

petty expedient of employing touters (hookers in, they are called), who frequent the railway stations and the coffee-rooms of inns, and hook in the unwary draper to their employers' dens. If we are to credit these very active gentlemen, no house comes up, for liberality, honesty, and respectability, to that of Noils, Shoddy, and Co. Or, perhaps, Messrs. Devil's-dust and Fent are the objects of their disinterested eulogy. When the honest country-draper meets with a hooker in, when he is hooked by the button-hole on the railway platform, he had better beware. And should the tempter lure him to inspect the stocks of the afore-mentioned houses, let him be careful in his purchases. Above all don't let him accept the invitation to dinner, which he will very probably receive; for, such is the extreme liberality of these firms, that they generally have a good dinner, and plenty of champagne provided for their customers. It is surprising how speculative some men will become (so say the hookers-in) after dinner.

WORDS UPON THE WATERS.

FAR away fond hearts are beating,
Out upon the stormy sea;
Let us hear if no kind greeting
In the noisy waves may be.
Each in hurrying after each,
(For the sea is loud and high)
Will bear it to the pebbly beach,
And cast it at our feet and die.

Hark! a low farewell of sorrow,
And foreboding of despair,
Fearful of the hard to-morrow,
Loaded with its freight of care:
Tender words of hope and comfort,
For the loved and the forlorn,
Left alone to toil and suffer,
On the rushing waves are borne.

Tender thoughts of home far distant,
Seen through mists of childish tears,
Mixed with brightest dreams of glory,
And the hopes of childish years;
Honours and renown, and victory,
Ere the strife is yet begun,
And the conquered to be pardoned,
Ere the day is fought or won.

Vows and words of trust and promise,
Murmured tenderly and low,
Given to the midnight breezes,
Where the northern waters flow;
Hope, regret, and joy and sorrow,
Mingled in the water's roar,
As the crested waves are rushing
Onward to the pebbly shore.

Hush! amid the din of waters
Let us hold our breath, and hear,
If the thunder of the cannon
Be not borne towards us here;

If the deadly sound of battle
Come across the waters free,
And the English cry of "Victory!"
Be not echoed by the sea!

THE GREEN RING AND THE GOLD RING.

THE story I have to tell, occurred less than eighty years ago, in the days of powder and pomade; of high heads and high heels; when beaux in pea-green coats lined with rose-colour, attended on belles who steadied their dainty steps with jewel-headed canes; and when lettres-de-cachet lay like sachets-à-gants on toilet tables among patches and rouge. Less than eighty years ago, when the fair Queen of France and her ladies of honour wielded these same lettres-de-cachet with much of the ease with which they fluttered their fans. Less than eighty years ago, when the iron old Marquis de Mirabeau was writing to his brother the Commandeur de Malte those fearful letters wherein the reader of the present day may trace, as in a map, the despotic powers then exercised by the seigneurs of France over their sons and daughters, as well as over their tenants and vassals. Hard, short-sighted Marquis de Mirabeau! Little did he reckon when he wrote those letters, or when he consigned his son, in the flush of youth, and hope, and love, to a prison-cell and to exile—that the family name was to be indebted to the fame of that vituperated son for its salvation from obscurity, or that the arbitrary powers he used so wildly were soon to be swept away for ever.

Less than eighty years ago, then, before the Revolution was dreamed of in that part of France, there stood, in a long, straggling, picturesque village of one of the southern provinces, a stone-and-mud cottage, less dirty and uninviting than those by which it was surrounded. There was no dirt-heap under the solitary window, no puddle before the door; which, unlike every other house in the village, possessed the luxury of an unfractured door-step. No tidy cottage-gardens gave cheerful evidence of the leisure or taste of the inmates; for in those days the labouring population of France were too thoroughly beaten down by arbitrary exactions to have spare hours to devote to their own pursuits; but round the window of this particular cottage a nasturtium had been trained by strings: and, through its yellow and orange flowers one could, now and then, catch a glimpse of a pair of lustrous eyes.

The superior cleanliness of this little dwelling, the flowers, the decency of the family, were the work of one pair of hands, belonging to a young girl named Alix Laroux, whose industry was the support of a younger brother and sister, and of a blear-eyed grandmother.

