the living, and they were so well cared for that the whole land became their mausoleum, and the art of preserving their remains one of the chief businesses of life. In China the dead continue to be the objects of reverence and affectionate service as long as their offspring survive to remember them. They have their graves above ground, often in retired and picturesque retreats, whither their descendants repair to do honour to their memory. The Hindoos, to use their own expressive term, "bury their dead in fire"—that is, they burn them in funeral pyres—or, being too poor to incur such expense, they cast them into the sacred stream of the Ganges, and thus launch them on their unknown voyage. Among the peoples of the East far more importance is attached to the place of burial than with us. The poor coolies who till the ground and cultivate the sugar-canes in the Mauritius will bargain when they are dying, if they can, to be carried back to their native soil after their death. The Chinese gold-diggers in Australia appropriate their first gains as a hoard to pay for the conveyance of their bodies back to the Flowery Land, in case of their dying in exile. Arminius Vámbéry gives a striking account of a burial custom, in illustration of the same engrossing desire on the part of the Persians. He was travelling through the Persian desert, when, towards midnight, "we heard from the distance a monotonous ring of bells, and, as I soon learned, this was from a large caravan which had set out an hour before us. We redoubled our steps in order to overtake it; but hardly had we advanced a hundred paces, when an insupportable smell began to oppress us. The Persians knew at once the cause of it. We moved faster, but the stench grew stronger and stronger, and when, influenced by curiosity, I inquired about it, I got for answer that this was a caravan of the dead. 'A caravan of the dead,' I thought, 'that is singular;' and I hurried to my neighbour to get an explanation. He called out to me, 'Go on, go on,' and after a powerful spurring of his little ass, already hard enough pressed, he came up to me as I was joining the aforesaid caravan, which consisted of about forty horses and mules, laden with coffins, and accompanied by three mounted Arabs. Everybody strove hard to reach it, in order to get past it as soon as possible. I shall never forget the sight that met my eyes when I came up with one of the riders. His nose and mouth were covered, his yellow face showed yet more ghastly by the moonlight. In spite of the un-

endurable stench, I could not help asking him some questions. The Arab told me that he had already conveyed these dead ten days, and had to conduct them for twenty days more before he could reach Kerbela, the spot where these pious persons, who had died for the love of Imam Hussein, were permitted to be buried. This custom is general in all Persia; and whenever means permit, they order themselves to be transported from the distant Khorossan to Kerbela, to be placed in the same earth in which the beloved Imam Hussein rests."

In some respects, the care and reverence for the dead which mark the conduct of the heathen, is a reproof to us who are Christians. We English, especially, have been justly open to rebuke on the score of neglect and forgetfulness of the duty which is due to those who have "gone before." Up to a comparatively late period, we have crowded our dead into church vaults and narrow churchyards in the thick of our towns and cities, until the soil of such spots has been doubled and trebled in mass by the mere dust of human decay; and these consecrated receptacles of the forms we loved have become the foci of foul and deadly disease. We were slow to follow the example set us by the continental nations, the French and the Germans especially, who had had their suburban burial-grounds for generations ere we had awoken to the necessity of establishing such institutions. The first public cemetery in the neighbourhood of London—that of Kensal Green—was not opened until the close of 1832, after the first frightful visitation of cholera had aroused the alarm of the Londoners; others were opened in subsequent years, as the advantage of them became felt and acknowledged. In 1850 there were seven public cemeteries in the neighbourhood of London, all of which, it may be assumed, owed their origin to the state of public feeling in regard to sepulture, and not to any exertions of the Legislature. But in 1850 Parliament, influenced by the general feeling in this matter, passed an Act prohibiting interments within the limits of the metropolis, and empowering the Government to remedy the evils and guard against the dangers of burying the dead among the living. Since that time the number of the London cemeteries has increased to fifteen; no burials are now allowed to take place in churchyards in the metropolis or its precincts, and consequently that source of danger from infection may be supposed to be done away with. All who die in London—and their number can hardly be less on an average than fifteen hundred a week—are now carried for sepulture to one or other of the outlying cemeteries; thus there have grown up at Highgate, Kensal Green, Norwood, Nunhead, Abney Park, Brompton, Victoria Park, and other places, populous colonies of the dead, where, surrounded with all the elements of natural beauty and tranquillity, hundreds of thousands of our fellow-citizens have already "made their rest."

The objection that may be fairly stated against some of these mortuary gardens, lies in the fact that they are not far distant enough from the great and wide-spreading city, and that, ere another generation has passed away, London will have swallowed them up. Another objection, which was made even before the passing of the Act of 1850, had reference to the limited dimensions of some of them, which led to unseemly overcrowding; and though this objection has been met in several in-

stances by the addition of more ground, such a remedy, it is obvious, can only serve to aggravate the evil involved in their proximity to the abodes of the living. Of all the London cemeteries, that which spreads itself over the southern slopes of Highgate is the most charmingly picturesque; but already there are symptoms of the fulfilment of the old prophecy, which places "Highgate Hill in the centre of London;" the bricks and mortar are advancing against the consecrated ground; the expanse of green sward that used to separate it from northern Islington is vanishing away; and before many years have elapsed, it must give up its claim to be considered an extramural burial-ground according to the spirit of the Act of Parliament.

