THE WOMAN IN WHITE.

TART THE SECOND. HARTFIGHT’S NARRATIVE.

Thus far, the information which I had received from Mrs. Clements—though it established facts of which I had not previously been aware—was of a preliminary character only. It was clear that the series of deceptions which had removed Anne Catherick to London and separated her from Mrs. Clements, had been accomplished solely by Count Fosso and the Countess; and the question whether any part of the conduct of husband or wife had been of a kind to place either of them within reach of the law, might be well worthy of future consideration. But the purpose I had now in view led me in another direction than this. The immediate object of my visit to Mrs. Clements was to make some approach at least to the discovery of Sir Percival’s secret; and she had said nothing, as yet, which advanced me on my way to that important end. I felt the necessity of trying to awaken her recollections of other times, persons, and events, than those on which her memory had hitherto been employed; and, when I next spoke, I spoke with that object indirectly in view.

“I wish I could be of any help to you in this sad calamity,” I said. “All I can do is to feel heartily for your distress. If Anne had been your own child, Mrs. Clements, you could have shown her no truer kindness—you could have made no reader sacrifices for her sake.”

“There’s no great merit in that, sir,” said Mrs. Clements, simply. “The poor thing was as good as my own child to me. I nursed her from a baby, sir; bringing her up by hand—and a hard job it was to rear her. It wouldn’t go to my heart so to lose her, if I hadn’t made her first short-clothes, and taught her to walk. I always said she was sent to console me for never having chick or child of my own. And now she’s lost, the old times keep coming back to my mind; and, even at my age, I can’t help crying about her—I can’t indeed, sir!”

“I waited a little to give Mrs. Clements time to compose herself. Was the light that I had been looking for so long, now glimmering on me—far off, as yet—in the good woman’s recollections of Anne’s early life?”

“Did you know Mrs. Catherick before Anne was born?” I asked.

“Not very long, sir—not above four months. We saw a great deal of each other in that time, but we were never very friendly together.”

Her voice was steadier as she made that reply. Painful as many of her recollections might be, I observed that it was, unconsciously, a relief to her mind to revert to the dimly-seen troubles of the past, after dwelling so long on the vivid sorrows of the present.

“Were you and Mrs. Catherick neighbours?” I inquired, leading her memory on, as encouragingly as I could.

“Yes, sir—neighbours at Old Wellingham.”

“Old Wellingham? There are two places of that name, then, in Hampshire?”

“Well, sir, there used to be in those days—better than three-and-twenty years ago. They built a new town about two miles off, convenient to the river—and Old Wellingham, which was never much more than a village, got in time to be deserted. The new town is the place they call Wellingham, now—but the old parish church is the parish church still. It stands by itself, with the houses pulled down, or gone to ruin, all round it. I’ve lived to see sad changes. It was a pleasant, pretty place in my time.”

“Did you live there before your marriage, Mrs. Clements?”

“No, sir—I’m a Norfolk woman. It wasn’t the place my husband belonged to, either. He was from Grimsby, as I told you; and he served his apprenticeship there. But having friends down south, and hearing of an opening, he got into business at Southampton. It was in a small way, but he made enough for a plain man to retire on, and settled at Old Wellingham. I went there with him, when he married me. We were neither of us young; but we lived very happy together—happier than our neighbour, Mr. Catherick, lived along with his wife, when they came to Old Wellingham, a year or two afterwards.”

“Was your husband acquainted with them before that?”

