

for his office if he be ignorant, of the laws of human health and life."

.
 Yes! That his work had lived and would live, this was what he cared for. This it was that kept him uniformly brave and bright, and made him say to me one evening in tones of grateful joy—we were sitting on the wide balcony watching the moon rise over the fir-tree tops, his hand in mine as of old,—

"I have indeed succeeded! I have lived to see seven millions of the public money expended on this great cause. If any one had told me, when I began, that this would be, I should have considered it absolutely incredible."

CHAPTER X.

THE SUNSET OF LIFE—ITALY, 1861.

My grandfather had travelled abroad but little during his strenuous life. He had, it is true, been to Paris in 1850, accompanied by Mr Charles Macaulay, Dr John Sutherland, and Mr (afterwards Sir Henry) Rawlinson, on business connected with the General Board of Health scheme for extra-mural sepulture, but, except on that occasion, he had not left England.

So that when in 1857 he was asked to join a party of three proceeding to Milan for the purpose of examining the irrigation works of that city, he gladly undertook the journey, which was to lead them *viâ* Marseilles and along the Cornice Road, then traversed by carriage only. The beauty of Italy thus came before him with full freshness at the age of seventy, and he returned strengthened and invigorated.

The following year my grandfather lost his wife. She died at The Pines, at Weybridge, after a short illness, in the summer of 1858.

Two years later he was able to carry out his cherished hope of returning to Italy, and we went to Florence, where his daughter Emily had been living for some years. She welcomed us to the rooms she had secured in an old palace beyond the Arno—to the artistic Italian surroundings of which she had added something of the atmosphere of an English home.

His delight in the art and nature of Florence and its environs was intense, and the beauty of land and sky seems to make a fitting setting for the end of such a life as his.

He stood on the old jeweller's bridge, one autumn evening late in November, and watched the sun go down behind the western hill of the rushing Arno; and the sunset of his own life came soon after. Perhaps he had lingered too long gazing at this beautiful scene; for a chill, producing rapid bronchitis, took him from us on the 10th December 1861.

Towards the end, when he knew he was passing away, after other gentle loving words, almost his last were—with a sweet triumphant smile—

“Draw up the blind and let me see the stars;
for I still love the beauty.”

At the cemetery at Porta Pinti are some sombre gates with, over them, the words “Ils se reposent de leurs travaux, et leurs œuvres les suivent.” Those black gates opened one sunny December morning and showed a sloping avenue of marble tombs, tangles of pink and of white China roses in full flower falling over them, and at the end a tall white cross shining in the sunlight against the blue Italian sky,—fit type of the black gates of death, which had rolled back to let him pass into the Eternal Light beyond.

There we left him in completest trust, our “Knight Errant,” after his life's warfare.

For there is a poem by Adelaide Procter (on whom written I know not) which seems to give, with the full force of poetical presentation, the spirit of the Life I have tried to depict. It even seems to follow the very order of the periods of that life—*our* hero following the course of

hers; and thus fulfilling Mrs Browning's words when she says—

“Ingemisco, ingemisco!
Is ever a lament begun
By any mourner under sun
Which, ere it endeth, suits but one?”

In my extract-book the following lines have lain away for the nearly forty years which have passed since he went from us, and they still remain, to me, the best expression of what he was. I find, in pencil, against the verses the place or date which they symbolise.

If those who have read these pages see their aptness, they will learn from them, more than from any words of mine, what measure of man he was.

A KNIGHT ERRANT.

“Though he lived and died amongst us,
Yet his name may be enrolled
With the knights whose deeds of daring
Ancient chronicles have told.

*Bristol,
Edinburgh,
Yeovil.*

Still a stripling he encountered
Poverty, and suffered long,
Gathering force from every effort
Till he knew his arm was strong.

Then his heart and life he offered
To his radiant mistress—Truth.
Never thought or dream of faltering
Marred the promise of his youth.

So he rode forth to defend her,
And her peerless worth proclaim;
Challenging each recreant doubter
Who aspersed her spotless name.

*London, 1820
to 1854.*

First upon his path stood *Ignorance*,
Hideous in his brutal might;
Hard the blows and long the battle
Ere the monster took to flight.

Then, with light and fearless spirit,
Prejudice he dared to brave,
Hunting back the lying craven
To her black sulphureous cave.

Followed by his servile minions,
Custom, the old Giant, rose;
Yet he, too, at last was conquered
By the good Knight's weighty blows.

