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## A STATEMENT OF FACTS.

To put an end to many false reports and erroneous surmises, the following statement is printed, which will furnish all those who have heard of the melancholy story, with facts sufficient to establish the truth—a truth which, we are sorry to say, can not be established with impunity to the character of all those who may figure in the narrative.

In the autumn of 1855 and part of the following winter, Mr. D. became a guest in Mr. G.'s house. The guest and the host had been friends for nearly twenty years, and they were at that time doubly united by similar views on religious questions, which had to keep their ground not without contest.

Mr. D., who had always shown a kind concern in the welfare of his host's children, expressed much interest at this time in the education of Mr. G.'s eldest daughter,\* Dora, a young lady at that time sixteen years old. He wished himself to be her instructor, and particularly to give her lessons in the French language. To accomplish this, he made this arrangement:—that Dora's lessons should begin at four o'clock in the morning; but desired that her brother Herbert, a lad fourteen years old, should not get up till a quarter past five.† By this method there was an hour and a quarter's uninterrupted instruction for Dora, who, with some of the younger children, in the subsequent part of the day, used to meet Mr. D. in a small room set apart for his use.

It is to be observed, however, that this arrangement changed the established custom, as it had always been the habit of the brother to rise much earlier than his sister; and it was also a change in Mr. D.'s established habits, who never was remarkable for such early rising.

This went on for some time with no unusual incident, till Mr. D. began to complain of Herbert's "great unsubduedness and self-will." "This strong will of his," he said, "ought to be broken, or he would soon govern the house," &c. &c. These remarks did not at all accord with Mr. G.'s

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\* In a narrative of this sort, in which, even by circumlocution, it is scarcely possible to state the facts in decent language, it is better that ideal names should designate those who must be frequently mentioned.

† Thus as admitted by Mr. D., or half-past five as stated by Mr. G.

observation of his son's conduct, who had always appeared remarkably docile and obedient to his parents; but, nevertheless, supposing that the "unsubduedness" must be towards Mr. D., he rebuked Herbert as the occasion seemed to require, and that without inquiring or entering into details.

In November, 1855, Mr. G. left home for Glastonbury. On the Sunday during his absence, Mr. D. told Mrs. G. that he had something very serious to communicate to her about the children, that he had been dreadfully troubled, and thought he should have gone out of his mind; that he had had a conversation with them that morning, and hoped it might not be quite so bad as he feared; that he would tell her all another time. This communication was made to Mrs. G. as she was walking with him to chapel, Sunday, November, 1855.

In the after part of the day, Mrs. G. requested Mr. D. to explain himself. He then said he believed God had brought him into the house to discover what was going on there; that there was "impurity" (this was the word Mr. D. used) among the children, and that none were free from it, even from the eldest to the youngest. He then proceeded to state those detestable charges, of which more will be said presently. But after entering into these details, he told Mrs. G. there was no need of mentioning the matter to her husband. It might be said that he dealt with the children without Mr. G.'s knowing it, but that it was absolutely necessary "to save the family" (this was precisely his expression); that Herbert\* ought to leave the house forthwith; and for this object he wished to know whether Mrs. G. thought her husband might be induced to consent to Herbert's going to school, &c.

Mrs. G.'s reply was chiefly to this effect, that all this communication must be repeated without reserve to her husband—that the matter must be placed in his hands, and wait his decision.

On Mr. G.'s return from Glastonbury at the beginning of the week, Mr. D. requested to have a private interview with him, and then made such statements as we are fully persuaded it was never yet the destiny of any father to hear made of his children. Although for the completeness of this narrative those statements ought to be given here unreservedly, yet so inconceivably atrocious are they, so violently offensive not only to modesty, but so revolting also to minds not unaccustomed to free recitals, that we

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\* Either on this occasion or some other, when Mr. D. was urging on Mrs. G. the necessity of sending Herbert away, he gave as an instance of his iniquity, that he had made communications about his own father, "which were of that nature that Mr. D. was obliged to stop him, lest he should become like Ham when he exposed the wickedness of Noah."

We leave this delectable enigma, in language and in turn of the imagination so characteristic of the man, to the ingenuity of the reader for an explanation.

must be content to refer our readers to the minutes which were taken at the meeting for investigation at Bath, Feb. 4, 1857, where this matter will be found, and in all the unveiled odiousness of Mr. D.'s own words.

We doubt not that our readers will feel grateful to us for thus sparing their feelings.

It must, however, be stated that Herbert was described by Mr. D. as the chief offender, the *fons et origo mali*, the corruption of the family, the "sultan of the harem;" and in consequence of his supposed profligacy Mr. D. pressed anxiously on Herbert's father the necessity of sending him out of the house. He offered to defray the expense of his being at school, urged his immediate departure, and offered his rooms at "Howley Place" for him, until a school or suitable situation (he mentioned a land surveyor's office) could be found for him.\*

With what astonishment Mr. G. received these astounding criminations of his children it is more easy to conceive than to describe; but as he knew from all his domestic arrangements, and from his most intimate acquaintance with his children, that these things could not be true, as he was certain of their innocence, and knew that there was nothing in their ways and habits which if known to all the world could cast even a shade of suspicion on them, these accusations made no impression on him: he was convinced he had to deal with a slanderer, and asked Mr. D. for proofs of his accusation. The sort of proof adduced by Mr. D. is truly characteristic of the man. He said that "Dora had one morning, when they were all seated at the breakfast table, left the room to fetch a plate; that Herbert almost immediately afterwards took the opportunity of going out, and that he, Mr. D., *knew it was for purposes of iniquity.*" We veil the expression, for Mr. D.'s words, on occasions of this sort, will not bear reporting.