“With Catherick, sir—not with his wife. She was a stranger to both of us. Some gentlemen had made interest for Catherick; and he got the situation of clerk at Wellingham church, which was the reason of his coming to settle in our neighbourhood. He brought his newly-married wife along with him; and we heard, in course of time, she had been lady’s maid in a great family that lived at Varneck Hall, near
Southampton. Catherick had found it a hard matter to get her to marry him—in consequence of her holding herself uncommonly high. He had asked and asked, and given the thing up at last, seeing she was so contrary about it. When he had given it up, she turned contrary, just the other way, and came to him of her own accord, without rhyme or reason seemingly. My poor husband always said that was the time to have given her a lesson. But Catherick was too fond of her to do anything of the sort; he never checked her, either before they were married or after. He was a quick man in his feelings, letting them carry him a deal too far, now in one way, and now in another; and he would have spoilt a better wife than Mrs. Catherick, if a better had married him. I don’t like to speak ill of any one, sir—but she was a heartless woman, with a terrible will of her own; fond of foolish admiration—and fine clothes, and not caring to show so much as decent outward respect to Catherick, kindly as he always treated her. My husband said he thought things would turn out badly, when they first came to live near us; and his words proved true. Before they had been quite four months in our neighbourhood, there was a dreadful scandal and a miserable break-up in their household. Both of them were in fault—I am afraid both of them were equally in fault.”

“You mean both husband and wife?”

“Oh, no, sir! I don’t mean Catherick—he was only to be pitied. I meant his wife, and the person—”

“And the person who caused the scandal?”

“Yes, sir. A gentleman born and brought up, who ought to have set a better example. You know him, sir—and my poor, dear Anne knew him, only too well.”

“Sir Pereivall Glyde?”

“Yes. Sir Pereivall Glyde.”

My heart beat fast—I thought I had my hand on the clue. How little I knew, then, of the windings of the labyrinth which were still to mislead me!

“Did Sir Pereivall live in your neighbourhood at that time?” I asked.

“No, sir. He came among us as a stranger. His father had died, not long before, in foreign parts. I remember he was in mourning. He put up at the little inn on the river (they have pulled it down since that time), where gentlemen used to go to fish. He wasn’t much noticed when he first came—it was a common thing enough for gentlemen to travel, from all parts of England, to fish in our river.”

“Did he make his appearance in the village before Anne was born?”

“Yes, sir. Anne was born in the June month of eighteen hundred and twenty-seven—and I think he came at the end of April, or the beginning of May.”

“Came as a stranger to all of you? A stranger to Mrs. Catherick, as well as to the rest of the neighbours?”

“So we thought at first, sir. But when the scandal broke out, nobody believed they were strangers. I remember how it happened, as well as if it was yesterday. Catherick came into our garden one night, and woke us with throwing up a handful of gravel from the walk, at our window. I heard him beg my husband, for the Lord’s sake, to come down and speak to him. They were a long time together talking in the porch. When my husband came back upstairs, he was all of a tremble. He sat down on the side of the bed, and he says to me, ‘Lizzie! I always told you that woman was a bad one; I always said she would end ill—and I’m afraid, in my own mind, that the end has come already. Catherick has found a lot of lace handkerchiefs, and two fine rings, and a new gold watch and chain, hid away in his wife’s drawer—things that nobody but a born lady ought ever to have—and his wife won’t say how she came by them.’”

“Does he think she stole them?” says I. “No,” says he, “stealing would be bad enough. But it’s worse than that—she’s had no chance of stealing such things as these, and she’s not a woman to take them, if she had. They’re gifts, Lizzie—there’s her own initials engraved inside the watch—and Catherick has seen her, talking privately, and carrying on as no married woman should, with that gentleman in mourning—Sir Pereivall Glyde. Don’t you say anything about it—I’ve quieted Catherick for tonight. I’ve told him to keep his tongue to himself, and his eyes and his ears open, and to wait a day or two, till he can be quite certain. ‘I believe you are both of you wrong,” says I. “It’s not in nature, comfortable and respectable as she is here, that Mrs. Catherick should take up with a chance stranger like Sir Pereivall Glyde.” “Ay, but is he a stranger to her?” says my husband. “You forget how Catherick’s wife came to marry him. She went to him of her own accord, after saying No, over and over again, when he asked her. There have been wicked women, before her time, Lizzie, who have used honest men who loved them as a means of saving their characters—and I’m solemnly afraid the Mrs. Catherick is as wicked as the worst of them. We shall see,” says my husband, “we shall soon see.” And only two days afterwards, we did see.”