To meet objections of this kind, the force of which increases with the lapse of time and the growth of London's population, companies have wisely settled down farther a-field, altogether beyond the reach of London brick and mortar, in the quiet seclusion of the country. Thus the Great Northern Cemetery is situated seven miles off, in the vicinity of Colney Hatch; and the London Necropolis is at the distance of some three times seven miles, on Woking Common. Both these companies offer the facilities of railway communication with the place of sepulture; they have mortuaries established at their London stations, to which the dead may be removed from dwelling-houses to await the time of burial; and they have private railway-stations, with separate waiting-rooms for the use of mourners. Thus, to meet the circumstances of those who require it, the expense of a funeral display through the streets may be avoided; while all outward testimony of respect to the departed can be manifested without the turmoil and distraction attendant on a progress through the crowded city. Another consideration in favour of these two companies—and it is one of paramount importance to the vast majority who bury their dead—is the release they afford to those who are bereaved, in relation to the matter of funeral expenses. "There is no tax," says a writer in the "Times;" "so severe as that of a funeral; there is none which the taxed is so helpless to resist. 'Respect for the departed' is urged by the undertaker with an eye to his bill; and under the paralysis of affliction, moral cowardice permits the tradesman to tyrannise; and thus a sudden calamity often becomes the first germ of continued indebtedness." We have touched on the subject before in a couple of papers on "Funeral Expenses" (see "Leisure Hour," vol. xi., 1862), and we took occasion then to recommend the French system of burial by classes, according to which all expenses are comprised under one charge. Now both these companies (the London Necropolis and the Great Northern) have adopted, with some modifications, the French plan, and the result is that all expenses may be known beforehand, and may be covered by a single payment; so that extortion is out of the question; and as the class of funeral may be selected to suit the means of those who have to pay for it, no one is left in doubt as to what expense he will incur.

Any one who has paid even a passing attention to this subject must, we think, have noticed that of late years, although the population of London has so enormously increased, and the number of funerals is now between seventy and eighty thousand a year, yet the spectacle of a funeral procession in the streets is not nearly so common as it used to be. This is

mainly due, there is no doubt, to the arrangements of the cemetery managers, and notably to the facilities afforded by railway lines in connection with the outlying cemeteries. It is found that by the system adopted by the London Necropolis Company, for instance, although their burial-ground is at the greatest distance from town, the conduct of funerals is carried out with perfect precision and decorum, with all the privacy and solemnity which are due to the feelings of the bereaved, and at the same time at a minimum cost. This vast necropolis, which seems destined to become the great grave-ground of future generations, covers an extent of two thousand acres—land enough, it is calculated, to afford a resting-place for all the dead of our million-peopled city for about four hundred years to come, and more than five times the area occupied by all the other London cemeteries put together.

The price of a grave is as variable a quantity as that of any other purchasable property which could be mentioned. When a pauper had to be buried, under the old system, and the parish paid the cost, "rattling his bones over the stones," as Hood has it, the price was almost nominal, and was measured by some fraction of a pound sterling. But in the case of some great man, or millionaire small one, the price mounts up prodigiously. Twenty, forty, fifty pounds for a family vault in a modern cemetery is nothing; you may spend as much as two hundred if you like for that posthumous luxury, and be only following the example of others. For graves under the turf the charges also vary according to the pleasantness of the site—those most secluded and situated farthest from the public walks ranking the lowest. The lowest price of all is the grave which is not the "castle" of the quiet and peaceful occupant, Englishman though he be, but which is liable to the intrusion of some other unconscious fellow-tenant after the lapse of a specified, or it may be not specified period. According to the scale of charges by which all the funeral expenses are covered by a single payment—we quote the tariff of the Necropolis Company—a funeral, including undertaking charge, grave in perpetuity, and head and foot stone, may be conducted at any cost agreed upon between ten guineas and twenty pounds; while funerals including undertaking charge, and grave not in perpetuity, range from about two to five guineas. Other cemeteries may possibly offer terms as reasonable, and indeed the Great Northern prints prices even lower; but with regard to most of the companies it may be said to be difficult to ascertain what the charges will ultimately amount to, so numerous and perplexing are the various items which, under the vague denomination of "extras," may chance to come into the category.

What an old trade this is of burying the dead! The first bargain we have any account of is a bargain for a grave, and the very first historical record of money in the form of a precious metal, is of the money paid for a burial-ground. The details of this old commercial transaction are given with remarkable and touching minuteness in Gen. xxiii., where we read that the patriarch Abraham bought of Ephron, the son of Zohar, the field in which was the cave of Machpelah, for a burying-place, and paid for it four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant. We read further, that after the purchase, "the field, and the cave that was therein, and all the

trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession. . . . And after this Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre. . . . And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying-place by the sons of Heth.* How closely does this stroke of business, transacted three thousand seven hundred years ago, resemble the purchase and conveyance of property in our own day!

