

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From the London Working Man's Friend.

THE BREAKFAST PARTY.

BY MISS H. M. RATHBONE.

CHAPTER II.

'Yes, and for many months her strength has so evidently been declining, that I have felt anxious that she should try a little porter every day—you do not think it objectionable do you?' 'I? how can I have an opinion on the subject, my dear sir? and if your daughter be really out of health, I would strongly recommend your consulting one of our best physicians immediately; and should the expense, as I fear, be any object, you must allow me to have the pleasure of sending my own medical attendant to see her.' For a few moments every one was silent, from sheer perplexity, what to say or do next, and then Mr Gardiner said at a venture, 'Are you Dr Harrison, sir?'

'I am physician, my dear sir; what could induce you to suppose me one?'

'Good! Gracious, father! pray read this note immediately which a boy has just brought,' said Charles, putting one into Mr Gardiner's hands which contained these words,—

Gower Street,

'Dear Mr Gardiner,—An unforeseen and very important engagement has prevented my being able to breakfast with you as was proposed this morning, and I fear you may have waited for me. I shall, however, hope to see your sister, in whose case I feel much interested, in the course of the day; and believe me always very faithfully yours,

RANDALL HARRISON.'

The stranger guest had drawn his chair beside Mrs Donovan, saying it was quite time they entered upon the necessary arrangements for her mother's comfort, when Mr Gardiner, having shown Dr Harrison's note to his daughter, requested the stranger to read it, and then said, 'Until this moment I and my family have supposed you to be Dr Harrison, who had, as you see, engaged to breakfast with us to-day, previous to a consultation with him respecting my daughter's health. His person and indeed his name were both unknown to us, his generous proposal having been made through others; and whoever you are, I therefore venture to hope you will not be offended by the mistakes into which we have thus been unconsciously betrayed.' The stranger looked astonished at this explanation and after a moment's thoughtful pause, he asked Mrs Donovan what was her name, and on hearing it exclaimed, 'Really it is for me to apologise for having trespassed so unwarrantably upon the hospitality of perfect strangers. I had fixed to breakfast this morning with the married daughter of my old foster nurse, who lives in Derbyshire; and until now, I concluded Mrs Donovan to be this married daughter, whom I had never seen since she was a mere child. She had pressed me particularly to bring Lady Harriet, and as my daughter seldom deserts me, we agreed to go together, and set out for a house in this neighbourhood, to whose description I assure you, yours tallies exactly, and my business was to alter some arrangements regarding my old nurse, whose declining years seem, from what I hear, to require increased comforts, though,' he added, with a smile, 'I trust I may still find her able to thread a needle without spectacles.'

'May I then inquire whom a poor despised artist has had the honour of receiving?' said Mr Gardiner.

'That you have a full right to know, and I trust you will not refuse to ratify an acquaintance, which, to me, at least, has commenced so auspiciously. I am commonly called Lord Scarborough, and this is my daughter, Lady Harriet Greville, who will, I am sure, equally with myself, wish to improve her acquaintance with our gentle little hostess.'

CHAPTER III.

A few words more of mutual explanation passed, and nothing could exceed the readiness with which Lord Scarborough endeavoured to do away with the uncomfortable embarrassment, under which the Gardiners laboured. He seemed in no hurry to leave them, and with a delicacy as soothing as it was encouraging, he showed by his conversation that he now looked on his new acquaintances as superior in mental acquirements and manners than the family with whom he had hitherto supposed himself associated, whilst he owned that there interest in the fine arts and general tone of conversation had greatly surprised him. Finding that Mr Gardiner's five years slavery to the C— Theatre had recently ended, and that he only waited for a good opportunity, to resume his former profession as an historical painter, the Earl asked to see his latest designs, and expressed himself so much pleased, with a spiritual drawing of the aged Priam supplicating Achilles for the body of his son Hector, that he ordered a large oil picture from it, desiring the artist would name his own price, and giving permission, for its appearing at the exhibition before being transferred to G— House. Mr Gardiner was so completely overwhelmed, he could make no articulate reply; so to relieve him, Lord Scarborough turned to Mary and jestingly asked her what she would like to do. She replied, with grave simplicity, 'I have been used to help my father, sir, in colouring the foliage and flowers he was