Mrs. Clements waited for a moment, before she went on. Even in that moment, I began to doubt whether the clue that I thought I had found was really leading me to the central mystery of the labyrinth, after all. Was this common, too common, story of a man’s treachery and a woman’s frailty the key to a secret which had been the life-long terror of Sir Pereivall Glyde?

“Well, sir, Catherick took my husband’s advice, and waited,” Mrs. Clements continued. “And, as I told you, he hadn’t long to wait. On the second day, he found his wife and Sir Pereivall whispering together, quite familiar, close under the vestry of the church. I suppose they thought the neighbourhood of the vestry was the last place in the world where anybody would think of looking after them—but, however that may be, there they were. Sir Pereivall, being
seemingly surprised and confounded, defended himself in such a guilty way, that poor Cath-
ericke (whose quick temper I have told you of already) fell into a kind of frenzy at his own
disgrace, and struck Sir Percival. He was no match (and I am sorry to say it) for the man
who had wronged him—and he was beaten in the cruellest manner, before the neighbours, who
had come to the place on hearing the disturbance, could run in to part them. All this hap-
pened towards evening; and, before nightfall, when my husband went to Cathericke’s house, he
was gone, nobody knew where. No living soul in the village ever saw him again. He knew too
well, by that time, what his wife’s vile reason had been for marrying him: and he felt his
misery and disgrace—especially after what had happened to him with Sir Percival—too keenly.
The clergyman of the parish put an adver-
sitement in the paper, begging him to come
back, and saying that he should not lose his
situation or his friends. But Cathericke had too
much pride and spirit, as some people said—too
much feeling, as I think, sir—to face his neigh-
bours again, and try to live down the memory
of his disgrace. My husband heard from him,
when he had left England; and heard a second
time, when he was settled, and doing well, in
America. He is alive there now, as far as I
know; but none of us in the old country—his
wicked wife least of all—are ever likely to set
eyes on him again.”

“Did he stay in the neighbourhood?” I inquired.

“No, he, sir. The place was too hot to hold him.
He was heard at high words with Mrs. Cathericke,
the same night when the scandal broke out—and
the next morning he took himself off.”

“And Mrs. Cathericke? Surely she never
remained in the village, among the people
who knew of her disgrace?”

“She did, sir. She was hard enough and
heartless enough to set the opinions of all her
neighbours at defiance. She declared to
everybody, from the clergyman downwards, that
she was the victim of a dreadful mistake, and
that all the scandal-mongers in the place should
not drive her out of it as if she was a guilty
woman. All through my time, she lived at Old
Welmington; and, after my time, when the
new town was building, and the respectable
neighbours began moving to it, she moved too,
as if she was determined to live among them
and scandalise them to the very last. There
she is now, and there she will stop, in defiance
of the best of them, to her dying day.”

“But how has she lived, through all these
years?” I asked. “Was her husband able and
willing to help her?”

“Both able and willing, sir,” said Mrs. Cle-
ments. “In the second letter he wrote to my
good man, he said she had borne his name, and
lived in his home, and, wicked as she was, she
must not starve like a beggar in the street. He
could afford to make her some small allowance,
and she might draw for it quarterly, at a place
in London.”

“Did she accept the allowance?”

“Not a farthing of it, sir. She said she
would never be beholden to Cathericke for bit or
drop, if she lived to be a hundred. And she
has kept her word ever since. When my poor
dear husband died, and left all to me, Cathericke’s
letter was put in my possession with the other
things—and I told her to let me know if she
was ever in want. ‘I’ll let all England know
I’m in want,’ she said, ‘before I tell Cathericke,
or any friend of Cathericke’s. Take that for
your answer—and give it to him for an answer,
if he ever writes again.’”

“Do you suppose that she had money of her
own?”

“Very little, if any, sir. It was said, and
said truly, I am afraid, that her means of living
came privately from Sir Percival Glyde.”