Now, Alix was a pretty, as well as a hard-working girl, yet it was neither to her

beauty nor to her industry that she was indebted for becoming the heroine of our tale, although her success in finding work, when others could find none, had made envious tongues gossip about her. Village scandal is very like town scandal; as like as a silken masquerade costume is to its linsey-woolsey original; the form is the same, the texture alone is different; and at the well of Beauregard, from which water was fetched and where the salad for supper was washed, it was whispered that Alix was a coquette, and that the remote cause of her prosperity was the influence which her bright eyes had obtained over the strong heart of the Bailiff of Beauregard. Every one wished that good might come of it, but—

But, in the meanwhile, good did come of it; for, thanks to the large black eyes that looked so frankly into his, and to the merry smile of the village beauty, Monsieur Reboul had come to the knowledge of Alix's cheerful steady activity; and a feeling of respect had mingled with his early admiration when he discovered that, while no one was more particular in the payment of lawful dues than the hard-working girl, no one resisted more strenuously any illegal exactions. At length the stricken bailiff—who, by-the-by, was double Alix's age—testified the sincerity of his feelings towards her by taking her brother Jean into the household at the castle, and even offered to have Alix herself admitted among the personal attendants of one of the young ladies of Beauregard; whose marriage had lately been celebrated with great magnificence in Paris.

But Alix shook her pretty head, and said, "No, she thanked him all the same," with a smile that showed her pearly teeth: and what man in love—though a bailiff—could resent a denial so sweetly accompanied? Monsieur Reboul was, indeed, for a moment cast down, but his spirits were soon revived by some of those wonderful explanations which men in his predicament generally have at their command; so he left the cottage with a friendly adieu to the smiling girl, and without a suspicion that Alix had any private reasons for her dislike to leave the village, or that the daily greeting of François the stone-cutter was a matter of more moment to her than the prettiest compliments of the Bailiff of Beauregard.

The next day was market-day at Maillot, a town about two leagues distant from the village, whither, for four years, Alix had been accustomed to go once a week with poultry and eggs; her great resource for the rent of her grand-dame's hut. It was a matter of rivalry among the young women of the neighbourhood to be first at market; and Alix, who greatly enjoyed supremacy in everything, had endeavoured in this, as in all else, to surpass her companions. This, however, was not very easy, for others could rise

betimes, as she did herself. A few months before, an accidental discovery of her brother Jean had at length secured for her the envied privilege. Jean, like other idle lads of his class, was necessarily a poacher, and, on one of his secret expeditions into the forest which lay between Beauregard and Maillot had chanced to fall upon a path by which the distance between the two places was shortened by at least a third. This discovery he confided to Alix; and ever since, under his guidance and escort, she had availed herself of it to reach Maillot earlier and with less fatigue than her companions. She had found the walk very pleasant when Jean was with her to carry her basket, and with his boyish sallies to prevent her from dwelling on the superstitious terrors with which tradition had invested the forest; but now that she must tread its tangled paths alone, she hesitated, and was half tempted to relinquish the daring project. Still she felt unwilling to yield the honour of being first, without a struggle. Besides, her companions had always given her a reputation for courage, and although she had a secret conviction that she owed it solely to her young brother's reflected bravery, it is a reputation which young girls prize so highly, that, rather than forfeit it, they will rush recklessly into real dangers, from which, if they escape, it is by their good fortune, and not by their boasted courage.

Alix could not endure to allow to others that she was afraid. No, no, she must not permit that to be said, nor must she expose herself to the jeers and laughter of those who would delight to hear that she was not first at market. She must go by the wood-path, and must go early. And so thinking, she laid her down to rest.

The part of France in which Alix was born and brought up is full of historical remains, and therefore abounds with traditions, the more mystical and terrible from the dash of paganism with which they are mixed up. Not a forest, ruin, or grotto, is without some picturesque legend, which the young listen to from the lips of the aged with shuddering delight; and all that Alix had ever heard of the forest of Beauregard, or of any other haunted wood in the province, rose with disagreeable tenacity to her memory on this particular night. She remembered the darkness and gloom of the old trees, the thickness of the brushwood, and shuddered as she thought of the possibility of meeting the Couleuvre-Fée—the Melusina of Provence—or the Chèvre d'Or, who confides the secret resting-place of hidden treasures to the wandering traveller, only to afflict him with incurable melancholy if he prove himself unworthy of riches. As the dread of these supernatural creatures increased upon her with the silence and darkness of night, she hid her head beneath the counterpane, and wisely resolved to dare all

that human beings could do to vex her, rather than encounter the tricks and temptations of those uncharitably ones,—and then she slept.