A girl goes out of the room to fetch a plate; her young brother, a lad of fourteen, soon after goes out too; and on this circumstance the calumniator founds his monstrous and diabolical charges!

Mr. D. added that Herbert was *very jealous* of him, and that he had shown it one evening as they were all "coming up the hill together." That one evening Mrs. G. was walking with him, whilst Dora and Herbert were walking together behind; that when they came to the steep part of the hill, Mr. D. said to Dora, "Come, Dora, as your mamma is here you may take

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\* There is proof of this suggestion of Mr. D. in a letter of his writing, addressed to Mr. G., January, 1856:—"If you had judged the evil yourself, or even let Herbert go, as was natural, to some employment, it would have been merely a parent's ordinary care, and nothing remarkable to any one. You preferred your own view of the case, and *discredited all I said.*"

my arm." She did so, and Herbert immediately *began to be uneasy*—complained of his flannel waistcoat, which he had put on that day, and showed irritability at having to wear it: that he, Mr. D., "*knew that the flannel had nothing to do with his uneasiness, but that it was jealousy, such as a man would feel towards another who he thought was supplanting him in his designs on a woman.*"

This is pretty good proof, at any rate, of what Mr. D. himself was thinking of; but, for the rest of this fair story, we may observe that it is not very surprising that a lad who on that day had put on his flannel waistcoat, and who was toiling up one of the steep hills of Bath, should feel somewhat uneasy, or even irritable, with the irritation of the warm vesture. Hot flannel *may* irritate a boy, and no great crime in that: Mr. D.'s irritation had probably some other origin. He added other stories about Herbert and the younger sisters, surmises of his, from the most trivial circumstances; but the details of which may be spared both for their frivolity and their odiousness. One of these accusations was about a little girl four years old! and it may be noticed that these anecdotes, with their vile inferences, he had already detailed to Mrs. G.

For three hours did Mr. G. listen with patience and calmness to all these accusations of his family; at the end of them he said to Mr. D., "that it was impossible for him to believe the charges he had made, and he felt convinced **THERE WAS SOMETHING BEHIND ALL THIS.**" Mr. D. lost his temper, and said it was useless in Mr. G. to attempt to exculpate his children, "for he had their own confessions to condemn them." At last the painful interview terminated, and Mr. G. retired to take notes of all that had passed. He lost no time in writing down the principal things Mr. D. had said.

After this Mr. D. left the house and took lodgings elsewhere. It was one of Mr. G.'s first objects to make enquiries of his children as to what had passed between them and Mr. D., and he found that "Mr. D. had used the opportunity of Dora's being with him at this early hour alone, to talk to her in a way which he, Mr. G., as a father, *could never have spoken to his daughter.* His communications were of a most improper character, suggestive of impurity and evil," and these "had been repeated over and over again." He used to tell her that he was anxious about her soul, and called it "dealing with her conscience." Herbert, also, he "dealt with" in the style of the confessional, and questioned him as to his "feelings of lust," but he never succeeded in obtaining that power over Herbert that he had gained over his sister, on the contrary, the boy, though not understanding the drift of the reverend confessor's "dealings," showed those marks of "unsubduedness," which doubtless suggested to Mr. D. the necessity of getting rid of

him without delay. It was as we have seen, with the object of exiling Herbert from the house, that Mr. D. first made his statement to the parents, and to this circumstance is owing that most providential rupture by which Mr. D. himself became the exile—a catastrophe which he had not anticipated.

We have now before us proofs of the foregoing statements, such as cannot be gainsaid, for they are proofs furnished by Mr. D.'s own letters. Mr. D. has indeed, subsequently, in the most public manner, denied that there are any grounds of accusation against the children—has professed absolute ignorance of all Mr. G.'s statements—and has, by his sign manual, asserted that these reports against Mr. G.'s children are “false and unfounded,” thereby implying that they are the invention of Mr. G. himself. The following letters, therefore, we trust will be very carefully perused, as there is scarcely a sentence in them which, either directly or indirectly, does not allude to the antecedent narrative, and confirm every part of it. We repeat it, that the truth of those circumstances which we have been describing is taken for granted in these letters: in the part of our narrative before us the bearing of Mr. D.'s remarks is clear and intelligible, without them, his letters would be unintelligible.

The following letter, according to the usual practice of the writer, is not dated, but it was received about the end of November, 1855. A blank has been left for those words which it has been impossible to decipher:—

“Last night I had quiet to think over the course I had pursued apart from the circumstances themselves. It is to me an unfeigned feeling of sorrow to be severed from the confiding affection of those dear children. This morning, when I awoke at four, I had no Dora to wake up; no Herbert to call; no being to force me out before daylight with the little ones to make their morning walk pleasant and cheerful to them; no little hearts, whose happiness and blessing I unfeignedly sought. I feel it is good for me, because, however genuine as it was, I am sure, as I often saw and said, nature found its account in it, as it was not always simply bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life of the Lord Jesus might be manifested in the mortal body.

“Besides, it ought to have been you rather than me; and this I have said to you, but you, at the times I was with you, were in bed. But after all, this is only an episode, and as water spilt upon the ground which cannot be gathered up again.

“But I come to the point of importance. I have in every relationship as a Christian ever felt that I respect God in respecting what he has established. You are the father of these children, and that place and its responsibilities, and its divine rights God has given you. I saw evil, hoped a word to conscience might suffice; saw it a habit so strong, that this influence was un-availing, and felt I ought to bring it before the parents, into whose hands God had confided their care.

“Hence it was impossible I could move through it as unconscious of it, or having nothing to say to it in my own conscience before God, as being in another's hands, and those concerned ignorant that I knew it. The result

was, after all that I had presented to you, that you deliberately determined to treat it as non-existent, and to cultivate habits which, if it did exist, were its sure sphere and nourishment.