After that last reply, I waited a little, to re-
consider what I had heard. If I unreservedly
accepted the story so far, it was now plain that
no approach, direct or indirect, to the Secret
had yet been revealed to me, and that the pur-
suit of my object had ended again in leaving me
to face with the most palpable and the most
dishartening failure.

But there was one point in the narrative which
made me doubt the propriety of accepting it un-
reservedly, and which suggested the idea of
something hidden below the surface.

I could not account to myself for the circum-
stance of the clerk’s guilty wife voluntarily living
out all her after-existence on the scene of her dis-
grace. The woman’s own reported statement that
she had taken this strange course as a practical
assertion of her innocence, did not satisfy me. It
seemed, to my mind, more natural and more
probable to assume that she was not so com-
pletely a free agent in this matter as she had
herself asserted. In that case, who was the
likeliest person to possess the power of compel-
ing her to remain at Welmington? The per-
son unquestionably from whom she derived the
means of living. She had refused assistance from
her husband, she had no adequate resources of
her own, she was a friendless, disgraced woman:
from what source should she derive help but
from the source at which report pointed—Sir
Percival Glyde?

Reasoning on these assumptions, and always
bearing in mind the one certain fact to guide
me, that Mrs. Cathericke was in possession of the
Secret, I easily understood that it was SirPer-
cival’s interest to keep her at Welmington, be-
cause her character in that place was certain to
isolate her from all communication with female
neighbours, and to allow her no opportunities of
talking incisantly, in moments of free inter-
course with inquisitive bosom friends. But
what was the mystery to be concealed? Not
Sir Percival’s infamous connexion with Mrs.
Cathericke’s disgrace—for the neighbours were
the very people who knew of it. Not the sus-
picion that he was Anne’s father—for Welm-
ington was the place in which that suspicion must
inevitably exist. If I accepted the guilty ap-
pearsances described to me, as unreservedly as others had accepted them; if I drew from them the same superficial conclusion which Mr. Catherrick and all his neighbours had drawn—where was the suggestion, in all that I had heard, of a dangerous secret between Sir Percival and Mrs. Catherrick, which had been kept hidden from that time to this?

And yet, in those stolen meetings, in those familiar whisperings between the clerk's wife and “the gentleman in mourning,” the clue to discovery existed beyond a doubt.

Was it possible that appearances, in this case, had pointed one way, while the truth lay, all the while, unsuspected, in another direction? Could Mrs. Catherrick's assertion that she was the victim of a dreadful mistake, by any possibility be true? Or, assuming it to be false, could the conclusion which associated Sir Percival with her guilt have been founded in some inconceivable error? Had Sir Percival, by any chance, courted the suspicion that was wrong, for the sake of diverting from himself some other suspicion that might be right? Here, if I could find it—here was the approach to the Secret, hidden deep under the surface of the apparently unpromising story which I had just heard.

My next questions were now directed to the one object of ascertaining whether Mr. Catherrick had, or had not, arrived truly at the conviction of his wife's misconduct. The answers I received from Mrs. Clements, left me in no doubt whatever on that point. Mrs. Catherrick had, on the clearest evidence, compromised her reputation, while a single woman, with some person unknown; and had married to save her character. It had been positively ascertained, by calculations of time and place into which I need not enter particularly, that the daughter who bore her husband's name was not her husband's child.

The next object of inquiry, whether it was equally certain that Sir Percival must have been the father of Anne, was beset by far greater difficulties. I was in no position to try the probabilities on one side or on the other, in this instance, by any better test than the test of personal resemblance.

“I suppose you often saw Sir Percival, when he was in your village?” I said.

“Yes, sir—very often,” replied Mrs. Clements.

“Did you ever observe that Anne was like him?”

“She was not at all like him, sir.”

“Was she like her mother, then?”

“Not like her mother, either, sir. Mrs. Catherrick was dark, and full in the face.”