Light to see, however, is nearly allied to courage to dare; and when Alix arose at early dawn, her perturbations and tremblings had vanished, and her midnight decision was overturned by the impulse of the morning. She dressed herself, quickly, but carefully, in her most becoming attire; and a very fine specimen of the women of the province she looked—noted though they are for the regal style of their beauty—when equipped in her plaited petticoat; her bright fichu, not pinned tightly down, but crossing the bosom in graceful folds, and fastened in a knot at the back; her thick glossy bands of black hair contrasting well with the rich glow of her cheek, and with the Madras silk handkerchief which covered without concealing the luxuriance of her long hair. Holding in her hand her large market-basket, not unlike in shape to a coal-scuttle or a gipsy bonnet, with a majestic rather than a tripping step, Alix began her walk; looking more like one of the Roman matrons from whom tradition tells that her race was descended than a poor peasant girl.

As she reached the turn from the high-road to the wood, she quickened her steps, and resolutely took the forest path; while, as if determined to prove to herself that she was not afraid, she ever and anon gave forth a snatch of song, in a voice as clear and shrill as that of the birds twittering in the branches overhead to join the common hymn of praise with which the denizens of earth and sky salute the new-born day.

The morning was unusually sultry and oppressive, although the sun was but newly risen. Alix felt herself overcome with fatigue when scarcely half-way through the forest. She was so fatigued that she found it necessary to sit down; but, just as she had selected a seat in a quiet shady nook which promised to be a pleasant resting-place, she discovered that it abutted closely on the opening to one of the grottos that tradition had marked out as the former habitation of hermits or saints whose spirits were still believed to haunt their old dwelling-places. She no sooner became aware of the grotto's vicinity than she rose hastily; and, snatching up her basket, set off down one of the alleys of the forest, without taking time to consider where she was going; when forced to pause to recover her breath, she found herself in a spot she had never seen before, but one so lovely that she looked around with surprise and admiration.

It was a little glade, in form almost an amphitheatre, carpeted with turf as soft and elastic as velvet; its bright green, enamelled with flowers; and on each petal, each tiny blade of grass, dew-drops were sparkling like tears of happiness, in welcome to the sun's returning rays. Around this little circle,

mighty old trees, gnarled and rugged, the fathers of the forest, were so regularly ranged as to seem the work of art rather than of nature, and this impression was strengthened by the avenue-like alley that spread from it towards the north. Immediately opposite to this opening, on the southern side of the amphitheatre, rose a rampart of grey rocks, marbled with golden veins, from whose hoary side sprung forth the rock rose or pink cystus, and under whose moist shade the blue aster, one of the fairest of earth's stars, flourished luxuriantly. As Alix's eye fell on the trees, and grass, and flowers, she set her basket down carefully at the foot of a fine old oak, and, forgetting fatigue, heat, and superstitious terrors, busied herself in gathering the dew-gemmed flowers, until her apron was quite full.

Then, seating herself under the oak, she began with pretty fastidiousness to choose the most perfect of her treasures to arrange into a bouquet for her bosom, and one for her hair. While thus engaged she half-chanted, half-recited her *Salve Regina* :—

 Hail to the Queen who reigns above,
 Mother of Clemency and Love!
 We, from this wretched world of tears
 Send sighs and groans unto thine ears.
 Oh, thou sweet advocate, bestow
 One pitying look on us below!

The hymn and toilet were concluded together; and then, but not till then, Alix remembered that there was a market at Maillot, at which she must be present, instead of spending the day in such joyous idleness. She sighed and wished she were a lady—the young lady of Beauregard, of whose marriage Monsieur Reboul had told her such fine things—and, as she thought thus, association of ideas awoke the recollection that this day was the twenty-third of June, the vigil of St. John; a season said to be very fatal to the females of the house of Beauregard. She shuddered at the terrors of that tradition recurred to her memory, and wished she were not alone in the haunted forest on so unlucky a day. Many and strange were the superstitions she had heard regarding St. John's Eve, and many the observances of which she had been the terrified witness; but, that which had always affected her imagination the most, was the ancient belief that any one who has courage to hold a lonely vigil in a church on St. John's Eve, beholds passing in procession all those who are fated to die within the year. It was with this superstition that the legend of Beauregard was associated; for it was said that in old times a certain lady of the family had, for reasons of her own—bad reasons of course—held such a vigil, had seen her own spirit among the doomed, and had indeed died that year. Tradition further averred, that since then, the twenty-third of June had been always more or less fatal to the females of her house; and as

Alix remembered this, she was content to be only Alix Leroux, who, though possessed neither of Châteaux nor forests, and forced to work hard and attend weekly markets, had no ancestral doom hanging over her, but could look forward to a bright future, as the beloved mistress of a certain stonemason's comfortable home; of which stonemason's existence Monsieur Reboul was quite unconscious.

