

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm
Garnett Engels Byron Schiller
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka
Cotton Dostoyevsky Hall
Baum Henry Kipling Doyle Willis
Leslie Dumas Flaubert Nietzsche Turgenev Balzac
Stockton Vatsyayana Crane
Burroughs Verne
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch
Homer Tolstoy Whitman
Darwin Thoreau Twain
Potter Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato Scott
Kant Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Burton Harte
London Descartes Cervantes Wells Hesse
Poe Aristotle Wells Voltaire Cooke
Hale James Hastings Shakespeare Chambers Irving
Bunner Richter Chekhov da Shaw Wodehouse
Doré Dante Pushkin Alcott
Swift Chekhov Newton



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Stray Studies from England and Italy

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STRAY STUDIES
FROM
ENGLAND AND ITALY.

BY
JOHN RICHARD GREEN.

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PREFACE.

I have to thank the Editors of *Macmillan's Magazine* and the *Saturday Review* for allowing me to reprint most of the papers in this series. In many cases however I have greatly changed their original form. A few pages will be found to repeat what I have already said in my 'Short History.'

[Pg ix]

A BROTHER OF THE POOR.

[Pg 3]

A BROTHER OF THE POOR.

There are few stiller things than the stillness of a summer's noon such as this, a summer's noon in a broken woodland, with the deer asleep in the bracken, and the twitter of birds silent in the coppice, and hardly a leaf astir in the huge beeches that fling their cool shade over the grass. Afar off a gilded vane flares out above the grey Jacobean gables of Knoll, the chime of a village clock falls faintly on the ear, but there is no voice or footfall of living thing to break the silence as I turn over leaf after leaf of the little book I have brought with me from the bustle of town to this still retreat, a book that is the record of a broken life, of a life "broken off," as he who lived it says of another, "with a ragged edge."

It is a book that carries one far from the woodland stillness around into the din and turmoil of cities and [Pg 4] men, into the misery and degradation of "the East-end," – that "London without London," as some one called it the other day. Few regions are more unknown than the Tower Hamlets. Not even Mrs. Riddell has ventured as yet to cross the border which parts the City from their weltering mass of busy life, their million of hard workers packed together in endless rows of monotonous streets, broken only by shipyard or factory or huge breweries, streets that stretch away eastward from Aldgate to the Essex marshes. And yet, setting aside the poetry of life which is everywhere, there is poetry enough in East London; poetry in the great river which washes it on the south, in

the fretted tangle of cordage and mast that peeps over the roofs of Shadwell or in the great hulls moored along the wharves of Wapping; poetry in the "Forest" that fringes it to the east, in the few glades that remain of Epping and Hainault,—glades ringing with the shouts of school-children out for their holiday and half mad with delight at the sight of a flower or a butterfly; poetry of the present in the work and toil of these acres of dull bricks and mortar where everybody, man woman and child, is a worker, this England without a "leisure class"; poetry in the thud of the [Pg 5] steam-engine and the white trail of steam from the tall sugar refinery, in the blear eyes of the Spitalfields weaver, or the hungering faces of the group of labourers clustered from morning till night round the gates of the docks and watching for the wind that brings the ships up the river: poetry in its past, in strange old-fashioned squares, in quaint gabled houses, in grey village churches, that have been caught and overlapped and lost, as it were, in the great human advance that has carried London forward from Whitechapel, its limit in the age of the Georges, to Stratford, its bound in that of Victoria.

Stepney is a belated village of this sort; its grey old church of St. Dunstan, buried as it is now in the very heart of East London, stood hardly a century ago among the fields. All round it lie tracts of human life without a past; but memories cluster thickly round "Old Stepney," as the people call it with a certain fond reverence, memories of men like Erasmus and Colet and the group of scholars in whom the Reformation began. It was to the country house of the Dean of St. Paul's, hard by the old church of St. Dunstan, that Erasmus betook him when tired of the smoke and [Pg 6] din of town. "I come to drink your fresh air, my Colet," he writes, "to drink yet deeper of your rural peace." The fields and hedges through which Erasmus loved to ride remained fields and hedges within living memory; only forty years ago a Londoner took his Sunday outing along the field path which led past the London Hospital to what was still the suburban village church of Stepney. But the fields through which the path led have their own church now, with its parish of dull straight streets of monotonous houses already marked with premature decay, and here and there alleys haunted by poverty and disease and crime.