"You were the parent, and I was going across God's ways if I interfered otherwise than speaking as a Christian with you. My hope fully is, that what has passed has broken and stopped the evil. But where was I, if moving within the scene, or knowing I was cognizant of it, where I had seen with my eyes and heard with my ears the utter present ruin of the susceptibilities of Herbert's conscience, and letting loose of his will, as led to slur over sin as rudeness?\* and if there was a recrudescence which would run altogether in moral tone body and soul that the parent, by his resolute determination and course, was the cause of it? It would have been insupportable and wrong to God and myself to have done so.

"I had, and Herbert knew I had, the things before my mind and eyes, some done after remonstrance, and (I do not speak with reference to you, dear G.) now I can, as outside, cast it all in grace on God, as a parent responsible to God alone, when pressed to the wall, appealing to your actions† in justification, in terms which left no doubt as to what was in him, and no little effect in my mind as to him. Your refusal to see anything forced me to pass and re-pass everything, to see what ground I had, and thus the facts became fixed in their real import in my spirit. Your letter was saying, I am uncommonly thankful, but I am determined to pursue the course of not assuming any evil, and giving full occasion to it. This was after I had suggested taking Herbert with me, so as to remove occasion and to change circumstances, and leave home happy as a resource and a . . . . ., without touching any delicate point. But it is now all over. I quite recognize the matter as in your own hands. You are their father; but then I feel, for that very reason, I must leave that responsibility in its entirety, and keep clear of touching the ground where in my own mind I think it wrong, and retire from the scene.

"You must not be surprised, therefore, if I am as absolute and as decided in my path as you are in yours, or think it any want of kindness. Those beloved children have a place in my heart which I hardly think, if I know myself, they could lose. My relationship towards them is perhaps truer and more healthful to them than it was before; indeed, what was so much nature and natural affection before has become towards them a much deeper feeling—it has been all useful to me through much sorrow.

"I never expect other people's feelings to be as deep about things as in many cases mine, though I do not usually display them. If I have seen faults in yourself, dear G., as a father, I have seen equal or greater in myself in other ways, and I carry them in grace to the same source of mercy and grace that my own have found forgiveness and the knowledge of divine love in. Only you must not be surprised when my conscience is engaged if I show as much absoluteness and determination in my path as I leave to you in yours. If the effect should be to make you think my fears groundless and my judgment all wrong, I can afford to be thought wrong if those I love are happy by it."

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\* The construction of this paragraph baffles any attempt at a more regular order of the words. Thus much, however, is manifest, and it is an extremely important point, that Mr. D. protests against *slurring over sin as rudeness* in any comment on Herbert's conduct. At the meeting for investigation we shall find him boldly asserting that it was only indecent romping, and not sin, that he noticed in the children.

† The word appears to have been written both "actions" and "antics," and we cannot determine which was the writer's meaning.



• *Second Letter: post mark, Dec, 28, 1855.*

“If it is any convenience to you, and you will trust your dear child to me, I can bring dear Dora back with me, and will take the best care I can of her. If you think it better to fetch her, I shall have no sort of displeasure (!) at your saying so, as I merely propose it to save a journey, as I am there\* (Cheltenham). Whatever is wisest will please me best. Perhaps it will do Mrs. G. good to take a trip. I am no great hand at escorting females, but will do my best, if it is any convenience to you.

“I feel anxious, as I am writing to you, to add a few words. I am more than ever convinced of what I said to you, that it is a critical time in your Christian history; God has given you, I do not doubt at all, a gift, and has blessed you, so that I should be doubly anxious, besides the affection I have for you, that all should be in the course of manifest blessing. My own conviction is, that (partly I do not doubt my duties as regards your children, but not altogether) you have been in a measure out of the flow of service for a certain length of time, though I believe it has been restored again in a measure, in which I heartily rejoice, but I do not insist on that now.

“God has all manner of ways and means of reaching us, and yet sustaining us, so as to put our soul through full exercise. Now I do not enter into the question of what I did. You blame my conduct; I hold my peace, inwardly astonished at yours, and there I leave it. But I think you must be conscious of this, that it brought out the strongest development of self-will and unsubduedness, at least no one else but yourself can doubt it. Now I cannot but see God is dealing with you in this, because in the very thing your heart, and I think your pride partly clung to, he is dealing with you. Now I must add here, that I do not doubt in the main your earnest desire for the blessing of your children, and that you have sought their good and laboured for it. But man is man. Job is celebrated for his patience, and his history is impatience; Moses for meekness, and they provoked his spirit, so that he spake unadvisedly with his lips. and was thus shut out of the land. Now I must tell you what I did not know before, and what was said by persons wholly ignorant of recent circumstances, and that has gone through channels, in one instance at least, you would be surprised at. You are held to be dreadfully severe with your children, and to have alienated them from you. One told me ‘his children all hate him.’ I only said ‘I do not think he has the gift of winning children;’ but certainly this is quite exaggerated. Another, ‘his children are thoroughly awed by him.’ These were quite different persons in different places. To you only have I spoken of it, save to modify or moderate one thought. Now I mention this that your ways as to them have attracted notice, a thing I was entirely ignorant of before—and I believe God chose me to hear now. But this I leave now.