Her thoughts of François, her young warm-hearted lover, and of the two strong arms ready at a word from her to do unheard-of miracles, dimpled her cheeks with smiles, and entirely banished the uncomfortable cogitations which had preceded them; taking up her basket, she arose; and, looking around her, began to consider which path she ought to follow, to find the most direct road to Maillot.

She was still undecided, when a whole herd of deer dashed down the north alley towards her, and broke forcibly through the thick covert beyond, as if driven forward by intense fear. She was startled by the sudden apparition, for a moment's consideration convinced her that what had terrified them might terrify her also, and that the part of the forest from which they had been driven was that which she must cross to reach Maillot. Timid as a deer herself, at this thought she strained her eyes in the direction whence they had come, but could see nothing. She listened: all was still again, not a leaf stirred,—and yet, was it fancy, or was it her sense of hearing excited by fear to a painful degree of acuteness, that made her imagine that she heard, at an immense distance, a muffled sound of wheels and of the tramp of horses' feet? She wrung her hands in terror; for, satisfied that no earthly carriage could force its way through the tangled forest paths, she could only suppose that something supernatural and terrible was about to blast her sight; still, as if fascinated, she gazed in the direction of the gradually increasing sounds. Not a wink of her eyes distracted her sight as she peered through the intervening branches. Presently, a huge body, preceded by something which caught and reflected the straggling rays of sunshine that penetrated between the trees, was seen crushing through the brushwood. Nearer and nearer it came with a curiously undulating movement, and accompanied by the same strange, dull, inexplicable sound, until, as it paused at a few hundred paces from her place of concealment, she perceived to her intense relief that the object of her terror was nothing more than an earthly vehicle of wood and iron, in the form of one of the unwieldy coaches of the day, drawn by a team of strong Flanders horses; and that the strange muffled sounds which had accompanied it, arose solely from the elasticity of the turf over which it rolled having deadened the noise of the wheels and the horses' hoofs. The relief from

supernatural terrors, however, rendered Alix only the more exposed to earthly fears; and, when a second glance at the carriage showed her that the glistening objects which had caught her eye at a distance were the polished barrels of mousquetons, or heavy carbines, carried by two men who occupied the driving seat, she slipped from her hiding-place behind a large oak tree, and carefully enconced herself among the thick bushes that overshadowed the rocks.

Scarcely had she done this, before one of the armed men got down from the box, and walked round the circular glade, scanning it with a curious and penetrating glance. For a moment, he paused before the old oak, as if attracted by some flowers Alix had dropped; but another quick searching look seeming to satisfy him, he returned to the carriage and stood by the door, as if in conference with some one inside.

"Thank Heaven!" thought Alix, "he sees that the carriage cannot pass further in this direction; I shall not, therefore, be kept here long;" and her curiosity as to what was next to be done, gaining predominance over her fears, she again peered eagerly between the branches. A gentleman got out of the carriage, and examined the little glade as carefully as his servant had done.

"What a handsome man!" thought Alix. "What a grand dress he has; all silk and velvet!" She fixed an admiring glance on the tall, noble-looking figure that stood for a moment, silent and still, in the centre of the amphitheatre.

"It will do Pierre," he said at length, as he turned on his steps; "begin your work."

Pierre bowed, and without speaking, pointed to a little plot of ground, of peculiarly bright green, with a dark ring round it—a fairy-ring, in short, so named in all countries—which lay almost directly opposite to Alix's hiding-place.

"Yes," was the brief answer. "Call Joseph to help; we are at least an hour too late."

The strong rigidity of the speaker's countenance caused Alix to tremble, although she did not know why, unless it were in her dread of falling into his hands as a spy of his secret actions, whatever they might be; for he was evidently not a man to be trifled with.

Pierre went back to the carriage, from which the other man had already descended, and together they took from the hind boot, a couple of pickaxes and spades, with which they speedily began to cut away the turf of the green-ring, for a space of some six or eight feet in length, and as many in breadth.