Not like her mother, and not like her (supposed) father. I knew that the test by personal resemblance was not to be implicitly trusted—but, on the other hand, it was not to be altogether rejected on that account. Was it possible to strengthen the evidence, by discovering any conclusive facts in relation to the lives of Mrs. Catherrick and Sir Percival, before they either of them appeared at Old Welmingham? When I asked my next questions, I put them with this view.

“When Sir Percival first appeared in your neighbourhood,” I said, “did you hear where he had come from last?”

“No, sir. Some said from Blackwater Park, and some said from Scotland—but nobody knew.”

“Was Mrs. Catherrick living in service at Varneck Hall, immediately before her marriage?”

“Yes, sir.”

“And had she been long in her place?”

“Three or four years, sir; I am not quite certain which.”

“Did you ever hear the name of the gentleman to whom Varneck Hall belonged at that time?”

“Yes, sir. His name was Major Dountorne.”

“Did Mr. Catherrick, or did any one else you knew, ever hear that Sir Percival was a friend of Major Dountorne's, or ever see Sir Percival in the neighbourhood of Varneck Hall?”

“Catherrick never did, sir, that I can remember—nor any one else, either, that I know of.”

I noted down Major Dountorne's name and address, on the chance that he might still be alive, and that it might be useful, at some future time, to apply to him. Meanwhile, the impression on my mind was now decidedly adverse to the opinion that Sir Percival was Anne's father, and decidedly favourable to the conclusion that the secret of his stolen interviews with Mrs. Catherrick was entirely unconnected with the disgrace which the woman had inflicted on her husband's good name. I could think of no further inquiries which I might make to strengthen this impression—I could only encourage Mrs. Clements to speak next of Anne's early days, and watch for any chance-suggestion which might in this way offer itself to me.

“I have not heard yet,” I said, “how the poor child, born in all this sin and misery, came to be trusted, Mrs. Clements, to your care.”

“There was nobody else, sir, to take the little helpless creature in hand,” replied Mrs. Clements. “The wicked mother seemed to hate it—as if the poor baby was in fault—from the day it was born. My heart was heavy for the child; and I made the offer to bring it up as tenderly as if it was my own.”

“Did Anne remain entirely under your care, from that time?”

“Not quite entirely, sir. Mrs. Catherrick had her whims and fancies about it, at times; and used now and then to lay claim to the child, as if she wanted to spite me for bringing it up. But these fits of hers never lasted for long. Poor little Anne was always returned to me, and was always glad to get back—though she led a gloomy life in my house, having no playmates, like other children, to brighten her up. Our longest separation was when her mother took her to Limmeridge. Just at that time, I lost my husband; and I felt it was as well, in that miserable affliction, that Anne should...
not be in the house. She was between ten and eleven year old, then; slow at her lessons, poor soul, and not so cheerful as other children—but as pretty a little girl to look at as you would wish to see. I waited at home till her mother brought her back; and then I made the offer to take her with me to London—the truth being, sir, that I could not find it in my heart to stop at Old Welmingham, after my husband’s death, the place was so changed and so dismal to me."

"And did Mrs. Catherick consent to your proposal?"

"No, sir. She came back from the north, harder and bitterer than ever. Folks did say that she had been obliged to ask Sir Percival’s leave to go, to begin with; and that she only went to nurse her dying sister at Limmeridge because the poor woman was reported to have saved money—the truth being that she hardly left enough to bury her. These things may have soured Mrs. Catherick, likely enough—but, however that may be, she wouldn’t hear of my taking the child away. She seemed to like distressing us both by parting us. All I could do was to give Anne my direction, and to tell her, privately, if she was ever in trouble, to come to me. But years passed before she was free to come. I never saw her again, poor soul, till the night she escaped from the madhouse."

"You know, Mrs. Clements, why Sir Percival Glyde shut her up?"