“I am satisfied, that with an anxious fatherly care, which I fully owe, and making all allowance in the particular recent case for wounded feelings, yet before as to them, I have seen what seemed the breaking of their wills, the working of your own, for that is the one point I am on now. The children have been merely the occasion of showing it; and that the recent matters

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\* On this extraordinary proposition we have Mr. G.'s sentiments in the following words:—  
 “When I found that he was remaining in Bath, I took my eldest daughter to Cheltenham to stay for a time with Mrs. P. I shortly after learned that Mr. D. was going to Cheltenham, and meant to stay at Mr. P.'s himself; and, strange to say, I received a letter from him, requesting my permission to bring Dora back with him when he returned to Bath. No one will be surprised to learn that I immediately went to Cheltenham and fetched her home myself.”

have shown an unbrokenness of will, which God is dealing with, and bringing them to your conscience, and dealing with your whole condition by. There are times when God deals with us, and tries the whole nature by the most unlooked-for circumstances, when nobody thought of such a thing. I have no doubt he is doing so with you, and that he loves you as his child and servant. If you do not bend, he will exercise you farther, and bend you.

"You have your own judgment of the matter, and go your own way. God won't care for your judgment of it, and will go his own way, and break through your own will, if will it is. Use your will to break your will. If he pleases he will bless you, and has blessed you, where and whenever you have sought the good of your children; for I cannot doubt . . . and . . . (two of the children) are converted, and I quite hope dear Herbert is too: but then he won't let you off when your will is at work, for I speak of your children now, merely as the occasion when it is shown. He cannot let you . . . your way in circumstances, and keep your will. He will have inward breaking down before him. It is not keeping your children apart I complain of. If you thought right to exclude me from their affection to profess it yourself, though it would be loss to me, as to my feelings, I should in one sense rejoice, if I did not, should say 'I have not a word to say, he thinks it correct. I am not talking of your plans about them, but about your own position. All I hope is, you will weigh this before God, and see if you have not to get your soul into another condition before him, that blessing may freely flow. You may have partly done it. It is no outward course I look for, one way or another, but an inward work before God. You cannot think that the fostering your own will in anything, if blessed in others, would blind the judgment of other persons, or that of God.

"I beseech you to lay all this to heart, not resting in this particular or that, but judging the whole position of your soul before God as to it."

These fragments from other letters will show how Mr. D. persisted for some time in his first statements:—

"Perverse and bad habits came under my own cognizance. Seeing them persevered in by Herbert, after appealing to his conscience, I mentioned finally to you. You chose to hush it up, as regards his conscience, and wrote to me that you wished the kind of liberty, as innocency of manner. I must either thwart you, or remain in the house cognizant of and acquiescing in what I was perfectly satisfied was evil, and playing the hypocrite with the children. This I could not do—you never could get me to do; and therefore, when once I found you were determined so to do, I did not enter into it any more. Having cleared my own conscience by being away, I left all the rest to God, and there I leave it, thoroughly happy as to myself."

This was written about January, 1856.—As late as Feb. 5, 1856, he says in another letter:—

"Did I feel at liberty, I should warn you again and again as to Herbert. I do not mean now as to what is passed, which I do not touch; but as it is, I leave it there. You may be sure I have not an unkind feeling as to the dear boy."

To persons unacquainted with the peculiarities of this style of writing, the prototype of which is in the speeches and letters of Oliver Cromwell, the

larger portion of Mr. D.'s letters would be wholly unintelligible; for, besides the grotesque language in which Mr. D. invests his thoughts, it is his constant object to cast them in a mysterious form—a double enigma of perplexed sentences and disguised sentiments. One advantage certainly accrues to the author from this method of writing—that he is thereby able, if he should be so disposed, to evade a straightforward interpretation of his words; and it must be confessed that not unfrequently whole paragraphs of Mr. D.'s composition admit of no certain interpretation by the usual rules of grammar, or the proper construction of speech. With some this has an oracular effect, for as Mr. D. is generally supposed to be very deep in his thoughts, the depth is more admired when it is absolutely unfathomable; and indeed it is not a little to this faculty, the art of creating clouds, that he owes the strength of his dominion over his partizans. Their leader, like the sun in a fog, moves in a haze of mysteriousness, vouchsafing his full light only by fits and starts, and keeps them in a state of wonder at that brilliancy, of which they very rarely can catch a glimpse.

On the present occasion we will, however, endeavour to penetrate this writer's meaning through the haze that envelopes it.

The following passage in the second letter is important, but requires a paraphrase to be fully understood:—

“I do not enter into the question of what I did. You blame my conduct: I hold my peace, inwardly astonished at yours, and there I leave it; but I think you must be conscious of this, it brought out the strongest development of self-will and unsubduedness, at least no one else but yourself can doubt it. Now I cannot but see that God is dealing with you in this; because in this very thing your heart, and I think your pride, cling to, he is dealing with you.”

The paraphrase requisite seems to be this:—“You blame my conduct for laying these charges against your children, but on that subject I hold my peace, inwardly astonished at your presumptuous conduct in not submitting to my view of the case, in not believing my accusations, but on the contrary standing up to defend your children. I think, however, you must be conscious that this affair has brought out in you the strongest development of self-will, and of unsubduedness towards myself, who naturally expected from you an unhesitating adhesion to my opinions and submission to my wishes. No one but yourself—that is, no one of my followers and disciples but yourself—can doubt this. Now I cannot but see, in order to bring you into a humbler state of mind, God is dealing with you in this matter; He saw that you loved and esteemed your children, that you had a natural pride in their growing virtues and interesting characters, so he has in this very point

allowed you to be humbled in the character of your children, which was so dear to your parental heart."

He then goes on to inform him, that though he believes he, as an affectionate father, has earnestly desired the blessing of his children, and laboured for their good; yet some people hold him to be dreadfully severe with his children, and that his children hate him, &c., &c.

