

MIRK ABBEY.

CHAPTER XXVII—(Continued.)
Notwithstanding that Coverton Church is "gritty," like all the rest of the architecture of that locality and presents the appearance of an ecclesiastical edifice swathed in sand-paper, it is by no means unpleasing; while the spot on which it stands can compare for beauty with any God's acre in England. It is more than a hundred feet above the level of the village, and commands a glorious view, which would be a complete panorama, but for the steep wooded hill, which protects it from the bitter north, and assists the genial climate to make a flower-garden of the churchyard three parts of the year round. Even thus early in summer, had Ralph's visit been paid in the daytime instead of the night, he would have seen it bright with bud and blossom, for almost every grave was itself a little parterre, tended by pious hands. Poor wretched human forms, but not seldom dearer to others, than the handsomest and healthiest, often come to Coverton to prolong for a little their painful lives, until they fit away like shadows; indeed, if you read the grave stones, you will find three out of four are records of departed youth. The newly married pairs their honeymoon at the pleasant little village, and those who have been sentenced to death by the Doctors come also thither, and a strange and touching contrast they afford. The large moon was flooding the sacred place with its soft radiance, so that the inscriptions were as plain to be seen as in broad noonday. From knoll to knoll, each roofing sacred dust, Ralph wandered not unmoved; for he too had lost a dear one by untimely death, and even now was looking for the place where happily she might lie. He would have felt it in some sort of comfort to know that her bones rested beneath the rounded turf, rather than in yonder shifting deep, although, beyond the wooded village with its scattered lights, it lay as motionless as present as a silver ball. No less than three, he came upon the tombs of those with whom he had been a fellow passenger on board that doomed ship so many years ago. Upon a huge recumbent slab, which evidently roofed the remains of more than one person, were engraved these words: "Beneath this stone are laid the bones of those who were washed ashore from the wreck of the North Star, but whose remains, from lapse of time, or other causes have not been identified. 'Requiescent in pace.'"
A nameless grave, indeed, with not even the number or the sex of its unfortunate inmates specified! The slab bore the date of but a week or two subsequent to the catastrophe, yet spoke "of lapse of time." How impossible, therefore, to discover now whose bones had mouldered beneath it into dust. His Lucy might be there, or she might not. It was one of the few tombs that exhibited no trace of care; but a tuft of violets, the sweet breath of which betrayed them, seemed to be growing at the edge of it, and Derrick plucked them, and placed them in his bosom. He seemed to feel certain now that she had come ashore somewhere; and why not here? How solemn and still it was! The very air, though odorous and fresh, seemed full of the presence of the dead; and Ralph's thoughts were with them; so he quite forgot the purpose with which he had visited the little village, light after light in which was being quenched beneath him, for it was growing late. "Bless my soul and body, what's this?"
He glanced his face into the church window for upwards of a minute, and when he took it away again, it was white as the marble font that gleamed within. Had Ralph Derrick seen a ghost, that he slipped down from that window still with such excessive precipitation, and stood beneath it with his hat off, wiping his cold brow? "Am I awake or dreaming?" murmured he, striking himself a sounding blow upon the chest. "Was the brandy at yonder so strong that it has drugged me? or has this moonlight, as some hold it does, been stealing away my wits? or has the subject of my thoughts suggested names of which I had believed no record survived?" Once more Ralph took his station at the window, and this time did not leave it until he had not only made himself master, although with pain and difficulty, of that part of the inscription which he arrested his attention, but had even transferred it as well as his position permitted, to his pocket-book, word for word:
IN MEMORY OF
FRANK MEADE, AGED 66,
AND
RACHEL, HIS WIFE, AGED 56,
DROWNED AT SEA, SEPT. 14, A.D. 1832.
AND ALSO OF
RALPH GAVESTONE, AGED 22,
WHO PERISHED IN THE SAME STORM.
Some sacred words were added, but they told them nothing more concerning those three persons, namely his lost wife's father and mother, and himself. Ralph Gavestone, *alias* Derrick, had been gazing upon his own memorial window, set up to commemorate his death more than thirty years ago!
Who had done it? And who the means? And how was it that he and the Meades were associated together upon yonder painted glass, and yet not she who was the only bond between them? Why was not the death of that sweet saint maid mentioned in a place so fitting to its record, and where its own unworthy name had found admittance—not the one which had stood upon passenger list of the *North Star*? Into his perplexed and wandering mind there came some half forgotten tale, heard from he knew not whom, of some Scotch laird who, gifted with the second-sight, perceives a funeral pass by—the coffins borne by some relatives of his, and followed by troops of mourning friends—and marvels that among the woeful crowd he does not recognize himself.