There is nothing marked about either church or district; their character and that of their people are of the commonest East-end type. If I ask my readers to follow me to this parish of St. Philip, it is simply because these dull streets and alleys were chosen by a brave and earnest man as the scene of his work among the poor. It was here that Edward Denison settled in the autumn of 1867, in the second year of the great "East London Distress." In the October of 1869 he left England on a fatal voyage from which he was never to return. The collection of his letters which [Pg 7] has been recently printed by Sir Baldwyn Leighton has drawn so much attention to the work which lay within the narrow bounds of those two years that I may perhaps be pardoned for recalling my own memories of one whom it is hard to forget.

A few words are enough to tell the tale of his earlier days. Born in 1840, the son of a bishop, and nephew of the late Speaker of the House of Commons, Edward Denison passed from Eton to Christchurch, and was forced after quitting the University to spend some time in foreign travel by the delicacy of his health. His letters give an interesting picture of his mind during this pause in an active life, a pause which must have been especially distasteful to one whose whole bent lay from the first in the direction of practical energy. "I believe," he says in his later days, "that abstract political speculation is my *métier*;" but few minds were in reality less inclined to abstract speculation. From the very first one sees in him what one may venture to call the best kind of "Whig" mind, that peculiar temper of fairness and moderation which declines to push conclusions to extremes, and recoils instinctively when [Pg 8] opinion is extended beyond its proper bound. His comment on Newman's 'Apologia' paints his real intellectual temper with remarkable precision. "I left off reading Newman's 'Apologia' before I got to the end, tired of the ceaseless changes of the writer's mind, and vexed with his morbid scruples—perhaps, too, having got a little out of harmony myself with the feelings of the author, whereas I began by being in harmony with them. I don't quite know whether to esteem it a blessing or a curse; but whenever an opinion to which I am a recent convert, or which I do not hold with the entire force of my intellect, is forced too strongly upon me, or driven home to its logical conclusion, or over-praised, or extended beyond its proper limits, I recoil instinc-

tively and begin to gravitate towards the other extreme, sure to be in turn repelled by it also."

I dwell on this temper of his mind because it is this practical and moderate character of the man which gives such weight to the very sweeping conclusions on social subjects to which he was driven in his later days. A judgment which condemns the whole system of Poor Laws, for instance, falls with very different [Pg 9] weight from a mere speculative theorist and from a practical observer whose mind is constitutionally averse from extreme conclusions. Throughout however we see this intellectual moderation jostling with a moral fervour which feels restlessly about for a fitting sphere of action. "Real life," he writes from Madeira, "is not dinner-parties and small talk, nor even croquet and dancing." There is a touch of exaggeration in phrases like these which need not blind us to the depth and reality of the feeling which they imperfectly express, a feeling which prompted the question which embodies the spirit of all these earlier letters,—the question, "What is my work?"

The answer to this question was found both within and without the questioner. Those who were young in the weary days of Palmerstonian rule will remember the disgust at purely political life which was produced by the bureaucratic inaction of the time, and we can hardly wonder that, like many of the finer minds among his contemporaries, Edward Denison turned from the political field which was naturally open to him to the field of social effort. His tendency in this direction was aided, no doubt, partly by the [Pg 10] intensity of this religious feeling and of his consciousness of the duty he owed to the poor, and partly by that closer sympathy with the physical suffering around us which is one of the most encouraging characteristics of the day. Even in the midst of his outburst of delight at a hard frost ("I like," he says, "the bright sunshine that generally accompanies it, the silver landscape, and the ringing distinctness of sounds in the frozen air"), we see him haunted by a sense of the way in which his pleasure contrasts with the winter misery of the poor. "I would rather give up all the pleasures of the frost than indulge them, poisoned as they are by the misery of so many of our brothers. What a monstrous thing it is that in the richest country in the world large masses of the population should be condemned annually to starvation and death!" It is easy to utter

protests like these in the spirit of a mere sentimentalist; it is less easy to carry them out into practical effort, as Edward Denison resolved to do. After an unsatisfactory attempt to act as Almoner for the Society for the Relief of Distress, he resolved to fix himself personally in the East-end of London, and study the great problem of pauperism face to face.