Now nobody could so fully and unhesitatingly have repelled and silenced these calumnies as Mr. D. himself, whose whole conduct in this narrative, and sentiments in these letters, show that, so far from finding fault with Mr. G. for severity to his children, he blamed him rather for remissness and indulgence. It was to this austere and formidable parent he had laid open an unsparing picture of the crimes of his children; but that severe father, instead of rising up in wrath to punish and repress those crimes, stands up as their defender, and shelters them with the shield of his affection. Was it excess of severity or of indulgence to allow the children, and especially the eldest daughter, to be with Mr. D. three hours every morning before the rest of the family were out of their beds? Does not the whole tenor of the narrative confute the charge of unnatural severity? Mr. D. knew, with an absolute knowledge, that it was a falsehood; but what did he do? In order to carry out "God's dealings"—that is, in order to strike another blow at his friend in his family relations—he held his peace when he ought to have spoken, and he tells us without circulocution that this was the course he pursued.

"I ONLY SAID I do not think he has the gift of winning children"—which, besides that it is a guilty silence where words were wanted, is, where words were not wanted, a covert stab of true Jesuitical dexterity. For who could not well understand that when Mr. D. heard these accusations, and did not repel them, but *only* added that gentle commentary, that he assented to the accusation, and even confirmed it in his peculiar way?

From this sickening scene of perfidious cant it is really instructive to turn to a heathen for better morals, and to remember his wise and celebrated words: "Fingere qui non visa potest—absentem qui rodit amicum—qui non defendit alio culpante. Hic niger est, hunc tu, Romane, caveto."

But we proceed with our narrative. When Mr. D. had left Mr. G.'s house and taken lodgings elsewhere, Mrs. G. after a time called on him, for the purpose of again entering on the matter with him, as she feared that Mr. D. was labouring under an aberration of intellect.

In this interview Mr. D. repeated the original charges against the children and showed a strange anxiety to convince Mrs. G. that her husband was

deluded\* in the whole matter; he added, "that it was with a cost he could not tell her how he had laboured to save her children from ruin," and he then read to her a letter professedly written to Mr. G., but never sent, which contained the criminatory matter to which we have already referred. Mrs. G. expressed to him calmly her conviction of the perfect innocence of the children, and that if the matter were investigated these cruel accusations would at once be disproved. Mr. D. became excited, and even violent, and ended with saying, "I would send this letter to any father in Bristol, and see if they would not come to the same conclusions as I have."

Thus, then, we have seen that Mr. D. first brought these odious charges against Mr. G.'s children to their mother; that he repeated them to their father in a long interview which he demanded for the express purpose; that he wrote letters about all that had taken place after he left the house—letters such as we have seen; that, in another interview with Mrs. G., he passionately repeated the charges, and even showed her a long letter detailing these charges, and which he had prepared for her husband. We shall now see what his next course was.

In January, 1856, Mr. G. repeatedly pressed Mr. D. to meet him in the presence of friends, that these accusations of his children might be examined; but this Mr. D. repeatedly refused, and in February set off to France. However, as rumours of an unpleasant nature were spread about, and caused much uneasiness in the minds of Mr. D.'s friends, it became at last requisite to institute some investigation; and after considerable difficulties, it was ultimately arranged that a meeting of inquiry should take place, which was effected on Feb. 4, 1857. At this meeting there were three friends of Mr. D.'s and three of Mr. G.'s, besides a chairman, supposed to be neutral, and another gentleman, not classed with either party.

Of this meeting it may be truly said that never was one convened more admirably calculated to obtain no results, and to throw still darker obscurity on matters which were already dark enough; for whilst Mr. D. knew perfectly well what he was about and what he had to do—whilst he, contrary to the plain requirements of the case and the decencies of justice, was allowed to sit "as one of the jury" (to use the words of one of his partisans)—nobody else present seemed to understand either the object or drift of the meeting, which was conducted with an imbecility and helplessness of which it would be difficult to find a parallel, and which ended with an absurdity perfectly in keeping with the preliminary investigation.

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\* In a letter of Mr. D., received Jan., 1856, he uses a stronger expression to Mr. G.:—"You have appeared what I may call *bewitched* in the whole matter."

Mr. G. at this meeting made his statements such as we have seen in this narrative, and particularly referred to that letter which Mr. D. had read to Mrs. G., as intended for him, but never received. He requested Mr. D. to read that letter. Mr. D. acknowledged that letter, but refused to produce it. "He was deeply grieved that imputations very sadly injurious were cast upon the children; these things had been grossly exaggerated, and he *felt too much for the children to read that paper.*"

The chairman pressed Mr. D. to read that letter, but he again refused. But why did the chairman not point out to Mr. D. that his own words were confuting himself. Ought he not to have said to this effect:—"You say these accusations have been grossly exaggerated; why, then, do you not read your letter which you had prepared for Mr. G., and which at once would show us what the true statements are? If your statements are not injurious to the children, why not read them? If you feel for the children, and know them to be innocent, how is it possible that your true statements can injure them? What you wrote to their father was, of course, the truth, and no exaggeration. We are sure it was nothing like these reports that are abroad; therefore, read your letter, and all will be cleared up."

But this the chairman said not; on the contrary, he afterwards affirmed there was no evidence to prove the declarations of either party, though this concealed letter, and the very act of concealing it, was proof sufficient.

After much conversation, Mr. G. was asked if he had any letters of Mr. D. referring to these charges; and, in consequence, he read extracts from several of the letters, but what these extracts were, and in what way they were made to bear on the question, is not stated in the minutes of the meeting. It does not appear that any one present made any observations on the extracts from Mr. D.'s letters, though, as we have seen, it required no great effort to extract from them superabundant proof of Mr. G.'s statements.