Surely, thinks he, he should be there, to show respect to the common friend departed, whom he must have known so well, though he misses no remembered face. Then on a sudden it strikes him that he himself must be in the coffin—that it is his own interment of which he is the witness—and his heart fails within him because he feels that he has had his warning, and stands indeed with the shadow of black death. Why Ralph should think of such a tale in such a place may perhaps have been easily accounted for, but once remembered he applied it with lightning speed to the subject in his mind, but only in an inverse sense. The reason why his Lucy's name was not upon that mystic monument, where those of her parents and her husband were glowing in purple and gold, must be that she herself was *alive*.
Nay, who upon earth could have wished thus piously to perpetuate their memory except Lucy herself? How she could of had the power to do so, in so splendid and enduring a manner would be of itself sufficiently miraculous, but that that circumstance was swallowed up, like Pharoah's serpents, by the still greater miracle—the fact that she was among the living!
For a moment of ecstasy seemed to possess this world-wearied Wanderer, and all the moonlit scene to assume an aspect altogether strange, such an earth and sea, however beautiful, can only show to the pure and hopeful; then a sharp thought pierced his brain. She might have been alive when she caused that window to be set up, and yet not now. He knew that those gorgeous eyes kept their bright colors for many a year undimmed: supposing that he allowed five years (in which, by the by, Ralph was very near the truth) as a reasonable time to have elapsed between the shipwreck and the time that this memorial was erected—and in less time, how was it possible she could have saved the money for such a purpose—that would still live more than quarter of a century between set erection and of the present time. A quarter of a century! Time enough to die, to marry—but no, his Lucy would never have done that. This window, showing so tender a regard after such a lapse of years, was evidence in some sort to the contrary; and since he himself had never forgotten her, and only now, after a lonely lifetime, was meditating another marriage, he felt no apprehension upon that score. No; if his Lucy was alive, she was still his; and free to welcome him as of old to her loving arms. The only question with which he had now any real concern was, whether he still lived? Henceforward it would be his whole business in the world to find this matter out. And first, she must certainly have been washed ashore alive; and somewhere in these parts. Who, then, so fit to give him information upon that point as old Jacob Forest who had lived in Coverton all his life, and at that time, in the very cottage on the beach where his nephew now resided? So Ralph Derrick (for, like every body else, we may still continue to call him so) took the path that he originally had intended to take after all, notwithstanding his marvellous discovery, and made straight for Jacob's dwelling on the hill; no longer with the intention of winning a bride, but of recovering a long-lost wife.
TO BE CONTINUED.

The Value of a Trade.

The old story of the uncertainty of riches and the importance of learning a trade is brought to mind by the following—Karl Frosten, the old nailmaker of Lubben, in Silesia, was a jolly, storytelling man, who sang at his work, and whose busy hammer made merry music.
Not far away lived Herr von Koben, a wealthy land owner, whose son, when not at school was wont to come to the nailer's, where he would sit by the fire and watch the bright sparks as they flew in showers from the ringing anvil.
"Come, Master Conrad," said the nailer one day, in a jolly mood; "why not set the world an example! Show them that the son of a rich man can learn a trade. Who knows but that it may profit you one of these days!"
The youth fell in with the humor of the thing; and pulling off his fine jacket he donned a leather apron, and went to the anvil. He was a bright, quick lad, and when he had once attempted to make a nail, he had a pride to make it well; and so it came to pass that ere long he could make shoe nails as deftly and as well as could old Koben.
Time passed on, and Herr von Koben died, leaving his great wealth to his son Conrad. A few years thereafter the armies of Frederick came sweeping all through Silesia, and Conrad's inheritance was gone. In poverty he wandered away towards the mountains of Bohemia until he came to a town where a host of shoemakers were at a stand for want of nails. Shoes were in great demand for the soldiers, and a great price was offered for nails. "Here," thought Conrad, "is my opportunity. Let us see how my trade will serve me."
And he told the shoemakers if they would help him to get a few more, he would make nails for them. They furnished him what was required, and he went at the work in earnest. He made better nails than had ever been made before in that section. He took apprentices, and enlarged his shop, and in time Von Koben's nails were demanded on both sides of the mountains. By slow but sure degrees he rose to opulence as a manufacturer, honored and respected as the founder of his own fortune. And it all came, as he was proud to tell his children in the after years, from his having learned a trade in his youth.

From the Cradle to the Grave.

An English generation on the march from the cradle to the grave is an instructive spectacle. Let us trace the physical fortune which any million of us may reasonably expect. The number, to begin with, is made up of 511,745 boys and 488,235 girls, a disproportion which by-and-by will be redressed by the undue mortality of the boys, and will be reversed before the close of the strange eventful history. More than a quarter of these children will die before they are five years old—in exact numbers, 141,387 boys and 121,795 girls. The two sexes are now nearly on a level. The next five years will be much less fatal. In the succeeding five years—from ten to fifteen—the mortality will be still further reduced. Indeed, for both sexes, this is the most healthy period of life; the death-rate, however, is lower for boys than for girls. There will be some advance in deaths in the next five years, and still more in the five which follow, but 634,045 will certainly enter on their twenty-sixth year. Before the next ten years are at an end, two-thirds of the women will have married. The deaths during that period will be 23,070 boys and 20,875 girls. There will be 27,134 will be caused by consumption. Between thirty-five and forty-five, a still larger death-toll will be paid, and little more than half the original band—i.e. exact number, 502,915—will enter on their forty-sixth year. Each succeeding ten years, up to seventy-five, will now be a downward course. At seventy-five, only 161,124 will remain to be struck down, and of these 122,559 will have perished by the 85th year of their age. The 28,565 that remain will soon lay down their burdens; and 2,153 of them will struggle out to a ninety-five, and 233 to be one hundred years old. At the age of one hundred and eighty years of the course, the last solitary life will flicker out. Such, then, is the average 14 of a million English men and women.

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Hypochondria	Tididity
Nervous Complaints	Exhaustion of the Skin
General Debility	Impaired Sight and Memory
Indigestion	Worms
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