[Pg 11] His resolve sprang from no fit of transient enthusiasm, but from a sober conviction of the need of such a step. "There are hardly any residents in the East rich enough to give much money, or with enough leisure to give much time," he says. "This is the evil. Even the best disposed in the West don't like coming so far off, and, indeed, few have the time to spare, and when they do there is great waste of time and energy on the journey. My plan is the only really practicable one, and as I have both means, time, and inclination, I should be a thief and a murderer if I withheld what I so evidently owe." In the autumn of 1867 he carried out his resolve, and took lodgings in the heart of the parish which I sketched in the opening of this paper. If any romantic dreams had mixed with his resolution they at once faded away before the dull, commonplace reality. "I saw nothing very striking at Stepney," is his first comment on the sphere he had chosen. But he was soon satisfied with his choice. He took up in a quiet, practical way the work he found closest at hand. "All is yet in embryo, but it will grow. Just now I only teach in a night school, and do what in me lies in looking after the sick, keeping an eye upon [Pg 12] nuisances and the like, seeing that the local authorities keep up to their work. I go to-morrow before the Board at the workhouse to compel the removal to the infirmary of a man who ought to have been there already. I shall drive the sanitary inspector to put the Act against overcrowding in force." Homely work of this sort grows on him; we see him in these letters getting boys out to sea, keeping school with little urchins,— "demons of misrule" who tried his temper,—gathering round him a class of working men, organizing an evening club for boys. All this, too, quietly and unostentatiously and with as little resort as possible to "cheap charity," as he used to call it, to the "doles of bread and meat which only do the work of poor-rates."

So quiet and simple indeed was his work that though it went on in the parish of which I then had the charge it was some little time

before I came to know personally the doer of it. It is amusing even now to recollect my first interview with Edward Denison. A vicar's Monday morning is never the pleasantest of awakenings, but the Monday morning of an East-end vicar brings worries that far eclipse the [Pg 13] mere headache and dyspepsia of his rural brother. It is the "parish morning." All the complicated machinery of a great ecclesiastical, charitable, and educational organization has got to be wound up afresh, and set going again for another week. The superintendent of the Women's Mission is waiting with a bundle of accounts, complicated as only ladies' accounts can be. The churchwarden has come with a face full of gloom to consult on the falling off in the offertory. The Scripture-reader has brought his "visiting book" to be inspected, and a special report on the character of a doubtful family in the parish. The organist drops in to report something wrong in the pedals. There is a letter to be written to the inspector of nuisances, directing his attention to certain odoriferous drains in Pig-and-Whistle Alley. The nurse brings her sick-list and her little bill for the sick-kitchen. The schoolmaster wants a fresh pupil-teacher, and discusses nervously the prospects of his scholars in the coming inspection. There is the interest on the penny bank to be calculated, a squabble in the choir to be adjusted, a district visitor to be replaced, reports to be drawn up for the Bishop's Fund and a great charitable society, the curate's sick-list to [Pg 14] be inspected, and a preacher to be found for the next church festival.

It was in the midst of a host of worries such as these that a card was laid on my table with a name which I recognized as that of a young layman from the West-end, who had for two or three months past been working in the mission district attached to the parish. Now, whatever shame is implied in the confession, I had a certain horror of "laymen from the West-end." Lay co-operation is an excellent thing in itself, and one of my best assistants was a letter-sorter in the post-office close by; but the "layman from the West-end," with a bishop's letter of recommendation in his pocket and a head full of theories about "heathen masses," was an unmitigated nuisance. I had a pretty large experience of these gentlemen, and my one wish in life was to have no more. Some had a firm belief in their own eloquence, and were zealous for a big room and a big congregation. I got them the big room, but I was obliged to leave the big congrega-

tion to their own exertions, and in a month or two their voices faded away. Then there was the charitable layman, who pounced down on the parish from time to time and threw about meat and blankets till half of the poor were demoralized. Or there was the statistical layman, who went about with a note-book and did spiritual and economical sums in the way of dividing the number of "people in the free seats" by the number of bread tickets annually distributed. There was the layman with a passion for homœopathy, the ritualistic layman, the layman with a mania for preaching down trades' unions, the layman with an educational mania. All however agreed in one point, much as they differed in others, and the one point was that of a perfect belief in their individual nostrums and perfect contempt for all that was already doing in the neighbourhood.