"I only know what Anne herself told me, sir. The poor thing used to ramble and wander about it, sadly. She said her mother had got some secret of Sir Percival’s to keep, and had let it out to her, long after I left Hampshire—and when Sir Percival found she knew it, he shut her up. But she never could say what it was, when I asked her. All she could tell me was that her mother might be the ruin and destruction of Sir Percival, if she chose. Mrs. Catherick may have let out just as much as that, and no more. I’m next to certain I should have heard the whole truth from Anne, if she had really known it, as she pretended to do—and as she very likely fancied she did, poor soul."

This idea had more than once occurred to my own mind. I had already told Marian that I doubted whether Laura was really on the point of making any important discovery when she and Anne Catherick were disturbed by Count Fosco at the boat-house. It was perfectly in character with Anne’s mental affliction that she should assume an absolute knowledge of the Secret on no better grounds than vague suspicion, derived from hints which her mother had incantiously let drop in her presence. Sir Percival’s guilty distrust would, in that case, infallibly inspire him with the false idea that Anne knew all from her mother, just as it had afterwards in his mind the equally false suspicion that his wife knew all from Anne. The time was passing; the morning was wearing away. It was doubtful, if I stayed longer, whether I should hear anything more from Mrs. Clements that would be at all useful to my purpose. I had already discovered those local and family particulars, in relation to Mrs. Catherick, of which I had been in search; and I had arrived at certain conclusions, entirely new to me, which might immensely assist in directing the course of my future proceedings. I rose to take my leave, and to thank Mrs. Clements for the friendly readiness she had shown in affording me information.

"I am afraid you must have thought me very inquisitive," I said. "I have troubled you with more questions than many people would have cared to answer."

"You are heartily welcome, sir, to anything I can tell you," answered Mrs. Clements. She stopped, and looked at me wistfully. "But I do wish," said the poor woman, "you could have told me a little more about Anne, sir. I thought I saw something in your face, when you came in, which looked as if you could. You can’t think how hard it is not even to know whether she’s living or dead. I could bear it better, if I was only certain. You said you never expected we should see her alive again. Do you know, sir?—do you know for truth—that it has pleased God to take her?"

I was not proof against this appeal; it would have been unspeakably mean and cruel of me if I had resisted it.

"I am afraid there is no doubt of the truth," I answered, gently; "I have the certainty, in my own mind, that her troubles in this world are over."

The poor woman dropped into her chair, and hid her face from me. "Oh, sir," she said, "how do you know it? Who can have told you?"

"No one has told me, Mrs. Clements. But I have reasons for feeling sure of it—reasons which I promise you shall know, as soon as I can safely explain them. I am certain she was not neglected in her last moments; I am certain the heart-complaint, from which she suffered so sadly, was the true cause of her death. You shall feel as sure of this as I do, soon—you shall know, before long, that she is buried in a quiet country churchyard; in a pretty, peaceful place, which you might have chosen for her yourself."

"Dead!" said Mrs. Clements; "dead so young—and I am left to bear it! I made her first short frocks. I taught her to walk. The first time she ever said, Mother, she said it to me—and, now, I am left, and Anne is taken! Did you say, sir," said the poor woman, removing the handkerchief from her face, and looking up at me for the first time—"did you say that she had been nicely buried? Was it the sort of funeral she might have had, if she had really been my own child?"

I assured her that it was. She seemed to take an inexplicable pride in my answer—to find a comfort in it, which no other and higher considerations could afford. "It would have broken my heart," she said, simply, "if Anne had not been nicely buried—but, how do you know it, sir? who told you?" I once more entreated..."
her to wait until I could speak to her more unreservedly. "You are sure to see me again," I said; "for I have a favour to ask, when you are a little more composed—perhaps in a day or two."

"Don't keep it waiting, sir, on my account," said Mrs. Clements. "Never mind my crying, if I can be of use. If you have anything on your mind to say to me, sir—please to say it now."

"I only wished to ask you one last question," I said. "I only wanted to know Mrs. Cathie-

rick's address at Welmingham."

My request so startled Mrs. Clements, that, for the moment, even the tidings of Anne's death seemed to be driven from her mind. Her tears suddenly ceased to flow, and she sat looking at me in blank amazement.