None of the investigators seemed to understand the nature of proof, nor how to avail themselves of the evidence within their reach. As for cross-examination of a witness, it never seemed to enter into their thoughts at all; nor did it ever strike any one of them as strange that the person who, of all others, ought himself to be in the dock, and to be submitted to a most rigorous sifting, was himself one of the jury, and one whose signature was required at the close of the meeting to authenticate their "grand result."

Though Mr. D. refused to answer Mr. G.'s statements, even on the invitation of the chairman, yet he did make some acknowledgments of a serious import. He confessed that he had explained what "lust" meant to Herbert (a very superfluous explanation, if the twentieth part of Mr. D.'s

charges was true), but he denied that he had explained what "lust" meant to Dora. Mr. G., however, pressed Mr. D. with the fact that he *had* used the word "lust" to his daughter, as applied to her feelings, and at last Mr. D. said "It was more than a year ago, and he *might* have used the word."\*

But here observe the astonishing quietness of the jury. It seemed to them quite sufficient to hear what Mr. D. might or might not be pleased to say, as if his word was all the evidence. We should like to know is not the testimony of the young lady herself, of her mother, and of her father worth something? The father and the mother affirm that "lust" was explained, and that abundantly, to their daughter. From her they have heard it, and they know that not once or twice only, these sort of "dealings with the conscience" took place. They affirm it. Mr. D. says either it is not true, or that he has forgot it; and this satisfies the jury and the chairman.

Mr. D. utterly denied "the extreme statements" that had got about in the reports, and said that it was only "indecent romping"† he had noticed in the children!!! He was quite willing to be thought ever so foolish, so that the character of the children might be cleared.

At last, after these fruitless labours, the chairman remarked "that there was the widest discrepancy, which could not be reconciled, between the statements that had come before them, and *no evidence* to sustain one side or the other," which ought to be read "no evidence *made use of* to sustain one side or the other."

In short, the chairman, whose leniency could not be mistaken, made a drawn game of it, by which no object was obtained.

The official result of the meeting, signed by all the jury, is seen in the following resolution:—"That having patiently investigated the charges *stated to have been made* against Mr. G.'s children, it appears that there is no ground whatever for the reports which have been circulated to their prejudice, Mr. D. himself distinctly stating that in his opinion any such reports are **ENTIRELY FALSE AND UNFOUNDED.**" This resolution is signed by Mr. D. himself.

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\* This acknowledgement was nevertheless superfluous, for we have the fact admitted in Mr. D.'s letter:—"I saw evil, hoped a word to conscience might suffice, saw it a habit so strong that this influence was unavailing, and felt I ought to bring it before the parents." This is a statement of what he did, in order of time: he first addressed the consciences of the children, and *afterwards* spoke to their parents.

† We have already seen what Mr. D. really thought on this subject in his first letter, and to that, with the note, we refer the reader.

If any of the jurors had pressed any point, they might have compared this statement with Mr. D.'s declaration that he had talked to Herbert about *lust*. Is "indecent romping" lust? How had Mr. D. got on such a subject with "romping" only for his text? This is one piece of evidence at least, but the chairman could not see it.

This then is the result of the investigation, that the children are perfectly innocent of all charges laid against them. *Who then has falsely accused them?* Not Mr. D., for he denies he ever brought any charges against them. The false accuser, therefore, must be Mr. G., who has been the calumniator of his own children! This is the inevitable corollary of the resolution, and this is the result of persons undertaking a task for which they have neither capacity nor moral firmness.

That Mr. D. should have played his last card thus, and have given so unexpected a turn to the meeting, does not surprise us at all, for we quite give him credit for all the boldness requisite for such a game, but that he should expect in this way to win it, and to come off finally victorious, is truly surprising; for, whatever his partizans may say, he cannot expect that any individual free of his mastery, will not understand the true state of the case. It must indeed be a desperate cause that has recourse to such a daring expedient, but he has made his choice and must abide by it. Independently of all the proof before us, we might say with confidence, that this consideration alone would settle the question. "Have the children been foully calumniated by their father or by Mr. D.? Has the father invented these accusations against his own children, or has Mr. D.?"

Let any rational person answer that question, we need not go further than this in our investigation.

We know that already a feeling is abroad that Mr. D.'s denial cannot be true. Even his own friends feel that it is too daring a treatment of the difficulty; and with this feeling, some of them are whispering that "Mr. D. really had seen evil in the children, but that he was anxious to screen them when the matter had, contrary to his wishes, become public." We anticipate that this excuse will be a good deal urged, for indeed what else can be urged in such a perplexity? But against this stands as an everlasting banner, those words to which Mr. D. himself has appended his signature—"That such reports are false and unfounded." To get rid of these words is impossible; whoever endeavours to do so is no friend of Mr. D.; for either these words are strictly true, or he is a *liar*—there is no other alternative.

The question now arises, how are we to interpret these extraordinary evils? for what object, and with what motive did Mr. D. fulminate those iniquitous accusations against Mr. G.'s family, accusations which he himself now declares were "false and unfounded." There can be but two solutions of this mystery: 1. Either that Mr. D. is insane, and like other mad persons, believes the phantasms of his disordered imagination; or, 2. That he had an ulterior design, which must be intelligible to the reader, without the need of particularly stating it.