obliged to introduce in some scenes, but—and her colour deepened—could I choose my work, I would rather sing than draw a great deal.' The Earl desired her to point out some of her handiwork, and she showed him an ivy wreath mixed with clematis, which he praised highly, and said, 'but you have not your father's genius, I see; your powers rather lie in the delineation of elegant forms on a small scale, and I think you do this so well, that I think I could procure you immediate employment, in Messrs Gladstone and Foster's porcelain works. First, however, you must see Dr Harrison, if indeed he does not turn out to be an imaginary individual of the Harris genus; and now mind you come up to G— House to-morrow, and tell my daughter, what he says, and if he pronounces you in a state to work, I will write at once to Mr Gladstone. Remember, we shall expect to see you in good time, as we keep early hours.' Lord Scarborough then took a most polite and cordial farewell of his host's family, assuring young Donovan he would not lose sight of him, and before he quitted the house, he wrote a note to the imperious managers of D— Theatre, begging him to allow Charles Gardiner a fair opportunity of testing his powers as a comic actor. Accompanied by heartfelt though nearly silent blessings, he and Lady Harriet departed, leaving a very truly happy family group behind them, whilst the sweet dawn of hope, seemed to have already brought a faint tinge of rose into Mary's pale cheeks. Dr Harrison came in the afternoon, a tall, buxly, black haired individual, who seemed an almost laughable contrast to the Earl, yet in his own way he was quite as kind and very skillful. After a few searching questions, put in the most rapid possible manner, he rose to go, and shaking hands with Mary, her aunt, and her father, as fast as he could turn from one to the other, he called out from the doorway—'Good bye, good bye, there's nothing at all the matter with my gentle little patient; she's thin, see that you give her plenty of nourishing food, and she'll soon mend of that ailment; she's low, take care and let her have recreation combined with regular moderate employment, and her depression will be all gone in less than a month; and take a pleasant abode in some healthy neighbourhood, and then see if she does not grow fat, fair, and handsome in six weeks' time. When you have complied with my directions,—and mark me, there must be no delay in carrying them out—why then if she's not well I'll come and dose her with black draughts three times a day; good bye, good bye to ye.' In another moment his foot had touched the step of his carriage, and the chariot was driving, rapidly down the street.

Mrs Donovan smiled, but no one spoke, for Mary, though hopeful for the future, was vexed that conditions so formidable had been proposed in the hearing of her poverty stricken father; and Mr Gardiner was himself engaged in silently ruminating how he should accomplish the main part of the prescription relating to an more airy, and therefore, alas! a more expensive dwelling. But these fears were all set at rest by an enclosure of a £100 from Lord Scarborough, which was delivered that same evening, accompanied by a kind note stating he had remitted the first instalment of his payment for the picture of Priam and Achilles, thinking it might be useful to Mr Gardiner. The next day, Mary, attired in her neatest garb, set out for G— House, with Mrs Donovan, who only stayed to see her admitted, and told her niece she would call for her again in an hour to take her home. Mary was shown into a small, tastefully furnished drawing room, where her delighted eye fell upon a large stand of rare, fragrant, and exquisitely lovely flowers, amongst which canaries were flitting to and fro, warbling a few sweet notes whenever Lady Harriet spoke. This lady gaily welcomed her pale little visitor, and having soon ascertained Dr Harrison's opinion, she rang for refreshments, and sportively insisted on Mary's instantly obeying the physician's orders, as she placed a cup of hot cocoa and a plate of sandwiches beside her. The shy visitor felt ashamed at the idea of eating in such company, but she was very tired by her long walk, and so excessively hungry and having once begun, she did not stop till she had finished the whole plateful of bread and ham. Another half hour had passed only too quickly, and he was beginning to think it must be time to go, when the Earl came in with another gentleman, and told her he had not forgotten her fondness for singing, and that this friend of his would be able to judge whether it would be worth while for her to study music professionally. He did not say, what however was really the case, that his own quick ear had been much struck the day before with the quality of her voice, even in speaking; nor were his benevolent expectations disappointed when her strong interest in the subject helped Mary to forget herself and permitted the powers of her voice to display themselves. She had sung more or less from her infancy, and having listened to many good performers when engaged in her theatrical characters, she knew what she was about pretty well, and put her whole soul into one of her favourite ballads, 'On the banks of Allan water.' The musical, bell-like tone of thrilling, liquid voice that went to the soul, united to great flexibility, considerable compass, and a very correct ear, caused the Earl's Italian friend, himself an eminent singer, to clap his hands, and prophesy fame, fortune and brilliant success to the pale little maiden, who listened with suspended breath to his oracular judgement, and then bursting into a violent fit of irrepressible weeping, hid her head on the sofa and sobbed without restraint.