"For the Lord's sake, sir!" she said, "what do you want with Mrs. Catherieck?"

"I want this, Mrs. Clements," I replied: "I want to know the secret of those private meet-
ings of hers with Sir Percival Glyde. There is something more, in what you have told me of that woman's past conduct and of that man's past relations with her, than you, or any of your neighbours, ever suspected. There is a Secret we none of us know of between those two—and I am going to Mrs. Cathierick, with the resolution to find it out.

"Think twice about it, sir!" said Mrs. Clements, rising, in her earnestness, and laying her hand on my arm. "She's an awful woman—you don't know her, as I do. Think twice about it."

"I am sure your warning is kindly meant, Mrs. Clements. But I am determined to see the woman, whatever comes of it."

Mrs. Clements looked at me anxiously in the face.

"I see your mind is made up, sir," she said.

"I will give you the address."

I wrote it down in my pocket-book; and then took the good woman by the hand, to say farewell.

"You shall hear from me, soon," I said: "you shall know all that I have promised to tell you."

Mrs. Clements sighed and shook her head doubtfully.

"An old woman's advice is sometimes worth taking, sir," she said, "Think twice before you go to Welmingham."

PORT WINE.

HAPPPENING to be in Oporto during the last vintage season, I must needs visit the wine country, and set off, on a fine night in September, with a friend who was returning to his vineyard. Travelling, as the fickle sun, chiefly by night, through the large towns of Penafiel, Amarante, and Regoa, we reached my friend's "quinta" in three days. The roads, bad everywhere, were in some places so very rugged that we had to dismount and lead the horses. Now and then we passed small wooden crosses, surrounded with stones, and, at each of these our guide enlivened us by halting, to mutter a paternoster, and add one stone more to the little heap. Such a cross marks the spot upon which a man has been found murdered. When a man is found dead on the road, he seldom has money about him to pay for the regular masses, therefore, a cross being set up to mark the spot, every passer-by repeats, out of charity, a prayer for the repose of the soul of the poor unknown, and the stones in the heap represent the number of the prayers. Grievous, indeed, was the number of the crosses. Assassinations are a usage of the wine country, and no effort is made by the authorities for the detection of assassins.

Port wine is from the province of Traz os Montes (behind the mountains), on the north bank of the river Douro. The scenery of this wine country is far from picturesque. The landscape simply consists of a series of high hills, covered with vines from base to summit, everywhere treeless, except for some elder clumps and a few olives here and there; but olive-trees are of sad countenance, substantial friends of man, who do not offer him eyeservice.

The ground on the hills is a loose granite, with a very thin covering of soil, and it is cut into gigantic flights of steps, on which the vines are planted. These grow in bushes three or four feet high, about a yard apart.

The first care of the wine farmer, when his harvest-time approaches, is to engage men and women enough for the vintage work. The labourers engaged are almost savages, wild in their tempers, dirty in their persons, and each male of them, man or boy, goes armed, after the custom of the province, with an ugly gun slung to his back. The day's food of these poor people is a little matter. They will think themselves very well off if they can get a couple of dried sardines for dinner, as a relish to their bit of Indian corn bread. The duty of the women in the vineyard is to cut the bunches into large baskets, which the men carry upon their shoulders to the press. There is a great deal of singing on the ground, and all seem to work very contentedly, in spite of the great heat. When darkness ends the labour of the day, the labourers all meet outside the farm-house, a guitar is produced, and dancing is kept up for some hours.

When all the grapes are in the wine-press, the first thing to be done is to drag them well over with wooden rakes, to separate some of the stalks. Then all the men tuck up their trousers and jump in. At my friend's farm, a tub of water was ostentatiously set by the side of the press. I suspect, however, that this was a concession to the prejudice of visitors, for it did not go to the extent of actual ablation. Nobody used the tub of water, all seeming to have a supreme contempt for cleanliness. The scene inside the press is very animated. Twenty or thirty brown-faced and black-bearded tatterdemalions, up to their knees in the purple