She could distinctly see Pierre's face, and perceived it was not one that she had ever seen before. That of Joseph was concealed from her, as he worked with his back towards her; but there was something about his dress and appearance that seemed familiar to

her, and which was very different from that of Pierre. But what strange kind of hole was that they were digging?

"Holy Mother of mercy, it is a grave!"

As this idea occurred to her, her blood ran cold; but the sudden thought underwent as sudden a change, when, the second man turning his face towards her, she recognised to her amazement, the countenance of her admirer, the old bailiff.

The sight of his familiar face dissipated her gloomy suspicions, and she speedily persuaded herself that instead of a grave to hide some dreadful deed, they were digging for some of the concealed treasures which everybody knew were buried in the forest. Monsieur Reboul had often told her that he had heard of them from his grandmother, so it was natural enough he should be ready to seek them. How she would torment him with the secret thus strangely acquired!

From her merry speculations she was roused at length by the re-appearance of the tall man carrying in his arms something wrapped in a horseman's cloak, and followed by another and younger figure, bearing, like himself, all the outward signs belonging to the highest class of the nobility, though on his features was stamped an expression of cruelty and harshness.

"Going to bury a treasure, rather than seek one," thought Alix. "Very well, Monsieur Reboul, I have you still!"

The tall man, meanwhile, had placed his burden on the ground. Removing the cloak that covered it, he now displayed to Alix's astonished eyes a young and very lovely lady. For a moment, the fair creature stood motionless where she was placed, as if dazzled by the sudden light; but it was for a moment only, and then she flung herself on the ground at the feet of the elder man, beseeching him to have mercy upon her, to remember that she was young, and that life, any life, was dear to her!

The man moved not a muscle, uttered not a word save these, "I have sworn it."

The girl—for she looked little more than sixteen—pressed her hands on her bosom, as if to still the suffocating beating of her heart, and was silent. Such silence! Such anguish! Alix trembled as if she herself were under the sentence of that cold cruel man. But, now the grave was finished; for grave it seemed to be, and one too, destined to enclose that living, panting, beautiful creature. The old man laid his hand upon her arm and drew her forcibly to the edge of the gaping hole.

With sudden strength she wrenched herself from his grasp; and, with a wild and thrilling shriek rushed to the young man, clung to him, kissed his hands, his feet, raised her wild tearless eyes to his, and implored for mercy, with such an agony of terror in her hoarse broken voice, that the young man's powerful frame shook as if struck by ague. Involuntarily, unconsciously he clasped her in his

arms. What he might have said or done, God knows, had the old man allowed him time; but already he was upon them, and snatched the girl from his embrace. The young man turned away with a look so terrible that Alix never recalled it, never spoke of it afterwards, without an invocation to Heaven.

"Kill me first," shrieked the poor girl, as her executioner dragged her a second time to that living grave. "Not alive, not alive! Oh my father, not alive!"

"I have no child, you no father!" was the stern reply. The young man hid his face in his hands, and Alix saw them thrust their victim into the grave; but she saw no more, for, with a cry almost as startling as that which the murdered lady had uttered, she fled from her concealment back to the village. Panting, she rushed on without pause, without hesitation, through unknown paths; her short quick cries for "Help! help! help!" showing the one idea that possessed her; but she met no one until she stopped exhausted and breathless at first house in the village, that of the curé.

"Come, come at once; they will have killed her!" she exclaimed.

"What is the matter my poor girl?" he asked in amazement, as, pushing back his spectacles, he raised his head from his breviary.

"Oh come, sir! I will tell you as we go. Where is François! He would help me! Oh, what shall I do, what shall I do? Come, do come!"

There was no mistaking the look of agitation in her face; the curé yielded to her entreaties and followed her. As they quitted the house, they met some labourers with spades in their hands, going to their daily work.

"Make these men come with us," Alix said, "and bring their spades!"

The curé did so, and in an incredibly short space of time the little party reached the green ring. The spot was vacant now, as formerly—carriage, horses, servants, executioners, and victim, all had disappeared as if by magic; and, in the quiet sylvan solitude, not a trace save the newly-turned soil was perceptible of the tragedy enacted there so lately. But Alix staid not to glance around her; going directly up to the fatal spot, she gasped out, "Dig, dig!"

No one knew why the order was given, nor what they were expected to find; but her eagerness had extended itself to the whole party, and they at once set to work, while she herself, prostrate on the ground, tried to aid them by tearing up the sods with her hands. At length the turf was removed, and a universal cry of horror was heard, when the body of the unhappy girl was discovered.