It was with no peculiar pleasure therefore that I rose to receive this fresh "layman from the West"; but a single glance was enough to show me that my visitor was a man of very different stamp from his predecessors. There was something in the tall, manly figure, the bright smile, the frank winning address of Edward Denison that inspired confidence in a moment. "I come to learn, and not to teach," he laughed, as I hinted at "theories" and their danger; and our talk soon fell on a certain "John's Place," where he thought [Pg 16] there was a great deal to be learned. In five minutes more we stood in the spot which interested him, an alley running between two mean streets, and narrowing at one end till we crept out of it as if through the neck of a bottle. It was by no means the choicest part of the parish: the drainage was imperfect, the houses miserable; but wretched as it was it was a favourite haunt of the poor, and it swarmed with inhabitants of very various degrees of respectability. Costermongers abounded, strings of barrows were drawn up on the pavement, and the refuse of their stock lay rotting in the gutter. Drunken sailors and Lascars from the docks rolled along shouting to its houses of ill-fame. There was little crime, though one of the "ladies" of the alley was a well-known receiver of stolen goods, but there was a good deal of drunkenness and vice. Now and then a wife came plumping on to the pavement from a window overhead; sometimes a couple of viragoes fought out their quarrel "on the stones"; boys idled

about in the sunshine in training to be pickpockets; miserable girls flaunted in dirty ribbons at nightfall at half-a-dozen doors.

But with all this the place was popular with even [Pg 17] respectable working people in consequence of the small size and cheapness of the houses — for there is nothing the poor like so much as a house to themselves; and the bulk of its population consisted of casual labourers, who gathered every morning round the great gates of the docks, waiting to be "called in" as the ships came up to unload. The place was naturally unhealthy, constantly haunted by fever, and had furnished some hundred cases in the last visitation of cholera. The work done among them in the "cholera time" had never been forgotten by the people, and, ill-famed as the place was, I visited it at all times of the day and night with perfect security. The apostle however of John's Place was my friend the letter-sorter. He had fixed on it as his special domain, and with a little aid from others had opened a Sunday-school and simple Sunday services in the heart of it. A branch of the Women's Mission was established in the same spot, and soon women were "putting by" their pence and sewing quietly round the lady superintendent as she read to them the stories of the Gospels.

It was this John's Place which Edward Denison chose as the centre of his operations. There was very [Pg 18] little in his manner to show his sense of the sacrifice he was making, though the sacrifice was in reality a great one. No one enjoyed more keenly the pleasures of life and society: he was a good oarsman, he delighted in outdoor exercise, and skating was to him "a pleasure only rivalled in my affection by a ride across country on a good horse." But month after month these pleasures were quietly put aside for his work in the East-end. "I have come to this," he says, laughingly, "that a walk along Piccadilly is a most exhilarating and delightful treat. I don't enjoy it above once in ten days, but therefore with double zest." What told on him most was the physical depression induced by the very look of these vast, monotonous masses of sheer poverty. "My wits are getting blunted," he says, "by the monotony and *ugliness* of this place. I can almost imagine, difficult as it is, the awful effect upon a human mind of never seeing anything but the meanest and vilest of men and men's works, and of complete exclusion from the sight of God and His works, — a position in which the

villager never is." But there was worse than physical degradation. "This summer there is not so very much actual suffering for want of food, nor from sickness. What is [Pg 19] so bad is the habitual condition of this mass of humanity – its uniform mean level, the absence of anything more civilizing than a grinding organ to raise the ideas beyond the daily bread and beer, the utter want of education, the complete indifference to religion, with the fruits of all this – improvidence, dirt, and their secondaries, crime and disease."

Terrible however as these evils were, he believed they could be met; and the quiet good sense of his character was shown in the way in which he met them. His own residence in the East-end was the most effective of protests against that severance of class from class in which so many of its evils take their rise. When speaking of the overcrowding and the official ill-treatment of the poor, he says truly: "These are the sort of evils which, where there are no resident gentry, grow to a height almost incredible, and on which the remedial influence of the mere presence of a gentleman known to be on the alert is inestimable." But nothing, as I often had occasion to remark, could be more judicious than his interference on behalf of the poor, or more unlike the fussy impertinence of the philanthropists who think themselves born "to expose" [Pg 20] Boards of Guardians. His aim throughout was to co-operate with the Guardians in giving, not less, but greater effect to the Poor Laws, and in resisting the sensational writing and reckless abuse which aim at undoing their work. "The gigantic subscription lists which are regarded as signs of our benevolence," he says truly, "are monuments of our indifference."