For the first explanation we know there are several advocates, and that it is the opinion of many that Mr. D. labours under a monomania, which manifests itself in calumny and a belief of imaginary enemies and evil. There is, we confess, not a little in the history of this gentleman for the last few years, which might strengthen so melancholy a suspicion; and if Mr. D. had in this particular case followed the usual course of lunatics, we ourselves should be disposed to adopt this explanation of his conduct. But his actions have not in this case been those of a lunatic; *he has not adhered to his delusion*, but has shrunk from its responsibilities, and denied its existence as soon as it was brought to the test of a formal examination. This is not the conduct of an insane person. Lunatics invariably sustain the reality of their delusions; opposition only strengthens their belief, and confirms their determination to uphold it. A calumniator and a lunatic resemble one another closely in the mischief they accomplish, but differ materially in the moral motive, as their subsequent conduct manifests. The lunatic believes the representation of his disordered imagination, and acts upon that belief, though it may be a most dangerous hallucination: the calumniator provokes his imagination to invent the falsehood, and knowing it to be false, turns it to the best account he can. Hence, when the hour of retribution arrives, the lunatic adheres to the delusion, and affirms he was performing his duty; but the calumniator uses every shift to escape the consequences of his evil deeds, and hesitates not to deny his actions, if that may serve his turn.

Let these remarks be applied to the present case, and it will be acknowledged that we have good ground for rejecting this explanation of Mr. D.'s conduct.

There are, moreover, some other circumstances, apparently trivial in themselves, but which tend to fortify the mass of evidence. In May, 1856, when Mr. D. was on the Continent, he sent a sum of money to Mr. G. as a gift; but this Mr. G. refused to accept. Again Mr. D. sent another sum of money through his bankers, which was, of course, returned immediately. In the month of July, 1856, Mr. D. returned to England, and from the railway hotel at Bath sent a note to Mr. G., requesting to have an interview with him. To this request Mr. G. most incautiously acceded, and went to see Mr. D. unaccompanied by witnesses, and therefore wholly at the mercy of one whom no prudent person would care to meet alone. If it were possible to prove what took place at this meeting we should arrive at some important results, for Mr. D. made an acknowledgment, in his usual tortuous language, indeed, but intelligible enough, and tending to clear up the whole mystery. This, of course, he would now deny; and it would then be a question of the veracity of two witnesses contradicting one another; and

as Mr. G. already complains that Mr. D. has spread about "a most untruthful account of this interview," it is useless to say more on this incident. If Mr. G. has been misrepresented and injured, where, we would ask, was his prudence in committing himself to a private interview with such an antagonist? Could he reasonably expect any other result? Had he not had painful experience enough already to warn him against such a step? Was he not sure to come out with wounds from such an encounter?

After this a dispute arose in their chapel about discipline, a mere question of sect, foreign to our subject. Mr. D. made much of this dispute, and wrote to Mr. G. about it, as there was a difference of opinion between them on the subject. Mr. G. told Mr. D. that the question between them was his conduct about the children, and that he should not enter into another with him. He moreover wrote to him these very plain words, which at once come to the point, "that he had invented the accusations against his children as a cover to his own sin." To this Mr. D. made no reply; but a few days afterwards wrote to him about his eldest son in London expressing the greatest anxiety in his welfare, and offering to supply him with architectural books and other requisites. That young gentleman knew nothing of the distressing events which had taken place in his family, but he was immediately warned by a letter from his mother not to receive any books from Mr. D. In the interval, however, before his mother's letter arrived, the young gentleman had accepted a small present from Mr. D.; and this fact Mr. D. has turned to good account, as a proof that they were willing, notwithstanding all that had happened, to accept his benefits. To use Mr. G.'s own words, "I will leave any one to judge whether Mr. D.'s turning this fact into my receiving money from him, and then parading it among his friends, is a proof of innocence, when lying under such imputations as he does."

What judgment are we to pass on these additional circumstances? After the immeasurable wrong done to Mr. G. by the attack on the reputation of his children, Mr. D. sends money to their father! He does that twice, and it seems pretty clear that he supposed Mr. G. had accepted the first donation, otherwise he would not have transmitted the second. What an estimate do we here see of a father's feelings in this insult! What a thorough contempt, not only of his friend, but of mankind, to suppose that any decent person would receive money from the cruel hand that had done this mighty wrong. Mr. D. seems never to have doubted that it would be received, calculating apparently on the omnipotence and universality of the mercenary principle. If his money were accepted, we see to what account it would be turned—a parading of his own generosity, and a proof of the meanness and worthlessness of those people who were presuming to stand

forth as his accusers. In all this we behold the same man. He began with injuring the family; he finishes by endeavouring to humiliate them. His estimate of the injury is a pecuniary one. Take this money to cure your wounds and stop your mouth; but if you receive it, you are damaged as a witness. If you do not receive it, still I shall be known to be a generous benefactor; and as my partizans, in any question of wrong between myself and others, are sure to proclaim me the injured party, they will say, "How noble and generous, how Christian and forgiving, in dear Mr. D. to have offered assistance to those ungrateful wretches, who have *done him so much injury.*"

Thus have we accomplished our melancholy task, which, if it be the recital of a dark story, is to us most so in the evidence that it offers of the thralldom of superstition, that power which most unnerves and prostrates the human mind. It is by and through this power that all the details of this shocking narrative have their existence; for it is certain that no such events could have taken place, except in a position where there existed that dreadful and mysterious fascination of sectarian despotism. The relative position of religious ruler and subject must first be created, the mind must first be divested of its natural safeguard of common sense and reason—must first have been broken down into servile obedience and absolute subjugation, before the possibilities of such occurrences could exist. In what family, free from this fascination; would such a latitude have been conceded to any friend, however long tried and established in the confidence of the parents? But in cases like this, the answer would be: "Oh, it was our spiritual director whom we trusted; our teacher, our prophet, our angel, our oracle, our man of God." Then, when it is too late, the evil is discovered, and a conflagration of mischief is lighted, the end of which no one can foresee.