Dr. Chalmers, in his "Daily Scripture Readings," vol. i., p. 39, has some interesting comments on this passage. "I have long been impressed," he says, "with the dignified politeness of the patriarch, as laid before us in this passage; with the discourses he made to the people of the land. . . . There is nothing in the etiquette of courts and parliaments, or in any of our forms of highest breeding, which so powerfully expresses the respect of man for his fellows. . . . The reception he met with from the children of Heth tells us, and impressively, of the might and consequence to which Abraham had risen in this the prescribed land of his pilgrimage. He insisted on giving its price for the land, and this is of a piece with what is recorded of his disinterestedness in chapter xiv., where he would receive from the king of Sodom none of the spoil which he had recovered for him. The various particulars of this transaction evince very considerable progress at that early period in economics, in commerce, in law. There is money, and of a given denomination or coin; balances for weighing it; a standard thereof, such as was current with the merchant—a superiority, therefore, in the method of trade above the way of barter; forms in the conveyance and exchange of property before witnesses, as here in the audience of the people of Heth; the terms and specifications of a bargain, by which the several particulars were made sure to Abraham in the presence of and before many witnesses; all serving to confirm the doctrine that the progress in these days was from an original civilisation down to barbarism, the civilisation being coeval with the first and earliest revelations, or with Adam himself."

If, while endorsing the above eloquent remarks of Dr. Chalmers, we might be allowed to add one of our own, it would be to the effect that the lapse of thirty-seven centuries, which has witnessed the rise and fall of the grandest dynasties of the world, seems to have left untouched the "dignified politeness" of the dwellers in the Syrian plains. According to the testimony of every oriental traveller, the monetary transactions of to-day are carried out with the same effluence of compliment and verbal iteration of subserviency, which characterised the children of Heth in their dealings with Abraham; and Ephron the son of Zohar has his living prototype in many a long-bearded sheikh of the valley of the Jordan.

NATURAL HISTORY ANECDOTES.

PARROTS.

The varieties of parrots best known in this country, and generally kept, are six in number, namely, parrots, cockatoos, macaws, parrakeets, love birds, and lorries, though these latter are more rarely kept, on account of their not being so proficient in

speaking as most of the other kinds, though their plumage is exceedingly gay and beautiful.*

It is said that macaws are the best talkers of the whole species, providing they are reared from the nest. And not only are they able to talk, but they also sing in a peculiar, soft voice. Though perhaps not in volume, certainly in sweetness and softness, they are excelled by various kinds of parrakeets, particularly the green or grass parrakeet. While the cockatoo is the hardiest of the parrot tribe, and the most easily tamed, it is at the same time the most difficult to teach to talk at all well. Its disposition is, however, more gentle, and its obedience more implicit, than that of the other species. The grey or ash-coloured African parrot is very docile, and receives its lesson with great aptitude, hence it is the most general favourite, though the common green Amazon parrot, from the little attention it requires, and being easily taught to speak, shares the favour bestowed upon the grey-coloured one.

The writer of this article has in his possession a green parrot which has an extraordinary fluency in its conversation and variety of expressions, so much so that it is hoped the bird will take a prize at the ensuing show at the Crystal Palace. As soon as its owner opens the door of the room in which it is usually kept, in a most natural voice it exclaims, "Pa, dear, come and kiss your pretty green beauty;" or if its master knocks at the door, it immediately shouts, "Come in, come in, pa, and give us a kiss, and a thousand more." This done, the parrot shouts "Hip, hip, hip, hurrah! three cheers for the Queen;" and instantly begins to dance to the tune, "Polly put the kettle on, and we'll all have tea," repeating, or rather singing, the words perfectly. Again, she frequently says, "Let the dear waiter bring pretty Polly a pot of beer, for she really wants her dinner," and numbers of similar observations, such as "Who'll give thirty guineas for the pretty green beauty, then she will ride in her carriage, the dear?" or again, "Oh, you cookey rough, why did you promise to marry me, and didn't?" This bird is most affectionate, and never allows its master to leave the room without giving it a kiss or shaking its foot. It has a lovely green plumage and belongs to that variety which is not commonly supposed to talk, namely, the parrakeets, but it is said when they do talk they excel all the rest of the tribe.

My brother-in-law, captain of a large sailing vessel, which frequently touched at the ports on the western coast of Africa, at different times possessed two grey parrots, one of which, from having had some hot water thrown on its head accidentally, lost all its feathers permanently. Being frequently asked what was the cause of his strange bald pate, he used to reply, "I was scalded;" but whenever he saw an old gentleman passing by in the street or enter into the room with a bald head, he would be sure to shout out, with a correct changing of the grammar, "You have been scalded," and then turning to the company, he would add, "He's been scalded."

* The parrots of Asia and Africa were known to the Greeks and Romans more than two thousand years ago, and we find frequent mention of their powers of mimicry in such writers as Plutarch and Euripides; and we have occasional mention also that they were favourites in the palaces of kings and princes. About the time of our Saviour's birth, frequent notice is found in the writers of that day of parrots and macaws. Ovid, for instance, speaks of the emerald hue of their plumage, while Pliny draws attention to their rose-coloured collar and brilliant green plumage.