The one hope for the poor, he believed, lay not in charity, but in themselves. "Build school-houses, pay teachers, give prizes, frame workmen's clubs, help them to help themselves, lend them your brains; but give them no money, except what you sink in such undertakings as above." This is not the place to describe or discuss the more detailed suggestions with which he faced the great question of poverty and pauperism in the East-end; they are briefly summarized in a remarkable letter which he addressed in 1869 to an East-end newspaper:—"First we must so discipline and regulate our charities as to cut off the resources of the habitual mendicant. Secondly, all who by begging proclaim themselves destitute, must be

taken at their word. They must be taken up and kept at penal work—not for one morning, as now, but for a [Pg 21] month or two; a proportion of their earnings being handed over to them on dismissal, as capital on which to begin a life of honest industry. Thirdly, we must promote the circulation of labour, and obviate morbid congestions of the great industrial centres. Fourthly, we must improve the condition of the agricultural poor." Stern as such suggestions may seem, there are few who have really thought as well as worked for the poor without feeling that sternness of this sort is, in the highest sense, mercy. Ten years in the East of London had brought me to the same conclusions; and my Utopia, like Edward Denison's, lay wholly in a future to be worked out by the growing intelligence and thrift of the labouring classes themselves.

But stern as were his theories, there is hardly a home within his district that has not some memory left of the love and tenderness of his personal charity. I hardly like to tell how often I have seen the face of the sick and dying brighten as he drew near, or how the little children, as they flocked out of school, would run to him, shouting his name for very glee. For the Sunday-school was soon transformed by his efforts into a day-school for children, whose parents were really [Pg 22] unable to pay school-fees; and a large school-room, erected near John's Place, was filled with dirty little scholars. Here too he gathered round him a class of working men, to whom he lectured on the Bible every Wednesday evening; and here he delivered addresses to the dock-labourers whom he had induced to attend, of a nature somewhat startling to those who talk of "preaching down to the intelligence of the poor." I give the sketch of one of these sermons (on "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together") in his own words:—"I presented Christianity as a society; investigated the origin of societies, the family, the tribe, the nation, with the attendant expanded ideas of rights and duties; the common weal, the bond of union; rising from the family dinner-table to the sacrificial rites of the national gods; drew parallels with trades' unions and benefit clubs, and told them flatly they would not be Christians till they were communicants." No doubt this will seem to most sensible people extravagant enough, even without the quotations from "Wordsworth, Tennyson, and even Pope" with which his addresses were enlivened; but I must confess that my own experience

among the poor agrees pretty much with Edward Denison's, and that I believe [Pg 23] "high thinking" put into plain English to be more likely to tell on a dock-yard labourer than all the "simple Gospel sermons" in the world.

His real power however for good among the poor lay not so much in what he did as in what he was. It is in no spirit of class self-sufficiency that he dwells again and again throughout these letters on the advantages to such a neighbourhood of the presence of a "gentleman" in the midst of it. He lost little, in the end he gained much, by the resolute stand he made against the indiscriminate almsgiving which has done so much to create and encourage pauperism in the East of London. The poor soon came to understand the man who was as liberal with his sympathy as he was chary of meat and coal tickets, who only aimed at being their friend, at listening to their troubles, and aiding them with counsel, as if he were one of themselves, at putting them in the way of honest work, at teaching their children, at protecting them with a perfect courage and chivalry against oppression and wrong. He instinctively appealed in fact to their higher nature, and such an appeal seldom remains unanswered. In the roughest costermonger there is a vein of real [Pg 24] nobleness, often even of poetry, in which lies the whole chance of his rising to a better life. I remember, as an instance of the way in which such a vein can be touched, the visit of a lady, well known for her work in the poorer districts of London, to a low alley in this very parish. She entered the little mission-room with a huge basket, filled not with groceries or petticoats, but with roses. There was hardly one pale face among the women bending over their sewing that did not flush with delight as she distributed her gifts. Soon, as the news spread down the alley, rougher faces peered in at window and door, and great "navvies" and dock-labourers put out their hard fists for a rosebud with the shyness and delight of schoolboys. "She was a *real* lady," was the unanimous verdict of the alley; like Edward Denison she had somehow discovered that man does not live by bread alone, and that the communion of rich and poor is not to be found in appeals to the material but to the spiritual side of man.

"What do you look on as the greatest boon that has been conferred on the poorer classes in later years?" said a friend to me one

day, after expatiating on the [Pg 25] rival claims of schools, missions, shoe-black brigades, and a host of other philanthropic efforts for their assistance. I am afraid I sank in his estimation when I answered, "Sixpenny photographs." But any one who knows what the worth of family affection is among the lower classes, and who has seen the array of little portraits stuck over a labourer's fireplace, still gathering together into one the "home" that life is always parting—the boy that has "gone to Canada," the girl "out at service," the little one with the golden hair that sleeps under the daisies, the old grandfather in the country—will perhaps feel with me that in counteracting the tendencies, social and industrial, which every day are sapping the healthier family affections, the sixpenny photograph is doing more for the poor than all the philanthropists in the world.