Gently did Lady Harriet soothe the agitated girl, whilst she helped her to put on her walking things, and judiciously interposed to prevent her from being further overpowered by the arrangements for her future instruction into which the Italian and Lord Scarborough were both impatient to enter. Such were the first fruits occurred to the artist's family through the strange accident of the memorable breakfast party, and very briefly must we chronicle the after progress of events. Whilst receiving the necessary musical education, Mary obtained profitable employment at the porcelain manufactory, for which her natural delicacy of taste, and long practice under her father, had well fitted her; and her dearly loved, handsome brother rose rapidly in the line he had so long desired to tread, and having an admirable debut in the difficult part of sir Fretful Plagiary, he was at once engaged at a salary of £3 a week, and seemed as happy as the day was long. The artist and his ungainly, intelligent nephew pursued a quieter yet not less happy career.

Cheered by the society of his sister, Mrs Donovan, his health renovated by removing to the breezy site of Hampstead, and his genius fostered by liberal discriminating patronage, his right hand resumed more than its former cunning; and when his picture of Priam and Achilles was exhibited, and the beautiful representation of—in its back grounds was discovered to be a striking likeness of Lady Harriet Greville, he at once took his place in the highest ranks of celebrated artists, the young, the fashionable, the graceful besieging him in crowds, in order to have their likenesses transmitted to admiring posterity. Edward Donovan's rough but masterly sketch of the bacchante group received the prize of a silver medal, and he was then bound apprentice to an eminent engraver, whilst he supported himself by illustrating children's books, thus owing his subsistence to the energy and perseverance with which he had practised drawing during those early years when unstimulated by any prospect of a metropolitan career. Once Mrs Donovan proposed to take a house for herself and Ned, but her brother would not listen to the scheme, declaring he needed the solace of her company the more that Mary was doomed to spend the next twelve months at Dresden, under the tuition of some famous master. The widow accordingly agreed to remain with him, though her heart was often heavy when she looked on the emaciated, awkward form and melancholy face of her affectionate, unattractive son, and wondered why he alone, talented and excellent as he was, should thus seem miserable amidst worldly prospects so satisfactory, and living amongst loving relatives.

A year later and Mary returned to England in the full bloom of youthful charms, and the time had come when she was to make her public appearance at a grand concert in Exeter Hall. Occupying conspicuous places, sat her father, aunt, and brother; and Lord Scarborough and his beautiful daughter were also present, with a large circle of noble friends, all anxious to hear the new singer of whom the report spoke so highly. Edward Donovan was alone absent, having been sent on a mission into Nottinghamshire by his employer. The decisive moment arrived, and universal applause greeted the elegant young girl who timidly curtsied to the assembled audience and received her roll of music from the tenor singer with whom she was to sing a duet from 'Gazza Ladra,' whilst the band began its soft harmonious accompaniments. But to the dismay of all her friends Mary's courage failed; she saw her father and Charles, and knew the Earl and Lady Harriet were present, and her voice throughout the duet sounded so murky, that on the conclusion of the piece she was led off with prophecies of failure on all hands ringing in her ears. Very soon it became her turn to give an impassioned solo, and this time she stood alone before the crowded sea of human faces. Not a trace of colour tinged her own, and her first notes were low and trembling, and her agitated father said it was all over, and that it was a great pity she had appeared a second time. At that moment Edward Donovan, heated and jaded, came in having just arrived in town and not having, as he afterwards confessed, tasted food for a whole day and night. He was quickly told of their fears respecting Mary, and in his despair he stood up in his place, and gazed at her quivering figure and listened to her murky notes he well-nigh groaned aloud. Fortunately she happened to raise her eye, and meeting his wild gaze of mingled love and agony, they acted like an electric shock. The bright red crimsoned her cheek, her eye kindled, her voice forgot its disguisings, and in rich mellow tones its magnificent cadence filled the great hall her every word accentuated so perfectly, that the softest notes never broke the thread of sentiment conveyed by the poet, and the highest tones never degenerating into shrillness. Twice was the splendid solo rapturously encoded; and so it continued throughout the concert, every piece she sang; being repeated at least twice—and the delighted audience calling for her at the close overwhelmed her with a storm of applause that nearly deafened the fair young singer, whose brilliant success had thus, in one short hour, placed her at the head of female performers. That night the dark piercing eyes of Edward Donovan beamed as they used to do in former times, for that evening he dared to hope that Mary Gardiner might look with favour on the suit of her ungainly cousin.