"Take her out; she is not dead! Monsieur le Curé, save her; tell us how to save her!"

The labourers gently raised the body, and placed it in Alix's arms, as she still sat on the ground. They chafed the cold hands, loosened the rich dress—the poor girl's only shroud—but she gave no sign of life.

"Water, water!" cried Alix.

No fountain was near, but the rough men gathered the dead leaves strewed around, and sprinkled the pale face with the dew they still held. For a second they all hoped; the eyelids quivered slightly, and a faint pulsation of the heart was clearly perceptible.

But that was all. They had come too late.

The curé bent over the dead and repeated the solemn "De profundis clamavi ad te, Domine," and then all joined in the hymn of death, "Dies iræ, dies illa!" as they gently bore the corpse from the place of its savage sepulture, to holy ground. For several days, the body was exposed in an open coffin in the little village church of Beauregard, and every effort was made to track the perpetrators of the dreadful deed. But in vain; no traces of them could be found. An innate dread of some personal misfortune sealed Alix's lips with respect to her recognition of the Bailiff, and all inquiries as to the passing of a carriage such as she had described, between Maillot and Novelle, were made unsuccessfully.

The dress of the young lady was carefully examined, in hopes of the discovery of her name by means of cyphers or initials on her linen; but there were none. The satin robe, the jewels she had worn on her neck and arms, and the delicate flowers twined in her hair, gave evidence that she had been carried away from some gay fête. From the ring on her marriage finger they augured she was a wife; but there all conjecture ended. After her burial in holy ground her gold ring and other ornaments were hung up in the church, in the hope that some day a claimant might arise who could unravel the strange mystery; and close by them was suspended an *ex voto* offering by Alix, in gratitude for her own escape.

The story was never cleared up. Monsieur Reboul was never seen again, and Alix had so lost her boasted courage that she never afterwards dared to take a solitary walk, especially near the fatal green ring in the forest. Perhaps it was this dread of being alone, or perhaps the mysterious disappearance of Monsieur Reboul, which tempted her soon afterwards, to follow the advice of her neighbours, and become the wife of François, the stonecutter. The marriage was a happy one, and a time came when the remembrance of that fatal Eve of St. John was recalled more as a strange legend to be told to her children and grandchildren than as a fearful drama in which she had herself taken part.

In the revolutionary struggles which followed, the ornaments of the murdered girl were, with other relics of the old régime, lost

or removed from the little village church. Yet the story lingers there still, and, like many another strange story, it is a true one.

LAST MOMENTS OF AN ENGLISH KING.

AN opportunity has been afforded us of examining, at our leisure, a curious collection of papers of the age of Charles the Second, recently discovered at Draycot House, near Chippenham, in Wiltshire: the seat of the ancient family of the Longs, of Draycot, in that county. The collection is very miscellaneous, consisting of printed broadsides, manuscript satires, not very decent, and, in some cases, too well known; newsletters, chiefly relating to matters of little general or even local interest, and other very miscellaneous sheets of handwriting, now and then containing facts of importance to the student of English manners and customs. The Jew's-eye of the whole (as an enthusiastic collector would call it), is a letter adding new points of consequence to the accounts we possess of the death-bed of Charles the Second. It is, unfortunately, without signature or address; but the air of truth throughout is so great, the known facts and details are so supported by other testimony, and the new facts it reveals are so consistent with what was passing around, and with the known character of the individuals to whom they relate, that the discovery of the letter must be considered an accession of consequence to the stock of materials illustrative of English history.

It is certainly remarkable that the death-beds of King Charles the Second and his two great favourites, the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Rochester, are among the best known recorded by poets, historians, or biographers. Burnet has given us an account of the last hours of Lord Rochester, which a great moralist (Dr. Johnson) has recommended to all classes and conditions of readers. Pope has made an enduring picture of the worst inn's worst room in which Villiers breathed his last; and Mr. Macaulay has devoted fourteen pages of his *History* (and among the finest even in his volumes), to the last moments of King Charles the Second. The picture which Mr. Macaulay has drawn with so much fidelity and skill, has been compiled from printed and from manuscript sources. Every incident has been worked up, and given its proper place and proportion. One would have thought that no more was to be done to it. Our letter, however, throws much supplementary light upon the scene. Here it is, with the spelling modernised. The writer is a lady, the wife of a person about the Court at Whitehall, with ample opportunities of obtaining information from the best-informed persons:—

"Methinks I owe my dearest a particular relation of his late Majesty's sickness and