Once again he rose a conqueror,
And, though wounded in the fight,
With a dying smile of triumph
Saw that Truth had gained her right.

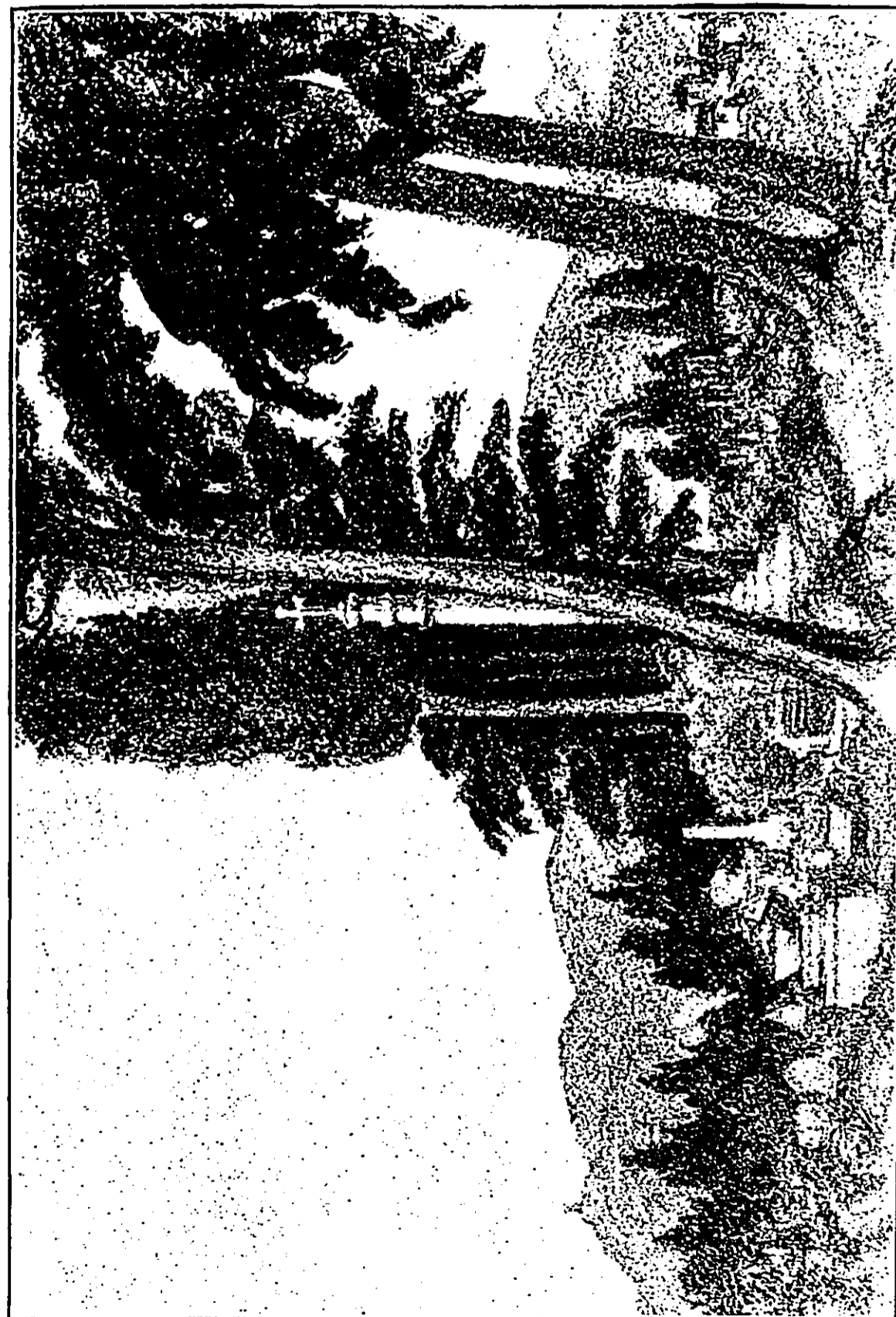
Weybridge.

On his failing ear re-echoing
Came the shouting round her throne;
Little cared he that no future
With her name would link his own.

Spent with many a hard-fought battle
Slowly ebb'd his life away,
And the crowd that flocked to greet her
Trampled on him where he lay.

Gathering all his strength he saw her *Italy.*
Crowned and reigning in her pride,
Looked his last upon her beauty,
Raised his eyes to God—and died."

—A. A. PROCTER.



VIEW FROM PORTA PINTI.