Look at those letters we have printed, see there how every line describes the awfulness of this despotism. How astonished the director is to find his views contradicted or his opinion called in question! how he speaks as if he knew the coming judgments, "the dealings of God," the point to which they would be directed, and the object and reason of their mission. The director writes as if he were sure to carry his point—he does not doubt it all; as if a contrary supposition were almost impossible. In fifty cases before, doubtless, he had carried his point in breaking down the will of incipient rebels, and always with that style of language which, though to spectators out of the aids of delusion, may appear inexpressively ridiculous and offensive, is, alas! quite otherwise to those unhappy persons who have made a sacrifice of their understanding to a theological mesmerist.

Those obscure, uncouth, ungrammatical, and tortuous sentences which

only excite our contempt, enter into the very bones of the victims, and paralyze them in all their inner man. In vain is it in such cases to appeal to right reasons, to morals, to clear logic, to mathematical proof—they can neither see nor hear but as the mesmerist chooses—the most afflicting spectacle beneath the sun! Many are the instances of this delusion we have seen. If it be terrible to behold an innocent nightingale drawn down from its nest of love and harmony by the fascination of a rattle-snake, and, bewitched by those baleful eyes, gradually descend into the dragon's jaws, far more afflicting is it to behold men of courage, honour, and nobility of sentiment (such as they once were) gradually divest themselves of all that was high-minded, frank, and generous, and yield piecemeal their understanding, their integrity, their best principles, and their distinctive virtues into the hands of a spiritual director; to see with his eyes and hear with his ears, adopt his sentiments, his passions, his hatreds, and his malignity; to fight his battles, sustain his strife, inoculate themselves with his bigotry, and identify themselves with his aberrations of mind and spirit—in one word, become his most submissive and well-cudgelled spaniels. And alas! we have seen victims of such superior minds, birth, and education—men of such unfeigned piety and sincerity of purpose, fall within this sort of fascination, that we know not who may be considered safe from it, nor can we point out any sure method for avoiding it, except by the exposure of the snare.

In the meantime, wherever an escape is effected, let us be thankful. Let us be thankful whenever the affections and duties of the family are too strong for sectarian despotism, and ultimately cast it off; and let us hope that examples of this sort may be useful warnings to those who are yet free, but have not yet fully comprehended the inestimable value of their liberty.

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## APPENDIX.

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*Copy of a letter as it relates to the meeting of investigation.*

..... "THE reported reports were not accusations expressed by Mr. D. against the children—he never made any, save to the father or mother—but reports *spread abroad by Mr. G.*, and through his means: reports which Mr. D. first heard at the meeting, and denied the truth of, and signed the testimonials in common with the rest. He was one of the jury, and not the prisoner. The meeting was got up entirely by Mr. G., and he asked whom he liked, and shut out at least one who wished to be there, and distinctly refused the brethren to judge the case. Mr. —, the chairman, is *an old pious friend of mine*—a judge from India, a Church of England Christian, and a perfect man of business. He utterly rejected H.'s proposition," ..... &c.

This letter, dated May 27, 1857, is signed G. V. W.

This letter is of importance as showing the result of the meeting, and what it has accomplished. The writer informs us, as if he believed it, that Mr. D. first heard of the reports against the children at the meeting, and that they had been spread abroad by Mr. G. himself, so that the father had defamed his own children.

This, as we have already pointed out, is the fair corollary of that resolution which the investigators signed; and though such a corollary is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the resolution—proving its senselessness—yet it nevertheless affords a handle to unscrupulous persons to lay hold of, and to make such assertions as we here see.

G. V. W. seems hard to please. He finds great fault with the structure of the meeting, although he is fully satisfied with its results, of which he avails himself liberally in describing what they did. But how could the meeting have been better constructed, even by G. V. W. himself? He had his "old pious friend" in the chair, and that friend a judge; he had three avowed and selected friends of Mr. D. on the jury, so that with the leanings of the chairman (of which, if we are to believe this letter, there could be little doubt) a majority in favour of Mr. D. was *certain*. We should be sorry indeed to consider any fact proved by the mere assertion of the writer of this letter; but "utter rejection" of *any* proposition sounds far more like the act of a partisan than is expected to manifest itself in such circumstances. Calm impartiality is usually considered a primary requisite in undertaking a duty

of this sort; strong expressed feelings and utter rejections are scarcely in harmony with this requisite.

The other assertions about the formation of the jury are not true, nor can we imagine what more G. V. W. would have than what he has already obtained. Often and often Mr. G. had wished the case to be examined, but without success. Who, then, are "the brethren" to whom this case ought to have been submitted for judgment? Are they brethren of the coif, sergeants-at-law? or are they, peradventure, some sect with which G. V. W. may be affiliated?—some fold of select lambs with sharp teeth—some close and spiteful party, nursing in obscurity the passions and animosities of its own little dark world, and calling itself "the brethren," the dear family of light and love?

Wherever men of honour and probity are to be found, there can be no lack of proper materials for an investigation like this, which turns mainly on a question of facts, bearing on the honour of a family, and the slandered characters of innocent persons. There is no need of an areopagus of especial illuminati "Brethren," of a choice sect, to confound a plain case with their party intrigues. Truth can be best elicited by common honesty. If this whole case were submitted to the searching investigation of a committee of upright and honourable men, wholly indifferent to Mr. D. or Mr. G., and perfectly clear of all sectarian influence, we have no doubt of the result, which would be something very different indeed from the labours of that inept meeting of February, with which G. V. W. had better rest content.

For the very reason that *we* are so little content with it, we have printed these pages, to furnish evidence for others to form a correct judgment on a subject much perplexed and misrepresented.

The rest of G. V. W.'s letter not bearing on this particular subject, we omit for the present. It is in that writer's most objectionable style. But another opportunity may occur for giving it a thorough examination, when it will not be forgotten.