It is easy indeed to resolve on "helping" the poor; but it is far less easy to see clearly how we can help them, what is real aid, and what is mere degradation. I know few books where any one who is soberly facing questions like these can find more help than in the "Letters" of Edward Denison. Broken and scattered as his hints necessarily appear, the main lines along [Pg 26] which his thought moves are plain enough. He would discriminate between temporary, and chronic distress, between the poverty caused by a sudden revolution of trade and permanent destitution such as that of Bethnal Green. The first requires exceptional treatment; the second a rigid and universal administration of the Poor Laws. "Bring back the Poor Law," he repeats again and again, "to the spirit of its institution; organize a sufficiently elastic labour test, without which no outdoor relief to be given; make the few alterations which altered times demand, and impose every possible discouragement on private benevolence." The true cure for pauperism lies in the growth of thrift among the poor. "I am not drawing the least upon my imagination when I say that a young man of twenty could in five years, even as a dock-labourer, which is much the lowest employment and least well paid there is, save about £20. This is not exactly Utopia; it is within the reach of nearly every man, if quite at the bottom of the tree; but if it were of anything like common occurrence the destitution and disease of this life would be within manageable limits."

I know that words like these are in striking contrast [Pg 27] with the usual public opinion on the subject, as well as with the mere

screaming over poverty in which sentimentalists are in the habit of indulging. But it is fair to say that they entirely coincide with my own experience. The sight which struck me most in Stepney was one which met my eyes when I plunged by sheer accident into the back-yard of a jobbing carpenter, and came suddenly upon a neat greenhouse with fine flowers inside it. The man had built it with his own hands and his own savings; and the sight of it had so told on his next-door neighbour—a cobbler, if I remember rightly—as to induce him to leave off drinking, and build a rival greenhouse with savings of his own. Both had become zealous florists, and thrifty, respectable men; but the thing which surprised both of them most was that they had been able to save at all.

It is in the letters themselves however rather than in these desultory comments of mine that the story of these two years of earnest combat with the great problem of our day must be studied. Short as the time was, it was broken by visits to France, to Scotland, to Guernsey, and by his election as Member of [Pg 28] Parliament for the borough of Newark. But even these visits and his new parliamentary position were meant to be parts of an effort for the regeneration of our poorer classes. His careful examination of the thrift of the peasantry of the Channel Islands, his researches into the actual working of the "Assistance Publique" in Paris, the one remarkable speech he delivered in Parliament on the subject of vagrancy, were all contributions to this great end. In the midst of these labours a sudden attack of his old disease forced him to leave England on a long sea-voyage, and within a fortnight of his landing in Australia he died at Melbourne. His portrait hangs in the school which he built, and rough faces as they gaze at it still soften even into tears as they think of Edward Denison.

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[Pg 30]

SKETCHES IN SUNSHINE.

[Pg 31]

SKETCHES IN SUNSHINE.

I.

CANNES AND ST. HONORAT.

In a colloquial sort of way we talk glibly enough of leaving England, but England is by no means an easy country to leave. If it bids us farewell from the cliffs of Dover, it greets us again on the quay of Calais. It would be a curious morning's amusement to take a map of Europe, and mark with a dot of red the settlements of our lesser English colonies. A thousand Englands would crop up along the shores of the Channel or in quiet nooks of Normandy, around mouldering Breton castles or along the banks of the Loire, under the shadow of the Maritime Alps or the Pyrenees, beneath the white walls of Tunis or the Pyramids of the Nile. During the summer indeed England is everywhere—fishing in the fiords of [Pg 32] Norway, sketching on the Kremlin, shooting brigands in Albania, yachting among the Cyclades, lion-hunting in the Atlas, crowding every steamer on the Rhine, annexing Switzerland, lounging through Italian galleries, idling in the gondolas of Venice. But even winter is far from driving England home again; what it really does is to concentrate it in a hundred little Britains along the sunny shores of the South. Each winter resort brings home to us the power of the British doctor. It is he who rears pleasant towns at the foot of the Pyrenees, and lines the sunny coasts of the Riviera with villas that gleam white among the olive groves. It is his finger that stirs the camels of Algeria, the donkeys of Palestine, the Nile boats of Egypt. At the first frosts of November the doctor marshals his wild geese for their