If the springs put forth no blossoms, in summer there will be no beauty, and in autumn no fruit. So, if youth be trifled away without improvement, riper years will be contemptible and old age miserable.

From the London Working Man's Friend.

JOHN HAMPDEN.

THE principal events in the life of John Hampden are of course familiar to the majority of our readers—we have given a somewhat lengthy account of both the man and his times in an early number of the Working Man's Friend. The statue of 'the patriot Hampden' by Mr. Foley, is one of the most interesting of those in the New Houses of Parliament, not only for its associations with the place, but also on account of its artistic excellence as a great historical portrait. A very brief resume of the life of this great man may not, however, be out of place—the more especially as we cannot refer to him or his times without acknowledging the importance of the principles for which he and his compatriots struggled against king and court.

John Hampden came of an ancient and noble family in Buckinghamshire, and was born at London in the year 1594. At an early age he entered as a commoner at the University of Oxford, which ancient seat of learning he left for the study of the law, and for a short time studied at one of the inns of court. The death of his father, however, put him in possession of an ample estate, and he retired to his country seat in Buckinghamshire with the intention of pursuing the quiet career of a country gentleman. Events, however, occurred which roused up within him all the energies of his mind, and called him from his paternal acres, like another Cincinnati, to take part in a great political struggle.

In 1625 he entered the House of Commons, and at once attached himself to the popular party. Cousin-german to Oliver Cromwell, he could not look calmly on the usurpations of Charles; and thus it was that he had soon to undergo the ordeal of a government prosecution for opposing the illegal impost of ship-money. Though he lost the cause—which he defended in person against the Crown lawyers for twelve days—his adherence to the popular side gained for him the applause of the people and the hatred of the court. His defeat, though it was hailed as a great victory by the court, was considered as no small triumph by his party, because by it they were enabled to take a certain position in reference to the question which they had not hitherto assumed. It is said that both Cromwell and Hampden contemplated emigrating to America after the trial, but that an order in council prevented their departure. As it was, the court gained in these two men two of their most inveterate opponents. Henceforth, Hampden took an active part in the contest between the king and the parliament; and when at last an appeal was made to arms, he joined the Earl of Essex in opposing the misguided monarch.

The history of the Long Parliament, and the issue of the struggle between the Roundheads and Royalists, is known to every child in Great Britain. In that struggle Hampden fell—too early for his country's good, but not too early for his own fame. Prince Rupert coming suddenly upon the parliamentary forces, near Thame, in Oxfordshire, Hampden eagerly headed a few horse soldiers that were rallied in haste, and in the skirmish that ensued received a wound in the shoulder which proved fatal. After lingering in great agony for six days, he expired on the 24th of June, 1643.

His death, while it threw his party into consternation and dismay, was looked upon by the adherents of the Crown as a real triumph; for they feared a man of so much eloquence, bravery, firmness, moderation, and good sense. Of the questions which agitated men's mind in those days, and the feelings which prompted their actions happily little but the history remains. Time, the leveller and consoler, has enabled us to look with cooler judgment and clearer vision on the great events in which our forefathers were engaged; and in this day we may congratulate ourselves that the stern uncompromising principles of Cromwell and his parliament, rendered all future antagonism between court and people, all misunderstanding about 'royal prerogative, and 'popular rights,' for ever unnecessary. With the liberty which we, in this year of grace, enjoy under the sway of a beloved Queen, we cannot well understand, or perhaps even sympathise with, the unyielding character of the political crisis which produced such a man as the Patriot Hampden.

From Hogg's Edinburgh Instructor.

CAN INSECTS TALK.

THIS may indeed seem a strange question to those who would limit the meaning of the word to the capability of expressing ideas by means of articulate sounds; nevertheless, a little reflection will convince any one who is conversant with the habits of these creatures, that, though they have no tongues, they can express themselves in some way or other with most miraculous organ. Various experiments might be quoted in proof of this assertion; let us, however, select one of two which seem to leave no room for dispute about the matter. Any one who finds himself in the vicinity of an ant's nest, may soon be convinced that these industrious little labourers are by no means destitute of the power of communicating information to each other relative to the affairs of their commonwealth. Let him, for example, place a heap of food in the neighbourhood of the ant-hill, and watch the proceedings of its inmates. A short time will probably elapse before the discovery of the treasure, but at length some wanderer, in his morning's ramble, has the good fortune to stumble upon it. What does he do? He does not, like an isolated individual, incapable of asking for assistance,